



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ATHLETICS ADMINISTRATIONS  
OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

# RETURN TO TRAINING



JUNE 2020

Guidance on Safe Return to Training for  
Track and Field Athletes



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# A Message from the President

Dear Members,

As President, I take this opportunity to thank you, the public for your patience during these unusual times that we are experiencing along with the rest of the world. I also extend my appreciation for your continued commitment and dedication to ensure that your fitness levels remain at competition standard as the levels of creativity that have been adapted by both coaches and athletes have been commendable whilst still maintaining the regulations implemented by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT).

With respect to our sport, which has been affected like many other sports worldwide, the following guidelines have been suggested to assist coaches, athletes and members to make informed decisions upon return to training eventually leading to competition. Diversification of your approach is encouraged while observing all the protocols as outlined by the health professionals such as washing of hands, wearing masks and physical distancing, in our commitment to work alongside Government in preventing the spread of the virus.

The National Association of Athletics Administrations (NAAA) has been and will continue its communication trust with our valued stakeholders, the sporting governing bodies and the public as this unprecedented situation evolves. It is understood that information and guidelines may change as new information on the virus is realized, however, Government regulations should always be adhered to especially when returning to any form of training and should be adapted where needed. It is therefore responsibility of all to abide by the policies and procedures designated and to review information provided by the following information sources:

- The Ministry of Health of T&T (MOH) [www.health.gov.tt](http://www.health.gov.tt)
- The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs (MSYA) [www.msya.gov.tt](http://www.msya.gov.tt)
- The Ministry of National Security (MNS) [www.nationalsecurity.gov.tt](http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.tt)

The NAAA keeps as priority the health and safety of its athletes, coaches, members and stakeholders and we will address any new developments as it becomes available.

I trust that you and your families continue to keep well and safe.

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## **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

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## ***“General Overview”***

The following persons should NOT attend practice or training venues:-

- i. **Any person experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 which includes (fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, headache or shortness of breath). If these symptoms begin while at the training venue, the individual should leave immediately and contact their physician or visit the nearest health facility. If tested positive, contact must be immediately established with the club/coach to ascertain traceability all persons are asked to comply with the MOH’s procedures/policy with respect to COVID-19;**
- ii. **Any person who has been told to self-isolate at home;**
- iii. **Any person who lives in a home or has been in contact with someone with symptoms of COVID-19;**
- iv. **Any person who lives in a home or has been in contact with someone who has been told to self-isolate at home for fourteen (14) days;**
- v. **Any person who has arrived in Trinidad and Tobago from outside of the country within the last fourteen (14) days;**

### **1. CLUBS/COACHES OPERATING IN A NEW TRAINING ENVIRONMENT**

- i. **Check all guidance that has been published by the GORTT, especially concerning social distancing and hygiene and any athlete specific guidance.**
- ii. **Be aware guidance can change quickly and more restrictive rules may be applied in the future, so please refer to the GORTT’s websites regularly.**
- iii. Check with MSYA (SPORTT) when planning to use a facility that they coordinate.
- iv. Check directly with your Athletic Club on their policy for club activity.
- v. Ensure all contact information and or consent forms are up to date.
- vi. **Coaches must ensure they have the permission/agreement of the responsible parent or guardian of an athlete who is under the age of 18 to coach that athlete.**
- vii. Have an emergency or safety plan prepared in the event of an emergency,
- viii. At this time if possible, recommend that parents or spectators not attend training sessions ,
- ix. **Frequently sanitize or wash your hands before and after training sessions,**
  - x. Refrain from touching your face, eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
  - xi. Do not shake hands, high five or embrace.
  - xii. Do not share food, drinks, utensils, water bottles, towels or personal items.
  - xiii. Wherever possible use your own equipment.
  - xiv. Be responsible and clean any equipment before and after training sessions.
- xv. **DO NOT TRAIN IN A FACE MASK.**
- xvi. **Be aware of COVID-19 symptoms**
  - a. Fever
  - b. Chills
  - c. Cough/ Barking Cough/croup
  - d. Shortness of Breath
  - e. Sore throat/ Difficulty swallowing

- f. Runny nose/Congested nose
- g. Loss of taste or smell
- h. Pink eye
- i. Headache
- j. Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain
- k. Muscle aches
- l. Extreme Tiredness
- m. Falling down often

