



World Para Taekwondo Newsletter

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2020 Paralympic Update



Azerbaijan Qualifies Full Slate, Korea Avoids Embarrassment

There we have it, folks – the field is set for Para Taekwondo's Paralympic debut!

After the pandemic-postponed continental Paralympic Qualification tournaments wrapped up, and 8 lucky fighters received Bipartite Invitations by the IPC and World Taekwondo, the field of 72 fighters has been finalised.

As a reminder, qualified athletes won positions for their countries – not themselves, meaning that countries can decide which athlete to choose. *[Bipartite invitations are the exception.]*

This will make for some difficult decisions for countries like Turkey (#2 **Mahmut Bozteke** or #4 **Ali Can Ozcan** in -61 kg) and Russia (#2 **Magomedzagir Isaldibirov** or #4 **Vladimir Feofanov** in -75 kg, and one of #3 **Zainutdin Ataev**, #4 **Aliskhab Ramazanov**, or #9 **Bilal Iakhiaev** in +75 kg).

Japan, too, won't have to name its three representatives until later this summer. So, the Para Taekwondo world will have to wait to see whether **Chikaro Ito** (#10 in K44) or **Kenta Awatari** (#5 in K43) will compete in -61 kg and whether **Shunsuke Kudo** (#8 in K44) or **Mitsuya Tanaka** (#4 in K43) in -75 kg will join world champion bronze medalist **Shoko Ota** (+58 kg) when they host the Paralympics this summer at home in Tokyo.

Paralympic Qualification Tournaments

We finally learned who would win Para Taekwondo's final Paralympic berths as the European and Asian Paralympic Qualification tournaments were held last month in Sofia, Bulgaria, and Amman, Jordan.

Ahead of the tournaments, athletes from Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan joined their Uzbekistani counterparts for

a training camp in Tashkent – and the results showed.

Azerbaijan qualified four fighters for Tokyo – the maximum possible through the qualification tournaments. **Imamaddin Khalilov** (-61 kg), **Abulfaz Abuzarli** (-75 kg), **Royal Fataliyeva** (-49 kg), and three-time world champion **Aynur Mammadova** (+58 kg) are all headed to Japan.

Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan each qualified two fighters, meaning that the three countries together secured 8 of 12 available Paralympic licenses.

Zukhruddin Tokhirov (-61 kg) and **Ziyodakhon Isakova** (-49 kg) qualified for Uzbekistan, while **Nyshan Omirali** (+75 kg) and **Kamilya Dosmalova** (-58 kg) will represent Kazakhstan.

Great Britain also qualified two fighters – reigning world champion **Matt Bush** (+75 kg) and newcomer **Beth Munro** (-58 kg).

South Korea avoided the embarrassment of not qualifying a single fighter when **Jeonghun Joo** calmly claimed his spot in the -75 kg division.

Unranked newcomer **Shahab Rayehe** (+58 kg) will join former world champions Mehdi Pourrahnama (-75 kg) and Asghar Aziziaghdam (+75 kg) in representing Iran in Tokyo.

Bipartite Invitations Awarded

There were initially three Bipartite Invitations to be awarded – to those divisions in which Japan was not sending an athlete as host.

The number increased when some positions were not claimed by athletes through the rankings (women's K43 -58 kg) or the Paralympic Qualification tournaments (Oceania).

Finally, two fighters from Australia that had qualified through the rankings were unable to claim the licenses due to injury or other personal circumstances.

In total, 8 athletes from 8 countries were offered bipartite invitations.

The list includes Aruba's **Elliot Loonstra** (+75 kg), Costa Rica's **Andres Molina** (+75 kg), the Philippines' **Allain Ganapin** (-75kg), India's **Aruna** (-49 kg), Afghanistan's **Zakia Khudadadi** (-49 kg), Serbia's **Marija Micev** (-58 kg), Jamaica's **Shauna-Kay Hines** (-58 kg) and Nepal's **Palesha Goverdhan** (-58 kg).

