



World Para Taekwondo Newsletter

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Grand Prix Fever



Para Taekwondo's Best Join Their Able-Bodied Counterparts at Paris Grand Prix in Paris 2024 Preview

Para Taekwondo's best are back – and this time they're joining their able-bodied counterparts in France's Paralympic capital of Paris.

After a successful debut Para Grand Prix in Sofia, Bulgaria in June, the second leg of Para Taekwondo's prestige tournament series returns in September and will give the sport's best fighters the opportunity to get a taste of the 2024 Paralympic Games host two years before they aim for Paralympic glory.

The exciting format sees 12 of each weight category's top fighters battle for big rankings points – and the fighters are hungry.

Gone are the days when fighters could coast through the early rounds, working their way into top gear later in the tournament. Every match is difficult and the rewards for toppling a top fighter make every fight important.

Just ask France's **Djelika Diallo** and Ukraine's **Vladyslav Nechai**, who toppled European champions **Beth Munro** (GBR) and **Joseph Lane** (GBR) on their way to Para Grand Prix gold and bronze medals, respectively.

Who will step up and provide the next great upset? Who will stop the up-and-comers and cement their status as their division's elite fighters?

With big world rankings points on the line – 60 for gold, 36 for silver, 21.6 for bronze, and even 12.96 for quarterfinalists – 107 of the world's fittest fighters, from 33 countries all over the planet, will meet in Paris on 5 September for the next step of their quest to become Paralympic champion at Paris 2024.

Grudges to Settle

Perhaps the biggest surprise at the first Para Grand Prix in Bulgaria was the arrival of France's Djelika Diallo as a fighter to watch in the -65 kg category. After falling to Ukraine's **Yuliya Lypetska** at the 2021 World Championship quarterfinals, Diallo pulled off three straight upsets at the GP, including a rematch against Lypetska in the semi-final and then stunning Great Britain's European champion and Paralympic runner-up Beth Munro in the final.

Munro should have the opportunity to avenge the loss on Diallo's home turf but could also have to fend off her own challenger with a chip on her shoulder. After falling to Denmark's **Lisa Gjessing** in the Tokyo 2020 final, Munro bested the Paralympic champion to become the European champion earlier this year, handing Gjessing just her second competitive loss. There are plenty of storylines in the -65 kg group.

There may be no more group topsy-turvier at the top than the -58 kg category, where Israel's reigning world champion **Asaf Yasur**, Turkey's No. 1-ranked **Ali Can Ozcan**, Brazil's Pan American champion **Fabricio de Souza**, Azerbaijan's World Championship and Para Grand Prix bronze medalist **Sabir Zeynalov**, and France's four-time world champion veteran **Bopha Kong** all have designs on winning in Paris.

Yasur, Zeynalov, and de Souza had a joint training camp recently, while Kong traveled to Mexico to work with Mexico's reigning Paralympic champion **Juan Diego Garcia Lopez** to prepare for his home Para Grand Prix. Another highly anticipated grudge match could emerge in the -47 kg category, where a "Refugee Rumble" could see a Paralympic rematch between two fighters forced from their homes due to war. Afghanistan's **Zakia Khodadadi** had a harrowing escape from Taliban-held Afghanistan just to make it to Tokyo 2020, where she nearly upset Ukraine's six-time world champion **Vika Marchuk**. Marchuk was forced to flee Ukraine in March after Russian bombs began falling on her city.

Khodadadi now lives and trains in France and fights under the Refugee Team banner, while Marchuk and her Ukrainian teammates live and train in Denmark, and still fight under the Ukrainian banner. Will home turf be enough for Khodadadi to reverse the result from Tokyo 2020?

Stars in the Making

There simply is no better platform this year for young fighters to make a name for themselves than the Para Grand Prix series – and many will look to follow in the footsteps of Diallo and Nechai.

The arrival of Team Nepal in Paris will be met with great anticipation as Asian Youth Para Games champion **Palesha Goverdhan** and Asian Youth Para Games runner-up **Shrijana Ghising** continue their journey to become Nepal's first-ever Olympic or Paralympic medalist.

