

# **LEN WATER POLO COMPETITIONS**

## ***SANITARY GUIDELINES***

# 1- PREAMBLE

This Protocol (the LEN guideline) sets out the framework of medical, sanitary and hygiene procedures together with the operations that are to be applied when staging LEN Water Polo competitions. The difficulty is to foresee how Covid-19 will evolve, either in terms of its epidemiology or in the nature of the countermeasures imposed by national governments, whilst it is almost impossible to establish a completely risk-free environment, the aim is to lower the risk as far as possible by applying current medical advices and best practices.

In order to minimize the risk to LEN competitions from COVID-19, precise preparations and on-site organisation is required. To large extent, the cooperation of the teams, their players, officials, technical staff, the referees, the venue staff and all those involved in the matches is crucial. Therefore LEN expects all parties to adhere to hygiene best practices both in the controlled match environments and in their personal day to day lives.

All precautions set out in this document must be strictly accepted by all those involved. Non-respect of such social norms could have serious consequences for the staging of international competitions.

The LEN Guideline does not contain any matters related to medical or operational requirements for a return to training by teams. It is the competence of the National Federations in coordination with the relevant local authorities.

The aim of this document is to set out a single medical and operational protocol applicable to competitive LEN Water Polo matches for senior club and national teams for men and women.

Given the overall situation and the regulatory conditions which may occur during in the coming months, the LEN guideline may be revided and adapted at any changes. The LEN guideline is subject to legal provisions and other orders issued by the competent local authorities in the various countries. Each national federation should inform LEN as soon as possible if any existing or new legislation may have an impact on how this protocol is applied.

# 1- PREAMBLE

The LEN Guideline sets out the necessary procedures for organising all LEN WP Competitions, focusing on matters such as the testing regime, teams and officials travel and hotel planning and the venue operations.

This means creating a protected and contained environment for team players and technical staff to provide them with a separated 'bubble' corridor for all movements into, within and out of the venue, and establish best practice principles for the protection and safety of all working staff involved in delivering the match. The aim is to minimize the amount of contacts between different groups involved in the match, to reduce the possibility of any cross-contagion between groups, and therefore to limit the number of people that may need to be tested.

The LEN Guideline includes medical and operational obligations for all parties taking part in organising LEN WP competitions. These obligations must be applied by each organiser when preparing venues, subject to any additional measures imposed by their local authorities. With the exception of those events for which LEN may be the direct organiser, the responsibility for implementing the requirements and guidelines set out in this document lies with the organiser.

If the games are to be played behind closed doors, no general public may be admitted to the venue. Only officials, people with a working function and accredited media/journalists will be allowed to access the venue.

The total number of people (teams, officials and working staff) permitted to be on the venue premises at one time may be limited depending on:

- local authority restrictions or limits applied to the event
- The level of the TV broadcast operation
- The space available to media

# 1- PREAMBLE

To ensure that the LEN guideline is properly implemented, each team taking part in LEN WP competitions must take the following measures:

Each team must appoint a **Medical Officer** (preferably the team doctor) who will ensure that the medical requirements are fulfilled and will liaise with a Testing service provider, as well as receiving all SARS-CoV-2-RNA test results and ensuring the sharing of the list of individuals negative results with LEN.

Each team must have a responsible person (**Team Manager**) for ensuring the travel, accommodation and general hygiene and social distancing measures are always respected.

Each organiser must appoint an English-speaking person responsible at the venue and during its operations (**Venue Manager**), whose responsibility will be to review the operational principles of the LEN guideline with the relevant local authorities, and to ensure that all the principles and appropriate hygiene measures are correctly implemented at the venue. This Venue Manager will apply a protocol to enter the venue and its controlled area that ensures that everyone entering the venue has their health and temperature checked daily.

