



World Para Taekwondo Newsletter

November 2021 | Issue #17

World Championships Return!



Para Taekwondo's New Look on Display at the Last Event of 2021

The qualification cycle for Paris 2024 hits high gear next month when the world's top Para Taekwondo athletes gather in Istanbul, Turkey to crown the newest world champions.

With Tokyo 2020 in the rear-view mirror, all eyes are now set on qualifying for Paris 2024. And not a moment too soon, as athletes have less than three years to collect ranking points to qualify directly.

No tournament makes that easier than the Para Taekwondo World Championships, set for 11-12 December in Istanbul, Turkey.

The G-14 event will see our new world champions add 140 ranking points in one tournament – even more important with the expansion of weight categories from three to five per gender.

Besides the new weight categories, the 2021 World Championships will also feature the new 'Super' K44 class, combining most athletes previously classified as K43 and K42 together with their K44 opponents. K41 athletes will compete for world titles in their own class.

All athletes that did not participate in the 2021 European Championships will need to be reclassified before competing. Classifications will happen at the event hotel from 9-10 December.

Finally, the tournament will feature the single, five-minute round format – which includes a single-use 30-second timeout, adding additional strategic and conditioning competencies to the speed, technique, and power elements for which the sport is famous.

NOTE: Only coaches with a World Para Taekwondo International Coach Certificate Level 2 will be allowed to coach athletes at the 2021 World Para Taekwondo Championships.

Bio-Secured Bubble

Originally slated for Wuxi, China, the 2021 World Para Taekwondo Championships will now be held in Turkey for the third time, after Antalya 2019 and Samsun 2017.

The additional weight categories mean the competition will be divided into two competition days.

COMPETITION DAYS

The different weight categories will be competing as follows (regardless of sport class):

DAY 1		DAY 2	
MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN
M-58kg	W-49kg	M-70kg	W-65kg
M-63kg	W-52kg	M-80kg	W+65kg
	W-57kg	M+80kg	

Other rules in effect at the 2021 World Para Taekwondo Championships are Point Gap and Point Ceiling. Should an athlete have a lead of 30 points or reach 40 points, they will be declared the winner.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the tournament will operate in a bio-secured bubble, meaning athletes and teams will be tested regularly and confined to the venue.

The tournament will be held at the Pullman Istanbul Hotel & Convention Centre. For more information, click the link below to access the Accommodation Guide.

[Click for 2021 World Championships Accommodation Guide](#)

The 2021 World Para Taekwondo Championships will be broadcast on Turkey's TRT Star, which can be found on satellite TV.

You can also follow a live stream of the event on the World Taekwondo YouTube page (<https://www.youtube.com/user/worldtaekwondo>) or the World Para Taekwondo Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/WorldParaTaekwondo>)

5 Key Points

Few tournaments between now and 1 January 2024 will offer athletes as many ranking points as the 2021 World Para Taekwondo Championships, meaning the tournament will be one of the most important on the Paris 2024 qualification calendar.

Here are five stories to keep your eyes on:

- 1. More world champions than ever!** With 10 K44 weight categories and 10 K41 weight categories, Istanbul 2021 will see more Para Taekwondo world champions than ever before!
- 2. Eyes on Paris 2024!** A strong showing at the G-14 world championships will vault athletes up the rankings in their new weight categories. With – at most – only two more world championships before the next Paralympic Games, you can be sure that the competition will be fierce.
- 3. Paralympic Pump or Slump?** Para Taekwondo crowned its first six Paralympic champions just a few months ago. Will they continue to show their dominance at Istanbul 2021, or will there be a post-Paralympics let down? There are plenty of reigning world champions looking to re-establish their place at the top of the divisions, as only Diego Garcia Lopez (MEX) can call himself a reigning World and Paralympic champion.
- 4. 'Super' K44's Supercharged New Rivalries.** We've already seen that former K43 and K42 athletes can compete toe-to-toe with their K44 foes. But we're waiting to see what exciting new rivalries will emerge with

the larger class. Imagine reigning world champions Khwansuda Phuangkittha (THA) vs Vika Marchuk (UKR) in -49 kg, or a rematch of the -63 kg European final between Mahmut Bozteke (TUR) and Evgenii Alifirenko (RUS).

