

**PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON GRASSROOTS
SPORTS DEVELOPMENT GLOBALLY: A CASE STUDY OF LAGOS STATE**

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Abstract

Over the past decades, there has been history of pandemic across the globe, such as Asian flu, Cholera, Ebola, and small pox, but none has been this devastating, so terrifying and holding the entire world to a standstill like covid-19. The first case of the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Nigeria was announced on the 27th February, 2020 when an Italian citizen in Lagos tested positive to the virus caused by SARS-CoV-2. On the 9th March, 2020 a second case was reported in Ewekoro, Ogun State to be a Nigerian who had a contact with the first victim. The survey research method was adopted for the study through collection of secondary data from the internet search engine. As each day passes, the COVID-19 situation becomes horrific as the number of casualties increases. A virus that seemed so insignificant spiraled quickly out of control and suddenly schools were closed down for months, workers resorted to working from homes except for the essential workers, borders were closed, airlines shutdown, sports facilities closed and mandatory lockdown became eminent in Lagos State, Ogun state and the FCT. As the world proceeded normally and calmly, things suddenly became uncontrollable. Within couples of days, events that seemed to be definite became postponed or fully terminated, for example the national sports festival that was to hold in Edo state Nigeria was put off, also all preparations for the much awaited Nigerian Universities Games {NUGA} was immediately put on hold..

Key Words: COVID-19, Development, Grassroots, Perceived, Sports, NUGA- Games

Introduction

In 2020, the world witnessed the emergence of a new viral zoonotic pathogen causing an outbreak of Coronavirus disease referred to as COVID-19 because it was first discovered in November, 2019.

The pandemic outbreak, which originated from Wuhan Hubei province, China, has extended to over all the provinces of the country such as Henan, Anhui,

Jiangxi, Guangdong, Zhejiang, Chongqing, Sichuan, etc and other closely connected countries, such as Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, South Korea, and Japan, among others in Asia. It also stretched to other countries in Europe, America, Africa, and as a result, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (Holshue, 2020)).

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It is an understatement to say that March 11, 2020 was not eventful in the sports world. In fact, there were plenty of things going on, but it will be remembered for reasons beyond sports. The level of preparedness of the Lagos State Athletes for the 2020 National Sports Festival tagged Edo 2020 witnessed a great momentum but was suddenly truncated by its postponement due to the novel COVID-19 pandemic as announced by the Minister of Sports. Lagos State Athletes already in closed camp were decamped after allowances and necessary medical screening have been observed (Nariwoh, 2020).

In the same vein, the full preparation for the much celebrated Nigerian University Games Association (NUGA), a National University Sporting event was also quickly put on hold as all schools in the country were forced to close down and University students were sent home indefinitely (Awoyinfa, 2020).

With another player contracting the virus in the United States of America and the news of the spread across the globe, the Lagos State Government through the Director General, Lagos State Sports Commission canceled all age grades sporting events across the five administrative divisions, suspended sports leagues and clinics for coaches. Both public and private sports facilities and recreational centres in the State were also closed with a view to curb the spread of the deadly Coronavirus disease.

Therefore, the study seeks to examine the perceived influence of COVID-19 on Sports Development in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Concept of COVID-19 from a Global Perspective

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an illness caused by the novel coronavirus disease which causes severe acute respiratory syndrome. Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2; formerly called 2019-nCoV) was first identified amid an outbreak of respiratory illness case in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, in China and was reported to the World Health Organisation (WHO) on December 31, 2019.

Biscayart (2019) indicated that on 30th January, 2020, WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global health emergency and on 11th March, 2020, WHO declared COVID-19 a global pandemic which makes its first of such designation since declaring H1N1 influenza a pandemic in 2009. However, illness caused by SARS-CoV-2 was recently termed COVID-19 by WHO being the new acronym derived from Coronavirus disease 2019.

The name was chosen to avoid stigmatizing the virus's origin in terms of population, geography, or animal association. On 11th February, 2020, the Coronavirus Study Group of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses issued a statement announcing an official designation for the novel virus termed Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (New York Times, 2020).

Sport on the other hand can be defined as an organised, recreational, competitive and a skillful physical activity, which asks for devotion and fair play. Sport is an institutionalized competitive activity that involves vigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by individuals whose participation is motivated by a combination of

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intrinsic satisfaction associated with the activity itself and the external rewards earned through participation (Nariwoh, 2019).

Sports have been part of civilized societies throughout history. In Greece, in the fifth century B.C., sport was of central importance to other times as during regressive asterism era of the Middle Ages. Sports were officially frowned at but they were still enjoyed by common people in villages and towns.

