



**UPDATE 4 - 5 MARCH 2020**

## **INFORMATION FOR PARA ATHLETES AND IPC MEMBERS REGARDING CORONAVIRUS**

With multiple sport events being cancelled or postponed in recent weeks the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has published a guide for athletes, National Paralympic Committees (NPCs) and International Federations regarding the coronavirus and its impact on the Paralympic Movement.

First and foremost, the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games are going ahead as planned and preparations continue apace.

The IPC is keeping a close eye on the impact of coronavirus and are in regular dialogue with the World Health Organisation (WHO), the IOC and our own Medical Committee on this matter.

Countermeasures against infectious diseases constitute an important part of Tokyo 2020's plans to host a safe and secure Games. Tokyo 2020 will continue to collaborate with all relevant organisations which carefully monitor any incidence of infectious diseases and will review any countermeasures that may be necessary with all relevant organisations.

We have full confidence that the relevant authorities will take all the necessary measures to address the situation. This includes the ongoing containment measures which has led to the cancellation of several events and mass public gatherings.

Athletes should continue training and building their excitement for the Opening Ceremony in the spectacular Tokyo Olympic Stadium on 25 August.

### **LATEST WHO UPDATE**

The WHO should remain your main source of information regarding this matter. Each day the WHO publishes a [Daily Status Report](#) regarding the virus and global efforts to contain it.

**INTERNATIONAL PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE**

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As of 4 March 2020, there are 93,090 confirmed cases worldwide in 68 countries since the outbreak began and 3,198 deaths.

In Japan, there are 284 cases and there have been six deaths.

It should also be noted that the daily number of confirmed cases in China has been dropping each day since February.

The WHO does not believe this is a pandemic.

## **IMPACT ON TOKYO 2020 QUALIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION**

A combination of restrictions by local authorities to contain the virus, an unwillingness to travel, and other factors has led to the cancellation of several Para sport events.

The cancellation of these events, many of which are qualifiers for Tokyo 2020 and/or offer classification opportunities, is having an impact on the plans of National Paralympic Committees and athletes.

- Each international federation is responsible for the qualification criteria for their sport. The IPC is in regular dialogue with each international federation and offering support where needed.
- All International Federations impacted by cancelled events are currently reviewing their qualification criteria for Tokyo 2020 and looking at possible solutions.
- Changes to the Tokyo 2020 qualification criteria will be published [here](#).
- The IPC is in regular dialogue with each international federation regarding the impact of cancelled events on classification opportunities, as well as athlete eligibility.
- For some international federations, rearranging classification opportunities is more difficult when the global situation regarding travel and competitions are changing daily. The International Federations and IPC are continuously monitoring the impact and working to try to find solutions.
- Please check relevant International Federation websites for the latest updates on qualification and classification.

## **POSTPONED OR CANCELLED EVENTS**

Last updated 5 March 2020

### **SUMMER SPORTS**

#### **March**

- 11-14 - IWAS Wheelchair Fencing World Cup, Sao Paulo, Brazil
- 11-15 - ITTF Fa40 Para China Open, Hangzhou, China (postponed)
- 11-22 - 2020 World Shooting Para Sport World Cup, Al Ain, UAE
- 12-15 - Tokyo 2020 Wheelchair Rugby Test Event
- 14-17 - World Para Athletics Grand Prix, Dubai, UAE
- 14-18 - IWAS Wheelchair Fencing Americas Championships, Sao Paulo, Brazil
- 18-21 - ITTF Fa20 Lignano Masters Open 2020, Lignano, Italy (postponed)

#### **April**

- 2-9 - IWAS Wheelchair Fencing Asian Championships, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand
- 2-9 - IWAS World Games, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand (Postponed to 10-17 December)
- 14-20 - 11th Fazza Dubai 2020 Para Powerlifting World Cup, Dubai, UAE
- 24-26 - World Para Athletics Grand Prix, Beijing, China
- 27-30 - FISA Asia and Oceania Continental Paralympic Qualification Regatta, Chung-ju, KOR (postponed to 8-10 May and relocated)

#### **May**

- 1-3 - World Para Swimming World Series, Singapore
- 26-31 - IWAS Wheelchair Fencing European Championships, Hatfield, Great Britain
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### **WINTER SPORTS**

#### **March**

- 2-5 - World Para Alpine Skiing Europa Cup Speed Finals, Sella Nevea, Italy

## **CANCELLED EVENTS IN JAPAN**

Several sport events have recently been cancelled or postponed in Japan, including Paralympic Test Events in boccia and wheelchair rugby. This is not because of a widespread outbreak in the country but in effort to limit and prevent further spread.

