With just under four weeks to go until the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) believes the host city is in impeccable condition.

Successful test events have been held and lessons learned incorporated into Games planning to ensure excellent conditions for the athletes to perform at the highest level.

IOC Olympic Games Executive Director Christophe Dubi said: “[With] one month to go we are into the fine, very fine details I would say. We have had an excellent campaign of test events, we've learnt a lot. Modifications, slight modifications, have been made to the operational plans. The venues are ready. They look fantastic. They have now received the look of the Games and frankly it's impeccable.”

Dubi was speaking one day after his arrival in the Chinese capital and after the IOC held a series of the traditional consultation calls with athlete representatives from around the world, the National Olympic Committees and the International Olympic Winter Sports Federations. They were also joined by the Beijing 2022 Organising Committee.

During the calls Juan Antonio Samaranch, Chair of the IOC Coordination Commission for Beijing 2022 told stakeholders everything is on track to stage a safe Olympic Winter Games for all participants and the people of Beijing.

As Games participants begin to arrive in the Chinese capital, IOC President Thomas Bach stressed that now is a critical time for everyone to be extra vigilant and even before departing for Beijing they should already follow the measures laid out in the Beijing 2022 Playbooks.

President Bach said: “Beijing starts now for all of us. We must do everything to ensure that the Olympic dreams of athletes are not taken away just days before departure. The Playbooks are not just a rule book – they should now be a way of life”.
Some of the Playbook rules were addressed again during the calls. The IOC Medical and Scientific Director, Dr Richard Budgett, emphasised that athletes and Games participants with an essential role can continue participating at the Olympic Games, even if they are defined as a close contact to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19. A special regime for close contacts is in place for such cases, including testing twice a day and special arrangements for travel and dining. For example, conditions are in place to ensure the quality of meals, and athletes will also be able to draw on mental health support at all times.

The stakeholders connected on all three consultation calls voiced their full support for the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 and the measures in place to ensure the safety of all involved.

Athletes and Games participants who test positive for COVID-19 and are asymptomatic will be discharged from quarantine once they have two consecutive negative COVID-19 (PCR) test results with at least 24 hours between the two samples and no other COVID-19 symptoms. They will then be released into the close-contact management system, i.e. tested twice per day, but allowed as a close contact to carry on their essential activities related to the Games without being isolated. For athletes, that means they would be able to continue training and competing. Each situation will be reviewed by a Medical Expert Panel (MEP) made up of top-level Chinese and international medical experts.

The Olympic Games Beijing 2022 will take place from 4 to 20 February 2022 and will be followed by the Paralympic Games from 4 to 13 March 2022.

00:09 SOUNDBITE: Christophe Dubi, IOC Olympic Games Executive Director (English Language)
Question: How are the final preparations for the Games going with just under a month to go?
“Well, you know, one month to go we are into the fine, very fine, details I would say. We have had an excellent campaign of test events, we’ve learnt a lot. Modifications, slight modifications, have been made to the operational plans. The venues are ready. They look fantastic. They have now received the look of the Games and frankly it’s impeccable. So, very confident at this stage.”

SHOTLIST:
00:41 SOUNDBITE: Christophe Dubi, IOC Olympic Games Executive Director (English Language)
Question: You arrived in Beijing with your team yesterday, can you briefly explain how the arrival procedure and entry into the closed loop system went?
“The arrival into Beijing and the closed-loop was a seamless operation. Very, very good training for all the staff. The only thing we couldn’t see were the smiles behind the masks. But for the rest, really it was impeccable. It took us between 35 to 40 minutes from the moment we came down from the plane, into the bus, straight into the hotel. So honestly it’s incredible what they have done. This experience I’m certain will be the same for everybody coming after us. So we were the guinea-pigs, but I would say that they were already very, very well trained.”
01:25 SOUNDbite: Christophe Dubi, IOC Olympic Games Executive Director
(English Language)
Question: Can you explain the importance of Games participants following the Playbook rules even before their departure to Beijing?
“The Playbooks actually should be a way of life. This is our way to create safe conditions for all participants. Those Playbooks for Beijing have been refined since the first edition that we used in the context of Tokyo, and we had assistance from a number of experts including WHO (World Health Organisation). This is really those rules that have to be followed, but not only at the time of the Games, already now. Wearing a mask, using gel, why not self-testing when it's possible, it is really important that those preventive measures are in place for everybody from now to avoid contracting the virus and spoil what is coming up, which is travel in the next days, in the next weeks. So following the Playbook is immensely important, starting now.”