Georgia is another up-and-coming federation and will send four athletes to the Para Grand Prix in Paris. Keep your eye on **Lia Chachibaia** in -52 kg and world record holder **Sandro Megrelishvili** in -63 kg.

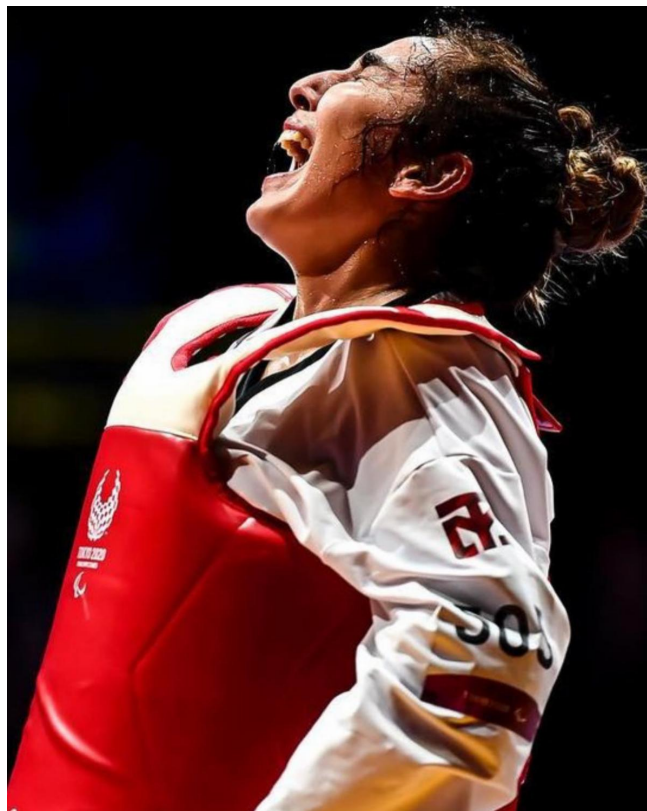
Africa will be well represented in Paris, with athletes from Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, and Niger all making the trek to the 2024 Paralympic host city.

Watch out for Egypt's Paralympian **Salma Ali**, who won Para Grand Prix bronze after falling in the semi-final to a late winner by Turkey's No. 1-ranked Meryem Cavdar, and Ghana's **Patricia Kyeremaa** in +65 kg.

Several island nations will also be looking for their first Para Grand Prix medallists, including Aruba's **Elliot Loonstra** in -80 kg and the Dominican Republic's **Geraldo Castro** in -63 kg.



Naimova to Star as Asian Championships Return



Uzbekistan's Paralympic champion Guljonoy Naimova is one of the few fighters set to defend their Asian titles as new athletes from new nations aim for their first international titles.

The Asian Championships are back – and they'll have a different look than ever before.

The field is full of new athletes from new nations, who will have the chance to make a name for themselves as many top fighters won't be attending.

Sixty-five athletes from 15 nations will travel to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam for the 2023 Asian Championships

on 23 August. Of those, 15 athletes are new – including two from host Vietnam. Vietnam had no registered athletes the last time it hosted the tournament, in 2018.

Iran is sending the largest contingent with 11 fighters headed to Vietnam. Kazakhstan (10), India and Uzbekistan (9 each), and Japan (6) are also sending large teams.

The tournament is G4/G2, meaning athletes from Asia earn twice as many ranking points as athletes from other continental associations.

It will be the first time the Asian Championships will be held under the new classifications and weight categories. Of the 12 that won gold at the 2021 Asian Championships in Lebanon, only three are returning in the K44 class – Uzbekistan's Paralympic champion and reigning Asian champion **Guljonoy Naimova**; Iran's **Saeid Sadeghianpour**; and France's four-time Asian champion **Bopha Kong**.

Gone are some of the region's biggest names, including Iran's reigning world champion and six-time Asian champion **Mehdi Pourrahnama**, Mongolia's reigning world champion and four-time Asian champion **Bolor-Erdene Ganbat**, China's 2019 world champion and Paralympic bronze medalist and former Asian champion **Yujie Li**, and Korea's Paralympic bronze medalist **Jeonghun Joo**.

