



**RULES for the**  
**IKF EUROPEAN KORFBALL CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**B-DIVISION FOR NATIONAL TEAMS 2021**

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**Version: 1 August 2021**



## INTERNATIONAL KORFBALL FEDERATION

### RULES for the IKF EUROPEAN KORFBALL CHAMPIONSHIP B-DIVISION FOR NATIONAL TEAMS 2021

#### 1 General

- 1 These rules are drawn up under the requirements of Article 1 of the IKF Competition Regulations. Except for Articles 4 and 5 of those regulations, which are not applicable, all Articles of the IKF Competition Regulations shall be deemed to be part of these tournament rules.
- 2 The IKF European Korfball Championship B-Division shall **not** be used as a qualification tournament for any coming IKF event.
- 3 As the Covid-19 pandemic is still going forward, there will be prepared a strict Covid-19 Protocol and guidelines per IKF Covid-19 Event Rules that should be followed by all athletes + officials of participating teams and appointed IKF officials. This Covid-19 Protocol and Event Rules will be based on the guidelines and strong recommendations as presented by the IKF Medical Committee and the mandatory (local) Governmental Regulations (see Appendix 4). Violation of these Covid-19 Protocol will be treated via the IKF Disciplinary Rules and IKF Competition Regulations and can be subject for immediate action per individual and/or team.
- 4 The Covid-19 Protocol will be provided to you ultimately 14 days before the start of the event. Just as is the case with the corresponding Covid-19 Event Rules, changes can be made until the last moment based on new or changed regulations impacting some or all participants.
- 5 The dates and venues of the tournament shall be determined by IKF and will be communicated to the national organisations concerned.
- 6 The actual dates and venue(s) for the tournament will be stated in the appendix to these rules.
- 7 The requirements of the IKF with respect to the organisation of the tournament will be laid down in a contract to be signed between the IKF and the host country.
- 8 Teams must comply with any timing requirements for arrival, departure, games, etc. demanded of them by the IKF and mentioned in the appendix.
- 9 The maximum number of players from each team that may participate during the match shall be normally seven (7) male and seven (7) female. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic it is allowed to bring one extra male and female player, so in total eight (8) male and eight (8) female players are allowed.
- 10 The closing date for submitting the **Information Form (Long List)** referred to in Article 6.2 of the Competition Regulations shall be **5 September 2021**. All listed players must have their eligibility approved in accordance with the IKF Competition Regulations Article 3.
- 11 The **Final Players' Declaration Form** referred to in Article 6.3 of the Competition regulations shall be submitted to the IKF no later than **17 September 2021, including the signed document "Country Athletes Officials Consents"**. The last mentioned list will be confirmed to the Jury at the pre-tournament meeting between the Jury and Team managers. Players listed in the form **must** have been included in the **Information Form (Long List)** and any emergency changes in this list **must** also have been listed in the original **Information Form (Long List)**.



## **2 Participation**

- 1 The tournament is opened to National selections of players from countries who are members of the IKF in accordance with Article 8 of the IKF Statutes.
- 2 The IKF shall determine which countries are eligible to participate.
- 3 All arrangements concerning the payment of the travelling and lodging expenses of the participating teams and their accompanying officials, together with the payment of any costs of participation, will be made by the participating teams in accordance with Article 2.8 of the Competition Regulations of the IKF, unless the Executive Committee of the IKF decides differently.
- 4 The participating countries must confirm in writing to the IKF secretariat that they have complied with Article 2.10 of the Competition Regulations concerning suitable insurance being taken out to cover the cost of any medical treatment of the members of their delegation during their stay in the places where the tournament is being held.

## **3 Playing-schedules**

- 1 The playing schedule will be an appendix to these rules and will be published separately at least 6 to 8 weeks prior to the start of the event.
- 2 The participating teams will be placed into the pools by the IKF Competitions Committee (CC) broadly based on the rankings of the countries. The pools and match schedules shall be as shown in this appendix 1 + 3.
- 3 No deviation from the playing schedules may be made without the approval of the CC.