02:22 SOUNDbite: Christophe Dubi, IOC Olympic Games Executive Director
(English Language)
Question: What happens if an athlete is defined as a close contact during the Games? How are they supported?
“Well, the first thing that is essential when you’re a close contact, is that being an athlete, or for that matter an official, the role will continue. Although the conditions will be slightly different. Instead of being tested once a day, it is going to be testing twice a day. As an athlete, you will be able to train, to compete as well, which is excellent. But, for example, the gym will be separate. The dining will be separate as well. Transportation will be separate too, in order to avoid that others become close contacts. So the rules are really designed to protect everyone, to make sure that the roles can be fulfilled, especially for the athletes. But, as well as limiting possible contamination. So everything has been done. No stone unturned from the Organising Committee side.”

03:20 SOUNDbite: Christophe Dubi, IOC Olympic Games Executive Director
(English Language)
Q. What is the procedure for athletes who test positive for COVID-19 but are asymptomatic?
“Should an athlete unfortunately test positive, he or she would have to return two negative PCR tests separated by 24 hours. Then, he or she would move to a regime where the test will be made twice a day. This is an improvement compared to the conditions we had in Tokyo where actually quarantine of minimum 10 days was imposed. So, again two negative PCRs separated by 24 hours. This is very flexible.”

03:59 SOUNDbite: Christophe Dubi, IOC Olympic Games Executive Director
(English Language)
Question: You were on the three consultation calls with athletes representatives, NOCs and Winter IFs yesterday, how was the feeling amongst them towards the upcoming Games?
“Well, the feeling was one of excitement. Everybody mentioned that they can't wait to be here in Beijing and for the Games to open on the fourth. Everybody understands as well what we repeated, that is to live by the Playbook rules from now until they arrive into the closed loop which will be very, very safe. But there is a lot of excitement. Obviously the Games for all of us, and for the athletes in particular, is the main objective within the
four-year cycle. So they are prepared. The athletes yesterday evening, this was the last call, were incredibly supportive but also very excited to be here with us.

04:47 SOUNDbite: Christophe Dubi, IOC Olympic Games Executive Director (English Language)

Question: What happens if an athlete tests positive just before departing for Beijing?

"Should an athlete test positive shortly before his or her departure, we want to make sure that there is still an option to come to Beijing. Preparation for many years to be spoiled at the very last minute, this is something we want to avoid at any cost. So what we have put in place is a mechanism where each situation can be reviewed by a panel of experts."

05:17 SOUNDbite: Christophe Dubi, IOC Olympic Games Executive Director (English Language)

Question: Concretely what does this mean?

"Concretely each and every situation will be reviewed in great detail. We owe it to the athletes to be as forensic as we can. Because for years, they've been preparing to come to these Games. And to be with us on the occasion of the Opening Ceremony on the 4th of February."

05:36 National 'Big Air' Ski Jumping Centre wide
05:39 Wide of Half-pipe event venue, Genting Snow Park
05:42 Aerial view of Yanqing National Sliding Centre
05:46 Downhill skiing course at Yanqing National Alpine Skiing Centre
05:50 Time Lapse of Beijing public skiing at Yanqing National Alpine Skiing Centre
05:53 Animated video of Beijing 2022 Olympic mascot Bing Dwen Dwen and Paralympic mascot Shuey Rhon Rhon.
06:09 Spectators social distancing and wearing masks at National Indoor Stadium
06:12 Action from Ice Hockey test event
06:17 Pairs Figure Skating test event at Capital Indoor Stadium
06:22 Seating at Ice Cube curling venue
06:27 Curling test event at Ice Cube venue
06:35 Sign with anti-covid instructions in Chinese and English language
06:38 Entrance to venue with masked official on door
06:42 Wide aerial of National Speed Skating Oval

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