

5th August 2022

Press Release

Selection of players for Commonwealth Games 2022 Birmingham

Sri Lanka Squash (SLS) regrets the negative press surrounding the selection process of national players for the Commonwealth Games 2022 and wishes to clarify the facts to its players, sponsors, supporters and squash community. As we are stewards of the sport in Sri Lanka, we are duty bound to adhere to the rules and regulations of the Federation and be accountable to all players in a consistent and transparent manner. Hence there is a need to clarify the facts regarding the Commonwealth Games 2022.

Sri Lanka's No. 1 national player Ms. Fathoum Issadeen has communicated via both digital and public media her views leading to her exclusion from Sri Lankan women's team for the Commonwealth Games 2022 Birmingham, UK.

All eligible players were invited to participate in the national selection trials. The procedure used was common to both men and women.

Ms. Fathoum Issadeen the No 1 women's ranked player won the first trial match but lost the second trial match to the No 2 ranked player. Her third trial match which was to be on the next day, had to be postponed because she failed to turn up for it but 30 minutes prior to the commencement of the game she communicated via email that she was injured.

In compliance with our procedures, SLS advised her to visit the Sports Medicine Unit at the Ministry of Sports and obtain necessary relief. The relief/rest directed by the medical authorities was duly provided and trial stoppage was communicated to the other participants. Additionally, two further extended dates were also provided at her request enabling the completion of trials. Amidst this, she abruptly informed SLS of her intention of leaving the country in mid-April and returning after one and a half months. She further requested a fresh trial and also to be included in the list of players for the Commonwealth Games, bypassing the trial process.

SLS informed the player that as per the diagnosis and recommendation of the Sports Ministry's Sports Medicine Unit, she will be required to complete the remaining selection trial matches in compliance with the accepted trial process. We also notified her in writing that any failure to do so will result in her name not being included in the final list of players who will be eligible to participate in the Commonwealth Games. During this period of time we accommodated a total of 3 extensions to the women's No 1 player.

On July 6th 2022 Ms. Issadeen filed action in court and in her petition she specifically sought an interim order preventing the shortlisted candidates pursuant to the said trial process from representing Sri Lanka at the Commonwealth Games without the inclusion of the Petitioner in the women's squad. Now, she sought relief to be included in the squad on the basis of a foreign resident and a world ranked player.

SLS stiffly resisted the said interim order on the basis that the Petitioner who had evidently failed to participate in the trial process should not be permitted to stop players who have been selected pursuant to the trial process from representing Sri Lanka at the Commonwealth Games.

However, SLS informed court that whilst Ms. Issadeen had failed to participate in the trials conducted in terms of the selection criteria, SLS will not object to Ms. Issadeen being included in the squad notwithstanding her ineligibility (due to her failure to participate in the trials/ having lost one game) as long as the remaining players who had duly participated and shortlisted pursuant to a rigorous trial process are not prejudiced by Ms. Issadeen's inclusion into the 2022 Commonwealth Games squad.



SLS also informed court that any decision to make any exception whatsoever will be at the hands of the National Selection Committee, National Sport Selection Committee and the Ministry of Sports in terms of the imperative provisions of the Sports Law.

When matters remained as such, SLS was shocked to note that notwithstanding making several exceptions permitting Ms. Issadeen to participate in the trials conducted by SLS, Ms. Issadeen had participated in a squash tournament overseas during the said rescheduled period of the trials amidst her claim that she was undergoing treatment.

Finally, we wish to highlight to the squash community, our sponsors and interest groups that SLS has adhered to the rules and regulations in a consistent and transparent manner with no intention of prejudice towards any player. We believe that while squash is an individual sport, the players represent the country. As such it is critical that we apply all rules equitably and consistently to all players regardless of their standing.

Sri Lanka Squash