Overall, 72 athletes from 37 nations will compete to claim their part of Para Taekwondo history when the sport makes its long-awaited Paralympic debut this summer in Tokyo.

****NOTE: This information is correct at the time of publication.***

To see highlights from the European Paralympic Qualification tournament, visit <http://www.worldtaekwondo.org/competition/view.html?nid=138139&mcd=M02&sc=vi>.

To see highlights from the Asian Paralympic Qualification tournament, visit <http://www.worldtaekwondo.org/competition/view.html?nid=138176&mcd=M02&sc=vi>.

Continental Championships Return



Mexico and Brazil Dominate Pan American Championships

It was a triumphant return to open international competition last month when Cancun, Mexico hosted the **Pan American Open championships**.

31 athletes from 7 countries traveled to the resort Mexican city to compete in the first open tournament since the European Open Championships in Bari, Italy in November 2019.

Mexico and Brazil dominated the event, winning five of the seven divisions. Paralympic-bound stars like **Juan Diego Garcia Lopez** (Mexico), **Evan Medell** (USA), **Angelica Espinosa** (Peru), and **Nathan Torquato** (Brazil) all cruised to Pan American Open gold medals.

The tournament featured a stunning moment when Brazil's **Silvana Ferdandes** shocked Denmark's previously undefeated **Lisa Gjessing**, the No. 1-ranked four-time world champion, snapping her seven-year win streak.

Next up are the Asian Open Championships in Beirut, Lebanon on 15 June and the African Open Championships in Niamey, Niger on 26-27 June.

For more information, please visit <http://www.worldtaekwondo.org/wtnews/view.html?nid=138182>



Preparations for Paris 2024



New Rules to Come into Effect on 6 September

If this were a standard year, talk would be dominated by how our Paralympic champions would fare at this autumn's world championships in Wuxi, China, and which fighters had the best chance to topple them.

But this isn't a standard year.

Lost in the excitement of Para Taekwondo's Paralympic debut are the preparations being made for the Paris 2024 tournament – now just three years away!

While World Para Taekwondo works diligently to have a spectacular Paralympic debut and the biggest Para Taekwondo tournament in history this summer in China, plenty of important changes are set to come into effect on 6 September, effectively kicking off the next Paralympic Games cycle.

New Weight Classes, More Medal Events

One of the biggest changes athletes will see is the increase of medal divisions from three to five weight categories.

These changes come into effect on 6 September and will be in place for the Para Taekwondo World Championships in Wuxi, China in October.

The new weight categories are as follows:

Men

-58 kg
-63 kg
-70 kg
-80 kg
+80 kg

Women

-47 kg
-52 kg
-57 kg
-65 kg
+65 kg

All Member National Associations should respond to the survey about New Weight Categories as soon as possible.

Sport Classes Reviewed

To continue to make the sport safer, fairer, and more transparent, World Taekwondo completed a review of Para Taekwondo sport classes and medal events.

A Delphi Study was completed by using a series of online questionnaires and in-person roundtable discussions from the 2019 World Championships in Antalya, Turkey, and physical research with athletes at the 2019 Asian Open and European Open championships.

The academic study looks at key areas for future research into Para Taekwondo's classification system.

The results were published in a research paper titled 'Expert consensus statement to guide research into evidence-based classification of athletes for Para Taekwondo – A Delphi Study', written by classifiers including Hee Seong Jeong, David M. O'Sullivan, Primoz R. Rus, and Ashanti Ramirez Montes de Oca.

The study and physical research composed the basis for the full review of the Kyorugi sport classes, which were proposed by the Classification Committee and passed by the World Taekwondo General Assembly (93-1).

To read the full academic paper on classification in Para Taekwondo, visit <https://jomh.org/articles/10.31083/jomh.2021.019>.

To review the new rules, please visit http://www.worldtaekwondo.org/viewer_pdf/external/pdfjs-2.1.266-dist/web/viewer.html?file=http://www.worldtaekwondo.org/att_file/documents/World%20Para%20Taekwondo%20Athlete%20Classification%20Rules%20as%20of%20September%206,%202021.pdf.