The **LEN Delegates** responsible for the game will be, amongst other tasks, responsible overall for checking, that the LEN guideline and hygiene measures are implemented at the venue, and must review all entry procedures and the zoning concept and access protection at the venue. The LEN Delegate must report to LEN office any failure in the implementation of the safety and operational measures

## 2- MEDICAL PRINCIPLES

### Social distancing and hygiene principles

In general, social distancing is considered the most effective way to reduce the risk of transmitting the disease together with hygiene best practices such as regular hand-washing and prevention of droplets through protective face mask.

At all matches, a two metres social distance must be always respected, and in no case less than the guidance recommended by the local government.

Such strict distancing measures must be applied between the teams and officials as well as all other groups of persons involved at the venue.

However, a testing programme to increase security and confidence for everyone involved in a LEN game must be considered as follows.

### Pre competition testing

In view of the current pandemic circumstances, to safeguard the health of all persons involved in LEN Water Polo competitions and the general public, only those that have tested negative may be entitled to take part in the relevant competition match. Teams will be required to provide confirmation of a negative SARS-CoV-2-RNA test result – issued by a Testing provider for each person concerned – accompanied by a valid ID document, on arrival at the venue in order to be granted access to the venue. Any person not in possession of such a confirmation will not be allowed to enter the venue.

Therefore all members of a team (Group 1) as well as referees and officials (Group 2) that are not at that time undergoing a domestic RT-PCR testing regime are requested to undergo a RT-PCR testing 72 hours prior to their match in the relevant competition. Such testing must be organised by each club or national federations with an accredited testing institute.

All participants therefore will have to be tested before leaving their home country, with sample collection taking place according to the time required to organise the sample collection logistics, testing and deliver the results in the country in question. In principle the test results has to be delivered before teams, referees and officials leave from their home countries.

## 2- MEDICAL PRINCIPLES

Sample collection for local officials will take place in the match venue country. Tests must be arranged by the organisation responsible for appointing the person in question not earlier than 72 hours prior the match. This group of people must have a certificate from an accredited test institute confirming a negative SARS-CoV-2-RNA test result for presentation upon arrival at the venue.

Please note that an additional test may be necessary upon the arrival at the host city if required by the relevant local authorities. Please note that such results will in principle be delivered in 48 hours.

### Management of test results

If someone in Group 1 tests positive, the relevant local authorities must be informed as required. The team's doctor must be aware of the obligations required by the relevant local health authorities that need to be followed either by the team or the person in question. Teams must ensure that no person testing positive can travel to the match venue or take part in the match.

If anyone in Group 2 tests positive, the relevant local authorities must be informed as required. The national federation must be aware of the obligations required by the relevant local health authorities that need to be followed by the person in question and shall urgently inform LEN who will proceed with the replacement of that person.

It is recognised that those who have recovered from COVID-19 may still be at risk of delivering positive PCR test results, despite having no contagion risk nor virus symptoms.

In order to be allowed to take part at the competition all Participants who have verified confirmation that they have now recovered from the virus have to submit documentation of this to LEN, including the date of diagnosis of the virus, complete relevant medical history and two SARS-CoV-2-RNA negative tests according to the related health care regulation and taken within 14 days period (medical certificate issued in English). This must be provided at least one week before the team's next match. This information will then be analysed by the LEN Medical Committee which may provide recommendations to the team concerned and to LEN as to the possible steps to be taken.

However, such recommendations are strictly advisory and it will be the responsibility of the team to liaise with the competent local health authorities.

## 2- MEDICAL PRINCIPLES

### Restart of the competition

For the players who have had documented Covid-19 diagnosis, before to take part in the competition the following examination are recommended:

- CPX (Cardio pulmonary stress test)
- Doppler echocardiography
- 24 hours ECG Holter monitoring
- Complete Spirometry
- Hematologic examinations (Blood tests) – Blood count, ALT/AST ratio, Gamma-Glutamyl Transferase (GGT), Creatinine, Creatine Phosphokinase (CPK), Troponin, Lactate dehydrogenase (LDH), Prothrombin time / Partial thromboplastin time (PT/PTT + International normalized ratio, INR), Protein electrophoresis, D-dimer, Polymerase chain reaction (PCR), Ferritin, Interleukin-6 (IL-6), complete urine test
- CT-Scan for Covid-19

### Development of symptoms onsite

Anyone involved in a match who develops any symptoms indicative of a potential COVID-19 infection must immediately isolate themselves at the hotel and must contact the relevant local health authorities for guidance.

