

## **The IPC's update on coronavirus disease (COVID-19) – 20/08/2020**

*The purpose of this biweekly update is to keep everyone within the Paralympic Movement informed of the latest developments with the COVID-19 pandemic and how it relates to the Paralympic Games and Para sport.*

**This week's update contains the following information:**

- **The journey back to athlete classification, by Agata Anderson, World Para Athletics Classification Co-ordinator**
- **IPC and Tokyo 2020 updates – includes the IPC's One Year To Go plans**
- **World Health Organisation update**

As we approach one year to go to the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, we have some more progress in a return to the 'new normal'. This week in Poland, the first athlete classification was held since early March.

In our lead article this week, Agata Anderson of World Para Athletics details the journey that classification has been on. While it has been a long five months, the team have not been standing still and have been looking for an opportunity to classify as sport returns. Thanks to a great deal of cooperation from Local Organising Committees (LOCs) also keen to classify, there is now the opportunity to see how classification can be done securely and safely in a COVID-19 world. We hear from those in Poland who made it possible and understand what adaptations have had to be made.

The next two weeks are sure to be busy as we celebrate One Year To Go activities and the launch of the IPC's #WaitForTheGreats campaign. There is also more exciting news regarding the Netflix Paralympic movie 'Rising Phoenix'. For both, we very much need the support of the Paralympic community – these are many opportunities over the next two weeks to extend the awareness of the Paralympic Games and Para sport.

We want this mail to continually highlight initiatives that National Paralympic Committees (NPCs), International Federations (IFs) and athletes are doing. If you would like to let us know about your story or raise awareness of any other initiative, then please get in contact at [ipc.media@paralympic.org](mailto:ipc.media@paralympic.org).

## **The journey back to athlete classification, by Agata Anderson, World Para Athletics Classification Co-ordinator**

None of us expected 2020 to be like this, certainly not in Classification, where we were anticipating a busy year of a different kind. World Para Athletics (WPA) initially scheduled 12 classification opportunities across the world in the 2020 event season. However, only two of them were delivered prior to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.

The WPA got caught in that cycle - gradual cancellation of events, increased travel restrictions, and the postponement of the Paralympic Games in Tokyo. Ultimately, it meant we were no longer able to classify as normal. The last time there was any athlete classification was 2-8 March in Australia.

Over five months on, as we approach one year to go to the Games, a shared concern by many NPCs is 'how am I going to get my athletes classified prior to the Games?' The WPA has the largest number of the athletes scheduled to compete in Tokyo, which means we also have the largest number of athletes that are required to undergo classification prior to Games.

We have not been standing still. The WPA has been carefully monitoring the worldwide situation looking for any possibility to safely resume classification activities. Fortunately, the WPA has built up positive relationships with LOCs over the years, some of whom expressed their willingness to host WPA international classification, even during these uncertain times.

Once the European Union's border started to reopen, we decided to use this opportunity to explore offering a classification opportunity in this region given the relaxed travel restrictions for local athletes and classifiers.

The Polish LOC intimated that they would be willing to help, and for us it was a sensible choice: they have already had experience in organising a successful WPA competition and classification. For them too, it was good practice as they look to host the European Championships in 2021. The 48<sup>th</sup> Polish Open Para Athletics Championships has been our return to the 'new normal'.

So how has it gone? It has been an intense few weeks of preparations: Our tasks have included securing the available classifiers, exploring the interest and possibilities of the NPCs in participating in this event at that time, and managing the extensive risk assessment.

This was done in cooperation with the Polish LOC in relation to the [IPC Classification hygiene and infection control guidelines](#) during COVID-19. The circumstances required us to be very vigilant and careful as we knew that the dynamic situation with COVID-19 may change multiple times and some decisions that are out of our control - such as travel restrictions - may have impacted our plans.

Fortunately for us, they did not and the classification in Cracow, Poland started on Monday, 17 August. Due to the extra measures that have been put in place to ensure classification could be delivered in accordance with the IPC hygiene and infection control guideline, we decided to organise the classification opportunity on a reduced scale.

The classification team in Crackow has included only one classification panel and a chief classifier (compared to normally having two or three panels), the classification days prior to the competition are increased to four days (compared to the usual three days), and classification was offered to 18 athletes. That way we secured the adequate breaks between the athletes' assessment to sanitise the equipment, allow fresh air circulation and ensured the highest level of safety.

The best way to explain how it has gone is to share some of the feedback from those involved.

#### **Classifier - Rudi Van den Abbeele, Chief Classifier**

"Coming back to classification feels like a first step back to 'normal' life. As a classifier, I was hungry to go back and meet the team, local organisers, athletes and volunteers. Also, from the athlete side, they are enthusiastic being back in competition.