If you have any questions, please contact World Para Taekwondo at para-tkd@worldtaekwondo.org.

Para Taekwondo Competition Calendar



- (International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)
- Africa Para Taekwondo Open Championships G4/G2 - June 26-27 - Niamey, Niger
(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)
- Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games - September 2-4 -Tokyo, Japan
(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)
- Wuxi 2021 World Para Taekwondo Championships - October 21-22 - Wuxi, China
(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)
- Oceania Para Taekwondo Open Championships - November 18 - Papeete, French Polynesia
(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)
- World Taekwondo President's Cup - Asia - November 18 - Nablus, Palestine
(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)
- 2021 Asian Youth Para Games - November 28 - December 7 - Bahrain
- 2021 World Taekwondo Grand Prix Final G10 - December - TBA

UPCOMING COURSES REGISTRATIONS OPEN NOW!



Here's a quick 'shout out' to all those coaches and federations that **sent in clips of their training sessions**. They look wonderful! Be sure to keep sending those videos to para-tkd@worldtaekwondo.org.

Now is the time to get your coaches and classifiers certified!

You will not be allowed to coach in international, World Taekwondo-sanctioned events if you do not have your certification!

To facilitate the process of new athletes being internationally classified, it is important for your MNA to certify its own national classifiers.

If you have any questions about the trainings or registration, please contact the World Para Taekwondo office ASAP.

10th Para Taekwondo ONLINE International Coach Certification Course [Level II]

- Course: 9-11 June (11:00-14:00 GMT-5). Registration **Deadline: 4 June 23:59 GMT-5**

[Click to Register for Para Taekwondo Courses](#)

Para Taekwondo Around the World

Africa:

Tunisia Celebrates Paralympic Day with a Para Taekwondo Demonstration

The National Paralympic Committee of Tunisia celebrated Paralympic Day last month on 29 May. To help celebrate, **Abdel Razzak Souissia**, a technical advisor to the Tunisia National Paralympic Committee, joined Tunisian youth radio to talk about a Para Taekwondo demonstration in El Kef.

For more (in Arabic), visit

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=4218021881598635>.



Asia:

Afghan Fighters Impress at Paralympic Qualifier

All three Afghan fighters that competed at the Asian Paralympic Qualification event in Jordan last month came home with bronze medals. **Zakia Khudadadi** (-49 kg), **Zubair Haidary** (-61 kg), and **Abdul Matin Hotak** (-75 kg) all fell just short of winning their Paralympic licenses by stumbling in the semifinals. Taekwondo is a popular sport in Afghanistan thanks in part to the success of **Rohullah Nikpai**, who won the country's first

Olympic medal – bronze in Beijing in 2008 – and repeated the feat four years later, winning bronze in London in 2012. The Para team's success was featured in several media outlets, including Radio Free Europe.

Azerbaijan applied for – and received – a bipartite invitation for Khudadadi, meaning that Afghanistan will have at least one fighter looking to replicate Nikpai's Olympic successes.

To read the Radio Free Europe article, visit <https://da.azadiradio.com/a/31270148.html>.

Iran Creates Women's National Team, Qualifies for Paralympics

For the first time, Iran formed a national women's Para Taekwondo team through a selection camp in February. **Fatemah Dodangeh** (-49 kg) and **Rayeh Shahab** (+58 kg) were selected for the team and took part in last month's Asian Paralympic Qualification tournament in Jordan. Unranked before the tournament, Shahab ended up earning her Paralympic license and will join former world champions **Mehdi Pourrahnama** (-75 kg) and **Asghar Aziziaghdam** (+75 kg) in Tokyo.

"We have tried to prepare the athletes for the [Paralympic Qualification tournament] in the best conditions and facilities provided by the [Iranian] Taekwondo Federation", national team coach Atefeh Keshavarz explained to the Iranian Students News Agency. "Of course, since this team is young and does not have the experience of participating in overseas competition, we can't have an accurate assessment of their [chances]."



