

Dear Friends

As we approach the 10th week of the Lock Down in response to the COVID – 19 pandemic, we thought it prudent to bring you up to date with developments on the Masters Hockey front. We trust that you and your loved ones have kept well and have been able to use the time fruitfully. If the pandemic has taught us one thing, it is that things can change rapidly and our success in dealing with it depends on our agility in adapting to changed circumstances. Many people have used the time at home with loved ones to re-assess their goals or just to make the most of the precious opportunity to invest in the most important relationships. We hope that you have been able to find the positive in this situation and to make the most of it. Knowing our hockey culture, we do not expect anything less.

SA MASTERS HOCKEY IPT 2020

We refer to our earlier communique announcing the postponement of the SA Masters IPT due to the uncertainty created by the spread of the COVID – 19 virus in which we identified 5-8 November 2020 as the date for the tournament. We aim to start the first matches at 12h30 on Thursday, 5 November to allow teams to fly to Cape Town on Thursday morning in an effort to reduce the number of annual leave days required as well as to reduce the accommodation requirement. The finals are planned for Saturday late afternoon with Sunday earmarked as a travel day.

We remain committed to the tournament at this stage and believe that there is a real chance that the IPT may be able to go ahead. The recent implementation of alert level 3 with the limited re-introduction of sport activities is a very positive sign. SA Masters remain in constant contact with SA Hockey and we are guided by their approach in this regard. We remain on course to re-open registration in August 2020 with a final decision being made in September 2020.

Having said that, we have to acknowledge that we live in uncertain times and that we may have to cancel the tournament due to circumstances beyond our control such as government intervention or a lack of interest from teams due to changed circumstances. We therefore urge you take precautions in the booking of flights and/or accommodation to ensure that you are able to obtain a refund if necessary. We can commit that should the IPT be postponed, it shall remain in Cape Town in 2021, all things being equal.

WMH WORLD CUPS

The status quo remains as far as the three Masters World Cups planned for 2020 and postponed to 2021 are concerned. We remain in regular contact with World Masters Hockey and will advise of developments as they unfold. Although we still await finalization of the World Cups in Japan and Nottingham, we can confirm that the World Cup in Cape Town is scheduled for 18 – 27 September 2021. The eligibility for the 2021 tournaments will be determined with reference to a participant's age at 31 December 2020, if you qualify in an age group in 2020, that participant will be able to play in the 2021 tournament.

SAHA is at present negotiating with the relevant authorities pertaining to the return to training and/or competition. The Minister has announced a phased introduction of sport and we hope that our World Cup and World Masters Games squads shall be able to at least return to group training, sooner rather than later.

In conclusion, we know that everyone craves certainty and clarity in times like these and that people are rightly concerned about cost escalations, availability of flights, etc. We cannot predict whether these concerns will become a reality. We are unable to control those concerns at this stage and we have to focus on what we can control. The picture will become clearer in the foreseeable future and we shall then be able to take responsible decisions. We shall continue to monitor the situation and communicate timeously.

For the Love of the Game & Be Safe

**Reg Marais
President
SA Masters Hockey Association**



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