"COVID-19 has meant some practical changes. The IPC Hygiene and infection control guidelines is reinforcing a respect between classifiers and athletes. The other big thing to note is that the cleaning of the classification room is taking an important amount of time, but health and safety is paramount.

"In spite of the reinforced hygiene guidelines, classification remains classification, athlete centred, respectful towards all involved parties. I would say, besides the increased respect of the hygienic guidelines, there is no difference."

#### **LOC - Marcel Jaroslowski, Competition Director**

"We've had over 250 athletes this week, mostly from Poland but there are athletes from six countries: Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Malta and Portugal.

"Everything is different now, but you adapt. Practically we had to get some extra equipment and sanitising products. Planning of the rooms was also very important in order to reduce the interference between people to minimum. Fortunately, the pandemic didn't change the classifiers. They remained friendly and understanding, so working with them still is a pleasure.

"Although these are challenging times, we're happy with how this week has gone. We could see it during our first Para athletics event in Sieradz two weeks ago that athletes and coaches have really missed the competitions. Here, in Cracow we have a feeling that we are back to the sports life and that we can finally do our job and remain optimistic."

#### **Athlete - Agnieszka Borowska, Poland, Javelin Throw, Shot Put and Discus Throw F55**

"Everything was very well organised. It was my first classification so at the beginning I was very stressed, but the classifier helped me, and in the end, I was

very relaxed about the whole experience. It was great to be back in competition: I was happy about my results and I know what I should do in training now.”

For us as the WPA management team, this was a very purposeful and useful return to action. We believe that this event will be a successful experience which allows us to see that classification can continue to take place safely under the current circumstances and keeps us motivated to explore other classification opportunities across the world in these unprecedented times.

## IPC & Tokyo 2020 updates

### One Year To Go activities

Over the next two weeks, the IPC will be celebrating One Year To Go (1YTG) until the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. We wanted to highlight ways how Members can support and amplify the campaign.

The Games will be held between 24 August-5 September 2021 and this campaign will run from the 1YTG mark until 6 September, the date the Closing Ceremony should have been held in 2020.

Please think how you can engage in and share our content and help us to amplify the campaign to Games fans. We want to maximise the impact of the 1YTG plans in order to raise awareness for and drive interest in the Paralympic Games.

#WaitForTheGreats is the campaign theme – we want to show the strength of Paralympians and power of the Paralympics. We can't have the Games now, but in a year, we will, with our athletes, members, partners and broadcasters put on an amazing show of strength for the world.

Key activity over the next two weeks includes:

#### 24 August

- 1YTG until Tokyo Paralympics. [A powerful short video](#) will be launched simultaneously on IPC, partners, broadcaster, membership and athlete/influencer channels.
- We want stakeholders to start using #WaitForTheGreats on social media, with an emoji hashtag on Twitter.
- Launch of the IPC's #WaitForTheGreats: [athlete-generated content](#) and [graphics](#) will be shared across accounts of athletes and members of the Paralympic Movement.

25-26 August

- To mark the original date of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Opening Ceremony, there will be a [24-hour Instagram Live relay](#) featuring athletes and key people of the Paralympic Movement.

26 August

- Official launch of [Rising Phoenix](#), the Paralympic Movement documentary on Netflix.

28 August

- Our first [Paralympic Podcast](#) will be launched together with Allianz.

29 August

- [Global Rising Phoenix Conversation](#) - We are inviting staff, Para athletes, teams, officials, friends, family and fans to come together around the world to 'press play' at the same time on Netflix, enjoy Rising Phoenix together from the comfort of your homes and to share your reactions to the incredible stories in the film. The event will take place at 21:00 CEST.

Until 5 September

- Continued athlete-generated content with the hashtag #WaitForTheGreats, [Instagram Takeovers](#), [Paralympic challenges](#) and [re-runs of live streams and great moments](#). This content will also be available to share and cross-post.

5 September

- [The Closing Act](#) - a musical performance to celebrate the end of the campaign.

#### 'Rising Phoenix' - Movie title track unveiled ahead of film launch and a 'Global Conversation'

The wait is almost over. Rising Phoenix, the ground-breaking movie about the Paralympic Movement, will premiere in over 190 countries worldwide on Netflix on Wednesday, 26 August.

Following hot on the heels of trailer is the lyric video for the title track of the movie. Coldplay, one of the world's most famous bands, Coldplay, helped us premiere 'Rising Phoenix'. Coldplay are brilliant supporters of the Paralympics and performed at the London 2012 Paralympic Games Closing Ceremony. The message in their social post was: "Performing at @Paralympics 2012 with @Rhianna, Jay-Z and @Paraorchestra was one of our proudest moments."

