

**FIVB Medical Commission  
COVID-19 Guidelines  
for FIVB-sanctioned Volleyball competitions**

**Version: February 01, 2021**

***/The rules and recommendations will be constantly updated depending on the evolution of the epidemiological situation /***

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## I. Introduction

These Guidelines sets possible mitigation steps to reduce the risk of infection for those involved in the FIVB Competitions during the COVID-19 pandemic, although the risk cannot be completely eliminated. Please note that all stakeholders participate in the competition at their own risk and shall cooperate by complying with these guidelines

Despite the fact that vaccination shall be considered as a priority in managing the risk of infection by COVID-19, not all countries will begin their vaccination campaigns before the beginning of the 2021 FIVB season and Athletes are unlikely to be in the first groups to be vaccinated. Therefore, a set of rules on hygiene, biosecurity, testing and medical management are essential to minimize the COVID-19 risk in FIVB Competitions.

The following assumptions shall also be considered.

- a. The protection given by vaccination against COVID-19 is not 100% effective.
- b. Vaccination protects against being sick, but it is not known whether it prevents viral transmission to others.
- c. There are no scientific data on how long the vaccine is effective.
- d. New virus mutations raise doubts about the effectiveness of the current approved vaccines.

## II. Terms and abbreviations

- a. *Organizers' COVID-19 Officer*: an individual appointed by the Organizer as a person responsible for all hygiene matters, with special focus on COVID-19 related issues. If possible, this person shall have medical background (but it is not mandatory) in order to supervise and conduct the established procedures and protocols. This person shall also have an extensive knowledge of the government regulations and shall collaborate with the FIVB Medical Delegate and Teams COVID-19 Officer.
- b. *Teams COVID-19 Officer*: an individual appointed by the respective Team and responsible for all hygiene matters, with special focus on COVID-19 related issues as well as the communication with the Organizers' COVID-19 Officer and FIVB Medical Delegate.
- c. *RT-PCR test (nucleic acids amplification tests)*: for diagnosis of active COVID-19 infection; rely on the detection of the genetic material of the SARS CoV-2 virus in a sample obtained from the patient.
- d. *Antigen tests*: relatively inexpensive, rapid, point-of-care tests that can be useful for screening in high risk congregant settings, in diagnosis of infection in those exposed to a known case COVID-19, and in diagnosis of infection in symptomatic patients. Sensitivity is less than RT-PCR, specificity is high. Rapid antigen tests are most sensitive in individuals who are tested during early stages of infection when viral load is generally highest.
- e. *Quarantine*: dealing with a person after exposure to COVID-19.
- f. *Isolation*: dealing with a person after positive test  $\pm$  symptoms.

### III. General information about COVID-19

#### *Transmission of the virus*

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also catch COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19 who coughs out or exhales droplets.

#### *Symptoms*

1. The most common symptoms caused by COVID-19 include:
  - a) Dry cough
  - b) Tiredness
  - c) Fever
2. Other symptoms include:
  - a) Aches and pains
  - b) Nasal congestion
  - c) Runny nose
  - d) Sore throat
  - e) Loss of smell
  - f) Diarrhea
  - g) General discomfort

### IV. Pre-event and event rules and recommendations

Based on the above-mentioned remarks and assumptions, the following FIVB Medical Commission recommendations for volleyball competitions shall be considered and implemented by hosts, teams and participants.

#### 1. Arrival/participation

- a. The necessity to perform a RT-PCR test before departure for the tournament (72 hours at the latest) and/or upon arrival shall be in accordance with the newest FIVB requirements and shall be also agreed with the Organizer, according to the local regulations of the host country. The tournament Organizer is responsible for carrying out the tests upon arrival (if such tests are agreed).
  - i. If tests prior to departure to the tournament are required, only team members whose test results were negative are allowed to start the journey.
  - ii. The results of the respective tests shall be collected and verified upon arrival by an Organizer's Covid-19 Officer. Only team members with negative test results will be admitted to the safe bubble established for the competition.
- b. All members of a team who have recovered from COVID-19 may be allowed to join the tournament provided that they are asymptomatic for at least 14 days (deadline

may be longer depending on the severity of illness). These individuals shall undergo an antigen testing prior to their departure (or upon arrival) instead of RT-PCR (due to a high risk of false positive results).