Key indicators of a COVID-19 infection include high fever, dry cough, tiredness, breathlessness or loss of sense of taste and/or smell.

A full list of potential indicator symptoms can be found here: [https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab\\_3](https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_3)

## 2- MEDICAL PRINCIPLES

### Swimming Pool

It is recognised that social distancing or other infection preventative measures may not be possible in all circumstances, not least between the opposite team players during a match.

Swimming pools are already environments considered quite healthy and if the usual hygienic sanitary measures according to the rules are respected, they should not be affected by any epidemic cases.

The virus responsible for COVID-19 is a virus with a fragile external lipid membrane. Typically viruses with such membrane are less stable in the environment and are more sensitive to oxidants, such as chlorine.

According to what is stated by the World Health Organization, the conventional methods utilised by a centralised water treatment systems that uses chlorine filtration and disinfection are deemed capable of inactivating the virus responsible for COVID-19.

Although the virus has been reported in river water, it has not been detected in drinking water and, based on the current evidence, the risk is very low for the water resources

It also reports that, for effective disinfection of the water, there should be a residual concentration of chlorine free of  $\geq 0.5$  mg / l.

As further confirmation, it has long been demonstrated that free chlorine above 0.5 mg / l ensures complete disactivation of SARS-CoV (from the same family of the virus that causes COVID-19).

In this regard, it is important to consider that the water to be used for the swimming pools must have the same requirements as for the water for human consumption (drinking water).

The above principles are in line with the opinion of the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that is the reference point in USA for the application of all measures in terms of prevention and control of diseases: "Conventional water treatment methods that use filtration and disinfection, like those in most of the municipal drinking water systems, should remove or inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19". There is no evidence that someone has contracted COVID-19 through drinking water.

Therefore, free chlorine concentrations between 0.8 and 1.5 mg / l in swimming pools seems largely capable of preventing the spread of COVID-19. Furthermore, the evaporation of chlorinated water could also reduce the risk of spreading a virus transmittable by air.

# 3- INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL PROCEDURES

## Team players and team staff

The following are requirements for teams when travelling:

- Use of masks in all public areas during travel
- Social distancing with anyone outside the group of players and technical staff who have been tested
- Regular use of hand sanitiser

Teams must also be prepared to comply with any SARS-CoV-2-RNA testing at the airport when required by the relevant local authorities.

The host team/organiser must facilitate the arrival and transfer of the visiting teams. This should include direct collection in a private bus avoiding public spaces where possible.

When possible, the return flight should take place immediately after the match.

For matches played in a tournament format, once teams have arrived on-site before their first match in the competition, they must remain on-site until after their respective last match in the competition. Teams are not permitted to leave the tournament venue for training camps, to take part in other matches or for any other reason.

## Team Delegation

A maximum of 10 people from the team's official delegation may attend the match. However if they are not part of the group tested, it is recommended that they stay in a separate hotel. However, if the same flight and hotel is used by both groups, the two groups must maintain social distancing and apply hygiene measures, particularly during the meals at the hotel.

These groups of people must always wear masks while present at the venue. They can only access the swimming pool when their respective team is competing.

# 3- INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL PROCEDURES

## LEN Referees and LEN Delegates

The LEN referees and LEN delegates must take care to maintain strict social distancing at all times. They must wear a protective face mask (for mouth and nose) for the total period of their journey whenever social distancing is not possible and use hand sanitiser regularly.

## Local transportation procedures

Team buses must be disinfected shortly before collecting the team. The bus driver should be equipped with an appropriate face protective mask and always remain at 2m from the team members (e.g. middle door to be used by players and staff to enter/leave the bus). The use of plexiglass to isolate the bus driver may be used as an alternative.