## 2. MINIMIZING RISK: MANAGING SCHEDULES AND TEAM TRAINING SESSIONS

In response to COVID-19 clubs/coaches should adjust to the new normal:-

- i. The NAAA will not be imposing a limit to the number of participants that can be at a facility at any given time due to the diverse nature of training facilities. **Clubs should contact the MSYA (SPORTT) to determine the appropriate capacity levels within the facility/space considering:**
  - a. **Social distancing**
  - b. **Coach capacity**
  - c. **Site access**
  - d. **Access to toilets etc.**
- ii. Coaches should be prepared to adhere to the six-foot social distancing measures as defined by the Public Health Ordinance;
- iii. Ensure permission is granted to coach athletes below the age of eighteen (18) by the responsible parent/guardian;
- iv. Implement alternate home workout plans for those athletes that may stay at home or are not feeling well
- v. Remind athletes that their health and safety and those around them are of the utmost importance;
- vi. Ensure athletes report symptoms and seek clearance from a registered medical practitioner prior to returning to training;
- vii. Avoid training in large groups and allow for extra time in between training sessions for the cleaning of surfaces and equipment;
- viii. Training may be required on the proper use of PPE including masks, setting up of physical space with pylons, cones, taped or marked/painted barriers etc.;
- ix. Implementation of an attendance process at every practice to help with tracking, tracing and quarantine if a case is discovered after the fact;
- x. Maintain a contact data bases which should include (coaches, athletes, parents, club personnel etc.);
- xi. Limit the number of persons in a group and be cautious not to increase numbers too quickly to mitigate transmission;
- xii. Ensure hygiene measures are implemented and upheld;
- xiii. Special considerations should be communicated for transitional periods between training groups when overlap and crowding is more likely to occur as well as if there are any training restrictions with regard to shared training spaces;

### 3. FACILITY & EQUIPMENT: CLEANING AND SANITATION PROCEDURES

- i. The NAAA recommends for **equipment such as rakes, measuring tapes, should be managed by dedicated individuals for a particular session and cleaned between one athlete's series of jumps or between sessions;**
- ii. Athletes should arrive at their scheduled time for training and leave as soon as it is completed;
- iii. All surfaces and equipment (starting blocks, throwing equipment, hurdles, medicine balls, etc.) should be cleaned regularly with germicide (i.e. anti-fungal, anti-bacterial, and anti-viral) cleaner to prevent the growth of microbes which have the potential to spread the disease;
- iv. Appropriate cleaning and sanitization supplies should be kept on hand including disinfectant, hand sanitizer, paper towels, disinfectant wipes, spray bottles, cloth towels, rags and sponges. If cloth towels are rags are being used, they should not be shared;
- v. Non-essential equipment should be removed from the training area and stored to minimize cleaning surfaces. Cleaning and sanitation procedures should also be extended to restrooms, exercise mats, water stations etc.;
- vi. Coaches, athletes and club personnel should be educated on hygiene and sanitation;
- vii. Keep frequently used doors open where appropriate to avoid recurrent contamination of doorknobs and high touch points;
- viii. It is recommended for Clubs and/or unattached coaches to ensure that facilities have posted appropriate signage outside/in the facility;
- ix. It is recommended for Clubs and/or unattached coaches to hold training in outdoor venues;

### 4. TRAINING SAFETY: RISK FACTORS FOLLOWING PERIODS OF INACTIVITY

After periods of inactivity athletes are especially vulnerable to exertional injuries. Coaches should consider the training level of each athlete as well as environmental and external factors in determining the appropriate course for training. During COVID-19 many athletes trained in small at home spaces coaches are advised to:

- i. Use their best evidence based and consensus based judgment and avoid overtraining.
- ii. Have three (3) training sessions per week with one to days of recovery sessions should be considered following the prolonged period of inactivity.
- iii. Focus on reestablishing dynamic movement patterns to decrease the likelihood of delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS) as well as loses in mobility and flexibility.
- iv. Implement a systematic and progressive dynamic warm up, lasting 10-20 minutes in length. This is suggested as it is may be well suited for drilling sprint mechanics, improving mobility and range of motion, and reestablishing a cardiovascular base while preparing the body for athletic activity and reducing the likelihood of injury.
- v.