## **4 Details arising from Article 22 of the Competition Regulations**

- 1 Matches shall be played with approved artificial korfs and Mikasa K5-IKF balls (art.22.1 + 22.5).
- 2 The matches shall be played according to schedule D1 in appendix 2 of the IKF Competition Regulations 2021. The schedule sets out the length of each half, length of 'real playing time' per half, the length of half time, the length of any 'golden goal' period, the provisions for any penalty shoot-out (sudden-death instead of 8 players all), whether or not substitutes may return to the game, the number of substitutions allowed and the number of time-outs allowed.
- 3 In accordance with paragraph 3.3 of the IKF Rules of Korfball update 2021, valid from 1-1-2021, the shot clock will be used in this competition.
- 4 If the scores are equal after normal time golden goal extra time shall be played under the conditions laid down in the Competition Regulations and for the period as mentioned above in 4.2.
- 5 If the scores are still level after golden goal extra time then the match shall be decided by penalties. The conditions for taking penalties shall be as mentioned in accordance with clause 4.2 above.



## 5 Late starts of matches

- 1 Should any team not be ready to start within 5 minutes of the scheduled starting time the Jury will decide whether the match should be abandoned or re-scheduled. In accordance with Article 20 of the IKF Competition Regulations, if a match is abandoned in such circumstances then the matter will be reported to the Tournament Disciplinary Panel (TDP), along with the reasons for the team's late arrival. The TDP will then decide whether the team concerned forfeits the match (in accordance with Article 20.3) or if no disciplinary action is taken (in which case Article 20.2 shall apply).

## 6 Final Provision

- 1 The jury shall have the power to deal with any matter that is not provided for under these rules.

Laid down by the Executive Committee of the  
INTERNATIONAL KORFBALL FEDERATION  
August 2021

## APPENDIX 1

### Arrival and Departure of teams:

Teams must arrive in time for their supporting eligibility documents to be checked by the Jury at the pre-tournament meeting. This meeting shall be held on the day before the first match in the tournament at 3 October. The time of the meeting shall be considered to be 18:00 hrs for the purposes of this travel requirement. If any change in time is made then this shall be sent to the competing teams nearer the date of the tournament but cannot be earlier than the time stated here.

Teams shall be free to leave one hour after the scheduled start time for the prize-giving and closing ceremonies.

**Dates:** Matches shall be played during the period 4 October – 9 October 2021, both dates inclusive.

**Venue(s):** Wroclaw (POL)

### Pools:

A1	<b>POL</b>
A2	<b>IRL</b>
A3	<b>SCO</b>
A4	<b>SUI</b>

B1	<b>SVK</b>
B2	<b>WAL</b>
B3	<b>TUR</b>
B4	<b>GRE</b>



## APPENDIX 2 Game Scenarios

In all scenarios substitutes are allowed to return to the match and real playing time shall be used.

Scenario	Length of each half (real playing time)	Length of half time	Length of any 'golden goal' period	Provisions for penalty shoot out	Number of time outs allowed	Maximum number of substitutions
A1	25 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes	8 players (repeated if necessary)	2 per team	8
B1	20 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes	8 players (repeated if necessary)	2 per team	8
C1	16 minutes	4 minutes	5 minutes	Sudden death	1 per team	6
D1	20 minutes split in two periods of 10 minutes with 1 minute break between each period	10 minutes	10 minutes	Sudden death	1 per team	8
D2	16 minutes split in two periods of 8 minutes with 1 minute break between each period	5 minutes	5 minutes	Sudden death	1 per team	6

Note: When there is a break between quarters it shall be administered like a time-out (i.e. a signal from the scorer will be made after 50 seconds upon which players are expected to return to the field)

If IKF deems necessary some adjustments can be expressed in the event rules.



## APPENDIX 3 Match-schedule

### IKF EKC B-Division in Wroclaw (POL) 4 till 9 October 2021

#### Schedule

A1	POL	B1	SVK
A2	IRL	B2	WAL
A3	SCO	B3	TUR
A4	SUI	B4	GRE

#### Participating countries

Poland  
Slovakia  
Ireland  
Wales  
Turkey  
Scotland  
Greece  
Switzerland

#### IKF Ranking 31DEC 2020

12  
15  
17  
22  
24  
26  
31  
37

#### Day 1

Monday 4 Oct

#### Time

13:30	1	IRL	SUI	
15:30	2	WAL	GRE	
17:30	3	SVK	TUR	
19:00		Opening	ceremony	
19:45	4	POL	SCO	

