



World Para Taekwondo Newsletter

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The Worlds are Back!!



Paris 2024 Qualification Kicks Into High Gear as World Championships Return in December

New classes, new weight categories, new rules, and increased ranking points – the race to qualify for Paris 2024 hits high gear this December as the 2021 World Championships are set to take centre stage.

Hot on the heels of the European Open Championships – the first tournament to feature Para Taekwondo's new look – the 2021 Para Taekwondo World Championships will be held in Istanbul, Turkey on 11-12 December.

The tournament will be the first to feature G-14 ranking points, meaning 140 ranking points are up for grabs for the new weight categories' new world champions.

With less than three years to go before Paris 2024, the 2021 World Championships will be one of the single, most important events on the qualification calendar. Less than a handful of tournaments between now and Paris 2024 will put so many ranking points up for grabs.

It will be the third time Turkey hosts the World Championships, after Samsun 2015 and Antalya 2019, but this year's tournament will look far different.

Out With the Old, In With the New Rules

First, there is a new “Super K44” class, featuring all athletes that would have previously been classified as K44, K43, and K42.

All athletes must be reclassified according to the updated rules!!

To facilitate this process, please submit your athletes’ Medical Diagnostic Forms (MDF) as soon as possible in the WTCS!

All athletes that have not been classified after 6 September 2021 must go through classification before the World Championships begin. Classifications will be held on 9-10 December at the tournament facility.

Second, Para Taekwondo has moved away from the six weight categories featured at Tokyo 2020 to ten weight categories in each class. See the table below for the new weight categories and classes.

SPORT CLASSES	
K41	
K44	
MALE EVENTS	FEMALE EVENTS
Not exceeding 58kg	Not exceeding 47kg
Not exceeding 63kg	Not exceeding 52kg
Not exceeding 70kg	Not exceeding 57kg
Not exceeding 80kg	Not exceeding 65kg
Over 80kg	Over 65kg

Finally, the tournament will feature the single, five-minute round format featured at the European Open Championships.

What to Expect

Para Taekwondo has come a long way since the first world championships were held in Baku, Azerbaijan in 2009, where 36 athletes from 16 countries competed to become the sport’s first world champions.

At the 2019 World Championships in Antalya, Turkey, 333 athletes from 66 nations competed to become world champions. In fact, the event has grown four-fold since the 2013 World Championships in Lausanne, Switzerland.

This year, the Kyorugi World Championships will be held separately from the Poomsae World Championships – and there is plenty to look forward to!

How will the six new Paralympic champions fare now that they have additional targets painted on their vests?

Who will emerge as the favourites in each of the new weight categories? What new rivalries will develop?

Who will become the sport’s newest breakout stars, like **Yujie Li** (CHN) at the 2019 World Championships, **Angelica Espinoza** (PER) at the 2019 Parapan Am Games, or **Beth Munro** (GBR) at the 2020 Paralympic Games?

Most importantly, who will get a leg up on the competition by securing 140 points for winning the world championship?

The race to Paris 2024 is on! Stay tuned to the World Para Taekwondo newsletter for all the info.

[Click to Register for 2021 World Championships](#)



New Faces Emerge At New Look European Championships



European Championships Kick Off Paris 2024 Qualification Cycle

The Para Taekwondo world got an early taste of what Paris 2024 might look like as new rules, classes, and

weight categories were premiered at the 2021 European Championships in Istanbul, Turkey last month.

For the first time, former K44, K43, and K42 fighters faced off in a new “Super K44” classification, while athletes acclimatised themselves to the new weight divisions, and had an early look at how strategy will come into play with the new single, five-minute round format.

The new format premiered thanks in part to the assistance of the European Taekwondo Union under the leadership of President Sakis Pragalos and the Turkish Taekwondo Federation.

This new look Para Taekwondo saw new faces emerge as European champions for the first time.

