

## **Protocol Development for fully vaccinated asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 positive participants in Professional Golf tournaments.**

### **1. Background**

An amendment of the Regulations, government notice R1715, to the Disaster Management Act was published in the Government Gazette no. 45855 on February 01, 2022

Regulation 7 (1) was amended as follows:

“Any person who is a confirmed laboratory positive COVID-19 case and is asymptomatic is not required to isolate”

Professional Golf Tournaments resumed from August 2020 and have been safely played during the peaks of the four COVID-19 waves in South Africa and countries throughout the world.

Research conducted throughout two seasons on the DP World Tour Golf, showed no evidence of transmission on the Field of Play, but rather from shared accommodation, shared transport, and shared indoor space.

The observations by scientists during and after the Omicron wave were that, despite the contagiousness of the variant, fully vaccinated persons who became infected, were in the main asymptomatic or experienced minor symptoms.

Professional athletes are currently withdrawn from participation when a positive test result is returned and are not allowed to participate in a tournament.

The withdrawal of an asymptomatic, healthy athlete due to a positive COVID-19 test has resulted in mental health concerns to the point where the athletes experience anxiety symptoms when tested because feeling healthy does not guarantee participation. The determination for participation is the outcome of a SARS-CoV-2 Antigen/PCR test.

The nature of the sport of golf lends itself to implement a protocol for positive participants being an outdoor sport where physical distancing from other persons is possible.

The Sunshine Tour/ Challenge Tour/ DP World Tour have developed the protocol below which will allow for the participation of fully vaccinated athletes and caddies who are asymptomatic but tested positive at its Tournaments

### **2. Protocol Development**

#### **2.1 Risk assessment and Risk mitigating processes.**

##### **2.1.1 Health risk and Vaccination status.**

Only fully vaccinated participants can be enrolled in the Asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 Positive Participant Protocol.

##### **2.2.2 Protection of Personal Health Information (PHI)**

The positive participant must give informed consent for his/her SARS-CoV-2 status to be revealed to, his/her caddie, other participants in the group in which he/she plays, and the Rules Officials assigned to the Tournament

### 2.2.3 Areas/situations where physical distancing criteria are stipulated

#### (i) Warm-up areas

Driving range and practice greens.

The positive participant **MUST** maintain physical distancing of > 3 metres from any other individual when on the practice range

The positive participant may only use the practice green when physical distancing of > 3 metres is possible.

#### (ii) On the course

Golf courses span over approximately 36 hectares and there are only two areas on the course where the golfers congregate which are addressed below.

##### ➤ Teeing area

The positive participant must ensure that physical distancing of > 5 m is maintained at all times between him/her and the fellow participants. In order to achieve this the positive status of the participant must be divulged to the fellow participants to assist the positive participant in maintaining this distance

##### ➤ Greens/ Putting areas

The positive participant must ensure that physical distancing of > 5 m is maintained at all times between him/her and the fellow participants. In order to achieve this the positive status of the participant must be divulged to the fellow participants to assist the positive participant in maintaining this distance

#### (iii) **Interaction during a round where physical distancing will be less than 5 metres**

##### ➤ Rules Officials

The positive participant's SARS-CoV-2 status must be shared with the Rules Officials assigned to the tournament. Should the positive participant need a ruling the participant and the Rules Official must adhere strictly to the NPI requirements with the additional precaution that physical distancing of not less than 3 metres are maintained during this process.

##### ➤ Caddie of Positive Player.

The caddie must be informed of the SARS-CoV-2 status of the player. The player's caddie **MUST** be fully vaccinated to continue with his/her duties.

The caddie has the option to elect not to continue with his/her duties. Should the caddie not be vaccinated or do not wish to continue, the player can use a different caddie

The caddie and the player must maintain a physical distancing of >5 metres except during the period of shot preparation on the course.

During this period the caddie must wear his/her mask. The duration of the interaction during shot preparation where physical distancing of < 5 metres will occur may not be exceed 2 minutes.

➤ Player of Positive Caddie

The player must be informed of the COVID-19 status of the caddie.