Korea, in fact, will send no fighters to the Asian Championships for the second straight year. China hasn't sent an athlete to an event since Li won bronze in Tokyo.

This leaves the door wide open for new fighters to make their mark.

New Fighters to Watch

Among the most anticipated arrivals at the Asian Championships will be the Philippines' **Allain Ganapin**. The Filipino fighter was set to make his mark at Tokyo 2020 before an ill-timed case of COVID prevented him from travelling. He'll have to get past Kazakhstan's Paralympian **Nurlan Dombayev** and Iran's No. 5-ranked **Alireza Bakht** if he wants to win his first Asian championship.

Chinese Taipei's **Chien Chiang Chen** will look to win his nation's first-ever Asian championship medal. Chen was on the brink of qualifying for Tokyo 2020 before dropping a 39-36 thriller in the Asian Paralympic Qualification tournament final to Uzbekistan's **Asadbek Toshtemirov**. The division is wide open, with Uzbekistan's **Kudrajton Haydarov** the only fighter ranked higher than Chen to register.

Iran's **Rayehe Shahab** will look to add her first Asian title to the bronze medal she won last year in Lebanon. After winning the Asian Paralympic Qualification tournament last year, Shahab nearly left Tokyo 2020 with a medal, falling to Great Britain's former world champion **Amy Truesdale** 41-31 in the bronze medal final. She'll have to top France's **Djelika Diallo**, who is riding high after beating Great Britain's European champion and Paralympic runner-up **Beth Munro** to win gold at the first Para Grand Prix in June.

Vietnam is also set to make a splash at home, registering athletes for the first time in Para Taekwondo. **Van Duong Nguyen** will have to get by France's four-time Asian champion Bopha Kong in -58 kg, while **Xuan Huy Pham** will need to find a way past Japan's No. 9-ranked **Shunsuke Kudo** and Iran's No. 6-seeded reigning Asian champion Sadeghianpour in -70 kg if Vietnam hopes to win its first-ever medals in the sport.

Champions Still the Favourites

Sadeghianpour will be making his debut in the -70 kg division after winning gold in the -61 kg K42 group last year. The -70 group has been dominated by teammate Pourrahnama, who has won all six Asian titles in the group. After a falling out with the national team, Pourrahnama will not be back to defend his title, leaving it to Sadeghianpour to make it 7-for-7 for Iran in the -70 kg category.

Any other result than gold for Uzbekistan's Naimova would likely be the upset of the year. Not only has the reigning Paralympic, World, Asian, and Grand Prix champion not dropped a fight since before Tokyo 2020, the highest-ranked opponent she could face in Vietnam is India's No. 17-ranked **Veena Arora**.

France's Kong will be the favourite in the -58 kg group as he looks to win his fifth Asian title. Born in Vietnam, the No. 2-ranked Kong also won his third Asian title in the country in 2018. He might need to face Spain's **Alejandro Vidal Alvarez**, as his long-time rival returns to action for the first time since Tokyo 2020.



Classification Courses Come to Asia



14 classifiers from 10 countries – primarily in Asia – are set to take part in in-person Level I and Level II classification courses ahead of the 2022 Asia Para Taekwondo Championships.

As World Taekwondo looks to expand its list of international classifiers, 14 candidates from 10 countries will travel to Vietnam this month ahead of the Asian Championships to become internationally-certified classifiers.

Classification Committee Chair Dr. Hadwah Moawad, alongside medical classifier Amine Khelladi (Algeria) and technical classifier Ashanti Ramirez de la Oca (Mexico) will train new classifiers from Afghanistan, Bahrain, Cameroon, India, Iran, Israel, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Sweden, and the United Arab Emirates.

The course offering is part of World Para Taekwondo's strategic vision to bring down costs associated with hosting events by having internationally-trained classifiers in every region.

The Level I course will take place on 18 August, with Level II being offered from 19-20 August. Each course costs \$300 USD.

