

## World Championships 2017: Botswana to honour Isaac Makwala if he wins 200m gold

Written by BBC Sport  
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Botswana will hold a national holiday in honour of Isaac Makwala if he wins 200m gold at the World Championships.

Makwala, whose exploits in London have been a major talking point this week, races in the final later on Thursday.

On Tuesday he was barred from the 400m final, as officials tried to halt a "very virulent" norovirus outbreak.

But he returned and progressed from an individual 200m time trial on Wednesday - he was quarantined for Monday's heats - and celebrated by doing press-ups.

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The 30-year-old, who said he is "still running with a broken heart" will be going up against South Africa's Wayde van Niekerk, who on Tuesday dominated the 400m race for which Makwala said he had been training.

Botswana's Sports Minister Thapelo Olopeng told BBC Sport the country would also pay Makwala the \$10,000 (£7,500) he would have received from the government had he won 400m gold.

"The president has set aside a certain day for him," said Olopeng. "It will be a public holiday for people to come and meet Makwala and all over the country there will be celebrations with music and dancing. The man has lifted the name of our country higher and higher, and he deserves this welcome as our hero."

The minister said that the country had submitted a further complaint about the handling of the issue by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), the world governing body.

"The way he performed yesterday [in the 200m qualifiers] he showed no signs of ailment and I don't understand why the IAAF has continued with the same decision," Olopeng said.

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"They should call for a re-run or give him the same opportunity as they did in the 200m [a time-trial run on his own]. They have not responded and if they don't then we will take the matter forward, we have a legal team waiting to give us advice on how far we can take it.

"What happened to our athlete has created a lot of displeasure in the country and we are very unhappy. To me it's a great disappointment."

The IAAF - criticised for its decision to stop Makwala running in the 400m final - allowed him another chance to compete in the 200m after receiving a written request from the Botswanan federation.

Makwala, who qualified second fastest behind the United States' Isiah Young, has the quickest season's best and personal best of the nine-man field.

Van Niekerk, running his fifth race in as many days, only made it through as a fastest loser.

Meanwhile, the number of people associated with the World Championships who have reported illness has risen from 30 to 40, Public Health England announced.

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The body said that three cases have been confirmed as norovirus by laboratory testing.

The IAAF defended its actions and said it was under instruction to quarantine athletes who showed symptoms of the virus.

It acknowledged Makwala's absence was "a sad case" but said its medical staff examined the athlete and notes taken by a doctor showed he had been vomiting over an 18-hour period.