#### D1

Preparation time 20'  
2x 20' RPT split in two periods of 10'  
1x TO per team  
8 (reversible) subs  
HIF 10'  
GG 10' RPT  
Penalties (team)

#### Day 2

Tuesday 5 Oct

#### Time

13:30	5	SUI	SCO	
15:30	6	POL	IRL	
17:30	7	TUR	GRE	
19:30	8	WAL	SVK	

#### Day 3

Wednesday 6 Oct

#### Time

13:30	9	TUR	WAL	
15:30	10	GRE	SVK	
17:30	11	SCO	IRL	
19:30	12	POL	SUI	

#### Day 4

Thursday 7 Oct

Day off No matches				
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#### End result pool matches

Nr. A1	
Nr. A2	
Nr. A3	
Nr. A4	
Nr. B1	
Nr. B2	
Nr. B3	
Nr. B4	

#### Day 5

Friday 8 Oct

#### Time

13:30	13	Nr. A3	Nr. B4	
15:30	14	Nr. B3	Nr. A4	
17:30	15	Nr. B1	Nr. A2	
19:30	16	Nr. A1	Nr. B2	

#### Day 6

Saturday 9 Oct

#### Time

10:00	17	Loser 13	Loser 14	
12:00	18	Winner 13	Winner 14	
14:00	19	Loser 16	Loser 15	
16:00	20	Winner 16	Winner 15	
17:30		Medal+closing	ceremony	

#### End position

Winner	7th place
Winner	5th place
Winner	3rd place
Winner	1st place



## APPENDIX 4 Covid-19 Rules & IKF Medical Committee Recommendations

### COVID-19 Event Rules

#### General:

Each participating team must appoint a dedicated COVID-19 Officer and confirm the name and contact details of this officer to the IKF at least 6 weeks in advance of the start of the event. He or she will be responsible for the team's execution of the IKF COVID-19 event protocol and will be the point of contact for COVID-19 related matters/ emergencies. Both the IKF and the LOC will also have a dedicated COVID-19 officer who are the contact persons for all COVID-19 related matters.

In order to take part in the competition, all team delegates will be required to confirm their compliance to the IKF rules and regulations being implemented for COVID-19 prevention, including following the complete IKF COVID-19 protocol. The same thing relates to all IKF Officials, LOC staff and volunteers, media and any other accredited individuals. Also, everyone needs to provide consent to treatment of testing data, within the GDPR regulations, and acknowledge that sanctions may be implemented in case of non-compliance.

Furthermore, everyone entering the event is expected to have an individual medical insurance that covers medical expenses, including COVID-19. Prolonged stay of an individual at a competition site extending beyond the competition dates due to local quarantine legislation are the responsibility of the team delegation.

#### Arrival at competition:

Each team delegate shall be required to present official documentation or formally declare:

- To have received the full vaccination of an EMA approved vaccine, with the last vaccine shot obtained at least 14 days prior to arrival, or;
- To have undertaken a COVID-19 PCR test with a negative test result, within 48 hours calculated from the time of the test prior to the departure to the event.

This documentation or declaration is a mandatory pre-condition for taking part in the competition.

\* The host country's domestic law or regulations and airline requirements shall prevail regarding the admission of the respective individual on the flight or entry to the host country respectively.

#### Competition testing protocol:

During the competition match days, depending on the COVID-19 situation at the time, all team delegates could be subject to mandatory COVID-19 (antigen) testing. If not required by the local authorities, it is up to the sole authority of the IKF to make the decision to have mandatory tests, including for the number of days that testing is required.

In the case required, the procedure for Rapid antigen testing will be as follows;

- A medical official shall execute the testing and collect samples from each team delegate
- Once the sample is collected, all team delegates should wait at the testing centre until the result is cleared. Test results will be confirmed in approximately twenty (20) minutes.
- Results of the test will directly be communicated to the COVID-19 Officials of the respective team. If the result is negative, the team delegate will be allowed to carry on their activities. If the result is doubtful or positive, a PCR test will be conducted as soon as possible.



- Once the PCR test sample is collected, the team delegate will be transported to the hotel and will start isolation at the hotel room until the PCR test result is confirmed. In the case of a negative test the relevant team delegate is allowed to carry on with all event activities. In case of a confirmed positive test, the team delegate will be required to continue the isolation until at least the end of the Event.

