



# **ELITE FOOTBALL RESTART GUIDELINES**

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## **1. PREAMBLE**

- 1.1 Football Association of Malawi (hereinafter referred to as “FAM”) primarily aims to promote and develop the game of football and providing wholesome entertainment to soccer loving Malawians across the entire breadth of the country.
- 1.2 FAM suspended all football activities on March 20, 2020 as Pre-caution measures to stop the Spread of the COVID 19.
- 1.3 FAM has received direction from government to restart football at Elite from 17th October 2020 without fans.

## **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 2.1 The following guidelines will guide all Football stakeholders on the process to be followed in a bid to restart football in a safest way possible.
- 2.2 All stakeholders under FAM and all those involved in the organization of the matches Under FAM are bind to these guidelines.
- 2.3 These Guidelines will at times be read in conjunction with organizational medical standards, international and national guidelines on public health and mass gatherings

## **3. PRE– TRAINING TESTING**

- 3.1 All Clubs to submit names of their players and backroom Staff to SULOM before resuming any football activities.
- 3.2 All players, referees and managers who return to football must be tested for COVID-19 in order to safeguard and strengthen the psychological confidence within the team and the environment.
- 3.3 SULOM in conjunction with Health Authorities and Club Medical Personnel to conduct complete medical check-up tests of all players and Technical Staff of each team and the first test to be performed at least 72 hours before resuming football activities to prevent false negatives (asymptomatic carriers of the virus).
- 3.4 Only those that will test Negative will be allowed to start football activities. Participants whose tests are positive should follow the recommendation of the health authorities on treatment and recovery.
- 3.5 Football participants must be tested at their club’s designated sites.
- 3.6 Clubs will cover cost of travelling to the nearest COVID 19 testing Centre in their region of residence.
- 3.7 Continued close monitor of participants for any flu-like symptoms and immediately entrust medical staff if respiratory illness is noted.

- 3.8 Each Club shall designate or recruit a person (Corona Compliance Officer) in charge of coordinating all actions related to the pandemic. Ideally a person who loves football, with good medical and technical knowledge, and who uses modern means of communication and Oriented on COVID1-19.

#### **4. TRAINING**

- 4.1 All Super League Clubs will not resume training until notified to do so by FAM through SULOM.
- 4.2 When planning for training sessions Clubs Coaches must consider the level of fitness of footballers returning to normal training and the measures to be taken to prevent the proposed increased risk of injury.
- 4.3 Clubs will be allowed to train only in the presence of a Health Personnel registered with the Medical Council of Malawi, who will be conducting medical examination of all players and officials. Team Doctors will be oriented on COVID 19 in conjunction with MoH.
- 4.4 All training balls and technical equipment must be disinfected before and after use.
- 4.5 All Personnel Players shall arrive at the training with gloves and a mask.
- 4.6 No exchange of training kit.
- 4.7 All personnel except the players when on field of play, should wear masks at all times.
- 4.8 Clubs to ensure every player and personnel has own drinking water
- 4.9 Clubs to provide hand sanitisers or water and soap for washing hands before and after training.
- 4.10 Training to be conducted behind closed doors without supporters even in venues that are not in fences.
- 4.11 Sulom and FAM with a team from Health Authorities to conduct independent audit inspection at every training ground to ensure compliance, FAM through SULOM will impose sanctions for noncompliance.
- 4.12 Club members must observe Mutual protection: Distancing, wearing a mask and gloves.

#### **5. PRE–SEASON TRAINING AND FRIENDLY MATCH**

- 5.1 All Pre-Seasons Training and Friendly Match shall be sanctioned by FAM through SULOM. Clubs must Write Sulom who will liase with FAM seeking permission to host a training or friendly match. For a training match Requests must be sent at least 72 hours before the match while for a friendly match at least 96 hours before the match.
- 5.2 Training matches and Friendly matches will be played behind closed doors.

- 5.3 Matches to be played only in the presence of a Sulom designated Match Inspector and Medical Personnel.
- 5.4 All matches to be played in the Presence of Health Personnel.
- 5.5 All personnel to be checked temperatures and only players with COVID-19 Negative results to be allowed to play.
- 5.6 Training and friendly matches will be between Super League clubs only.

## **6. TEST MATCHES**

- 6.1 FAM and SULOM will host trial matches to test and demonstrate mechanisms to be used in full official matches.

## **7. OFFICIAL SEASON KICK OFF**

- 7.1 Official Football Season will kick-off on 21st November 2020 with the Charity Shield.
- 7.2 This will be followed by the Super League Kickoff on 28th November 2020. Other Leagues will kick-off at a later stage to be advised by government.
- 7.3 Matches to be played only in certified venues.
- 7.4 Matches will be played behind closed doors.
- 7.5 Matches will be organized in accordance with the match organisations as stipulated in subsequent chapters.

