

*More than 500 to isolate after
COVID case at hotel during
Australian Open*



The Australian Open with up to 30,000 spectators expected daily at Melbourne Park under guidelines which allow for up to 50 percent capacity. (Photo: Loren Elliott/Reuters)

Melbourne, February 4 (RHC)-- More than 500 tennis players and officials in Melbourne for the Australian Open have been told to isolate and get tested after a worker at a hotel they use tested positive for COVID-19.

Daniel Andrews, Victoria state's premier, called a late-night news conference on Wednesday to make the announcement and urged anyone with symptoms in Melbourne to get tested. Andrews said the case could have an effect on some of the six tune-up tournaments being held this week ahead of the Australian Open.

He added that any players, coaches or officials who quarantined at the Grand Hyatt hotel in Melbourne are deemed to be casual contacts of the 26-year-old infected man and are required to isolate until they have returned a negative test. "It may have an impact on tomorrow's play in the lead-up events. But at this stage, there's no impact to the tournament proper," he told reporters. Australian Open organizers did not immediately have details on how many players would have to isolate.

The hotel advertises it has 550 rooms, including 25 premium suites, so potentially hundreds of people could be involved. It could also test the resolve of players who have recently come out of a two-week quarantine and give ammunition to critics of the decision to allow people to fly in from all over the world for the Australian Open.

The Australian Open is scheduled to start on Monday, with up to 30,000 spectators expected daily at Melbourne Park under guidelines which allow for up to 50 percent capacity. Everyone who arrives in Australia must undergo a mandatory 14-day quarantine under the COVID-19 pandemic regulations.

The infected worker tested negative on his last day at the hotel on January 29 but subsequently tested positive and has been working with government and health officials on contact tracing.

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