



Return to competition guidance v2

Updated 8.12.2020

Virtus - World Intellectual Impairment Sport

Virtus is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation | Mailbox 13, Alison Business Centre, 39-40 Alison Crescent, Sheffield, Great Britain, S2 1AS.
Registered in England No: 1173901 | Virtus is a recognised member of the International Paralympic Committee.

INTRODUCTION

This guidance has been published by Virtus as the organisation prepares to resume international competition in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like many sporting organisations across the world, Virtus wants to see a return to competition as soon as possible. However, we are committed to ensuring this can only happen in a safe environment for athletes, volunteers, officials, spectators and event staff.

This document sets out the guidelines Virtus will use to ensure events are delivered safely, that we can monitor and evaluate readiness, and the role and responsibility of member organisations/teams.

Please note that as the pandemic is an evolving situation, it may be necessary to update this guidance at short notice and without prior warning, in response to the ever-changing legal and good practice guidelines in place around the world. In particular, the guidance will be updated to reflect the changes enabled through the roll-out of a vaccination programme.

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. In providing this guidance, the following key principles apply at all times:
 - a. The final decision to enter an athlete into a Virtus event and overall responsibility for their safety at all times from leaving their home country until returning to that country remains with the Virtus Member Organisation and their nominated team manager. Member Organisations should use all available information to make an informed decision regarding entry to a Virtus competition.
 - b. The legal requirements and laws within the host nation in respect of event safety take precedence over all Virtus rules and policies. Normal event operations may be amended or altered to satisfy local laws and these could vary even within a nation and at short notice.
 - c. A key responsibility for any event organiser is spectator safety. To minimise risk, Virtus has determined that there will be NO spectators at any Virtus event (excluding team and event officials present) until further notice. In general this also includes family members who are not part of the team however LOC's may choose to allow family members to attend where safety measures can be implemented effectively including, but not limited to, a negative COVID-19 test taken no more than 72 hours before attending and isolation on any symptoms.
 - d. Quarantine rules (either entering the country of competition or return home) are additional to this policy and should be considered by the Member Organisation.
 - e. At all times, Virtus reserves the right to cancel an event where it is felt that the risk remains too high. This decision can only be taken by the Governing Board after advice from the Medical Committee.

EVENT SAFETY PROCESS

In the planning and delivery of the event, the following guidance should be observed:

Pre-event

- a. All nations who bid to host a Virtus event must complete the COVID-19 risk assessment as part of their bid submission. The risk assessment will be considered by the Virtus Medical Committee who will make a recommendation to the Governing Board as part of the bid approval process. The LOC should use the assessment to highlight areas of risk and to outline their proposed mitigation measures.

- b. All LOC's will be obligated to nominate a Medical Officer who will be responsible for overseeing all COVID-19-safe measures within the event and for liaison with Virtus. Medical Officers should be independent of the LOC or competing teams and must be a qualified medical practitioner.
- c. Virtus will work with the winning host/LOC to continue to oversee necessary mitigation and safety measures. It is acknowledged that these will change over time, and at short notice, so measures must be made on the basis of 'known and reasonably expected factors'.
- d. LOC's should ensure that, so far as is practical, all bookings for accommodations, transport and other event logistics should be flexible and refundable in the event of cancellation.
- e. Virtus Member Organisations who are planning an entry to competition are advised not to book any non-refundable/amendable travel or commit any other expenditure that cannot be recovered through refund or insurance.
- f. All events will be delivered in line with the sports IF guidance, which may suggest quarantine on arrival, COVID-19 tests on arrival into a country or a COVID-19 test no more than 72 hours before travelling, and the result must be negative. Anyone testing positive must not travel.
- g. As part of the event information pack, LOC's must publish a clear cancellation/withdrawal policy regarding event entry fees (including deposits) in the event of cancellation.
- h. LOC's should also publish details of any requirements or obligations on teams, for example a negative COVID-19 test undertaken no more than 72 hours before travelling.
- i. LOC's should ensure that entrants have appropriate travel and medical insurance in place, and including cover for COVID-19 risk.
- j. From 6 months to one month prior to an event, the LOC will produce a monthly report and then a weekly report ahead of the arrival of delegations which will contain an updated COVID-19 risk assessment for consideration by the Virtus Medical Committee. On each occasion the Medical Committee will determine either 'green' or 'red' status:
 - (i) Green status – the event may go ahead subject to the LOC continuing to meet COVID-19 safety rules and regulations and no substantive change to external factors including local legal restrictions. Note that laws, rules and regulations can change quickly and without notice.
 - (ii) Red status – the event may not go ahead as the LOC has not demonstrated that adherence local laws, local mitigation factors or some other aspect of event safety is not considered sufficient or achievable.

Competition time

Note: In this context, 'competition time' includes all transportation and accommodation arrangements as well as competition and training venues.

- a. All LOC staff and officials, volunteers and (on their arrival to the country) all team staff and athletes must be made aware of and subsequently observe any local laws and guidance in respect of social distancing.
- b. Attendance at the Competition should be restricted to those individuals that are essential to the delivery of the Competition.
- c. The LOC must advise the Team Manager of all risk and mitigation plans on arrival
- d. Virtus and the LOC retain the right to remove any individuals from the competition whose actions are viewed to breach any health and safety protocols (COVID-19 related or otherwise)

- e. Appropriate risk mitigation through screening of individuals prior to entry into the Competition Venue must be implemented. This may be through the use of COVID-19 questionnaires and/or testing in line with local government guidance.
- f. LOC's should be prepared to manage any cultural, language, religious or vulnerability considerations associated with COVID-19 regulations and guidance, as well as any medical requirements which international attendees may have.
- g. LOC's should have any PPE (equipment and training) that will be required for safe management of the event, particularly in the event of an injury or need for medical treatment.
- h. The LOC should have a GP/doctor available for the duration to respond to anyone who develops symptoms.
- i. The LOC should have access to rapid COVID-19 tests for the duration of the event and be prepared to manage any need to isolate groups/individuals (including where this prevents them from returning home) and follow local COVID-19 testing and reporting protocols.