

SASNOC OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE

MATTER: SAMOA TRIATHLON FEDERATION

1st AUGUST 2023

The Samoa Association of Sports and National Committee (“SASNOC”) wishes to communicate its official position with regards to the Samoa Triathlon Federation (“STF”) matters.

Name and Independence (SASNOC as per its Constitution)

1. There exists and shall continue to exist an incorporated society named the SAMOA ASSOCIATION OF SPORTS AND NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (INCORPORATED) which is a non-governmental and not for profit organization, of perpetual succession, duly registered in Samoa pursuant to the Incorporated Societies Ordinance 1952 as administered by the Ministry of Commerce, Labour and Industry.

2. As declared under Article 15 of the Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa and the “Olympic Charter”, SASNOC has and shall continue to be an independent body and shall resist any and all pressures of any kind whether of a political, religious, racial or economic character and shall always endeavor not to make or impose any policies, decisions, rules, regulations or laws that discriminate against any person or body on any or all of these grounds.

Qualifications for Membership

3. (a) The members of SASNOC shall meet the following conditions in order to be recognized and registered as SASNOC members:

- (i) Be nationals of Samoa (for individual members or representatives of legal entities).
 - (ii) Enjoy civil rights and shall not have been convicted of any criminal offense.
 - (iii) Be legally constituted and registered pursuant to the Incorporated Societies Ordinance 1952 (for National Federations, Sports Bodies and Organizations) and be affiliated to the International Federations concerned (for National Federations).
 - (iv) Must prove or demonstrate that it is, has or will conduct real and on-going sports activity including development and competition, and is affiliated to an International Federation recognized by the IOC or internationally recognized and be governed by and comply in all aspects with both the Olympic Charter and/or the rules of its International Federation.
 - (v) Act in accordance with the Olympic Charter, the IOC Code of Ethics, the World Anti-Doping Code and this Constitution.
- (b) SASNOC shall not recognize more than one national federation for each sport governed by an International Federation.

The Samoa Triathlon Federation (“STF”) is a registered member under the SASNOC National Federations Affiliated Members 2023.

Attempts by SASNOC to help resolve the dispute by Triathlon

To clarify SASNOC's position in attempting to assist the Triathlon parties resolve their issues, the following key actions had been taken:

1. Receiving and responding to the Samoa Triathlon Federation ("STF") communications from Mr. Afoa Seti Afoa as well as Mr. Darren Young and Ms. Lani Wendt in terms of the STF attempts to secure an Special General Meeting (SGM) with its members;
2. Communicating clearly to STF that all matters pertaining to its Federation are to be managed and decided internally by its Executive Committee and Members in its SGM;
3. SASNOC invited both parties to meet at SASNOC and agree to resolve its issues. This meeting was unsuccessful;
4. SASNOC had played a supporting role in accommodating requests by the Triathlon parties with availing meeting facilities, hosting and observing some of its meetings including the SGM held on June 15th 2023 at the SASNOC conference room, where three (3) SASNOC Executive Board members were present, strictly as observers;
5. Following the above-mentioned SGM, and noting issues that arised from both parties, communicated to SASNOC by both parties (Arthur Mulitalo/Darren Young/Suzie Poort and Seti Afoa), the SASNOC Executive Board held a Special Board Meeting, on 21st June 2023, to address the issues that arised from the SGM;
6. SASNOC then provided further written guidance to the STF via Mr. Seti Afoa and Mr. Arthur Mulitalo in its letter on 22nd June 2023;
7. That SASNOC recognizes only one National Federation and furthermore, for the parties to seek legal advice on its constitution, including the process on how it was amended resulting in two conflicting viewpoints by the members;
8. SASNOC had also advised the Triathlon parties to seek an Accredited Mediator to assist in resolving their disputes, within the same written communication dated 22nd June 2023. SASNOC had provided a listing of Accredited Mediators to Mulitalo and Afoa;
9. SASNOC clearly stated in its communication (22June23) that it does not accept the two (2) Executive Board selections as communicated by the two parties to SASNOC;
10. Following the above communication based on guidance and advice, SASNOC has noted a number of mainstream and social media releases by Ms. Lani Wendt and Mr. Darren Young that has attracted public comments, that have caused distraction and diversion, other than the main issue at hand – that being for the STF and its members to resolve their issues in an agreed manner and process, that will stand to remedy standing matters and allow its athletes and coaches to continue to participate and enjoy the sport of Triathlon including representing Samoa at the highest level.
11. The SASNOC Board met again on 7th July 2023, to address the media level of articles targeting SASNOC as unfair and unwarranted. At this meeting the Board agreed to suspend the STF from its SASNOC membership, until it resolves its key issues as alluded to in (6, 7, 8 and 9) above. The suspension also provides clear guidelines as to the reinstatement of the membership as per points below:
 - a. It has resolved all its internal dispute;
 - b. It has complied with all statutory requirement at MCIL, and;
 - c. It has resolved all its issues pertaining to its constitution, and;
 - d. It has presented SASNOC with one duly elected Executive, and;
 - e. Provided proof of restoration as a registered incorporated society with MCIL.

12. Despite the genuine efforts of SASNOC, the dispute between the parties remains unresolved and is not conducive for the wellbeing of athletes and the promotion of the sport of Triathlon. SASNOC therefore after careful consideration has determined that the parties must refer their dispute to the Samoa Sports Disputes Tribunal to be presided over by a Judge appointed by His Honor the Chief Justice and two members appointed by the Head of State acting on the advice of Cabinet.

It must be said also that in light of the up and coming SOL23 Pacific Games' required preparations for Team Samoa and its athletes, coaches and management, the focus for SASNOC and its members, must be concentrated on these national priorities. Triathlon as a sport, is part of this voyage.

Currently the Commonwealth Youth Games are about to open in Trinidad and Tobago, where two (2) Sports from Samoa in Athletics and Swimming with a total of seven (7) athletes, will participate.

RWC Paris 2023 is just around the corner and a number of Olympic Qualifying events for Paris2024, are currently being contested by a number of our sports including Samoa Weightlifting Federation, with its latest high achievements at the Commonwealth Championships in New Delphi, India.

Here ends.