The local organiser is always responsible for providing transport for the LEN Delegates and referees.

This vehicle used must be thoroughly disinfected before collecting this group. The driver must also wear an appropriate face protective mask when in the transport vehicle, both with or without the delegates and referees.

# 3- INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL PROCEDURES

## Hotels

It is recommended that an exclusive hotel should be reserved for the sole use of the visiting teams during their stay (In the case of a tournament it is mandatory to have an exclusive hotel for all participants). If this is not possible, the visiting team must make arrangements to prevent any close contact between the team and other guests or staff. This should include all the necessary hygiene measures, such as:

- Private dining area
- Private access routes.
- Wearing of masks/ Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) by hotel staff
- Maximising social distancing by staff
- Cleaning regime of rooms and public spaces (elevators etc)
- Meal arrangements
- Their policy regarding staff who have symptoms of infection

The teams themselves are solely responsible for handling team equipment

Buffet service should be organised for every meal with the presence of few hotel staff.

No clean-up is to take place until the players have left the dining areas

Team members (both players and technical staff) must not leave the hotel unless it is under previously organized conditions and does not involve to contact with anyone outside of their group.

However, it has to be strictly controlled that social distancing is respected and/or the appropriate Preventive Protective Equipment is used by all members of the team delegation if social distancing is not possible. The team manager is responsible for ensuring that the standard hygiene measures are respected.

# 4- OPERATIONS AT THE VENUE

## Hygiene measures

Anyone entering the competition Venue must have their temperature taken on arrival.

In addition, anyone entering the venue who is not in the tested groups must:

1. complete an epidemiological acknowledgment form
2. disinfect hands
3. wear a mask
4. maintain social distancing

All those failing to complete such acknowledgement form, or if a person shows abnormalities in their temperature checks, will not be allowed to access the venue.

Face masks covering the mouth and nose must be worn by anyone operating in the venue at all times. This requirement is not obligatory if social distancing can be maintained (if social distancing is not possible at all times then a mask must be worn on all days). Failure to comply with wearing masks may lead to ejection from the venue.

The requirement to wear a mask includes, but is not limited, to the following target groups: LEN staff, venue staff, stewards, catering and cleaning staff, broadcast staff, media (except commentators during the match), photographers.

Nonetheless for all matches the organisers are required to have an additional supply of face masks which can be provided to other stakeholders at cost price in case they are not equipped with sufficient PPE.

Hand sanitiser must be provided at all access points to the venue, and at the entry to the swimming pool. Hand sanitiser must be used by everyone entering the venue or when changing zones in the swimming pool.

In general, all areas of the venue to be used such as media working areas, seating (depending on use), offices, meeting rooms and sanitary facilities must be cleaned prior to use.

# 4- OPERATIONS AT THE VENUE

## Venue map and access areas

A zoning system must be implemented in order to prevent any uncontrolled or indirect contact with the teams.

A plan must be prepared in advance according to the venue and any local regulation. However, it is a must to define the approximate number of people who will need to be present in each zone at any given time during the day.

Queuing or other specific gatherings that can be expected (e.g. arrival of media or post- match media activities) must also be identified and mitigation measures taken such as barriers, signage and additional access points.

If teams are training at the swimming pool the transit through the pool deck area must be controlled and limited to only those people with a specific need. Each movement between Zones will be strictly limited. In principle, no one may enter the pool deck except the tested groups of the teams, LEN Delegates and Officials and venue staff. Specific exceptions may be possible for operators of approved camera positions. However the use of protective face masks will be mandatory.

## Competition Venue access and accreditation management

The organiser is always responsible for the accreditation system allowing access to the venue. For centralised matches, the LEN accreditation system will be implemented and will be used as a zoning system to allow entry to the different zones of the Swimming Pool. The LEN accreditation system will also be used to control numbers entering the specific zones.

For all non-centralised matches the match organiser must also implement a zoning system and a corresponding accreditation system according to the LEN accreditation system.