For the full interview, please visit <https://www.isna.ir/news/99121713188/%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%AF%D9%88-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%DB%8C-%D8%AA%DA%A9%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%88%DA%A9%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%A8%DB%8C-%D9%BE%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%BE%DB%8C%DA%A9>.



Kazakhstan Taekwondo Federation Celebrates its Paralympic-Bound Athletes

The Kazakhstan Taekwondo Federation was pleased to see **Nyshan Omirali** (+75 kg) and **Kamilya Dosmalova** (-58 kg) qualify for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games last month, where they will join two-time world champion teammate **Nurlan Dombayev** (-75 kg).

To see its Facebook post to mark the achievement, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/kaztkd>.

Korea's Joo Brings Tears of Joy to Many by Qualifying for Tokyo 2020

Not only did Korea's **Jeonghun Joo** (-75 kg) allay the fears of a nation by finally qualifying a fighter from the country that birthed the sport, he also brought tears of joy to someone far more close to home – literally – his grandmother, **Kim Bun-seon**. His grandmother was responsible for Joo when a terrible accident caused him to lose his hand when he was two years old. She never forgave herself. "Every time my grandmother saw me, she cried and said she was sorry", Joo told Yno.co.kr. "I will wipe my grandmother's tears at the Tokyo Paralympic Games." Joo will get that chance after a dominant performance at the Asian Paralympic Qualification tournament, where he won his Paralympic license after a 53-17 win over Mongolia's **Shinebayer Batbayar** in the final.



To read more about his qualification for Tokyo, check out this story on Seoul.co.kr - <https://www.seoul.co.kr/news/newsView.php?id=20210525025019>.

To read more about his grandmother, visit <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20200131002700007>.



Philippines' Impresses at Asian Paralympic Qualifier

The Philippines' **Allain Ganapin** (-75 kg) so impressed the Philippines Taekwondo Association at the Asian Paralympic Qualification tournament that the organisation prepared a thank you infographic to appear in a story in the Manilla Bulletin. Ganapin lost to Mongolia's **Shinebayer Batbayar** in the semifinal in Jordan.

In the end, Ganapin will end up representing the Philippines at the Tokyo Paralympic Games after receiving a bipartite invitation.

To read the full story, visit <https://mb.com.ph/2021/05/24/allain-ganapin-gets-bronze-but-misses-tokyo-olympics-spot1/>.

Uzbekistan's Paralympic-Bound Isakova Profiled in National Media

Uzbekistan's **Ziyoda Isakova** was featured in a profile by Kun.uz – one of the country's largest online news agencies. The 2017 IWAS World

Games runner-up had to dig deep to get by Iran's Fatemeh Dodangeh in the -49 kg final. Teammate **Zukhriddin Tokhirov** also qualified for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games by winning the -61 kg division (although the article does not mention this). Both fighters will join **Guljonoy Naimova** (+58 kg), who qualified for the Paralympic Games last year through the world rankings.

To read the full story, please visit <https://kun.uz/uz/news/2021/05/26/ozbekiston-tumanilik-sportchi-ziyoda-isoqova-tokio-2020-yollanmasini-qolga-kiritdi>.



Europe:

Azerbaijan Taekwondo Federation Beaming After Qualifying 4 Fighters to Tokyo 2020

The Azerbaijani Para Taekwondo has been reaping in the accolades since going undefeated and qualifying all four of its fighters at the European Paralympic Qualification tournament. A crowd was on hand to greet the team at the airport on its arrival and the team met with governmental officials a few days later. "Our goal is to see our Para Taekwondo fighters [become] the most powerful in the world", said Azerbaijan Taekwondo Federation vice-president Nagi Safarov. "Despite the difficulties of the coronavirus pandemic, you showed heroism. You proved to the whole world that despite the difficulties, you are strong. The four fighters that qualified for the Paralympic Games from Azerbaijan are **Imamaddin Khalilov** (-61 kg), **Abulfaz Abuzarli** (-75 kg), **Royala Fatliyeva** (-49 kg), and three-time world champion **Aynur Mammadova** (+58 kg).

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For more on the story, please see the story on Allsport.az at <https://allsport.az/qalib-parataekvondocularla-gorus/>.