\* Aside the standard testing protocol, a mandatory PCR test will be imposed on all team delegates who have developed any COVID-19 symptoms as well as in any situations in which there are reasonable grounds to believe that a team delegate has had or does have COVID-19. The concerned team delegate shall be isolated until the respective result is obtained. Until the outset to the final PCR test result, said person shall be considered as potentially infected. If the PCR results is negative, the individual can return to the event immediately. If the test comes back positive, he or she is ineligible for the entire event as stated underneath.

#### Eligibility of players and teams:

- Any player or other team delegate member who tests positive for COVID-19 on a Rapid antigen test needs to conduct a PCR test asap and shall immediately become ineligible to participate in the Event and should isolate / quarantine immediately. The same procedure needs to be followed by his or her roommate(s) at the hotel or other accommodation (if any). Individuals who initially test positive on a Rapid antigen test will remain ineligible until the outcome of the PCR test. In the case the PCR is negative (s)he will directly become eligible again. In the case the test is positive, (s)he stays ineligible for the entire event, regardless of any other negative PCR result afterwards. The same thing will count for the roommate(s) of someone that has tested positive, even when the PCR test for him or her is negative and being fully vaccinated. This to avoid any risks.
- Following the regular IKF Playing Rules a team will not be allowed to participate in a match without having at least a starting line-up of 6 players that have a confirmed negative COVID-19 test performed prior to the match. If a team does not have sufficient players, this is considered as a match irregularity. Following the IKF Competition Regulations, the team not guilty of the irregularity is deemed to have won the match with a 10-0 score.
- Any team that has more than (>) 25% of the team delegate members tested positive on Covid-19 will be taken out of the tournament immediately. Once again to avoid any risks.

\* Any decisions regarding the quarantine time in the hotel and additional tests before leaving the hotel and returning home should be made on a case by-case basis by the team delegates and local authorities.

#### Compliance and consequences:

It is essential that all levels of the COVID-19 protocol have oversight and compliance processes. If there are practicality issues for which a common-sense approach is not obvious, the IKF COVID-19 Officer should be consulted. Any non-compliance must be reported to the IKF COVID-19 Officer immediately. The LOC may also be required by local government authorities to report the incident for application of local quarantine violation sanctions. In this case, local measures may be enforced by the host country authorities as per the applicable rules.

Behaviour of individual team delegates and participating teams as a whole, that do not obey the rules as described in the COVID-19 protocol can have consequences. There are three main types of tournament consequences:





- Formal warning
- Disqualification from the upcoming match
- Disqualification for the complete event

The IKF Tournament Disciplinary Panel (TDP), that at least includes the IKF COVID-19 Officer, the IKF Tournament Jury Chair and the IKF Coordinating Officer, has the authority to formally warn an individual team delegate member or a team as a whole. The decision to disqualify a player, another team delegate or an entire team for the upcoming match or the complete event can only be taken by the IKF Secretary General on advice on the IKF TDP. Depending on the type of infringement all three above mentioned disciplinary actions can be imposed immediately. The IKF EXCO maintains the right to impose further sanctions of non-compliance on a team and/or team delegate after the event, in the case of severe infringements. Such follow up sanctions will follow the regular disciplinary procedures.

### **Covid-19 IKF Medical Committee recommendations**

The corona crisis has turned our world upside down. We live in 2020/2021 in a new reality full of challenges, including for the sports world.

At the time of writing this protocol, the pandemic is still at a high level influences the world. There are vaccinations in all countries but not everybody is vaccinated and the pandemic is still influencing all our lives.

The prospects are still quite negative, looking at the state of immunisation in almost all countries and the new variants of the virus. In most countries immunisation of young athletes will take at least still several months from now on and most is still unknown about for example: vaccination passports, possibilities in travelling, quarantine periods etc. We don't know yet if someone who is vaccinated can infect others. That is why we are on the safe side: for the time being, the same general corona rules apply to vaccinated people as to people who have not been vaccinated.

At this moment the contamination levels still worrying that it still advised that large groups of people not get together. This also applies to sports audiences. There are try outs for matches with public that is tested. But in most cases it is still not allowed for amateur competitions and most of the professional sports competitions (for example the Olympic Games).