Any areas where queuing may be required must be arranged and managed in such a way as to maintain social distancing. Signage, floor markings and barrier tape should be used wherever necessary to facilitate organisation and to inform people of the requirements.

# 4- OPERATIONS AT THE VENUE

## Team arrival/departure procedures at the Swimming Pool

### **a) Arrival**

The arrival of each team and the match officials must be organised to avoid mixing and crowding in the corridors. During team arrivals, any other transit of people must be avoided. Any stewards or local staff must maintain a minimum 2mt distance from the team. Teams may go straight to the dressing room.

Teams are permitted to come to the venue with a group of a maximum of 20 persons for each match. This allocation must include everyone from the team who will need access to the team area, which means players, coaching, technical and medical staff. Only this group of 20 persons will be permitted to enter the pool deck and their accreditations will be issued on production of a negative SARS-CoV-2- RNA test confirmation from the relevant test, together with a photo ID.

The other members of the team official delegation (president, board of directors etc) are permitted to come to the competition venue (up to a maximum of 10 persons). There will be seats in a dedicated part of the tribune and they will not be allowed to enter the team area.

### **b) Dressing rooms**

Dressing room areas for the teams and referees must optimise social distancing and air circulation. Depending on the size of the dressing room, additional nearby spaces may be used.

The dressing room areas, access routes (corridors, door handles, etc.) team benches (including any additional seating used to maintain social distancing) must be disinfected before the team arrives, between the team training sessions and prior to the match. Once the dressing rooms have been disinfected prior to team arrivals, no one may enter until the teams arrive.

For drinks, personal disposable bottles must be used exclusively. They must be collected and disposed of appropriately.

# 4- OPERATIONS AT THE VENUE

## *c) Departure*

Teams should leave the dressing rooms as soon as possible after the match and the completion of any media obligations.

## *d) Doping control*

An adequate waiting room for players must be considered as to ensure that social distancing can be maintained. The chairs in the waiting room must be positioned 2m from each other. To ensure proper distancing in the toilet area, it is required to install one mirror opposite the toilet so to allow the Doping Control Officer to observe the passing of the sample at a safe distance.

Separate transportation for those athletes subject to antidoping control must be considered.

A specific protocol clarifying any changes to the anti-doping control procedures can be found here:

[https://www.wada-ama.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/20200506\\_ado\\_guidance\\_resuming\\_testing\\_en.pdf](https://www.wada-ama.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/20200506_ado_guidance_resuming_testing_en.pdf)

## *e) Match operations*

The technical meeting can only be attended by the LEN Delegates, 2 referees, 2 team managers, 2 medical officers and Venue manager. It has to be organised in a room in which the Social distance between the people can be maintained.

The official lunch/dinner is not mandatory. However due consideration should be given to social distancing in selecting the location and the number of people invited.

The Jury table must be set taking into consideration 1m social distance between personnel. However the LEN delegates, the referees, the medical officers and the local officials can be seated at this table. Any other match technical staff will be seat in separate tables. Protective mask to br used at all times.

# 4- OPERATIONS AT THE VENUE

The medical staff must use PPE as prescribed by the local authorities and follow the local health regulations for any lifesaving procedures that may occur at the swimming pool.

The time in the dressing room should be kept to a minimum. Players must access the pool for the warmup earlier than the normal time. The pre-game presentation will be held introducing the teams and the referees in a different moment.

The players themselves are solely responsible for handling team equipment

Players and referees must maintain at least 1m distance between each person during the line-up ceremony.

No additional activities may be organised (e.g. player escorts, mascots, dancers, musicians, etc.), nor will there be any handshakes between teams or with the referees.

At half-time the teams should again avoid congregating in changing their benches. The local organiser should ensure that benches will be thoroughly disinfected during half-time.

Players and staff on the substitutes bench are not required to wear masks during the game, but are required to maintain social distancing at all times when seated. Solutions must therefore be found to extend the team benches or separate each seat on the bench. Solutions to adapt this seating may include the use of adjacent seating in the tribunes if accessible possible.

