



SOUTH AFRICAN BIATHLON ASSOCIATION SUID-AFRIKAANSE TWEKAMP VERENIGING

'A truly South African family sport.'

Provincial Biathlon Management Committees, parents and athletes

Sportsmans Warehouse SA Biathlon Championships 2020

On Sunday evening, 15 March 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa declared a national state of disaster in South Africa over the coronavirus / Covid-19 outbreak and announced the continent's most drastic measures yet to curb its spread. Amongst others, schools were closed and public gatherings of more than 100 people banned. The SA Biathlon Executive were left with no alternative to inform all provinces, parents and athletes that the SA Biathlon Championships scheduled for 20 – 21 March 2020 in Oudtshoorn had to be cancelled. Communication between committee members as well as in depth discussions with the main sponsors started on Friday 13 March when the extend of the pandemic became obvious and possible implications for sporting and other meetings became evident. Eden Biathlon was also in contact with Ms Anroux Marais, the Western Cape Minister of Culture and Sport. The decision, however, left the Biathlon family in South Africa saddened - athletes, parents and committee members have put in so much hard work to perform and organise the best SA Biathlon Championships. Therefor the committee want to bring you up to date with the situation.

We had enquiries regarding a postponement rather than cancellation. Currently, all sporting activities have been put on hold – schools do not even train. This may extend well beyond April and it will not be possible to confirm any date. Most provinces cannot practice swimming from May to September – and in September, the new season will start. Most sporting events were cancelled – and those who opted to postpone may also cancel soon. The SA Aquatics Southern Level 3 meeting in Oudtshoorn this week was also cancelled. Postponement will just create new expectations and possible fresh disappointment. The winter sport codes of schools – who also had cancellations for the autumn holiday tournaments, will have to catch up on their lost programmes. Finding dates will be a nightmare. A suggestion to stage a scaled down ('budget') version of the

President: Blackie Swart
Mobile: 082 409 8820
Email: hendrik.swart@westerncape.gov.za

Secretary: Johan Ferreira
Mobile: 073 032 5252
Email: secretary@sabiathlon.co.za

Vice President: Gerhard Louwrens
Mobile: 082 808 1106
Email: gerhard.louwrens@pioneerfoods.co.za

Treasurer: Ananda Blignaut-de Waal
Mobile: 082 642 1393
Email: ananda.blignaut@gmail.com

championships – without big opening ceremonies and a gala dinner – was also considered, but not regarded as the standard we would like to display at our prestige event of the year, together with all the aforementioned reasons. Under the circumstances, it was thus the best possible decision to cancel and this was supported by most members.

Colleagues, I also need to confirm an important notice, which we almost forgot about: The Annual General Meeting of the SA Biathlon Association, scheduled for Friday 20 March 2020, is also cancelled. This since it is linked to the SA Championships and it is envisaged that the additional costs of attending this meeting and probably lack of a quorum will prevent it from being constituted. The constitution does not deal with such a situation and we decided to replace it with a Special General Meeting to be conducted in electronic format. We will finalise the arrangements as soon as possible and confirm the agenda and format.

To offset the negative implications, also for Oudtshoorn who experienced the massive blow of the KKNK being cancelled, the SA Manco deliberated and, with the agreement of Eden and Griekwas, decided that the 2021 SA Biathlon Championships will be hosted by Eden Biathlon in Oudtshoorn! This will be some consolation for Oudtshoorn and the Local Organising Committee. They just need to extend their planning! It will not be easy though, but they have a solid team that will be able to pick up the loose strings again and forge a spectacular event! The 2022 SA Championships will then be held in Kimberley, hosted by the Griekwas Biathlon Committee. Thank you to Deon who kindly agreed and to Stephanie, Dave and the Eden LOC who are prepared to extend their tenure. This might also help with some of the challenges that some provinces and parents apparently experience with cancellation of accommodation. Some establishments repaid deposits or payments (in full or partly), but others indicated that they cannot do so. In most of the latter cases, they indicated that they may provide vouchers that can be redeemed at a later stage. Hence, it can be used for the 2021 SA Championships in Oudtshoorn. This will be a very positive gesture of support towards the town and community to help them to recur losses. We can then also finalise our opening of the Biathlon Museum at the Highgate Ostrich Farm. We are sure that the community and our sponsors will be supportive of our decision.

One of the most sensitive and complex issues that we must deal with, is the finances. A lot of expenses had to be incurred by the host province as well as the SA body, which cannot be recovered. Entry fees for cancelled sport events are usually forfeited. The Eden LOC and the SA Manco will carefully audit the income and expenditure and determine a possible refund. This includes the cost of extra function tickets bought by parents. Unfortunately, Dave van der Walt has been

admitted to hospital and will undergo another operation on Friday – a recurring problem with his foot (We wish Dave well with a speedy recovery). If all goes well, he will be discharged this weekend. A Manco representative will meet with Dave and the LOC by the end of next week (depending on Dave's wellness) to finalise the financial statements. Our Treasurer will also confirm all other expenses and we will then consider the presentations for final adjudication. I will endeavour to confirm the final decision by the end of March 2020. The statements will be added to our audit and everything will be open to scrutiny, availed to provinces and presented at the next AGM. I want to ensure you that I will handle this professionally and to benefit all stakeholders, including our national and provincial bodies and parents. All the competition shirts and special 'Under Armour' shirts ordered and paid for, will be couriered to all provinces. Please confirm the delivery address of the province with Dave van der Walt at Davesusvdw@gmail.com / davesus@telkomsa.net and then please help with the distribution to your athletes. We will also send the newspapers printed and prepared for the meeting with this consignment.

One last matter of importance. I know nothing can make up for the disappointment that our athletes experienced. Please keep this in mind and think of ways to recognize those biathletes who were selected and who excelled at your provincial and interprovincial meetings and trials. I know that each province has specific criteria for the awarding of colours. As the cancellation was due to a worldwide disaster and pandemic outside our ambit or control, please consider awarding colours to the biathletes selected for your team and inform their schools accordingly. This might soften the blow and motivate them to work harder for the 2021 season and SA Championships in Oudtshoorn!

Thank you for your patience and understanding in these trying times. We will keep you updated in due course.

Kindest



Blackie Swart

President: SA Biathlon

19 March 2020