First-Time European Champions

Among the new European champions are Kazakhstan’s Paralympian **Kamilya Dosmalova**, who won her second tournament of the year after winning the Asian Paralympic Qualification tournament to qualify for Tokyo 2020.

Spain’s new European champion **Dalia Santiago Moreno** nearly joined her in Tokyo, losing the European Paralympic Qualification final by Golden Point. She made up for it by claiming her first international title in just her third international event.

Other first-time European champions include Turkey’s **Secil Er** in the -65 kg category and Russia’s **Dzhetsun-Sholbana Kara-Ool** in the -57 kg group, who handed Ukraine’s **Vika Marchuk** her first loss at the European championships in seven years.

Paralympians Shine

Of course, our Paralympians showed why they continue to be some of the finest fighters in the world by adding additional European hardware to their shiny, new Paralympic medals.

Turkey’s **Meryem Cavdar** and **Mahmut Bozteke** both managed to defend their 2019 European titles on home soil just weeks after claiming Paralympic silver and bronze, respectively.

Russia showcased its impressive depth by having non-Paralympic fighters upstage their Paralympic counterparts.

Two Russian fighters, for example, finished ahead of Paralympic bronze medalist **Zainutdin Ataev** in the +80 kg category, including new European champion **Aliskhab Ramazanov**. In the -80 kg event, **Vladimir Feofanov** upended his Paralympic teammate **Magomedzagir Isaldibirov** for the title, denying the Paralympian his fourth straight European title.

New K44 Classification Shakes Things Up

If former K44 athletes thought they’d have an easy time with former K43 and K42 athletes joining them, they’d better think again.

Ukraine’s **Vika Marchuk** and France’s **Bopha Kong**, both multiple World and European champions from K43, won silver and bronze, respectively. Kazakh Paralympic flagbearer **Nurlan Dombayev** also claimed bronze after losing Paralympic bronze on a last-second kick at Tokyo 2020.

Former K42 athletes also had tournaments to remember.

Turkey’s **Ayse Dudu Karatay** and Russia’s **Evgenii Aliferenko** both claimed silver medals in their first tournament against former K43 and K44 opponents.

See the table below for the full results.

Event	Class	Gold	Silver	Bronze
K41	-58 kg	Rinat Iakupov Russia	Muhammed Asbala Turkey	Muhammet Ujur Bitkay Turkey George Khizanishvili Georgia
	-63 kg	Sabit Kose Turkey	Vladislav Krichfalushiy Russia	not awarded
	-80 kg	Malik Mukashev Kazakhstan	Yildiray Erdic Turkey	not awarded
	+80 kg	Spartak Gazzaev Russia	Adem Arslan Turkey	not awarded
K44	-58 kg	Askhat Akmatov Russia	Alican Özcan Turkey	Bopha Kong France Arzhan Arbakov Russia
	-63 kg	Mahmut Bozteke Turkey	Evgenii Alifrenko Russia	Mikail Akay Turkey Rafet Samet Adiyaman Turkey
	-70 kg	Fatih Çelik Turkey	Maciej Kęsicki Poland	Oktay Atalay Turkey Kadibagama Omarov Russia
	-80 kg	Vladimir Feofanov Russia	Magomedzagir Isaidibirov Russia	Nurlan Dombayev Kazakhstan Vladyslav Nechai Ukraine
	+80 kg	Alishab Ramazanov Russia	Bilal Iakhaev Russia	Nyshan Omirali Kazakhstan Zainuddin Ataev Russia

For the full 2021 European Open Championships recap article, please visit the World Taekwondo website at <http://www.worldtaekwondo.org/wtnews/view.html?nid=138371>



Chakir Chelbat on How to Grow Para Taekwondo



An Interview with the World Para Taekwondo Committee Chair

Chakir Chelbat, Chair of World Taekwondo's Para Taekwondo Committee, talks about how World Taekwondo's leadership has helped – and will continue to help – the sport of Para Taekwondo grow.