Please share their passion by helping us promote this amazingly powerful work, which was written and performed by three disabled hip-hop artists, to your network.

The links to the lyric video that you can share on your channels

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/paralympics/posts/10158130061576281>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Paralympics/status/1296484640853614593?s=20>

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/tv/CEHi4RyltEB/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/tv/CEHi4RyltEB/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

YouTube: [https://youtu.be/NAan\\_DEeQKA](https://youtu.be/NAan_DEeQKA)

Rising Phoenix tells the extraordinary story of the Paralympic Games. Athletes featured in the film include Bebe Vio (Italy), Ellie Cole (Australia), Jean-Baptiste Alaize (France), Matt Stutzman (USA), Jonnie Peacock (UK), Cui Zhe (China), Ryley Batt (Australia), Ntando Mahlangu (South Africa) and Tatyana McFadden (USA).

### **'Global Rising Phoenix Conversation' on 29 August**

To celebrate the release of the film, we invite you to join a global conversation on the weekend that originally would have seen great sporting action at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

On Saturday, 29 August, we are inviting Para athletes, teams, officials, friends, family and fans to come together around the world to 'press play' at the same time on Netflix, enjoy 'Rising Phoenix' together from the comfort of your homes and to share your reactions to the incredible stories in the film. Netflix, HTYT Films and IPC will be joining the conversation primarily on Twitter, but other channels can also be used.

The event will take place on Saturday 29 August starting at 5:00am Australian Eastern Standard Time / 12:00pm Pacific Time / 3:00pm Eastern Time / 4:00pm Brasília Time / 8:00pm British Summer Time / 9:00pm Central European Summer Time / 9:00pm South Africa Standard Time.

We would be grateful if you could please inform your athlete community and stakeholder network about this event by promoting it ahead of time via your own social media accounts. To encourage people to join the global conversation, please feel free to use the official trailer, the film artwork and the "Tweet-along Save the Date". On the day, please encourage people to share their reactions to the film using #RisingPhoenix. More information will follow in the coming week.

If you would like access to the latest promotional materials, please contact [philip.dorward@paralympic.org](mailto:philip.dorward@paralympic.org)

### Tokyo 2020 Paralympic competition schedule

The full schedule is available on the Tokyo 2020 website.

### Tokyo 2020 Qualification

The qualification regulations for all 22 sports can be found here:

<https://www.paralympic.org/tokyo-2020/qualification-criteria>

### Para sport event postponements and cancellations

The list of cancelled Para sport events remains on the IPC website and is being regularly updated. You can find details [here](#).

## **World Health Organisation update**

According to WHO's latest Daily Situation Dashboard on 20 August 2020 15:16 CEST, the number of confirmed worldwide cases has risen to nearly 22.3 million, with over 782,000 deaths confirmed. John Hopkins University of Medicine is reporting that nearly 14.4 million people have recovered.

The IPC continues to use the WHO and their [site](#) as its main source of information regarding the COVID-19. It provides regular situation reports and have a wide range of guidance on health and protection, travel advice, as well as extensive myth-busting and technical guidance sections.

Their '[Key planning recommendations for mass gatherings in the context of COVID-19](#)' guidance can be accessed on this link.

### WHO's WhatsApp messaging service

WHO's WhatsApp messaging service is providing the latest news and information on coronavirus in seven languages: Arabic, English, French, Hindi, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish.

#### **Arabic**

Send "مرحبا" to +41 22 501 70 23 on WhatsApp

[wa.me/41225017023?text=مرحبا](https://wa.me/41225017023?text=مرحبا)

#### **English**

Send "hi" to +41 79 893 18 92 on WhatsApp

[wa.me/41798931892?text=hi](https://wa.me/41798931892?text=hi)

#### **French**

Send "salut" to +41 22 501 72 98 on WhatsApp

[wa.me/41225017298?text=salut](https://wa.me/41225017298?text=salut)

#### **Hindi**

Send "नमस्ते" to +41 22 501 73 41 on WhatsApp

<https://wa.me/41225017341?text=नमस्ते>

#### Italian

Send "ciao" to +41 22 501 78 34 on WhatsApp

<https://wa.me/41225017834?text=ciao>

#### Spanish

Send "hola" to +41 22 501 76 90 on WhatsApp

[wa.me/41225017690?text=hola](https://wa.me/41225017690?text=hola)

#### Portuguese

Send "oi" to +41 22 501 77 35 on WhatsApp

<https://wa.me/41225017735?text=oi>