5. **Unexpected Breakthrough Performances.** Every tournament has them. Think Beth Munro (GBR) at the Paralympic Games, Angelica Espinoza (PER) at the Parapan Am Games, or Yujie Li (CHN) at the 2019 World Championships. At Antalya 2019, we saw first-time world champions from Brazil, China, Mexico, and Thailand. With the sport growing faster than ever, who will step up with a performance to remember on the sport's biggest stage?

For more event information, please visit <https://worldtkd.simplycompete.com/eventDetails/11ec27f1-f5c3-e389-ace8-02043e46ab3f/1>

To register, please visit <https://worldtkd.simplycompete.com/eventDetails/11ec27f1-f5c3-e389-ace8-02043e46ab3f/1>

Click to Register for 2021 World Championships



Asian Youth Games - Here We Come!



BAHRAIN 2021 ASIAN YOUTH PARA GAMES
البحرين ٢٠٢١ دورة الألعاب البارالمبية الآسيوية للشباب

Asia's Young Stars Set to Shine at Para Taekwondo's Asian Youth Games Debut.

Add another major international sporting event to the fast-growing list of major tournaments that are racing to add one of the world's fastest-growing Para sports.

Para Taekwondo will make its debut at the 2021 Asian Youth Para Games in Manama, Bahrain on 5 December ahead of its debut at next year's Asian Para Games in Hangzhou, China from 9-14 October.

Over 800 athletes from 31 countries are set to take part in the nine sports offered at the event. In addition to Para Taekwondo, athletes will compete in athletics, badminton, boccia, goalball, powerlifting, swimming, table tennis, and wheelchair basketball.

26 athletes from 7 countries will take part in Para Taekwondo, making its first appearance at the fourth Asian Youth Para Games. Indonesia and host Bahrain will make history by competing in Para Taekwondo at an international level for the first time.

Athletes under 23 years old from nations registered with the Asian Paralympic Committee (APC) are eligible to compete in the G-2 event, which will feature Para Taekwondo's new look – the 'Super' K44 class, five weight divisions for each gender, and the single, five-minute round format.

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

To facilitate this process, please submit your athletes' Medical Diagnostic Forms as soon as possible!

The tournament will see some of Para Taekwondo's biggest young stars, including Thailand's reigning world champion **KhwanSuda Phuangkittha** (21) and Nepal's Paralympian **Palesha Goverdhan** (19), who nearly won her nation's first-ever Olympic or Paralympic medal at Tokyo 2020 before losing on a late score to China's reigning world champion **Yujie Li**. Though eligible, Li (20) is not registered for the event.

"Together. Rising. Stronger."

The 2021 Asian Youth Para Games will mark the first time Bahrain has hosted a major international Para sports event.

Events will be held at the Khalifa Sports City and Isa Sports City facilities – the latter serving as the national indoor sports facility.

The event even has its own mascot, revealed last month to mark 50 days until the Opening Ceremonies on 2 December. The mascot – 'BulBul' – is a national bird of Bahrain and represents the beauty that can be found in its habitat.

The event's motto is "Together. Rising. Stronger.", which reflects the Asian Youth Para Games goals of promoting friendships among the athletes (together), helping improve athlete performances (rising), and leaving athletes better equipped for their future sporting careers (stronger).

“The APC’s new vision is to ‘Make for an inclusive Asia through Para sport’ and I can think of no better place to start achieving that than with the region’s youth”, said APC President Majid Rashed.



E-Vote for New Rules



WT Council & General Assembly to Vote in November

The WT Council and General Assembly will vote on proposed rules changes by E-Vote in November 2021.

Here are some of the proposed changes. Be sure to read the full list of updated rule proposals before voting.

As Para Taekwondo maintains its rapid growth, the sport's rules continue to be renewed and reinterpreted – and the newest updates are ready to go to an E-Vote in November 2021.

The updated rule interpretations mainly deal with streamlining judging, updating safety equipment specifications and world ranking bylaws, and clarifying the 'dangerous play' rules.