Georgia's Megrelishvili Causes Social Media Stir for Setting New Records

Georgian media was basking in the record-breaking performances of its fighters at last month's European Paralympic Qualification tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria. Para Taekwondo is new in Georgia and the team saw unexpected success from its two young fighters at the tournament. **Lia Chachibaia** made the final in the -49 kg category, falling to Azerbaijan's **Royala Fatliyeva**. **Sandro Megrelishvili** (-75 kg) lost in the semifinal, but not before breaking two records in his quarterfinal win. Megrelishvili set records for most points (89) and biggest margin of victory (72) in a dominant 89-17 quarterfinal win. The performance set off a social media stir with several organisations sharing his accomplishment.

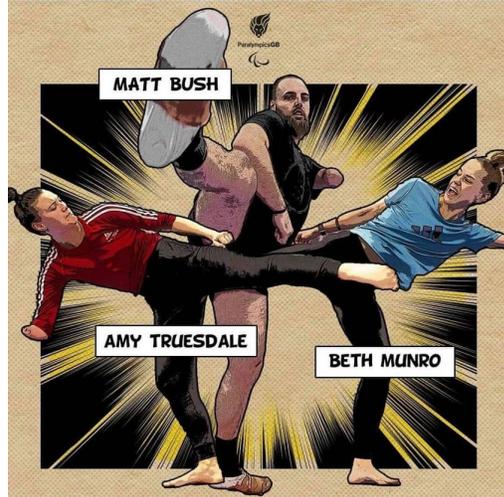


For more, check out this story on Georgia's First Channel - <https://1tv.ge/news/saqartvelos-parataekvondos-nakrebis-ori-medali-da-ori-mokhsnili-rekordi-1tvspor/>.

BBC Covers Great Britain's Successes at the European Paralympic Qualifier

The BBC, one of Great Britain's leading news organisations, covered the successful qualification attempts of world champion **Matt Bush** (+75 kg) and newcomer **Beth Munro** (-58 kg), who both won their Paralympic licenses at the European Paralympic Qualification tournament in Bulgaria. "It feels so good", Bush told BBC Sport. "It's been three years of uncertainty and not knowing what would happen." BBC Wales also did a video interview with Bush, noting that he is the first Welsh athlete selected for the Tokyo Paralympic Games.

(Photo credit: ParalympicsGB)



To read the BBC Sport article, visit <https://www.bbc.com/sport/disability-sport/57049929>

[fbclid=IwAR32yumT18NX6ggmyqk1PsrBvYFir3aWMRPknKEEG-Ur_t9n2WmZbqxDpL4.](https://www.facebook.com/ParalympicsGB/)

To view the BBC Wales video interview, visit <https://www.bbc.com/sport/av/disability-sport/57262860>.

Serbia No Show at Paralympic Qualifiers Makes National News

Major news organisations in Serbia took notice when no Serbian fighters appeared at last month's European Paralympic Qualification tournament in nearby Bulgaria. Several fighters that had Paralympic ambitions did not compete at the tournament, including 2019 world championship silver medalist **Marija Micev** (-58 kg) and No. 7-ranked **Nikola Spajic** (-75 kg). Serbia's N1 station – one of the region's most influential – did a feature story on the situation and hosted a "fierce debate" between the Secretary General of TAS and the Serbian Para Taekwondo Alliance.

In the end, Micev received a bipartite invitation to participate in Tokyo, where she'll join teammate **Danijela Jovanovich**, who had already secured a spot for Serbia in the -49 kg group. Jovanovich recently received the 'May Award' from the National Assembly - the Serbian Sports Association's highest sports award.



To learn more, check out the story on N1 at https://rs.n1info.com/sport-klub/ostali-sportovi/tas-kaze-da-je-postao-nadlezan-za-paratekvondo-takmicari-tvrde-da-su-ucenjeni/?fbclid=IwAR0m-1PyAkJOesTuK_A-0vPO1OQ-tHn4DeJCTSXK0gknsexYQF78m7TGSM or watch the debate (in Serbo-Croat) at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3U6U60_FYcM.