Interested participants must be a member of their national federation, at least 18 years old, and must hold a World Taekwondo Global License.

If you are interested in registering for a future course or learning more, please email your CV to para-tkd@worldtaekwondo.org.

Level I (National) Course

The Level I course will teach the basics of Para Taekwondo and the classification process. Successful completion of the course will allow you to serve as a national-level classifier.

Participants will learn about many topics, including:

- IPC and WPT rules, regulations, and code of conduct
- Para Taekwondo sport classes, and general medical and technical assessments of sport classes
- Roles of athlete, coach, and classifier in the classification process
- Para Taekwondo medical and technical terminology
- Interpreting Medical Diagnostic Forms (MDF)
- Using the World Taekwondo Classification System (WTCS)
- Classifier tools and setting up the classifiers room
- Observation assessment procedure and allocating sport classes
- Filling in the classifiers notes at a championship

All registrants will be tested and must score at least 70% to become certified. The written test is in English.

For more information on the Level I course, including the course outline and classification rules, please click [HERE](#).

Level II (International) Course

The Level II course will provide more in-depth knowledge of Para Taekwondo and international classification. Successful completion of the course will allow you to serve as an international classifier.

Participants will learn about many topics, including:

- IPC Classification Code and its relation to WT Para Taekwondo rules
- Understanding and completing the K40 athlete evaluation using WT Para Taekwondo assessment methods
- Correctly place athletes in the correct K40 sport class
- Using and interpreting Medical Diagnostic Forms (MDF)
- Protest procedures, risk management, and the impact of misrepresentation in classification
- Differentiate between misrepresentation and non-cooperation from an athlete
- Complete athlete observations in competition
- Allocate sport class and sport class status
- Complete classifiers notes, including observation assessment form

All registrants will be tested and must score at least 100% to become certified. The written test is in English.

For more information on the Level I course, including the course outline and classification rules, please click [HERE](#).



Virtus Oceania Asia Games Opens to All Athletes



Inaugural Virtus Oceania Asia Games to Take Place in Brisbane, Australia in November

The Virtus Games are the world's leading sports events for athletes with intellectual impairments.

The inaugural Virtus Oceania Asia Games are coming this November – and Para Taekwondo athletes from around the world can participate!

The event will be held in Queensland, Australia from 5-11 November and comes about six months ahead of the next Virtus Global Games, which will be held next June in Vichy, France.

The Virtus Games are the world's leading sports events for athletes with intellectual impairments.

How to Register

All athletes must meet the minimum impairment requirements as defined by Virtus. To discover whether you are eligible, please click [HERE](#).

The assessment process can take up to 16 weeks – so get your assessments in before 7 October!

After you've met the minimum impairment requirements, you'll need to register with your national Virtus member organisation. You can find your member organisation by clicking [HERE](#).

Once you are a member of your national Virtus team, you can register for the 2022 Virtus Oceania / Asia Games.

For additional information, or if you have further questions, please contact info@oagames2022.org.

Virtus Oceania Asia Games in Australia

The Virtus Oceania Asia Games will take place in the 2032 Paralympic host city of Brisbane, Australia. Up to 1,000 athletes will compete in 11 different sports. This will be the first time Para Taekwondo will be a full medal event, having been introduced at the 2019 Virtus Global Games as a demonstration sport. While both II-1 and II-2 athletes will compete at the Virtus Oceania Asia Games, only II-1 – athletes with an intellectual impairment – will participate in the Para Poomsae tournament.

“We're really pleased to be working with Sport Inclusion Australia”, said Heather Garriock, CEO of Australian Taekwondo, “to develop pathways for Taekwondo athletes with an intellectual impairment to compete in this event”.

For more information, please visit the official Virtus Oceania Asia Games website [HERE](#).

**VIRTUS OCEANIA
ASIA GAMES 2022**

The Virtus Oceania Asia Games 2022 (OA Games 2022) is an international multi-sport competition for elite athletes with intellectual impairment being held in Brisbane, Australia, 5-11 November 2022. This event is delivered by Sport Inclusion Australia.