In all indications, sports are timeless activities enjoyed by humans in the ancient times, as exemplified by the Greek Olympic Games. Indeed, ethnographic and archaeological evidences such as cave paintings and the accounts of early European explorers indicate sports may well go back to the very beginning of humankind. Many of the sports played and celebrated today such as football, even have their roots in various kicking and running ball games played throughout the medieval period (Nariwoh,2019).

Furthermore, as each day passes, the Covid-19 situation fluctuates. A virus that seemed so insignificant spiraled quickly out of control putting the world in a state of comatose.

Perceived Effect of POST Covid-19 on Sport Participation

Sports are categorized as team, racket, individual, traditional and by their probability for collision or contact. In collision sports e.g. boxing, wrestling, Judo, taekwondo and Karate, athletes could hit or

collide with each other or inanimate objects, including the ground with great force. In team sports e.g. basketball, football, handball, volleyball, etcathletes routinely make contact with each other or inanimate objects but usually with less force than in collision sports(Nariwoh, 2019).

In racket sports like tennis and squash,contact with other athletes or inanimate objects is infrequent or inadvertent. Some individual sports like cycling, gymnastics amongst others can be as dangerous as contact or collision sports.

The physical activity includes movement of people and/or different objects – sports equipment. At the same time, sport includes non- competitive activities, like jogging, running, exercising, walking which are usually classified as recreation. It means using of time designed as a physical, health and mental refreshment of the human body.

Sport is generally recognised as a system of activities that are based in physical athleticism or physical dexterity.Nonetheless, either of the above mentioned sport categories are extremely susceptible to the Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) because it involves the use of hands. In fact, it has been revealed that individuals with underlying medical conditions or chronic diseasesare greatly at risk of contracting this virus.

According to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC,2020), coronaviruses are common in camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Person-to-person transmissions are thought to occur when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza

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and other respiratory pathogens spread. Experts believe the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads mainly from person to person. This can happen through the following ways:

Droplets: When an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks, droplets with the virus fly into the air from their nose or mouth. Anyone who is within 6 feet of that person can breathe those droplets into their lungs.

Airborne transmission: Research shows that the virus can live in the air for up to 3 hours. When you breathe air that has the virus floating in it, it gets into your lungs.

Surface transmission: Another way to catch the new Coronavirus is when you touch surfaces that someone who has the virus has coughed or sneezed on. You may touch a countertop or doorknob that is contaminated and then touch your nose, mouth or eyes. The virus can live on surfaces like plastic and stainless steel for 2 to 3 days. To stop it, clean and disinfect all counters, knobs and other surfaces you and your family touch several times a day.

Fecal-oral: Studies also suggest that virus particles can be found in infected people's excreta. However, experts are not sure whether the infection can spread through contact with an infected person's stool. If that person uses the bathroom and does not wash their hands, they could infect things and people that they touch.

The virus most often spreads through people who have symptoms but it may be possible to pass it on

without showing any signs. Some people who do not know they have been infected can pass it on to others. This is called asymptomatic spread. You can also pass it on before you notice any sign of infection, called presymptomatic spread. Sometimes, a person can trace how they got the virus because they know that they have been in contact with someone who is sick hence the close of all sporting facilities and recreational centres. In other cases, the cause is unknown. Symptoms of COVID-19 are cough, high temperature and shortness of breath as a result adverse effect on the respiratory tracts (Rodriguez, 2019).

The advice of knowledgeable experts, the current health status of the athlete, the level of competition, the position played, the sport in which the athlete participates, the maturity of the competitor, the availability of effective protective equipment that is acceptable to the athlete, the availability and efficacy of treatment, whether treatment (e.g, rehabilitation of an injury) has been completed, whether the sport can be modified to allow safer participation and the ability of the athlete and parents to understand and accept risks involved in participation which used to be put into consideration is not even an option because of how dangerous Covid-19 is compared to other viruses (Clement, 2020) .

Unfortunately, adequate data on the risks of a particular sport for an athlete with a medical problem which are often limited or lacking as an estimate of risk becomes a necessary part of decision-making. However, total restriction from the public sports facilities is now the great counsel to the athlete and family contact with affected person in order to flatten the curve.

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The Lagos State Government immediately closed all public avenues to recreate, in order not to lose more life to the pandemic. Moreso, this is an additional characteristic relevant to athletes with cardiovascular or pulmonary disease from contracting the Covid-19 faster. A strenuous sport can place dynamic (volume) and static (pressure) demands on the cardiovascular system. These demands vary not only with activities of the sport but also with such factors as the associated training activities and the level of emotional arousal and fitness of the competitors (Millan-Oñate, 2020).

