

# PUISANO SPORTS

While contact sports such as soccer and rugby have to brace themselves for the 'long haul' the government is considering a request for professional golf to resume, as well as the opening of golf clubs around the country. Professional sporting events, as well as recreational sport, were stopped in March following the coronavirus outbreak in South Africa. Most of these events will only be able to continue once South Africa reaches Level 2 lockdown restrictions. The country is currently on Level 4, which doesn't allow for any sporting activity, although recreational athletes are allowed to run, walk and cycle between 6am and 9am in the morning. The Absa Premiership,

## Mthethwa wants PSL, Safa to guide government about football's return

South Africa's top-flight football league, was postponed with many rounds of matches still to be played. Kaizer Chiefs and Mamelodi Sundowns are locked in an almighty battle for the league title, but there is uncertainty about when or if the league will resume.

Many leagues in Europe are preparing to resume in the next month, but others in the Netherlands and France have already been called off due to Covid-19. The Premier Soccer League (PSL) has stated that they want to finish the remaining matches, while the custodians of the sport in the country, the South African Football Association, said football at all levels will only go ahead once it's safe to do so.

"We will be dependent on Safa as the mother body of football in the country and the PSL, with the hope they will guide government," the Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture Nathi Mthethwa said during a press briefing on Monday, 4 May 2020. "I have been in contact with both the Safa president Danny Jordaan and PSL chairperson Irvin Khoza and said to them I need their wise counsel as leaders in football on the reopening or softening of lockdown regulations with our risk adjusted strategy.

"We've convened meetings with both of

them. Khoza and Kaizer Chiefs chairperson, Kaizer Motaung, informed me that they are having a board of governors meeting on Thursday and they will come up with suggestions." However, golf courses around the country may soon be opened after stakeholders such as GolfRSA petitioned Mthethwa for the sport to return professionally without spectators and leisurely with strict physical distancing restrictions.

GolfRSA said in their letter to the minister that about 18 000 people could lose their jobs if golf clubs will remain closed. "There are others who have come to us and pleaded their case and golf is one of them," Mthethwa said. "They motivated strongly that the nature of their sport is not a contact sport and in terms of the regulations – the metres between people – they fit in. It would be easier for them to adhere to [physical distancing]. We are looking into that."

(source: IOL)

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## 293 athletes receive COVID-19 financial assistance

The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture's COVID-19 Relief Fund has come to the rescue of 293 financially distressed athletes, according to Minister Nathi Mthethwa. This comes after a R150 million Relief Fund was announced to assist artists, athletes, technical personnel and the core ecosystem of the sector.

The sport adjudication process began on 9 April. The deadline for application to the Relief Fund was 6 April. Subsequent to this, independent adjudication committees were appointed to oversee the process. Addressing reporters on Monday, Mthethwa said: "The other part of this fund was open to proposals for live-streaming the work of creatives and athletes, particularly, intergenerational cooperation between younger artists and the legends." The 293 successful athletes are from Boxing SA (47), athletics (86), canoeing (2), equestrian (21), fencing (7), golf (70), gymnastics (3), netball (8), football (17), SA National Boxing Organisation (4), those with disability (15), surfing (5), tennis (2) and triathlon (5).

The Minister said the processing of the funds was largely through the relevant federations but payment was made directly by government. Each athlete, he said, was entitled to a claim capped at

R20 000. "On the 23rd of April, more than 300 applications were received and the disbursement of relief funds to successful applicants began. On 24 April, 93 successful applicants received their relief funds." After re-submission of applications were referred back to the federations, Mthethwa said a total (aggregate) of 473 applications were received from 25 sporting federations. "We made a point at the time that the sector is going to be the hardest hit by the pandemic since the necessary measures to curb the spread of the virus were detrimental to the sector," said Mthethwa. The sport adjudicators, by April 23, had received 300 applications. The disbursement of funds to successful applications began the following day. Mthethwa said the department was concerned by the large number of declined applications. "We are concerned that a number of people did not succeed. These applications come from historically disadvantaged backgrounds. We need to do due diligence to adhere with criteria agreed upon. We are thinking that we need to do something to ensure that people who need this assistance get it," said the Minister. Reasons for declined funding applications included applications missing documents and no proof of event cancellation. – SAnews.gov.za

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