A fully vaccinated player has the option to elect not to continue using the caddie. An unvaccinated player must select a new caddie

The caddie and the player must maintain a physical distancing of >5 metres except during the period of shot preparation on the course.

During this period the caddie must wear his/her mask. The duration of the interaction during shot preparation where physical distancing of < 5 metres will occur may not be exceed 2 minutes.

➤ Score recording

Score recording is normally set-up indoors and a positive participant may not enter any closed environments

Alternative methods to submit scores such as an electronic copy of the signed scorecard to be submitted and telephonically verification the score should be considered. The Tournament Director to communicate to the CMO/CCO the procedure to be followed at the event.

## **Protocol for fully vaccinated asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 positive participants in Professional Golf tournaments.**

Should a participant in a professional golf tournament return a positive Antigen/PCR test result and is assessed to be asymptomatic and physically unaffected by the infection, the participant will be given the option to follow the Protocol for fully vaccinated asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 positive participants and continue with participation in the event.

The Medical Officer/Compliance Officer is responsible to ensure strict adherence to the protocol and responsible to obtain the informed consent as required for the sharing of PHI

### 1. Process

- Positive test result

Should a Participant in a professional golf event tests positive using an Antigen/PCR test the symptomatology needs to be assessed and should the participant be asymptomatic he/she will be allowed to participate in the event.

- The Chief Medical Officer (CMO)/Covid Compliance Officer (CCO) must inform the participant of the requirements for further participation and obtain the informed consent from the participant that his/her SARS-CoV-2 positive status may be shared with selected persons in the event

### 2. Protocol requirements:

- Participant must be vaccinated
- Participant must give informed consent that his/her SARS-CoV-2 status may be shared with pre-determined individuals
- May not share a room
- Must self-drive
- May only commute between their accommodation and the tournament venue
- May not enter any closed environments while at the course.
- Must ensure that > 3 metre physical distancing is maintained on the practice range and the practice green
- Must adhere to the physical distancing requirements of > 5 m while on the course, except
  - during a Ruling where the Rules Official must adhere strictly to the NPI requirements with the additional precaution that physical distancing of not less than 3 metres is maintained during this process.
  - during the shot preparation with his/her caddie. During this period the caddie is required to wear his/her mask. The duration of the interaction during shot preparation where physical distancing of < 5 metres will occur may not be exceed 2 minutes.

### 3. Sharing of positive status of participant during the event.

The CMO/CCO must inform the TD the positive case and clarify

- the process of communication with relevant role players who need to be informed.
- the process to be followed for scoring and score recording

### 3.1 At the start.

Verbatim to participants in the positive participant's group by CMO/CCO or alternative

- If the positive participant is a player:

XXXX tested positive for SARS-CoV-2/ COVID-19 and must adhere to the following protocol to ensure a safe environment for all

- Maintain Physical distancing of > 5 metres from other members in the group
- He/she is not required to wear a mask
- He/she is not allowed to exchange scorecards
- We request that you assist the player to maintain his/her physical distancing especially on the teeing area and on the greens

- If the positive participant is a Caddie:

XXX caddie of player YYY tested positive for SARS-CoV-2/ COVID-19 and must adhere to the following protocol

- Physical distancing of >5 metres from other members in the group
- When necessary to touch the flag stick or rake will sanitise prior and post touching
- Will wear a mask when < 5 m from any person on the course

### 3.2 Communication to Officials, Scorers, Starter on the course

XXXX on the course in match no YYY tested positive for SARS-CoV-2/ COVID-19.

In terms of the ST protocol for fully vaccinated asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 positive participants he/she is allowed to play/caddie

The following NPI protocol to be followed by officials when interacting with the player

- Official must wear a mask at all times when interacting with the player
- Maintain physical distancing of > 3 metres when interacting with the player
- Minimise interaction time with the player.

Note: should duration of Interacting with the player exceeds 15 minutes the CMO/CCO must be informed.

This protocol will remain in place until a negative Antigen/PCR test result is returned. The CMO/CCO is responsible to inform the TD of the change in the status of the participant.