TAEKWONDO

THE SPORT
Taekwondo is one of the many sports on the OA Games 2022 program for II-1 athletes.
Three years ago at the Virtus Global Games 2019, taekwondo was a demonstration sport.
Its popularity and proven success now sees it entering OA Games 2022 on the official Virtus sport program as a medalled event.

ELIGIBILITY
Eligibility is the criteria that defines the minimum impairment necessary to compete in a Virtus event.
To compete at the Games, athletes will need to meet the Virtus international eligibility criteria which can be found at:
<https://www.virtus.sport/applyin-g-for-athlete-eligibility>

JOIN THE TEAM
Athletes will need to contact their national Virtus member organisation about joining their national team.
Contact details for all members can be found on the Virtus website:
<https://www.virtus.sport/member>
For queries, please contact us at:
info@oagames2022.org

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GAMES

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OA virtus
Oceania Asia Games
Brisbane 2022

fund managed by
Sport Inclusion AUSTRALIA

Education



Upcoming Courses - Registration Open Now!!

World Para Taekwondo National Classifier Certification Course [Level I] (English)

- Location: Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam
- Course Date: August 18, 2022 ; Registration Deadline: August 12, 2022

World Para Taekwondo International Classifier Certification Course [Level II] (English)

- Location: Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam
- Course Date: August 19-20, 2022 ; Registration Deadline: August 12, 2022

Calendar



- Asian Open Para Taekwondo Championships (G4/G2) - August 23 - Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
(**International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches**)
- Paris 2022 World Para Taekwondo Grand Prix Series (G6) - September 5, 2022 - Paris, France
(**International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches**)

- Sao Paulo Para Taekwondo Open (Pan Am Series III) (G2) - September 15, 2022 - Sao Paulo, Brazil

(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)

- WT President's Cup Oceania (G2) - September 30, 2022 - Papeete, French Polynesia

(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)

- Oceania Para Taekwondo Open Championships (G4/G2) - October 1, 2022 - Papeete, French Polynesia

(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)

- Manchester 2022 World Para Taekwondo Grand Prix Series (G6) - Oct.20, 2022 - Manchester, Great Britain

(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)

- Open Bicentenario del Peru (G2) - November 3, 2022 - Lima, Peru

(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)

- 1st VIRTUS Oceania-Asia Regional Games (P20) - November 5-11, 2022 - Queensland, Australia

(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)

Around the World

Africa:

Ghana Insists It Will Be Ready for 2023 African Para Games

After the COVID-19 pandemic halted construction on the centrepiece Borteyman Complex in Accra, Ghana, the Local Organising Committee insists that facilities will be ready before the country is expected to host the first-ever African Para Games next year. Much information is not yet available, although AllAfrica.com reports that the able-bodied African Games will begin on 4 August and that the sport programme has been finalised, including Taekwondo. The African Para Games are expected to follow, although Para Taekwondo has not yet been officially included. Para Taekwondo was set to make its debut at the inaugural African Para Games in Rabat, Morocco in 2019 before that event was canceled. Taekwondo is set to be held in a 500-seat temporary dome at the complex, while Para sports are planned to be held in a 1,000-seat multipurpose hall. Ghana won two gold medals and a bronze at the 2022 African Para Taekwondo championships.



"I'm highly optimistic Ghana would stage one of the finest Games ever", said Ghana 2023 LOC Executive Chairman **Dr. Kweku Oforu-Asare**. "We are working our fingers to the bone to make sure we meet those schedules and are able to host the Games pretty well".

For more, please read the article on AllAfrica.com [HERE](#).

Asia:



India's Arora Wins Award for Dedication to Taekwondo

India's Para Taekwondo pioneer **Veena Arora** was recognised last month with the Chetan Chauhan Award for her dedication to Para Taekwondo. The award is given to athletes for "Outstanding accomplishments and individual excellence [in] performance in sports activities and motivation". Arora had part of her arm amputated due to a botched hospital injection when she was 22. She then became a celebrated Para athlete, winning a bronze at the 2016 Asian Para Taekwondo championships and bronze in shot put at the 2017 IWAS Games in Portugal. Still competing, she has also taken on an administrative role with the Indian federation and will soon become an international classifier. Due to take part in the 2021

Asian Championships in Vietnam, Arora was one of 12 athletes and coaches from 8 sports that was recognised with the award named for late Indian cricketer and cabinet minister Chetan Chauhan.