After Para Taekwondo's historic Paralympic debut, Chelbat took a moment to look back at the work of Para Taekwondo's leadership, how it helped get the sport to where it is, and what comes next for the Paralympic Games' first full-contact sport.

"We have a great team working together" - Work of the Committee

The Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games were an unprecedented event. Athletes, coaches, officials, federations, and yes, even the Para Taekwondo Committee, had to deal with multiple issues in order to stage the historic event.

"It was a really unique, really difficult situation", said Chelbat in an interview, "But we have to fulfil President Choue's mission – which is to give every person the chance to fulfil their dreams."

The Para Taekwondo Committee took the unexpected COVID-19-necessitated break in competition to get the sport's house in order.

The Committee used the time to update rules, develop ground-breaking education courses, and launch innovative communication tools.

For the first time, dedicated Para Taekwondo courses were offered to coaches, referees, and classifiers in regular online trainings. During the pandemic, 18 coach's trainings were held that saw over 500 coaches certified worldwide.

Improved communications with NPCs and the Para Taekwondo community at large were also a priority, which led to the launch of the monthly newsletter. They also passed new rules that went into effect earlier this month.

"As of September 6th, we said goodbye to the old rules and hello to the new ones", Chelbat said.

The new rules make it possible for even more athletes to compete at the Paralympic Games. Among the changes are additional weight categories and the amalgamation of the former K44, K43, and K42 classes into a single 'Super K44' class.

The additional weight categories mean there will be ten Paralympic champions at Paris 2024 - up from six at Tokyo 2020 - and a significant increase in participation. While the World Taekwondo proposal has yet to be given the official green light from the IPC, once accepted, 120 athletes will be headed to Paris 2024 - up from 73 at Tokyo 2020.

The near doubling of participation of athletes in just one Paralympic cycle is virtually unprecedented.

"We have a great team working together under the visionary leadership of President Choue", Chelbat said. "It's all of us – it's teamwork. We will continue to help Para Taekwondo grow."

"It was a great, historic feeling" - Impressions of Tokyo 2020

Para Taekwondo's Paralympic debut dazzled spectators and attracted the attention of a worldwide audience. It also demonstrated the sport's worldwide appeal, with Paralympic champions coming from six different countries and medallists from every continental association.

“It was a great, historic feeling”, said Chelbat. “I was really satisfied, Dr. Choue was really satisfied, and so was [IPC President] Andrew Parsons.”

Chelbat praised the work of the organisers and technical officials and spoke to the successes in safety and participation.

“Not one single nose, jaw, or tooth broken”, he said. “The face shield serves a lot of situations.”

He also commended the quality of the athletes awarded wildcard spots through bipartite invitations, including Costa Rica’s **Andres Molina**, who nearly beat Paralympic champion **Asghar Azizi Aqdam** in the semi-final before losing by Golden Point.

“The wildcard was a great success”, he said, “It gives a chance for new athletes to compete – and look how they performed!”

"2022 will be a very big year" - What's Next for Para Taekwondo

With Para Taekwondo’s Paralympic debut in the rearview, the Para Taekwondo Committee has big things planned for the sport going forward.

“Our vision is to have more education, more referees, more international competitions, bigger World Championships, and a Grand Prix series”, Chelbat said. “2022 will be a very big year.”

Among the additional competitions the Committee is working on are a junior category and a new team competition in line with the overall vision from WT for Para Taekwondo development.

They are also looking to address some other issues, such as the need for more classifiers worldwide and cleaning up ‘simulation’ in the sport”

“We cannot serve the planet with 23 classifiers”, he said, adding “The committee is taking ‘faking’ seriously. We are looking at the use of yellow cards and are preparing a new rule proposal.”

The goal is to provide the best possible product for Paris 2024, where the Committee hopes to convince the IPC to broadcast the sport live – something that wasn’t possible at Tokyo 2020.