"After every cycle, we analyse the Games", said World Para Taekwondo Committee Chair Chakir Chelbat, "There are areas where we have grey areas, such as kicks to the head and disqualifications. It's important to make the rules clear, consistent, and to eliminate the grey areas."

Streamlined Judging

There is an amendment to the number of judges needed per fight and what their roles would become. The proposed amendment to Rule 14.3 would see matches move to a two-judge system from the current three-judge system.

The proposed changes to Rule 22.4 call for the Review Jury to also take on the duties of the Technical Assistant.

This is done to make Para Taekwondo competitions more streamlined and cost-effective while maintaining the quality and fairness of competition.

Equipment and World Ranking Rule Updates

The proposed changes cover many small, but important topics, including equipment, world rankings, and even time-outs. While not an exhaustive list, here are a few of which to take note.

The proposed change to 4.2.2.1 clarifies that athletes with amputations can use additional protective equipment (padding) no thicker than 2 cm to protect the end of their residual limbs.

Rule 7.1.1 would codify the interpretation that coaches can not use their time outs during Golden Point rounds.

A proposed new Rule 6.1.10 of the World Para Taekwondo Ranking Bylaw would allow athletes to change weight categories up to once per year while retaining World Rankings points already accrued, while a clarification of Rule 7.5 of the World Para Taekwondo Competition Rules makes it clear that athletes disqualified by DQB (unsportsmanlike behaviour) would not accrue any ranking points.

'Dangerous Play' Rule Clarifications

A significant number of proposed updates concern clarifying rules surrounding unsafe play and defining the differences between intentional and unintentional (accidental) dangerous play.

Proposed Rule 15.4.8 would define Intentional Dangerous Play as "Clearly shown that athlete is aiming for and hitting the head with their technique" and/or "Turning and spinning techniques hitting the head directly." Unintentional / Accidental Dangerous Play would be defined as "Hitting the *hogu*, shoulder, etc. and technique slides up to hit the head due to the motion of the opponent".

Repeated unintentional dangerous play – cited three times during a single match – would still be subject to disqualification, but single occurrences would not inevitably result in automatic disqualification.

The updated interpretation of Rule 17.6 makes it clear that athletes unable to continue because of unintentional/accidental dangerous play will receive a result of WDR (withdrawn) while maintaining ranking points earned in earlier tournament results. Athletes deemed to be faking an injury or hit to the head will receive a result of DQB (disqualified due to unsportsmanlike behaviour) and will forfeit any ranking points earned in earlier tournament results.

Additional penalties are outlined for team members that "Inappropriately attempt to disturb or influence the outcome of the match, including instructing and/or faking injuries or hits to the head."

The proposed rules are meant to disincentivize unnecessary injury withdrawals while ensuring the safety of athletes by the use of commissioned doctors.

"We propose these changes for the benefit of the sport", said Chelbat. "To make them clear for everyone."

Updated rules will be posted on the World Taekwondo website once approved.

For more information, please contact para-tkd@worldtaekwondo.org



Education



Upcoming Courses - Registrations Open Now!

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

- Course will be offered ahead of the 2021 World Para Taekwondo Championships, as needed.

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

- Course will be offered ahead of the 2021 World Para Taekwondo Championships, as needed.

[Click to Register for Upcoming Courses](#)

Calendar



- 2021 Asian Youth Para Games (G2) - December 5 - Manama, Bahrain
(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)
- 2022 African Para Taekwondo Open Championships (G4/G2) - February 5-6, 2022 - Niamey, Niger
(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)

Around the World

Africa:

Malawi School Wins I'mPOSSIBLE Award

Malawi's Paralympic team may be small – the nation has just a single Paralympian – but it hasn't stopped the small African nation from making a big impact on the Paralympic movement. Malawi's Lilongwe LEA School was recognised for its implementation of the I'mPOSSIBLE education program that promotes the Paralympic vision and teaches inclusion by challenging and changing the perceptions of youth towards people with impairments.



Specifically, student **Noel Kenani** was singled out for his developing a ball with sound to include classmates with vision impairments. As the Malawian team was unable to travel to Tokyo, a special event was held last month that drew academics, politicians, and sports stars and attracted the attention of the national media. For winning, the school will receive an IPC Grant to purchase sports equipment.