For more, please check out the story [HERE](#).

Japan's Ito Stars in Company Commercial

Japan's **Chikara Ito** is one of eight Para athletes to be featured in a commercial for Salesforce – the company he works for – an American software company with an office in Japan. The commercial is titled "Dual Career Athlete" and features the athletes speaking about their experiences balancing work and elite sports. Ito has represented Japan since 2016, where he won the country's first-ever Para Taekwondo medal – a bronze at the 2016 Oceania championships. He then won Japan's first-ever gold medal the following year at the 2017 US Open. Ito was named one of the IPC's 'Ones to Watch' in 2018 and remains a threat as the 16th-ranked fighter in the world in the +80 kg category. Salesforce has redoubled its efforts to promote an inclusive workplace after allegations of workplace discrimination made it to Japanese courts in 2021.



"Sometimes you have to work when you're away at events, but there's an environment [at Salesforce Japan] where you can connect and support your team anytime, from anywhere", he says in the ad. "When there's a competition, you can focus on your event and work at your own pace".

To view the advertisement, please click [HERE](#).



Kazakh Trailblazer Dosmalova Featured on English-Language Podcast

Kazakh Paralympian and former European champion **Kamilya Dosmalova** was recently featured on an English-language podcast dedicated to inspiring stories of women athletes. Dosmalova spoke to Flame Bearers about how she grew up being the only girl on the team for years after picking up the sport at age 9. She was still the only woman member of the Kazakh national team when she had her breakout 2021. After qualifying for Tokyo 2020, Dosmalova won her first international tournament – the 2019 European championship – with a win over Turkey's top-seeded **Gamze Gurdal**. She would fall in the rematch at the 2021 World Championship semi-final, but still went home with her first World Championship medal, a bronze. Her success has inspired other Kazakh women and she no longer remains the sole female member on the national team – she's

now joined by teammate **Milana Krassavtsova**. The podcast features a chat with Dosmalova and her coach and is live translated by Kazakh team manager **Meruyert Tiebaldy**.

"I want you to realise that you are not alone", Dosmalova said during the interview, "that there are many other people with disabilities, and we are everywhere".

To check out the Flame Bearers podcast, please click [HERE](#).

World Champion Phuangkitcha Stars on Thai National TV

Two-time reigning world champion and Paralympic bronze medallist **Khwansuda Phuangkitcha** was invited to help host an ASEAN Para Games 'watch party' in the nation's capital of Bangkok last month. While Para Taekwondo was not on the programme this year, Thai national team coach **YeongGyun Shin** believes it will be on the program for the 2023 ASEAN Para Games in Cambodia. Among the most popular Para athletes in Thailand, Phuangkitcha was awarded nearly \$3,000 USD for winning bronze at Tokyo 2020. Phuangkitcha was billed as "Thailand's first Paralympic medalist in Taekwondo" and participated in several events, including broadcasts on national TV and moderating panel discussions.

"Para Taekwondo was not included in this competition [2022 ASEAN Games], but it is very likely to be adopted for the 2023 ASEAN Games in Cambodia", Shin said after the event. "I hope it gets adopted so there's another big opportunity and goal for athletes with impairments".



Europe:

Former Champion Celik Transitions to Coaching in Germany

It didn't take long for Germany's **Hasim Celik** to figure out what to do with his post-fighting career. The former world championship bronze medalist will pursue a career in coaching after receiving his International Coach Certificate last month. His career highlight was a bronze medal at the 2019 World Championships in Antalya, Turkey, where he upset the USA's No. 2-seeded future Paralympic bronze medalist **Evan Medell** before bowing out to Great Britain's eventual champion **Matt Bush**. The two-time African champion's final fight was a semi-final loss at the Tokyo 2020 European Paralympic Qualification tournament to Hungary's **Zoltan Kiss**.