“We will work very hard to broadcast Paris 2024”, he said, “The IPC likes that our sport has gender equality.”

The Committee has other ideas to ensure that it can meet President Choue's vision of giving every person the chance to fulfil their dreams, including introducing additional classes to the Paralympic Games and ensuring athletes have equipment that keeps them comfortable and safe.

“We’re hoping to have K41 at LA 2028 – and Poomsae, too”, he said. “We need to have equipment that will protect our athletes according to their needs and we will be inviting our suppliers to discuss making adjustments.”

Finally, Chelbat said that Para Taekwondo practitioners can expect to see more opportunities for education, additional international events, and improved methods of communication.

It was a long and arduous journey to put on such a dazzling display at the Paralympic Games, but it’s clear that for Para Taekwondo’s leadership – it was just the start. Work continues to ensure that everyone that wants to fulfil their dreams, gets that opportunity.



Education



Upcoming Courses - Registrations Open Now!

Para Taekwondo ONLINE International Coach Certification Course [Level I] (English)

- Course: 2-4 November at 20:00 - 23:00 CET
- Deadline: 30 October, 11:59 PM CET

Para Taekwondo ONLINE International Coach Certification Course [Level II] (English)

- Course: 6-8 November at 20:00 - 23:00 CET
- Deadline: 3 November 11:59 PM CET

[Click to Register for Upcoming Courses](#)

Calendar



- 2021 Asian Youth Para Games (G2) - November 28 - December 7 - Bahrain
(Exact dates for Para Taekwondo TBC)

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

- 2021 World Para Taekwondo Championships (G14) - December 11 - 12 - Istanbul, Turkey

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

Around the World

Africa:

Hakizimana Hopes He Inspired Refugees Worldwide

Nothing comes easy for refugee athlete **Parfait Hakizimana** – the first to participate at the Paralympic Games to come directly from a refugee camp. He lost the use of his arm during the Burundian civil war, was forced to flee to a refugee camp in Rwanda, and has not been able to compete in any international events except when the African Championships were held in Rwanda in 2017. Even when he inspired thousands of refugees worldwide by overcoming those obstacles to compete at Tokyo 2020 – he was drawn against eventual Paralympic champion **Nathan Torquato** (BRA). Still, the affable African had a smile on his face and hoped he had put one on his fans' faces too. "I hope I helped refugees around the world see that their dreams can come true as well", he said after his competition ended.



For more on the legacy of the Refugee Paralympic Team, please read this article in Sportanddev.com - <https://www.sportanddev.org/en/article/news/refugee-paralympians-leave-legacy-hope-tokyo-games-conclude>

For more on Hakizimana's journey, check out this article from UNHCR - <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2021/8/611e81f94/burundian-taekwondo-athlete-set-mark-tokyo-2020-paralympic-games.html>



Asia:

China's Li Profiled by State Broadcaster

China's reigning world champion **Yujie Li** was featured by state information service china.org.cn after winning bronze at the Paralympic Games in Tokyo, Japan. Li edged Nepal's **Palesha Goverdhan** to claim China's first-ever Paralympic medal in the sport. "My world title in 2019 has become the past, so does today's bronze medal", she told the website. "My goal is to focus on what I can do now." The teenage star will have the chance to defend her world title at the upcoming 2021 World Championships in Istanbul, Turkey in December.

For more, check out the full story at http://www.china.org.cn/sports/2021-09/04/content_77733301.htm

Kazakhstan Emerging as a Para Taekwondo Power

Kazakhstan continued its emergence as a major nation in Para Taekwondo by winning four medals at the 2021 European Open championships in Istanbul last month. After dominating the Asian Paralympic Qualification tournament and qualifying three fighters to the Paralympic Games – only Turkey and Russia qualified more – the country sent its largest team yet to the European championships. The eight-person team managed to claim four medals, including the first European title for up-and-coming **Kamilya Dosmalova** in the -57 kg K44 category and the second straight title for **Malik Mukashev** in the -80 kg K41 event. Kazakhstan's Paralympic flagbearer **Nurlan Dombayev** and Paralympic teammate **Nyshan Omirali** grabbed bronze medals in the -80 kg K44 and +80 kg tournaments, respectively.