"I am telling the whole nation that when we say it is possible, they should really take it seriously", said Noel Mwangi, the Director of the Ministry of Education & Special Needs Education. "Those kids that have disabilities should not be kept at home, but should go to school."

For more on the award, please read the IPC story here https://www.paralympic.org/news/para-sport-awareness-reaches-new-heights-malawi?fbclid=IwAR1WdnJS5ritxARZKnIWxolwPKdqq0FXoQO6M046UK_GOPHGsu7PO4LnayA

Mali Sends First Athlete to International Para Taekwondo Competition

In a sign of the increasing popularity of Para Taekwondo around the world, Mali sent its first athlete to an international competition abroad. An athlete from the West African nation travelled to neighbouring Niger to compete in the first



Taekwondo, sponsored in part by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Taekwondo has grown in stature in Mali thanks in part to the success of Olympian **Seydou Fofana** – the African Games champion that nearly toppled Korea’s three-time world champion **Lee Dae-hoon** at Tokyo 2020 this summer. Elia B. Misa, the ICRC / Niger Physical Rehabilitation Program Manager congratulated Mali for its participation and urged other countries to follow suit and promote Para Taekwondo for people with physical disabilities.

“Sport has confirmed to us its primordial role in the social integration and reintegration of people with disabilities”, she said. “To protect and assist people who are victims of war, violence, or natural disasters, [the ICRC] supports people with physical disabilities in sport beyond physical rehabilitation.”

For more, check out this article by Le Sahel - <http://www.lesahel.org/para-taekwondo-le-cicr-accompagne-le-sport-paralympique/>

Red Cross Helps Niger Host First Para Taekwondo Tournament

Thanks to the assistance of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Niger hosted its first international Para Taekwondo Cup last month. Taekwondo is immensely popular in the landlocked African state, thanks to the silver medal won by **Abdoul Razak Issoufou** at Rio 2016 – just the second medal won by the country at the Olympic Games. The inaugural Para Taekwondo event saw 20 athletes gather for competitions in both Kyorugi and Poomsae events. Held at Niamey’s Palace of Sport, the tournament comes just weeks after the ICRC opened a multi-sports complex for people with impairments at the Nigerian Federation of Disabled People. In the Kyorugi event, **Salifour Namata** took gold, **Idi Oumarou** won silver, and **Boubacar Djibril** was awarded bronze. In Poomsae, **Amadou Boubacar** won gold, Ms. **Zainabou Waba** took silver, and **Mohamed Mourtala** went home with bronze. The finals were watched by Sekou Doro Adamou, Niger’s Minister of Youth & Sport, who recalled Issoufou’s Olympic successes.



“Taekwondo is a sport which has made the international world take notice of Niger, to see the colours of Niger’s flag and [the sounds] of its national anthem have resounded in international competitions”, he said”, referencing the successes of Issoufou and African champion **Tekiath Ben Youssouf**.

For more on the event, please see this article by Niger’s Press Agency - <http://www.anp.ne/index.php/article/fin-niamey-des-premieres-competitions-de-para-taekwondo-de-self-defense-et-d-attaque>



Asia:

APC Names Afghanistan's Khodadadi Biggest Story of Tokyo 2020

The incredible story of Afghanistan’s **Zakia Khodadadi** and her resilient journey to compete at Tokyo 2020 continues to inspire people worldwide. In an article outlining the success of Asian nations at this summer’s Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, the Asian Paralympic Committee named Khodadadi’s story the “biggest attraction” of Tokyo 2020. Asian Paralympic Committee President Majid Rashed said “it was the major highlight for Asia”, adding that “the athlete’s participation definitely has sent out a message of peace, solidarity, and hope.”