As Japan's Prime Minister Abe said on 26 February: "Now is truly the critical moment to contain the outbreak swiftly."

These cancellations will have no impact on the Paralympic Games opening as planned on 25 August.

## **TRAVELLING TO AND FROM SPORT EVENTS**

Although some sport events have been cancelled, the majority are still going ahead. Our advice to anyone planning to travel to an event is as follows:

- Follow the official recommendations from the [WHO](#), your national Government and the national government of the destination you are travelling to.
- Check if there are any travel restrictions. The [International Airline Transport Association](#) has a page that is constantly updated with travel restrictions worldwide
- In the days prior to your journey, please check your own personal health, review any immigration of transit
- If possible, purchase flexible air tickets so that if plans do change you can receive a reimbursement

## **THE VIRUS**

### **WHAT IS CORONAVIRUS?**

Coronavirus is a respiratory virus that is transmitted from person to person through contact with an infected person through respiratory droplets, most commonly through coughing and sneezing. The common cold and influenza are respiratory diseases that are also transmitted in this way.

### **SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT GETTING CORONAVIRUS?**

The threat of catching coronavirus is much lower than getting seasonal flu however as this is a new disease it needs to be taken seriously.

To put it into perspective, every year around the world there are five million severe cases of influenza, which causes 500,000 deaths. Currently, according to WHO (as of 4 March 2020) the number of coronavirus infections is 93,090 worldwide (in 68 countries) and 3,198 deaths have been reported - our understanding is that only individuals of age or with associated health conditions have died from coronavirus.

In making our decisions, the IPC continue to be guided by the WHO and the local authorities. The WHO is urging governments and organisations to keep things in perspective and stressing that personal risk is extremely low. For those that do get coronavirus, in over 80% of cases the symptoms are mild, such as a running nose, sore throat, cough and fever.

### **WHY IS SUCH A FUSS BEING MADE OF CORONAVIRUS?**

It's partly because it is a 'new' disease, and because it has become a major media story globally.

As coronavirus is a new disease it's taking scientists time to understand its impact. As they need to develop a vaccine that doesn't currently exist, the best way to deal with the disease is to put in countermeasure restrictions. It's why countries like Japan and Italy have cancelled sporting events, for example.

It is also very hard to avoid media coverage of coronavirus, some of which has over-sensationalised the disease and its impact. For example, one of the reasons why there has been a global run on face masks is because the media tends to use images of people wearing masks. The reality is masks are only needed to be worn by those who already have the disease to prevent further contamination.

### **WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT CATCHING IT?**

The most important recommendation is to diligently apply the WHO good practices to reduce the general risk of transmission of infectious disease. Measures include:

- **Wash your hands frequently**, especially after direct contact with ill people or their environment
- People with symptoms of acute respiratory infection should practise cough etiquette (maintain distance, cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing, and wash their hands)
- Exchange/replace towels/cloth regularly (bathroom/kitchen)
- Avoid close contact with people suffering from acute respiratory infections

- Avoid unprotected contact with farm or wild animals.

## **LATEST IPC MEDIA STATEMENT**

Preparations by the IPC and Tokyo 2020 for this summer's Paralympic Games continue as planned. We are of course, keeping a very close eye on the impact of coronavirus and are in regular dialogue with the World Health Organisation, the IOC and our health experts on this matter.

Countermeasures against infectious diseases constitute an important part of Tokyo 2020's plans to host a safe and secure Games. Tokyo 2020 will continue to collaborate with all relevant organisations which carefully monitor any incidence of infectious diseases and will review any countermeasures that may be necessary with all relevant organisations.

We have full confidence that the relevant authorities, in particular in Japan and China, will take all the necessary measures to address the situation.

## **IMPORTANT WEBSITE LINKS**

- [World Health Organisation](#)
- [International Airline Transport Association](#)
- [Tokyo 2020 Qualification Criteria](#)