For full coverage, please visit the Kazakhstan Paralympic Committee website at <https://paralympic.kz/ru/press-tsentr/novosti/481-kazakhstanskije-para-taekvondisty-zavoevali-chetyre-medali-na-chempionate-evropy>



Nepal's Biggest Newspaper Wants More Support for Goverdhan

After nearly claiming the first-ever medal for Nepal at either the Olympic or Paralympic Games, **Palesha Goverdhan** has earned a powerful voice in her corner – Nepal's largest English-language daily newspaper, The Himalayan Times. Just weeks after profiling the No. 5-ranked athlete in a post-Paralympic Games article titled 'Brave Goverdhan Misses Olympic Medal by Whisker', the newspaper went a step further by publishing an opinion piece titled 'Support Athletes with Disabilities: State Has a Bigger Role to Play' that explicitly calls for increased support for Goverdhan. The author implores Nepal's citizens to celebrate star Para athletes like Goverdhan and pleads for increased support from both the government and private sectors. "It is good that the business community takes notice of athletes like Palesha, and that's why the financial support of the President of Sumeru Group ... is welcome",

says the author. "Can Sumeru Group endorse Palesha as its Brand Ambassador?"

Goverdhan bested world championship medalists **Marija Micev** (SRB) and **Brianna Salinaro** (USA) at Tokyo 2020 before losing to reigning world champion **Yujie Li** (CHN) on a late score in the bronze medal final.

To read the full article, please visit <https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/support-athletes-with-disabilities-state-has-a-bigger-role-to-play>

To read the post-Paralympics article, please visit <https://thehimalayantimes.com/sports/brave-goverdhan-misses-olympic-medal-by-whisker>

Thailand's Phuangkitcha Rewarded by Korean Ambassador

Thailand is quickly becoming a Taekwondo hotbed and even the Korean Ambassador has taken note. Hot on the heels of **Panipak Wongpattanakit** winning Thailand's first Olympic title in the sport, reigning world champion **Khwansuda Phuangkitcha** won the country's first-ever Paralympic medal in Para Taekwondo by winning bronze at Tokyo 2020. Lee Wook-heon, the Korean Ambassador to Thailand, awarded the athlete and her coach with several gifts, including flowers, running shoes, and Hanbok (traditional Korean clothes) to mark the Korean thanksgiving holiday of 'Chuseok'. "We believe that the friendship and cultural exchange between Korea and Thailand can get more synergy, such as the incredible worldwide popularity of 'Thainess' in Blackpink's music video 'Lisa', Thailand's first gold medal in Taekwondo, and Thailand's first medal in Para Taekwondo", said the Ambassador.



To read more on the event, please read the Pattaya Mail's story at <https://www.pattayamail.com/pattayasports/south-koreas-ambassador-presents-gifts-to-thailands-paralympic-medalist-and-coach-373090>

Europe:

Kesicki Wins Poland's First International Medal Since 2015

It's been a long time since Poland has seen success on the international stage, but that changed after **Maciej Kesicki** captured silver in the -70 kg category at the 2021 European Championships in Istanbul, Turkey. It is the second straight international podium for the up-and-coming Kesicki after the Pole won bronze at the European Paralympic Qualification tournament earlier this year. It's a welcome sign for Poland, who hadn't won a medal at the European championships since 2015, when **Michal Pawlak** won silver in Moldova – including being shutout when Warsaw hosted the tournament in 2016. "We brag



about our #taekwondo section players who represented us during the European Para Taekwondo Championships”, said Kesicki’s Klub Sportowy AZS-AWF Warszawa on Facebook, “Big bravo to the players and their coach Tomasz Pyciarz.”