Hopefully we can continue the planned tournaments and hopefully also with the public. It's just uncertain at the moment. With this advice we want to look ahead to the measures during a tournament should it take place in this pandemic.

The most important thing is the safety and health of everyone, including all players, staff, volunteers and IKF employees.

The protocols for all countries differ and it will be necessary to review the recent regulations per tournament at that time.

This advice was written in June 2021. It changes daily in the different countries and it is therefore important to continuously evaluate what is possible.



### **Top athletes are an example to many.**

We therefore want to ask the national teams to propagate this. Follow to the rules strictly. Communicate (for example in interviews) how important compliance with those rules are.

### **General guidelines:**

We recommend carrying out the following measures.

- Do you have symptoms? Stay in quarantine and get tested;
- Go home immediately if complaints arise during the sports activity such as:
  - Cold
  - Running nose
  - sneezing
  - sore throat
  - (light) cough
  - chest tightness,
  - elevation of temperature, fever and
  - sudden loss of smell or taste

This applies to everybody from players, staff, IKF members and volunteers.

- Keep 1.5 m distance from persons 18 years of age or older, only exception to children (age varies between countries, confirmation before each tournament).

The 1.5 meter distance is obligated at all time, except during training or matches where necessary. For example during meals, in the hotel, during national anthems, meetings with the team keep the 1.5 meter distance. Celebrating a win of a goal or match, be creative and do something that will secure the social distance.

- avoid crowds;
- often wash your hands with soap and water, especially before and after visiting a sports location;
- do not shake hands;
- observe the usual safety and hygiene rules for everyone;
- when people exercise in groups, make sure that it is recognizable which athlete to which group belongs;
- when persons from several households sitting in the same car, it is urgent advice to wear a face mask.
- after the sports activity you leave the sports accommodation as soon as possible.

### **Important:**

- 1. A health check takes place (eg verbally) before the start of the sports activity, it is obligated to answer with the truth.**
- 2. At all times the IKF official that is responsible for the COVID protocol during the tournament can send players or staff away from the venue when he or she noticed somebody with complaints without a recent negative test or when a player of staff doesn't follow the rules of the COVID protocol.**
- 3. If a player or staff has complaints stay in quarantine and get tested. Report the complaints to the IKF official that is responsible during the tournament for the COVID protocol.**

### **Advice for the local organizing committee and the accommodations:**

- The local tournament committee is responsible for execution of the advised protocol.



Adjustments, related to the changes in a local COVID-19 protocol can be made when necessary, after national and international changes due to the WHO, or measures or laws valid in the participating countries.

- The local tournament organization is asked to pass on the current regulations in the country to IKF to help update the protocol, so the IKF can inform the participating countries.

- Arrange at the accommodation:

- Set up the accommodation to ensure that volunteers, staff and players who have to wait can keep the 1.5 meter distance.

- walking routes

- information signs for hygiene, social distancing, waiting areas etc.

- disinfection materials at the entry and the exit of the accommodation and also enough around the field.

- A Corona supervisor for the accommodation so that the rules are followed.

The Corona supervisor has to be recognizable and communicate how that person can be reached. The Corona supervisor at the accommodation will work closely with the IKF official that is responsible during the tournament for the COVID protocol.

- Make sure that first aid material and an AED are always available and that they are not locked away.

- Give the volunteers extensive instructions on how to implement the protocol in the various areas of the accommodation and what the agreements are with the teams.

- Good ventilation is important for indoor sport facilities. Check the correct operation of existing ventilation systems and make sure that there is enough ventilation.

- Large areas/rooms for the team meetings where the teams can keep the social distancing.

- Doors in the accommodations remain open where possible to reduce the number of contact points. Door handles are cleaned several times a day.

- Permanent cleaning is provided for the toilet facilities throughout the day.

- Clean the training materials before and afterwards and put them back in the appropriate place.

- Control visitor flow

- Access is only granted on the field to the teams and staff that will play that day, IKF officials in function and volunteers for logistics. Try to keep the group that is on the venue as small as possible.

- Arrival does not take place earlier than the agreed starting time and athletes must leave the venue immediately afterwards.

- Arrange COVID testing facilities for all the volunteers, players, staff and IKF officials.

Arrange speed testing for everybody with the local distributors. The test facilities have to be available at all times.