For more, please click [HERE](#).

Greek Paralympic Hero Wins Para Poomsae Gold

Greece's Paralympic legend and Taekwondo teacher **Dimitra Korokida** has added a Para Poomsae gold medal to her incredible collection of international medals. Greece's 2015 Female Para Athlete of the Year won gold in the P50 Wheelchair Female category at the 2nd Open Poomsae & Para Poomsae Championships on 5-6 August. Korokida represented Greece in able-bodied Taekwondo for nearly 20 years before a motorcycle accident turned her into a multi-Para sport star. She competed at the 2014 Para Cycling World Championships and 2018 Para Badminton European Championships but is best known for her time in Para Athletics. Korokida won silver in javelin at the 2013 World Championships and gold in shot put at the 2013 and 2015 editions before finally adding her first Paralympic medal – a bronze in shot put at Rio 2016.

"Earning a medal is not hard; hard and strenuous is the way to get there", is the motto of which she told the IPC she lives.

For more, please click [HERE](#).





Oceania:

Australia's Watson Makes Successful Para Badminton Crossover

It looks like one Paralympic medal isn't enough for Australia's **Janine Watson**. The Tokyo 2020 bronze medalist made a successful crossover to Para Badminton by winning two silver medals at last month's Oceania championships. Competing in the wheelchair singles, doubles, and mixed doubles events, Watson looked impressive in putting together a string of four straight victories in singles, including over the No. 2 seed **Bree Melberg**, before dropping the gold medal match. She added a silver in women's doubles alongside partner **Fiona Sing**. She'll now look to Paris 2024 to add to the bronze medal she won at Tokyo 2020 which saw her become the first person

from Oceania to win a Paralympic medal in Para Taekwondo and the only fighter in the world with both a Paralympic medal and a Poomsae world championship.

"My MS has progressed and it's now affecting my upper limbs and particularly the left side of my body", she shared with Paralympics Australia. "We decided to give badminton a try because it's got similar skills [as Wheelchair Tennis, of which she is a four-time Australian champion] but on smaller courts, indoors, and without as much pushing [of the wheelchair]".

For more, please read the story [HERE](#). For the results, please click [HERE](#).

Pan Am:

Mexico's Garcia Lopez Adds Adidas as a Sponsor

Adidas has added another member of the Para Taekwondo family to its list of sponsored athletes – and it's none other than Mexico's reigning Paralympic champion **Juan Diego Garcia Lopez**. A year after signing a deal with Japanese star **Shoko Ota**, the global athleticwear company inked the deal with one of Para Taekwondo's most successful fighters. Garcia Lopez holds nearly every title available – Paralympic champion, Parapan Am Games champion, Grand Prix champion, and Pan Am champion. He lost his 2019 world title at the 2021 World Championships with a thrilling last-minute loss to Iran's five-time world champion **Mehdi Pourrahnama** – just his second loss in a sparkling four-year run.



"I'm very happy and motivated because I'm part of the Adidas family!", Garcia Lopez said about the sponsorship. "[I'm] focused on new goals and willing to give it my all to achieve them".

For more, please click [HERE](#).



USA's Medell Recognised After Grand Prix Win

The Grand Prix win by the USA's **Evan Medell** clearly thrilled USA Taekwondo, who took to social media to boast about their Para Taekwondo star. Medell had just beaten Croatia's **Ivan Mikulic** in convincing fashion to win the first Para Grand Prix gold medal by a score of 22-9. It was a bit of payback for the American who, as the top seed at Tokyo 2020, fell to his long-time rival from Croatia in the Paralympic semi-final. Medell went on to win Paralympic bronze, while Mikulic fell in the final to Iran's **Asghar Azizi Aqdam**.

"Congratulations to Evan Medell on his gold medal performance at the inaugural World Taekwondo Grand

Prix in Sofia, Bulgaria”, USA Taekwondo wrote on social media. “Go USA!”

For more, please click [HERE](#).

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