For more, check out the article on the Polish Olympic Taekwondo Association website at <https://www.qtara.pztaekwondo.pl/web/srebrny-medal-naj-mistrzostwach-europy-para-taekwondo-w-stambule.n2659.html>

Russia Tops Euro Medal Table

Russia continues to show that it’s a force to be reckoned with in Para Taekwondo by finishing at the top of the medal table at the 2021 European Championships just weeks after becoming one of only two nations to win more than two Paralympic medals. Out of the 26 athletes that Russia sent to Istanbul, 15 managed to medal with six being crowned European champions. Russia’s new European champions include 2018 European champion **Vladimir Feofanov** (-80 kg), 2017 world champion **Aliskhab Ramazanov** (+80 kg), 2016 European champion **Askhat Akmatov** (-58 kg), and 2013 world champion **Spartak Gazzaev** (+80 kg K41). Newcomers **Dzhetsun-Sholbana Kara-Ool** (-47 kg) and **Rinat Iakupov** (-58 kg K41) also became European champions in their first-ever international tournaments. To demonstrate just how deep Russia’s Para Taekwondo pool is, Paralympian **Zainutdin Ataev** won bronze in the +80 kg category, behind two of his teammates – Ramazanov and 2019 world championship bronze medalist **Bilal Iakhiaev**.



For more on Russia at the 2021 European Championships, please visit the Russian Paralympic Committee website at https://paralymp.ru/press_center/news/tkhekvondo/25-09-2021-sbornaya-rossii-vyigrala-medalnyy-zachet-otkrytogo-chempionata-evropy-po-paratkhekvondo-v-turtsii/



Spain's Santiago Caps Terrific Year With European Gold

One of Para Taekwondo’s traditional powers has found its newest star as Spain’s **Dalia Santiago** joined a distinguished list of Spanish superstars that have won a European championship, becoming the first woman from Spain to do so. It was the third straight podium this year for Moreno, who had never made the quarterfinals at an international event before 2021. The new European champ nearly qualified for the

Paralympic Games before dropping a Golden Point final to **Aynur Mammadova** (AZE) at the European Paralympic Qualification tournament and then won her first international medal when she took silver at the Asian championships this summer.

“It has been a great championship”, said coach Gaby Amato to the Spanish Taekwondo Federation, “Dalia, for her part, has been very focused with hardly any mistakes – and you can see the results.”

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/>

Host Turkey Sets Records at European Championships

It was a tournament to remember for the hosts of the 2021 European Open Championships as Turkey set several records at the tournament in Istanbul. The only nation to qualify a fighter in all six Paralympic weight categories, Turkey flexed its depth by bringing 51 athletes to Istanbul. The team won a record 23 medals – nearly half of the 48 medals awarded – including crowning five European champions. Gold medal winners included Paralympic medalists **Meryem Cavdar** (-52 kg) and **Mahmut Bozteke** (-63 kg), Paralympian **Fatih Celik** (-70 kg), and first-time champions **Secil Er** (-65 kg) and **Sabit Kose** (-63 kg K41).



President of the Turkish Taekwondo Federation was delighted with the results, saying “Our athletes made us all smile with the results they achieved ... next up is Paris 2024!”

For more, please visit the Turkish Taekwondo Federation website at <https://www.turkiyetaekwondofed.gov.tr/haber.asp?ID=2445>



Ukraine's Marchuk Loses Euro Crown, Wins New Home

Ukrainian Para Taekwondo legend **Vika Marchuk** may have tasted her first-ever defeat at the European championships but is still going home a winner – to her very own new home. The six-time European champion missed out on winning her seventh title after falling to Russia's **Dzetsun-Sholbana Kara-Ool** in the new -47 kg final. The result came just weeks after she just missed out on winning a Paralympic medal by losing to

RPC's **Anna Poddubskaia** in the bronze medal final. Still, her local city council allocated \$22,500 USD for the Para Taekwondo pioneer to purchase her first home as a reward for her continued successes.