Individual labelled drinks bottles must be organised by each team for each person on the bench and for those playing in the pool.

# 5- BROADCASTERS, MEDIA AND TECHNICAL SUPPLIERS

## General principles

All companies and their staff present on site must comply with the applicable national/local legislation as well as all requirements of the LEN Guideline, including the mandatory wearing of masks at all times in the venue.

Such companies implicated may be required to submit details of their own protocols, hygiene measures and operating plans, which must be adhered to if not exceeded by the LEN Guideline. Broadcasters must adhere to any national or local requirements with regard to their operations (e.g. use of plexiglass dividers between commentary positions).

In principle broadcast and media activities may continue subject to the specifications below

## Number of staff onsite

The numbers of broadcast staff and media attending a match will be decided based on

- domestic legislation
- working spaces available in the media tribune with appropriate hygiene measures
- total number of people permitted in the zones as defined in this guideline as well as any limitation on the number of people allowed in the venue under domestic legislation

## Broadcast compound and trucks

The compound must be arranged in a way that allows sufficient space for the movement of people without congestion creating additional routes or paths to limit any congestion of people.

# 5- BROADCASTERS, MEDIA AND TECHNICAL SUPPLIERS

## Broadcast positions, media and photographers during the game

Broadcast staff, media and photographers may be present in the tribunes for the standard pre-game operations, provided that social distancing is strictly maintained. Camera positions will be allowed in the tribune. Certain standard camera positions may be used on the pool deck, provided that they can maintain a 2m distance from the technical areas. Remote cameras may be installed in the call room subject to LEN's approval.

For matches organised in the club competition final tournament, additional solutions for cameras on the pool deck may be approved if the camera operators have received negative SARS-CoV-2-RNA test results within 48 hours prior to each match and have worn masks at all times and maintained rigorous social distancing and hygiene measures since being tested.

## Photographers during the match

Photographers are limited to eight on the pool deck, four on each side of the jury table in an identified area. Other positions in the tribunes may also be used if required. There must be a minimum of 2m between each photographer position.

## Media tribune

The distribution of media in the stands must allow a 2m distance to be maintained. When in operations, TV commentators are temporarily exempt from the requirement to wear a mask, but must still wear one at all other times.

## Media and photographer working area

Media and photographer working areas may be used if enough space is available to allow social distancing. Food and beverages may be provided if due measures have been taken for their preparation, packaging and distribution.

# 5- BROADCASTERS, MEDIA AND TECHNICAL SUPPLIERS

## Press conferences

Pre and post-match press conferences may be held if requested. They may either be organised with a video conferencing/remote system or by taking the following physical protection measures:

- A) Press conference podium at least 3m from the first row of seats and any photographer positions
- B) Separate and exclusive access for the team representatives
- C) Number of media who can attend must be adapted so that a 2m distance between each person can be always respected.
- D) Photographer positions must be arranged to ensure a 2m minimum distance between each position and to other media representatives
- E) All media attendees must wear face masks
- F) Recording devices (Dictaphones, mobile phones etc) must not be placed on the press conference table

## Pre-match stand ups

Stand-up positions may be allocated but only in the tribune and with at least 2m between the markings of each position. The maximum number of positions available will depend on the venue configuration.

# ***5- BROADCASTERS, MEDIA AND TECHNICAL SUPPLIERS***

## **Post-match flash interviews**

Post-match interviews may be organized on/around the pool deck area once the teams have left the area, or are in a suitable pre-approved location.

The allocated area must allow for 4m<sup>2</sup> per person and the reporter and camera crew must always maintain at least 2m from the player.

Common sense must prevail in terms of location and access, however all arrangements must be discussed and agreed beforehand between the HB, team representative and LEN.

## **Mixed-zones**

Mixed-zones mustn't be organised so as to avoid congestion of media representatives and to reduce risk of close proximity between teams and the media distribution.