To read the full article, please visit the Asian Paralympic Committee website at <https://asianparalympic.org/news-sep222021/>

India's Aruna to Miss Asian Youth

Games; Hopes for Worlds Comeback

India's 2019 World Championship bronze medalist **Aruna** was interviewed by Indian news outlet Sportskeeda last month about how her rehabilitation is going. Aruna became India's first Paralympian in Para Taekwondo in September when she defeated Serbia's **Daniela Jovanovich** 29-9 in the opening round. She sustained a hairline fracture to her right leg during a quarterfinal loss to the eventual Paralympic champion, Peru's **Angelica Espinoza** (Peru). The injury continues to cause her pain, hampering her training and leading to a rehab regimen of medication and physiotherapy.

"Given the fact I haven't been training for the last six weeks, it will be tough to win back-to-back medals at the Worlds", she told the outlet. "I am working with my physio to get back to practice."

To read her interview with Sportskeeda, please visit <https://www.sportskeeda.com/taekwondo/news-2021-world-para-taekwondo-championships-aruna-tanwar-hopes-physio-help-recover-leg-injury-sustained-paralympic-games>



Iran Celebrates National Paralympic Week

Events were held across Iran last month to mark the country's National Paralympic Week, including a special event for Paralympians at the National Olympic and Paralympic Academy on National Paralympic Day – October 16. There was plenty of reason to celebrate this year as the country marked its record-setting performance at Tokyo 2020 that saw the team win more gold medals (13) than ever before and finish 13th on the medal table. Para Taekwondo legends **Asghar Azizi Aqdam** and **Mehdi Pourrahnama** helped lead the team,

winning gold and silver, respectively. Paralympic Week activities included an event recognising Paralympic medalists, visits from VIPs and NGOs, participation events throughout the country, and Paralympic webinars focused on exercise, psychology, nutrition, culture, medicine, and sports ahead of the 2021 Asian Youth Para Games in Bahrain and the 2022 Asian Para Games in China.

VIPs in attendance included the Presidents of Iran's Olympic and Paralympic Committees and Iran's Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs, Dr. Hamid Sajjadi, who told attendees that Iran is "dedicated to ensuring that sufficient attention is given to providing budget, infrastructure, and supporting Para athletes in different areas such as their future professions and medalists' prize money."

For more, please visit the Iranian Paralympic Committee website at <https://www.paralympic.ir/fa/news/4564/%d9%85%d8%b1%d8%a7%d8%b3d9%85-%da%af%d8%b1%d8%a7%d9%85%db%8c%d8%af%d8%a7%d8%b4%d8%aa-%d8%b1d9%88%d8%b2-%d9%85d9%84%db%8c-%d9%be%d8%a7%d8%b1%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%85d9%be%db%8c%da%a9-%d8%a8%d8%b1%da%af%d8%b2%d8%a7%d8%b1-%d8%b4%d8%af>

Nepal's Paralympic Hero Goverdhan Recognised

Being Nepal's only Paralympian has its benefits – just ask **Palesha Goverdhan**. After nearly becoming the first Nepali athlete to win a medal at either the Olympic or Paralympic Games, Goverdhan continues to be recognised at home. Last month, she received a certificate of recognition and cheque for 10,000 Rs (~ \$135 USD) at a gala event in Kathmandu. Her coach and manager also received awards. Goverdhan lost to world champion **Yujie Li** (CHN) in the - 75 kg bronze medal final.

"It was a long journey", Goverdhan said in her thank-you remarks. "There were a lot of heartaches. There was a lot of joy ... I couldn't bring a medal to our



country, but even though I didn't win a medal I was stunned at how I really appreciated [my effort].” For more, check out the Nepal Para Taekwondo Committee Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/parataekwondonepal/> To see her bilingual acceptance speech, please visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6JnCL-rEPs>



Bank Partners with Singapore NPC to Offer Big Paralympic Paydays

In a model that Para athletes worldwide would like to see emulated, the Singapore National Paralympic Council (SNPC) recruits private companies to sponsor financial rewards for Olympic and Paralympic medalists through its Athletes Achievements Awards (AAA). Initially, Olympic champions were awarded \$740,000 USD while Paralympic champions received \$150,000 USD, with Singaporean company Tote Board being the sole Paralympic sponsor. Following a public outcry, the SNPC announced that Singapore's DBS Bank came

on a sponsor to double the Paralympic reward to \$300,000 USD. **Yip Pin Xu** was Singapore's only medalist at Tokyo 2020, winning two gold medals in swimming, meaning she won \$600,000 in total. She won't keep all the winnings though, as 20% is set aside to help support the Singapore Disability Sports Council and SNPC to fund training, development, and participation of athletes at major competitions.