For more on Jovanovich's award, check out the Serbian Taekwondo Association's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/TekvondoAsocijacijaSrbije/>.



Spain's Para Taekwondo Pioneer Garagarza First to Move to Coaching

In a sign that Para Taekwondo has moved out of its infancy as a sport, Spanish Para Taekwondo Pioneer **Gabriel Amado Garagarza** has become the first national team athlete to take on a position as a national team coach. Garagarza was named coach of Spain's national team alongside **Marco Carreira**. Garagarza found success early on in Para Taekwondo, winning medals at three of the first four Para Taekwondo World Championships. He finished 5th at the 2019 world championships, falling to Russia's **Magomedzagir Isaldibirov** in the -75 kg quarterfinal.

For more, check out the Spanish Taekwondo Federation Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Real-Federacion-Espa%C3%B1ola-de-Taekwondo-y-DA-1619237981638091>.

Pan Am:

Argentina's Paralympic-Bound Samorano Profiled on Paradeportes.com

Juan Samorano (-75 kg), Argentina's sole competitor in Para Taekwondo at this summer's Tokyo Paralympic Games, was recently profiled by adaptive sports website Paradeportes.com. A bronze medalist at the 2019 Parapan Am Games in Lima, Peru, the website interviewed the fighter after his triumph at the Pan American Paralympic Qualification tournament last year. The story covers his early life (including jobs as a bricklayer and sushi delivery man!), how he got started in Para Taekwondo, and what his training is like.

To read the whole story on Paradeportes.com, please visit <https://www.paradeportes.com/juan-samorano-el-parataekwondista-que-fue-repartidor-de-sushi-y-ahora-debutara-en-los-juegos-paralimpicos-de-tokio/>.



As Brazilian Team Prepares, World Champion Menezes Profiled by State Broadcaster

Rede Globo, Brazil's biggest broadcaster, recently profiled reigning world champion **Debora Menezes** (+58 kg) and 14-time Paralympic gold medalist swimmer Daniel Dias on their preparations for Tokyo. Brazil's Paralympic-bound Para Taekwondo athletes are training with coach **Rodrigo Ferla** in Curitiba. No. 2-ranked Menezes and **Silvana Fernandes** (-58 kg) moved there in April, while **Nathan Torquato** (-61 kg) joined the team in May. As part of Menezes' preparations, she got herself a new tattoo – the Tokyo 2020 logo on her left wrist. The new ink is situated just below a tattoo of the logo of the Lima Parapan Am Games, where she picked up a silver medal.

To find out more about how Brazil's Para team is preparing, check out the story on Rede Globo at <https://globoesporte.globo.com/paralimpiadas/noticia/a-100-dias-das-paralimpiadas-brasil-tem-175-atletas-confirmados-e-busca-100o-ouro.ghtml>.

Mexico's Garcia Lopez Featured on the Olympic Channel

There may be no bigger star in the world of Para Taekwondo right now than Mexico's **Juan Diego Garcia Lopez** (-75 kg). Hot off picking up his second Pan American Open title – his eighth tournament win in his last nine tries – the biggest channel in sport profiled the young world champion. The 5-minute piece titled 'How Fun Fuels This Para Taekwondo World Champion' is part of the channel's 'Unleash the New' series that profiles athletes from this year's new Olympic and Paralympic sports. Garcia Lopez's video features interviews with his mother and old coach, looks at his career in Para Taekwondo, and includes incredible footage from his earliest tournaments to the parade his city threw him upon returning with the world championship.



To watch Garcia Lopez's video, visit https://olympics.com/en/original-series/episode/how-fun-fuels-this-para-taekwondo-world-champion-unleash-the-new?fbclid=IwAR1e5hDdoDGzfw03lHrV_40l18rXVW6LOHDZeP5XwajElhXj48YVnI8Uomc.

To learn more about the 'Unleash the New' series, visit <https://olympics.com/en/featured-news/olympic-channel-latest-series-unleash-the-new>.

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