Teammate **Vladyslav Nechai** was awarded the title Master of Sports of Ukraine after winning his first-ever international medal at the European Championships – a bronze in the -80 kg category.

For more, check out this story on 061.ua - <https://www.061.ua/news/3214704/zaporozskaa-sportsmenka-viktoria-marcuk-oderzala-serebranuu-medal-na-cempionate-mira-po-parathekvondo>

Oceania:

Australia Grants Asylum to Afghanistan's Khodadadi & Other Afghan Taekwondoins

It has been a whirlwind couple of months for Afghanistan's **Zakiya Khodadadi**. After the Taliban takeover of her country, she was forced to go into hiding, put out a heartbreaking video plea for help that caught the attention of the world, and undergo a difficult and dangerous extraction from Afghanistan – just to make it to the Paralympic Games. She became the face of Tokyo 2020, attracting throngs of media who covered her every move. She nearly posted an inspiring win over six-time world champion Vika Marchuk (UKR), before losing her lead in the final round. The sight of her carrying Afghanistan's flag into the Closing Ceremony is one of Tokyo 2020's most powerful images – and something not likely to be seen again soon, as the Taliban have banned women from competing in sport. Several countries have offered to provide Khodadadi with refugee protection, including Australia, who was instrumental in helping extract her from Afghanistan. Australia has also offered refugee protection to Afghanistan's able-bodied women Taekwondoins.



For more, please read more about Australia's assistance to Khodadadi and other Afghan women Taekwondoins, please visit - <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-09-06/australian-government-grants-protection-visas-to-afghan-athletes/100437954> and <https://voic.id/en/sports/81176/australia-offers-humanitarian-visas-for-afghanistan-paralympic-athletes>

For more about Khodadadi's extraction from Afghanistan, please read <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-09->



Pan Am:

Paralympic Champs Brazil Celebrate National Para Athlete Day by Getting Back to Business

The Brazilian Para Taekwondo team celebrated Brazil's National Para Athlete Day (23 September) in style by reminiscing about the team's fantastic performance at Tokyo 2020. Brazil finished on top of the Paralympic medal table after all three of its Paralympians won medals in Tokyo – **Nathan Torquato's** gold in -61 kg, **Debora Menezes'** silver in +58 kg, and **Silvana Cardoso's** bronze in -58 kg. "Our job was to win 3 medals – and we knew it was possible – but being team champion was difficult as there were other strong teams that had more qualified athletes", said coach Rodrigo

Ferla in a National Para Athlete Day article. "In the end, the results worked out ... and we left with the historic result for Brazil as the Best Para Taekwondo nation in the world."

At the same time, the Brazilian federation resumed regular tournaments last month, with three of five regions holding regional championships. The three tournaments attracted 30 participants, including 15 new K44 athletes. Winners receive an all-expense paid trip to the National Finals in Sao Paolo in November and gain valuable nationwide ranking points.

To read the full article, please visit https://ferlatkd.com.br/2021/09/brasil-e-campeao-dos-jogos-paralimpicos-de-toquio/?fbclid=IwAR0aqqd-7WVCol4zrWectcG0y-VX8-dtGFyd5nDL8kblxRnQtBED_hoWU5E

Wicked Wildcard Paralympic Performance Wins Costa Rica's Molina Kudos at Home

One of the revelations of the Paralympic Games was the performance of Costa Rica's wildcard **Andres Molina**. Not expected to challenge after moving up a division to compete with the big boys in the +75 kg division, Molina won three of his five matches, only losing to No. 1-seeded **Evan Medell** (USA) for bronze and to Paralympic champion **Asghar Azizi Aqdam** (IRI) in the semi-final by Golden Point. His incredible run at Tokyo 2020 caught the eye of several Costa Rican publications, who praised his performance with lines like "His courage and pride led him to fight four-round fights on two occasions, succeeding in one of them, thanks to his good physical condition and his courage to face his rivals" (La Nacion) and "With an Olympic diploma and historic fifth place, Andres Molina said goodbye to the Paralympic Games with his head held high. (Delfino).