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## 5. OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Coaches are impactful in the lives of athletes and play a vital role in helping their teams adjust back to training and competition. However before considering training, supporting the primary needs of athletes is most important. This includes helping athletes get back on a regular schedule, which includes, sleeping habits, waking up, meals, commuting and in some instances academic responsibilities.

It is understood that most coaches and athletes have never experienced this level of uncertainty towards their sport and whether their upcoming seasons will occur. Recognizing COVID-19 has been a stressful and uncertain time for many individuals and coaches is an important perspective. Working to ensure the utmost precautions for athlete safety the health and wellness of all coaches and their members must also be made a priority.

## 6. HIGHER RISK ATHLETES

**Master athletes, athletes with disabilities and vulnerable athletes should read this guidance document and follow any medical guidelines they have been given about ensuring good health and welfare.**

**The NAAA recommends that they visit the MSYA website for further information.**

## ***“Event Specific Guidelines”***

### **TRACK (Sprints, Hurdles, Distance)**

- i. Do not train in a face mask;
- ii. Train in an outdoor area to ensure physical distancing can be maintained;
- iii. Try keeping 1 lane apart when on the track;
- iv. Use staggered starts when doing intervals/repeats;
- v. Limit the use of equipment that cannot be thoroughly cleaned before another use;
- vi. Designate persons for set up/take down of equipment (eg. Hurdles), ensure gloves are used or frequent washing of hands;
- vii. If starting blocks are limited they must be cleaned by the athlete before and after sessions;

### **THROWS (Javelin, Discus, Shot put, Hammer)**

- i. Do not train in a face mask;
- ii. Train in an outdoor area to ensure physical distancing can be maintained;
- iii. Athletes should retrieve their own throwing implements;
- iv. Personal aides like gloves, wrist straps, chalk, tape should not be shared between athletes
- v. Limit the use of equipment that cannot be thoroughly cleaned before another athlete can use it;
- vi. Designate persons for set up/take down of equipment (eg. toe boards, brooms, wrenches etc.), ensure gloves are used or frequent washing of hands;

### **JUMPS**

- i. Do not train in a face mask;
- ii. Train in an outdoor area to ensure physical distancing can be maintained;
- iii. Long Jump and Triple Jump pits should be fully cleaned (including turning and raking of the sand) before and after each individual athlete;
- iv. Equipment such as rakes, measuring tapes, should be managed by dedicated individuals for a particular session and cleaned between one athlete’s series of jumps or between sessions;
- v. High Jump mats should be cleaned in line with Government guidance before and after each individual athlete/user;
- vi. Pole Vault mats should be cleaned in line with Government guidance before and after each individual athlete/user;
- vii. If sharing, poles should be re-gripped before use and any part of the pole outside of the grip should be cleaned before use by another athlete;
- viii. Bars should be cleaned before use managed by dedicated individuals for a particular session and cleaned between sessions;



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- ix. Coaches are encouraged to be creative around specific drills and other activities to train athletes during this phase in preparation for when this equipment can be used in a later phase.
  - x. Ensure there is only one (1) athlete on the runway at a time;
  - xi. Use cones on the sides of the runway to visually remind athletes of the distance that should be maintained while waiting to use the runway;

#### OFF TRACK COACHING (Road Running)

- i. Do not train in a face mask
- ii. Coaches or athletes running in a public space other than a track and field facility should adhere to all restrictions that may be in place in a public space;
- iii. Coaches or athletes should ensure they carry out standard safety procedures (e.g. phones, route planning etc.) when accessing open public spaces
- iv. If running in a group maintain physical distancing

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## DISCLAIMER

This guidance document applies to Trinidad and Tobago only and are based on those detailing the use of public spaces, outdoor activity and exercise. It is the responsibility of each individual to make a risk assessment based on their local environment and adjust their plans when activities do not go as expected.

**We recommend that you stay up to date with government guidance at all times. The GORTT's guidance supersedes all advice given by the governing body and must be followed at all times.**

The safety and wellbeing of athletes, runners, coaches and the wider community is at the heart of any guidance that NAAA is distributing. Please note that the subject matter covered is in no way exhaustive and the material does not stand on its own nor is intended to be relied upon as a substitute for obtaining advice from the GORTT.