“As a Singapore brand, we believe in supporting and nurturing home-grown talent”, said DBS Singapore country head Shee Tse Koon. “All of us can do our part to create a more inclusive Singapore.”

For more on Singapore's AAA programme, check out this article by the Straits Times - <https://www.straitstimes.com/sport/paralympics-yip-pin-xiu-gets-800000-for-two-golds-cash-reward-doubled-as-dbs-named-new-sponsor>

Phuangkitcha's Bronze for Thailand Named a Top Tokyo Moment for Asia

Winning Asia's first-ever Paralympic medal in Para Taekwondo was enough to earn Thailand's Paralympic bronze medal winner **Khwansuda Phuangkitcha** recognition by the Asian Paralympic Committee for providing one of Tokyo 2020's most memorable moments. Phuangkitcha's bid to become the first reigning world champion to win a Paralympic gold fell short when she lost to Turkey's No. 2-ranked **Meryem Cavdar** in the quarterfinal. She then won three straight repechage fights to claim bronze, including a memorable 33-30 repechage semi-final win over Mongolia's former world champion and No. 1-ranked **Enkhtuya Khurelbaatar**. The article includes a picture of Phuangkitcha fighting Uzbekistan's **Ziyadakhon Isakova** in an all-Asia bronze medal match.



To read the full article, please visit the Asian Paralympic Committee's website at <https://asianparalympic.org/news-sep222021/>

Europe:

BBC Features Great Britain's Munro After Paralympic Success

Great Britain's breakthrough star **Beth Munro** was featured in an article by the BBC following her surprising silver medal at the Paralympic Games. The article outlines her journey from picking up the sport 18 months before Tokyo 2020 to standing on the podium alongside some of the sport's greats. Munro won her first-ever competition – the European Paralympic Qualification tournament – just to qualify for the event. There she topped some of the division's finest, including China's reigning world champion **Yujie Li**



Turkey's Bacaksiz Headlines National Sport & Women's Summit

Just days after winning silver at the European championships, Turkey's **Seyma Nur Emeksiz Bacaksiz** was a golden speaker at a national women's event designed to ensure that there are "no barriers to success" for Turkey's female Para athletes. A Turkish champion, three-time European champion, and 2017 world champion, Bacaksiz was tapped to lead a panel of some of the nation's top woman Para athletes, including Para Taekwondo's up-and-coming teen **Meryem Elif Iyin**, wheelchair basketball's Gulsah Akkaya, and sitting volleyball's Esra Gumus Kirici. The event was organised by the Turkish Ministry of Youth & Sports and Marmara University's Women's Studies Research Centre (ESKAR).

"I had a hard time convincing my mother", she told the summit. "But if I can succeed with a disability, I believe everyone can succeed – as long as you want to succeed."

For more on the summit, including quotes from Iyin, please read the full story by Anadolu Agency at <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/spor/turkiyenin-gururu-kadin-sporculardan-basarinin-onunde-engel-yok-cagrisi/2375857#>

before falling in the final to Danish legend **Lisa Gjessing**.

"I'm on cloud nine", she told the newsmagazine. "It's a cheesy phrase, but it's exactly how I feel."

To read the full feature, please visit <https://www.bbc.com/sport/disability-sport/58447554>



Oceania:

2032 Host Brisbane Grants Keys to the City to Australian Legend Watson

Para Taekwondo legend **Janine Watson** has joined the likes of the Bee Gees, Savage Garden, and the Bushfire Relief Heroes by receiving the Key to the City of Brisbane after her stirring bronze medal win at Tokyo 2020. Watson famously became the only Poomsae world champion to also medal at the Paralympic Games when she beat Ukraine's **Yuliya Lypetska** to win bronze at Tokyo 2020. Queensland's Olympic and Paralympic medalists were welcomed home to a raucous Brisbane crowd 10 years before the city hosts the world at the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Being given a Key to the City is the highest honour a city can bestow on its citizens and is reserved for citizens that demonstrate outstanding achievements. Plenty of VIPs were on hand for the event at King George Square including the Governor of Queensland, the Mayor of Brisbane, and the President of the Australian Olympic Committee.

