COVID-19 had, and continues to have, a significant impact on the 2020 sporting calendar, with the summer Tokyo Olympics postponed until 2021 and cancellation of a number of other sporting events and tournaments.1 Athletes and their sports are now slowly returning to a ‘new normal’ during this COVID-19 pandemic,2 and as athletes return to their sport in the coming months, we are expecting to see a number of athletes who develop suspected COVID-19 symptoms or indeed test positive for COVID-19. In our roles at sporting facilities/sports organisations, what is our responsibility to both the athlete with suspected COVID-19 symptoms and/or who test positive for COVID-19 as well as the other athletes and staff working within this environment?

First, to minimise the spread of COVID-19, athletes and their support staff need to ensure appropriate physical distancing, hand hygiene, use of face masks, limiting social contacts and considering modified forms of the sport.3 Second, over the coming months as athletes return to sport, there are certain symptoms that we should be alert to and have a high index of suspicion for COVID-19. As per current UK public health recommendations, COVID-19 should be suspected in those with a3:

► New continuous cough.
► A high temperature.
► Change in taste and/or smell.
As well as other reported symptoms including diarrhoea.4

WHAT ARE THE KEY ACTIONS FOR SPORT CLUBS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF COVID-19 TO THEIR ATHLETES?
All sport clubs should5:

► Perform a specific COVID-19 risk assessment.6
► Develop a COVID-19 plan.
► Have a designated isolation area for those with suspected COVID-19 symptoms.
► Screen those attending their sporting venue for COVID-19 symptoms to prevent those athletes attending their venue when unwell.
► Maintain attendance records at their venue for 21 days to facilitate contact tracing.
► Encourage use of the local contact tracing app.

IF, DESPITE THE ABOVE PREVENTATIVE MEASURES, AN ATHLETE DOES PRESENT TO THE SPORTING VENUE WITH SUSPECTED COVID-19, WHAT SHOULD I DO AS A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL CARING FOR A SPORTS CLUB?

► Advise the athlete to put on a face covering immediately.
► If they can and are medically fit to do so, leave the venue immediately via their own transport.
► If they are unable to leave the sporting venue immediately, move them to the designated isolation room.
► If the isolation area is used, minimise personnel accessing the room, and if the room is accessed, use appropriate personal protective equipment and

Infographic. Managing a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case: a guide for sports
Alan Rankin ,1,2 Neil Heron3,4
Infographic

maintain social distancing, if at all possible.

► If too unwell for home, contact an ambulance for transport to hospital and ensure to inform the ambulance staff of a suspected case of COVID-19.

► The sports session can continue if there are no other relevant concerns and no other athletes and staff are unwell.

► Arrange a deep clean of all affected areas attended by the athlete with suspected symptoms and/or a confirmed positive case of COVID-19.

If the athlete has not yet attended the sporting venue with suspected COVID-19 symptoms or a swab positive result, they should remain at home and self-isolate. If they become unwell, they can contact their own general practice/primary care service and either arrange a COVID-19 test through them or self-isolate. If they become unwell, they should remain at home and isolate. If they become unwell, they can contact their own general practice/primary care service and either arrange a COVID-19 test through them or self-isolate.

All positive cases will be informed to their sport and the sporting club, depending on the number of positive cases at a particular sporting venue. All positive COVID-19 cases in athletes should follow the return to sport guidelines for COVID-19.7

For those with suspected COVID-19 symptoms that actually have a negative COVID-19 swab, they can return to sport 48 hours after becoming asymptomatic.

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