- c. Teams shall be advised/highly recommended to show up with a vaccination passport for each team member (proof of COVID-19 vaccination), but it is not mandatory. That information, if provided, shall be collected during the preliminary inquiry.
- d. Teams shall be advised/highly recommended to have a SARS-CoV-2 serological (antibody) test done 72 hours before their departure for the tournament. The information about each team member's test result shall be collected during the preliminary inquiry.
- e. All team members are required to have health insurance covering the costs of medical treatment including COVID-19.
  - i. The cost of other procedures, e.g., quarantine/isolation, but not only, in case of contact /infection with SARS-CoV-2 shall be guaranteed/certified, e.g., by their national federation. That information shall be collected upon arrival by an Organizer's Covid-19 Officer.
- f. Each team shall appoint a COVID-19 Officer responsible for being in contact with the team, the Organizers and the FIVB Medical Delegate (if present). The name of the designated person must be communicated upon arrival to an Organizer's Covid-19 Officer.
  - i. The respective Teams COVID-19 Officer shall also be responsible, but not only, for checking the compliance of all team members with the competition anti-COVID rules and regulations.

## **2. General considerations**

- a. It is strongly recommended to create two safe bubbles during the tournament. It is highly recommended to limit any close contact between members of these different safe bubbles to the minimum necessary.
  - i. The first safe bubble shall include team members, FIVB Officials, International Referees and appropriate representatives of the Organizer. If needed, other members of this safe bubble will be agreed between the relevant FIVB Delegates and the Organizer.
  - ii. The second safe bubble shall include line judges, scorers, moppers, ball retrievers, media representatives, photographers and other personnel, whose presence will be agreed between the relevant FIVB Delegates and the Organizer.
- b. The safe bubble rules/recommendations listed below, but not only, shall be strictly adhered to, e.g.:
  - i. Face masks shall be used at all times except for sleeping, meals, training sessions and matches.
  - ii. Social distancing shall be respected whenever possible. Crowds in common spaces shall be avoided (hotel lobby, elevators). The use of elevators by members of different Teams shall be avoided.
  - iii. All common spaces (e.g., conference/video rooms) shall be cleaned with antiseptic solution before their use by the next team. The maximum number of people allowed in a room shall respect at least 1 person per 4 sq. m.

- iv. The movement of players and Officials shall be restricted to sports facilities and hotels only.
- v. Each member of a Team and their respective Team Officials are recommended to carry a personal hand sanitizer.
- c. All local staff shall present a negative RT-PCR test result done 24 hours before the arrival of the first Team. Their compliance with the anti-Covid-19 rules shall be mandatory and the Organizer's Covid-19 Officer shall be responsible for ensuring this.
- d. The Organizer is obliged to provide for a separate a room within the training and match facilities for the isolation of people with COVID-19 symptoms.

### **3. Hotel regulations**

- a. Each Team shall be lodged in one exclusive floor of a designated hotel.
- b. Single rooms for each of all Team members are recommended.

### **4. Meals and amenities**

- a. Enough space for each person in restaurant during breakfast, lunch and dinner shall be guaranteed by the hotel staff and the Organizer. To ensure this, only a limited number of people are allowed in the restaurant.
- b. Served meals on an open buffet basis is not recommended.
- c. Recreational facilities may be used, but social gatherings shall be restricted to the members of the same Team.
  - i. The recreational facilities shall be cleaned with antiseptic solution before their use by the next Team.