- A small numbers of speed tests have been validated. It has been sufficiently established that they give a reliable test result. This means an additional PCR test is required if these tests are positive. These five tests are validated:

Panbio COVID 19 Ag rapid test from Abbott

BD Veritor COVID test from Becton Dickinson



SARS-CoV-2 Rapid Antigen Test from Roche  
Sofia SARS Antigen FIA from Quidel  
Standard F-COVID 19 Ag FIA of SD biosensor

- When a organizing country obligates other regulations to testing the local protocol can be changed due to those regulations.

*When there is a positive speed test: see below at testing.*

### **For the teams:**

- Follow the general guidelines to guarantee safety for everybody
- Arrange a staff member that is responsible for the COVID protocol.
- Arrange good transportation that allows social distancing.
- All players and staff wear a face mask during transport to the venue, in the venue if they are not participation the match or training, during a match or training the staff and substitutions wear face masks.
- During a match staff and substitutions on the bench stay 1.5 meter apart.
- The 1.5 meter distance is obligated at all time, except during training or matches on field where necessary. For example during meals, in the hotel (a separate hotelroom for every player and staff member), during national anthems, meetings with the team keep the 1.5 meter distance. Celebrating a win of a goal or match, be creative and do something that will secure the social distance. When a medical treatment is necessary within 1.5 meters the player and staff member wear a face mask. The medical treatment will take place in the specific medical room assigned to a team.
- Come to the venue dressed and shower in the hotel afterwards.
- Clean the training materials before and afterwards and put them back in the appropriate place.
- Also think about travelrestrictions of your own country:
  - Do you have to go in quarantine when you get home. And what are the costs?
  - If a player is tested positive during the tournament can they travel home? If not (because some flights ask for a negative test before boarding) who will stay with the player or staff member untill they can travel home.
  - Make sure you prepare well.
  - Check if you need a negative COVID 19 test result, vaccination passport or a proof a Corona infection witin a few weeks before travelling.
  - Check if the country you are going to or coming from is a safe (green), low risk (yellow), high risk (orange) or a high risk country and make sure you follow the rules due to travelling from those countries (quarantine rules etc). The different colours of the countries due to travelling change almost on a daily base and can also change in the future due to changes in virus.

### **Testing:**

- Arrange a COVID test 48-72 hours prior to the tournament in country of origin (time spend depending on the regulations of your own country). Or a vaccination passport. Look at the regulation of the travel agency that will be used to travel to the tournament. A player or staff member that is tested positive is obligated to stay home.
- All teams have to be tested at arrival before they are allowed to compete during the tournament.



- All teams have to be tested every day during the tournament if they have a match, they cannot compete during the tournament day without a negative speed test result.
- All volunteers, staff and players have to be tested when they have complaints
- If a player or staff member is tested positive with a speed test a mandatory PCR test is obligated.
- If a player or staff member is tested positive they aren't allowed to compete during the next days and they have to stay in quarantine.
  - You must remain in isolation depending on the rules of the government from the positive test because you can be infectious to others.
  - You may be out of isolation if you have not received any complaints that match COVID-19 up to 72 hours (3 days) after the test, and you may only participate in the tournament if you can subsequently submit a negative test result.
  - If you get complaints within 72 hours (3 days) after taking the test, you will stay in home isolation for longer.
- Also close contacts have to go in quarantine for 10 days:
  - When are you a close contact?

If you were less than 5 feet away from someone with COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes.

If someone with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes in your face

If you have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 who is not in close contact, you do not have to adhere to separate rules if you are tested negative yourself. Do keep an eye on your health.

Most people who become ill with the new corona virus get the complaints within 10 days of the last contact.

The incubation period for the new coronavirus is a maximum of 14 days. Sometimes people still get complaints after the 10-day quarantine period. That is why it is important that you keep an extra close eye on your health up to 14 days after contact with the positive person.

**It is important to ensure the health of all players, staff, IKF officials and volunteers. The protocol is there for risk reduction and the safety of everyone. The protocol for every tournament will be adjusted according to the applicable rules in the country where the tournament is organized, so it can be different according to those rules. The same applies to any vaccination. It will depend on the regulations of the organizing country. The medical committee cannot and does not want to make a decision at this time about the vaccinations. We cannot look into the future, but we will continue to monitor developments closely**