Said Brisbane Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner ahead of the event, "This is a great opportunity for kids to start dreaming of emulating the success of our Olympians and Paralympians on home soil when the Games are held in Brisbane in 2032."

For more on the event, check out this press release from the Queensland government -

To see video coverage of the event, see this story by The Global Herald -

<https://theglobalherald.com/news/australias-olympic-heroes-welcomed-home-to-fanfare-in-brisbane-7news/>

Pan Am:

Aruba's Loonstra Featured on BBC

Aruba's popular Paralympian **Elliot Loonstra** was interviewed as part of a feature on the Paralympic movement in Aruba for Great Britain's national news agency the BBC. The article highlights how Aruba came to develop a Paralympic Committee, tells a heart-wrenching story of the tiny island nation's first Paralympic experience at Rio 2016, and looks at Loonstra's route to Tokyo 2020. From practicing on the island's sandy beaches, to selling his famous heart-shaped sunglasses to raise money, to carrying his nation's flag at the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, the article takes you along Loonstra's journey.



"We'd run along the beaches and do kicks", he told the newspaper. "By doing them in the sand, which is always shifting, you have to develop your balance a lot quicker."

To read the full feature, please visit <https://www.bbc.com/news/disability-57837062>



Sao Paulo Recognises Brazil's Paralympic Heroes

The government of Sao Paulo recognised the achievements of Paralympic champion **Nathan Torquato**, reigning world champion and Paralympic runner-up **Debora Menezes**, and coach Alan Nascimento at the 'Accessible City' conference last month. The government announced an investment of \$20 million USD to help municipalities in the Sao Paulo administrative district to "acquire equipment develop works that promote inclusion and accessibility. The event was held at the prestigious Palacio dos Bandeirantes and the Paralympians were honoured by Sao Paulo governor Joao Doria.

For more information on the Accessible City project, check out this release by the City of Caraguatatuba - <https://www.caraguatatuba.sp.gov.br/pmc/2021/09/prefeitura-de-caraguatatuba-marca-presenca-no-lancamento-do-programa-cidade-acessivel/>

Mexico Heads to Training Camp to Prepare for Worlds

With only weeks to revel in the success of becoming Para Taekwondo's only reigning Paralympic and World champion, Mexico's **Diego Garcia Lopez** returned to in-person training last month as Mexico's Para Taekwondo team began preparing for the 2021 World Championships at a training camp in Querataro, Mexico. The camp is expected to draw the biggest names in Mexican Para Taekwondo, including stars like Garcia Lopez, **Ivan Torres**, **Edgar Torres**, **Jessica Garcia**, and **Claudia Romero**, as well as newcomers like **Cesar Hernandez**, **Alberto Lopez**, and **Luis Mario Najero**. In addition to improving skills and conditioning, the Mexico Taekwondo Federation will assess the athletes to see who fits best into Para Taekwondo's new weight categories in order to qualify as many fighters as possible to Paris 2024.



“We have two sessions a day, one technical and the other physical preparation, from Monday to Saturday”, explained Mexican National Team coach Jannet Allegría. “They are motivated after seeing their teammates compete at the Paralympic Games in Tokyo and know that with the World Championships, they are starting the road to Paris 2024.”

In other news, both García López and Allegría have been nominated for Mexico’s National Sport Award. García López is a favourite to win again, after winning for the first time last year. García López recently won the State Award of Sport in his home state of Sinaloa in the Para athlete category.

For more, please check out this article from the Mexican Taekwondo Federation - https://femextkdoficial.mx/noticias/el-parataekwondo-mexicano-tiene-nuevo-objetivo-el-campeonato-mundial?fbclid=IwAR0nZC7KnaDEHHEUsV2D84uzCZ-Mqo4Dw_sTu1OupQ8YOq_nhem0zDuFQIO

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