### **5. Daily triage/testing procedures**

- a. Triage shall be performed and documented on the dedicated FIVB M-14 Medical Form on a daily basis by the Team's COVID-19 Officer.
- b. Daily briefings shall take place from the first day after the team's arrival. The purpose of the meeting is to present the current epidemiological situation of the competition. They shall be attended by each Team's COVID-19 Officer, Organizer's Covid-19 Officer and the FIVB Medical Delegate. The FIVB M-14 Medical Forms of each Team, documenting the results of the triage, shall be collected and analyzed at that time.
  - i. The tournament Organizer is responsible for guaranteeing a suitable room for the abovementioned meeting.
- c. The COVID-19 rules and regulations applicable for the respective tournament shall be presented and explained by the FIVB Medical Delegate "in general" during the Preliminary Enquiry, Technical Meeting and "in details" during the Teams Doctors Meeting.
- d. During the tournament, Players and Team Officials shall be submitted to repeated antigen testing (RT-PCR if agreed) every three/four days. Such testing procedure shall be provided and verified by the Organizer. The FIVB Medical Delegate has to be informed as soon as possible about possible threats.
- e. Testing of the local staff shall be performed in accordance with the agreement established between the Organizer and the FIVB Medical Delegate in the light of the FIVB and host country regulations. In principle, local staff shall undergo the same testing procedures as Teams and Officials.

- f. If a person has COVID-19 symptoms and a negative result of an antigen test, a RT-PCR test shall be then performed as more sensitive (in case of a positive result, please refer to Section V below).

#### **6. Transport during the event**

- a. It is highly recommended that each Team shall have its own dedicated bus for the duration of the entire event/stay.
- b. All vehicles shall be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected immediately before being used to transport the respective Teams.
- c. FIVB Delegates and other Officials shall have a dedicated means of transportation, allowing them to respect social distancing.

#### **7. Training sessions**

- a. Every person entering the training hall shall have their body temperature measured.
  - i. In case of an elevated temperature, the isolation of that person is mandatory.
  - ii. An antigen test should be performed without undue delay. In case of a negative result, a RT-PCR test shall be performed as more sensitive.
  - iii. A person who has a negative RT-PCR test, but still has symptoms compatible with Covid-19, shall remain in quarantine. Antigen tests shall be done on a daily basis and, in case of positive results, isolation should be implemented. If the antigen tests are negative, a new RT-PCR test shall be performed after 4 days.
    - 1. If this repeated test has a positive result, the person must be isolated (please refer to part V for further details).
    - 2. If this repeated test has a negative result, the person is free to return to his activity.
- b. One Team at a time on site, also from entering to leaving the training area.
- c. Antiseptic solution (alcohol based) shall be used to clean the floor and objects at the venue before the arrival of the next Team.
- d. Balls shall be wiped with an antiseptic solution (alcohol based) as often as possible during the training session.
- e. Players shall use antiseptic solution (alcohol based) before entering the court, after leaving the court and in other circumstances as often as possible.
- f. In order to reduce any further infection risk, it is recommended that players do not shower at the training hall, but they shall return to their hotels as quickly as possible to have shower in their respective rooms.

#### **8. Matches**

- a. Every person entering the competition venue shall have their body temperature measured (please refer to the recommendations on point 7.a above).
- b. Teams shall be allocated into changing rooms that shall be large enough to ensure that social distancing is respected, allowing sufficient space between seats.
- c. Teams shall be given access to their own toilet, which remain out of bounds to anyone else.
- d. During the games, players have assigned seats on the bench and shall be asked to refrain from e.g., licking their fingers, touching eyes, nose, mouth.
- e. When changing sides, chairs and other equipment shall be disinfected before being seized by the opposing Team.

- f. Face masks shall be recommended to be used by players in warm-up zone or while sitting. Face masks shall be used by Officials on the bench at all time during the game.
- g. Balls shall be wiped with an antiseptic solution (alcohol based) at all times when not in play (ball retrievers' duty).
- h. Antiseptic solution (alcohol based) shall be used to wipe the floor as often as possible (moppers).
- i. Players shall use an antiseptic solution (alcohol based) before entering the court, after leaving the court and in any other circumstance as often as possible.
- j. Court personnel shall permanently wear a face mask and use an antiseptic solution as often as possible.
- k. Before allowing the moppers to enter the court, if need be, the referee shall ensure that the players are standing back at least 2m.
- l. Shaking hands during or after the match is not recommended. Expressing satisfaction through close contact shall be prohibited during and after the match.
- m. After the match, it is not recommended to take a shower in the venue, but rather to go to the hotel and take a shower in the respective hotel room.