## **8. MATCH ORGANISATION**

- 8.1 The date, time and venue of the matches shall be communicated at least seven days before the match and confirmed at least 48 hours before kick-off.
- 8.2 SULOM Shall Set a Match Coordination team comprising of a Sulom Delegate (Match Commissioner), A Covid 19- Health Authority Official, Stadium Manager and Security Personnel that will ensure that all Measurers and Standards put in place are adhered to at each match venue.
- 8.3 The Match Coordinating Team shall inspect the Venue at least 48 hours before the game to certify if it is in condition to host the particular match.
- 8.4 FAM and SULOM shall a month before the start of the officials matches train Match Commissioners and Coordinators across the country

## **9. MATCH DAY MINUS 1**

- 9.1 The Sulom Delegate shall on the eve of the match lead the Match Coordinating team in convening a Match Coordination Meeting (MCM) of the officials of all teams with the Referee Assessor designated for each match. This will be a consultative meeting aimed at underlining and clarifying the main points of the Rules and Regulations governing this Competition including the Laws of the Game. The Match

Commissioner shall ensure the fulfilment of all conditions necessary for the regularity of the matches (security services, COVID-19 safety Measurers, etc).

## **10. MATCH DAY**

- 10.1 The Match Coordination team shall arrive at the Match venue at least Five Hours before kick-off.
- 10.2 The Match Commissioner and his team shall ensure that all measurers as stipulated in the Restart Standard Operations Guidelines are followed and before teams' arrival and gates are opened.

## **11. TEAM CONDUCT ON MATCH DAY**

- 11.1 Teams will be required to submit the list of their delegation a day before match and it must certify all are tested and negative.
- 11.2 Teams to be advised to travel in more cars and with a small delegation wherever possible. Each Team will be allowed to travel with at least 20 players and Seven officials.
- 11.3 Team's travel mode must be sanitized
- 11.4 Team delegation will be allowed out of the bus and into the dressing room/ Stadium only upon production of their Mpira connect ID, having their temperature checked, washing hands and verification of their covid-19 Negative Status.
- 11.5 Save for the players on the field of play, and during warm up, all members of the delegation must at all times have a mask on.
- 11.6 Only Nine Substitutes and Seven Mpira Connect Licenced and Accredited team officials namely Coach, Assistant Coach, Team Doctor, Team Manager, Goalkeeper Trainer, Kit Master and Physiotherapist/ Physical trainer as registered in the Mpira Connect shall be allowed to sit on the bench. Only those with accreditation will be allowed access in the Technical Area.
- 11.7 Teams must arrive at the match venue at least 120 minutes before kick-off.
- 11.8 Players and team officials must respect for physical distance in the locker room.
- 11.9 There will no children to accompany the players and Referees and the two tams shall Enter the field separately.
- 11.10 There will be no Meet and greet at the beginning of the match.

## **12. ACCESS AND CONTROL WITHOUT FANS**

- 12.1 If matches are played behind closed doors no Fans will be allowed into the stadium.
- 12.2 There will be no sale of tickets for matches played behind closed doors.
- 12.3 Special accreditation to be given to a few allowed to attend matches.

12.4 As per government only 100 people will be allowed in the stadiums.

### **13. ACCESS AND CONTROL WITH FANS**

13.1 Match tickets will be sold in advance and not at the match venue on match day.

13.2 Sulom to produce limited number of tickets, half the total capacity of each venue to control fans.

13.3 All high-profile matches will be played in bigger stadiums regardless of the draw or fixture. (Lilongwe and Blantyre Derbies, all matches involving Nyasa Big Bullets, Mighty Be-forward Wanderers and Silver)

13.4 All fans to observe the following safety Measures:

13.4.1 To put on a mask at all times (no mask no entry)

13.4.2 To wash hands with soap before getting into the stadium.

13.4.3 To have their temperature checked at the entrance and those with high temperatures will be sent back.

13.4.4 Sulom to put a mechanism on compensating the will be sent back due to high temperatures.

13.4.5 To observe social distancing in the stands which will be enforced by stewards.

13.4.6 Fans will be encouraged to come early to the matches to reduce waiting time.

13.4.7 Gates to open 10 minutes before for fans to get out with controlled measures not let in fans who have not been tested.

### **14. MEDIA OPERATIONS**

14.1 Only FAM accredited media will be allowed in the venues and in media designated areas.

14.2 Only Accredited Photographers and Cameramen with special bibs will be allowed in the technical area. The rest of the Journalists shall sit in a special media stand to be allocated at each venue.

14.3 All Photographers to sit behind the goal posts.

14.4 Social Distancing during pre- and post-match interviews as Players and managers will be interviewed by television reporters with microphones on sticks, keeping to a safe distance. There will be No press conference and only flash interviews to be conducted respecting the physical distancing

### **15. SENSITIZATION AND COMMUNICATION**

15.1 Sulom, FAM and clubs to ensure massive sensitisation to all stakeholders before and during the match.

15.2 Sulom and FAM with guidance from the Ministry of Health to create messages and jingles to be played during matches on P/A system at the matches and on radios during sports programmes and Football commentary

15.3 Sulom and FAM to print flies and posters to be distributed at the Match venues

## **16. POST MATCH DEBRIEF**

- 16.1 After each game, the Match Commissioner shall convene a debrief meeting to analyse the operations of the match.
- 16.2 Reports from all relevant stakeholders must be submitted to SULOM at least 48 hours after the match.

## **17. MISCONDUCT**

- 17.1 SULOM shall impose sanctions to stakeholders that will not adhere to the Standards and Guidelines in line with the SULOM Disciplinary Code.

## **18. GENERAL**

- 18.1 Any matter not specifically covered in these Guidelines shall be decided by SULOM in accordance with the Malawi Government COVID 19 Measurers, SULOM Constitution, SULOM Disciplinary Code and those of FIFA where applicable.