The 32-year-old Molina has been practising Taekwondo since he was six, competing for the Costa Rican national team before a serious work injury. The only Para Taekwondo artist on the island, he continues to practice with able-bodied sparring partners.

To read the article from La Nacion, please visit <https://www.nacion.com/puro-deporte/otros-deportes/taekwondista-andres-molina-quedo-a-dos-victorias/B6QHRJRJWVGG7MEGFZANHSDB3Q/story/>

To read the article for Delfino, please visit <https://delfino.cr/2021/09/andres-molina-quedo-quinto-en-el-parataekwondo-de-los-juegos-paralimpicos-de-tokio-2020>

Jamaica Wants to See Hines Succeed at Paris 2024

After getting her Paralympic feet wet at Tokyo 2020, the Jamaican Paralympic Association is excited to see how well **Shauna-Kay Hines** will do with a full Paralympic qualification cycle under her (black) belt. The Parapan Am Games bronze medalist has long been one of the top athletes in the -58 kg



category in the Americas, having won a medal at every regional competition she's been in – all seven of them – before finishing ninth at the Paralympic Games. The Jamaican star was feted at the airport on her post-Paralympics return by a crowd that included Jamaican Sports Minister Alando Terrelonge. “Shauna has been doing Taekwondo for a number of years and she has done very, very well”, he said. “She has done so much to make us all feel proud as a nation ... We look forward to seeing her growth as she continues to represent Jamaica.”

Christopher Samuda, President of both Jamaica's Olympic and Paralympic Committees went even further, “I want to commend our team for the Paralympic Games ... and certainly what we

are going to be doing is looking toward Paris [2024] now.”

To read the coverage of Hines in the Jamaica Observer, please visit https://www.jamaicaobserver.com/sports/hines-delights-in-amazing-paralympic-experience_231005 and https://www.jamaicaobserver.com/sports/paralympic-association_231070

Mexico's Garcia Lopez Continues to Reap Rewards

There are some benefits to being Para Taekwondo's only reigning World and Paralympic champion – just ask Mexico's **Diego Garcia Lopez**. Over the past couple of months, the teenage superstar has become the face of Toyota Mexico, carried the Mexican flag at the Paralympic Games Closing Ceremony, and received financial rewards from both the state and federal government. Toyota released two ads featuring the dual champion, while he received awards of \$11,500 from his state government and \$23,200 USD from the Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (although winners were initially told they would receive \$35,750 USD).



“The stimulus is like a reward for all the effort, dedication, and sacrifice we put into the preparation throughout this cycle”, the champion said afterwards, “I am very happy that I was present to receive the delivery of the stimulus from the President of Mexico.”

For more on Garcia Lopez receiving his reward from the Mexican President, please read the story on Yotambien.mx - <https://www.yotambien.mx/actualidad/premian-con-menos-de-lo-prometido-a-atletas-paralimpicos-de-tokyo-2020/>

For more on his award from the state government, please see the story by Espejo here - <https://revistaespejo.com/2021/09/20/a-seguir-cosechando-medallas-juan-diego-garcia-el-culiacanense-que-gano-medalla-de-oro-en-los-juegos-paralimpicos-tokio/>

To see Toyota's ad campaign featuring the Paralympic champion, please visit <https://www.toyota.mx/blog/experiencias/nuestro-taekwondista-juan-diego-garcia-supera-imposibles-en-los-juegos-paralimpicos-de-tokio> and <https://www.facebook.com/ToyotaMex/videos/916207309242775/> and https://m-partners.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=871591146795334&id=430457856994464&rd

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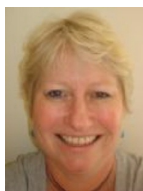
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