#### **9. Medical matters**

- a. The medical facilities in the venue and the respective medical team shall reach an agreement before the tournament with the Organizer, which has to be verified before the start of matches by the FIVB Medical Delegate.
- b. If a player requires the assistance of the Local Medical Team, the Referees are in charge of authorizing them, after ensuring that the area and its access is clear of players. All members of the Medical Team shall wear face mask and gloves.

#### **10. Anti-Doping**

- a. An appropriate space strictly according to the FIVB Medical and Anti-Doping Regulations shall be provided.
  - i. Sampling room shall be cleaned and disinfected every time after each test.
  - ii. All rooms shall be cleaned and disinfected before the arrival of the next group of players.
- b. Anti-doping staff shall provide a negative RT-PCR testing result and shall also observe the COVID-19 rules of the tournament.

#### **11. Opening ceremony**

It shall be limited to the Team representatives. The presence of the Organizers and of any media representatives shall be limited to the strict necessary number.

#### **12. Awarding ceremony**

It shall be limited to the Team representatives. The presence of the Organizers and of any media representatives shall be limited to the strict necessary number.

### **V. Medical Protocol and procedure to be applied/implemented in case of suspicion/positive case of COVID-19 during the competition**

**Dedicated local medical staff shall be responsible for dealing with any COVID-19 suspected/positive case.**

- a. If a close contact with a COVID-19 positive case is detected (being within 1 meter of a COVID-19 infected person for >15 minutes or having direct physical

contact), the decision on the further procedures shall be taken by the FIVB Medical Delegate (if present) in agreement with the Organizer's Covid-19 Officer. If FIVB Medical Delegate at the tournament is not present, the decision is to be made by a designated representative of the Organizer.

- i. Strict quarantine rules are not recommended, and quarantine shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. The final decision has to be made by the FIVB Medical Delegate (if present) or by FIVB Technical Delegate after consultation with the Organizer's Covid-19 Officer and the Local Medical Staff.
  - ii. In case of the adoption of double rooms in the hotels, the quarantine shall be limited to the roommate and not involve the whole team.
  - iii. Daily antigen tests shall be conducted in all other players and staff of the respective Team.
- b. Antigen screening shall be performed *ex officio* in all participants who develop any symptoms suggesting COVID-19 as well as in all situations considered uncertain. Upon a negative result, a RT-PCR test shall then be performed, and the concerned individual shall be isolated until the respective result is obtained - until the outset to the final test result such person shall be considered as being sick.
- c. All suspected cases of COVID-19 have to be reported to both the Organizer's COVID-19 Officer and the FIVB Medical Delegate (if present) by the Teams COVID-19 Officer in order to proceed according to the tournament/local/FIVB regulations.
- i. Dedicated services are responsible for further testing and medical procedures.
  - ii. A detailed epidemiological interview needs to be performed in each case.
- d. In case that a positive COVID-19 incident is confirmed, the stricter rule regarding quarantine and isolation shall be applied: either the domestic rules or the FIVB Regulations, if stricter.
- e. In case of a positive test within a Team, the Organizer's COVID-19 Officer shall track all possible close contacts to the infected person and shall as soon as possible report the outcome to both the Organizer's Covid-19 Officer and the FIVB Medical Delegate (if present).

## **VI. Sanctions for non-compliance with recommendations**

Any person who doesn't comply with the COVID-19 Protocol (Teams, Organizers, Officials or Journalists, e.g., refusing to wear face masks when required) shall be immediately suspended from the competition and placed in quarantine. An appropriate testing procedure on SARS-CoV-2 shall also be performed.

## **VII. References**

1. FIVB Medical and Anti-Doping Regulations 2021
2. Stanford COVID-19 Guide, January 2021
3. Covid-19 Concept and Guidelines for EHF European Club Competitions - Version 1
4. CEV Competitions Hygiene Guidelines updated on 11.12.2020