Global perspective reveals that 2020 Tokyo Olympics has been postponed till 2021. NBA, MLS, NHL seasons and MLB spring training have been suspended.

opening day delayed, fan festivities at NFL draft in Las Vegas; start of MiLB season delayed, NCAA tournament canceled both the men's and women's tournament and all spring and winter NCAA championships; XFL suspended; Premier League suspended (Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee)

Fitzsimmons(2020), highlighted numerous changes in sporting events making reference to Masters Tournament postponed; Kentucky Derby postponed; Ivy League conference tournament; BNP Paribas Open (tennis); Serie A; Nippon Professional Baseball and KBO Opening Day; the next three LPGA events, the Volvik Founders Cup, the Kia Classic and the ANA Inspiration; MotoGP Grand Prix of Americas; New York half marathon; 2020 McDonald's All American

Games; Bahrain Grand Prix and Vietnam Grand Prix (F1); University of Cincinnati spring football game; USOC media summit; Combate Americas (MMA); E32020 (esports); all NESCAC spring sports; the College Basketball Invitational and FIS Women's World Cup races.

All Ivy League spring sports; La Liga; Homestead-Miami Speedway NASCAR races; all Patriot League spring sports; ATP men's tennis tour; ACC, AAC, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12, SEC tournaments; all combat sports in California and Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach.

The Players Championship, Valspar Championship, WGC-Match Play, Valero Texas Open; Boston Marathon; USA Basketball; Bellator 241; Missouri high-school basketball state championships; IOC boxing qualifiers; PGA Championship; 24 Hours of Le Mans; Formula 1 Dutch Grand Prix, Spanish Grand Prix and Monaco Grand Prix; Start of NWSL regular season; Australian Football League; Formula 1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix; Indianapolis 500 Games were all postponed indefinitely (Silverstein, 2020)

COVID-19 has caused shutting down and postponement of various sporting events in Lagos State, NUGA games amongst Nigerian Universities and across the globe (Awoyinfa 2020). It is also on record that the fear of COVID-19 has also occurred in Lagos State and locally at UCI as well. With all the major leagues and professional sporting events being cancelled or postponed indefinitely, almost every, if not all college tournaments follow suit as they are cancelled. A little over 20 different basketball tournaments for both men and women were

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cancelled, including the upcoming Big West tournament that was supposed to be held during the weekend of 13th-15th March, 2020 (Nariwoh,2020).

In addition, major League Soccer in the USA such as the United Soccer League and NHL followed the trend of suspending regular season games in order to protect players from the risk of contracting and spreading the virus.

Recommendations

Having done an in-depth analysis on the influence of post-COVID-19 pandemic on Sports Development in Lagos State, the following are hereby recommended:

1. Obeying the rules of staying at home as directed by the government,
2. Practicing social distancing if there is need to be outside the confines of your home,
3. Information Technology inclined through virtual teaching of sporting skills (Robotic Training) by coaches and individual practice by athletes inform of imagery,
4. Cleaning and fumigation of the environment,
5. Building of immune system through balanced diet,
6. Washing of hands every thirty seconds with soap and under running water,
7. Wearing of nose masks and being kitted with the medical equipment when going for shopping and
8. Playing a sport or exercise with your family by doing 3-5 minutes of physical movement, such as walking or stretching, which will help

ease muscle strain, relieve mental tension and improve blood circulation.

Conclusion

Analysis has been made on the Coronavirus outbreak and the spillover on grassroots sports development in Lagos State which obviously will influence underdevelopment of sports because all sporting facilities have been shutdown and as such no games, clinics, talent hunts is taking place. Revenue from the sports facilities amounting to millions of naira monthly have been put on hold. Developing local markets have been put in a state of jeopardy because researches report that local sports events have the capacity to attract large number of people, initially from the local and surrounding areas where sports events take place and progressively expand.

Finally, this has also become a security threat in Lagos communities and neighboring states as the teeming youth have taken to the streets. Sport generally is a laboratory for character development and a veritable platform of discovering and developing to stardom. It has a lucrative way of gainfully involving, engaging and empowering young people thereby taking them off the streets from being involved in social vices but this is missing at the moment because of the deadly COVID-19 which will trigger global recession in 2020.

Policy makers in many countries are under pressure to respond to the Coronavirus outbreak. As a result, many governments made fast policy decisions that had far-reaching negative effects on their respective economy making many countries to plunge into recession unknowingly. Across the world and to

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varying degrees, sporting events have been cancelled or postponed; spectators have no games to watch and players no games to play until the COVID-19 pandemic curve is flattened.

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