



World Para Taekwondo Newsletter

January 2021 | Issue #7



World Taekwondo President Brings New Year's Greetings

World Taekwondo President Chungwon Choue brought New Year's greetings in a message to the global taekwondo community to mark the new year.

"There is no doubt that 2020 was a very challenging year for all of us but ... we enter into 2021 with a renewed sense of optimism and hope for the future".

The message discusses how difficult it was for the taekwondo community to endure the endless cancelation of events in 2020, how World Taekwondo used the extra time to develop and deliver a wide variety of online education courses, and the launching of the first-ever Online World Taekwondo Poomsae Championships – an event that will continue to be delivered.

President Choue talks about what the taekwondo community accomplished in 2020 and what it will look forward to in 2021, including the Olympic Games and Para Taekwondo's debut at the 2020 Paralympic Games.

"We are so excited to see our Olympians compete again and, of course, watch our Paralympians make history as Para Taekwondo is included at a Paralympic Games for the first time – this will be a very special moment for us all."

He also took time to mention those that the taekwondo community lost in 2020, including General Ahmed Fouly, Taekwondo Africa President and World Taekwondo Vice-President.

He ends his New Year's greetings by listing some other events to look forward to in 2021, including the World Championships in Wuxi, China, the return of the World Taekwondo Grand Prix, and the introduction of the World Taekwondo Open Women's Taekwondo Championship in Saudi Arabia.

If the pandemic allows – 2021 will be an enormous year for taekwondo!

President Choue concludes his message by saying:

"We have much to be proud of but we also have much to do ... Thanks to all your hard work, I have every confidence we can – and will – achieve great things in 2021."

To read President Choue's full New Year's greeting, click [here](#).

To watch a video of 2020 highlights in taekwondo, click [here](#).

January Marks Para Taekwondo Day!

It was six years ago this month that Para Taekwondo officially became a Paralympic sport.

The IPC announced that Para Taekwondo would become the Paralympic Games' first full-contact sport at a Governing Board meeting in Abu Dhabi on 31 January 2015.

It was a remarkable accomplishment for a sport that wasn't even around only a decade earlier.

Now, just 15 years after the sport's creation, Para Taekwondo will make its show-stopping Paralympic debut this summer.

Now regularly practiced in countries around the world on every continent, the popularity of Para Taekwondo has led to an explosion of new practitioners from every corner of the planet. Noting the popularity, World Taekwondo continues to adapt the discipline to more and more people, and this year will see world championship competitions for virtually every type of impairment.

So, let's take some time on January 31st to celebrate!

But first, let's take a quick look back at the sport's remarkable rise.

Becoming a Paralympic Sport

Unlike other Para sports that grew organically and later partnered with their able-bodied counterparts, Para Taekwondo was unique in that it was the able-bodied sport that developed the Para side. That meant that everything started from scratch – from athlete recruitment to developing methods of classification to figuring out a rankings system.

This process was started in 2006 and by 2009 World Taekwondo hosted the inaugural Para Taekwondo World Championships in Baku, Azerbaijan.

But the sport's first crack at gaining Paralympic status for the 2016 Paralympic Games in Brazil didn't come to pass. So, World Taekwondo set out to professionalise the sport.

Developing a working group with experts from other organisations including CPISRA and INAS, Para Taekwondo worked on improving classification, developing a global rankings system, and aggressively recruiting athletes.

By the time the sport hosted its fifth world championships – in Moscow, Russia in 2014 – the event drew record numbers.

The event's success convinced the IPC to adopt its first-ever full-contact sport.



World Taekwondo Federation (WTF)
Mr. Chungwon Chong
President

Via email

Abu Dhabi, 31 January 2015

2020 Paralympic Games – Sport Programme

Dear Mr. Chong,

On behalf of the IPC Governing Board and Chief Executive Officer Xavier Gonzalez I would like to inform you that the sport of Taekwondo has been admitted to the programme of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. Congratulations to you and your team!

While this decision by our Governing Board is certainly good news for WTF and for the athletic community, we hope that your organisation will now vigorously pursue a strategy of growth and of solidifying governance so that Taekwondo will be in an excellent position when we launch the next review cycle in 2018.

As previously advised, please keep this information confidential until the IPC has made an official announcement on its website. Thank you for your cooperation.

With kind regards,



Joergen Masberg
Paralympic Games Sport & NPC Services Senior Manager

Cc: Xavier Gonzalez, IPC Chief Executive Officer
Olof Hansson, WTF Para-Taekwondo Coordinator

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Becoming a Paralympic Powerhouse

Hard work and persistence in athlete recruitment may have spawned the sport, but its Paralympic status has helped fuel its enormous and continued growth.

Every successive world championship has seen record numbers of athletes and nations participating. The 2019 world championships nearly doubled in size from the 2017 edition and that trend is expected to continue at the ninth Para Taekwondo World Championships in Wuxi, China later this year.

Beyond simple numbers, the quality of the sport continues to improve. The Paralympic community will be amazed by the camera-friendly speed, skill, and strength our fighters will put on display at this summer's Paralympic Games.

In fact, the marketability of the sport is already well known. Fighters like [Lisa Gjessing](#) (Denmark) and [Amy Truesdale](#) (Great Britain) have lined up lucrative endorsements, while world champions like [Vika Marchuk](#) (Ukraine) and [Juan Diego Garcia Lopez](#) (Mexico) have won their country's highest sporting awards.

Just this month in its annual report, the IPC featured world champion [Debora Menezes](#) (Brazil) and [Elliot Loonstra](#) (Aruba).

And World Para Taekwondo's #KickingItAtHome social media campaign saw over 725,000 people watch over 2,000 hours of our athletes training at home.

The addition of several new impairment types to Poomsae this year will continue to foster the sport's growth and – it is hoped – will lead to the discipline's inclusion at a future Paralympic Games.

But until then, Para Taekwondo's dramatic rise from nothing to Paralympic powerhouse takes its next major step as we watch fighters from every continent face off in Tokyo for the chance to win those coveted first-ever Paralympic medals.

On behalf of the World Para Taekwondo team, Happy Para Taekwondo Day everyone!





Para Taekwondo Coach Courses - Level II

6th World Para Taekwondo ONLINE International Coach Certification Course [Level II]

- Course Dates : 15th January - 17th January 2021 Registration **Deadline: 12 Jan 2021, 11:59:PM (GMT+01:00 Europe/Berlin)**

Para Taekwondo Coach Course - Level I

9th World Para Taekwondo Online International Coach Certification Course [Level I]

- Course Dates : 22-24 Jan. Registration **Deadline: 19 Jan., 11:59:PM (GMT+01:00 Europe/Berlin)**

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

Second MNA Para Taekwondo Workshop (Invitation-Based)

The second MNA Para Taekwondo Workshop is aimed for MNA Presidents, Secretaries General, and Administrators. Each MNA can nominate up to five (5) participants and the participating MNA will receive a participation certificate in the MNA profile in GMS.

The Para Taekwondo Workshop was designed for our MNAs as part of our ongoing efforts to further enhance the knowledge of Para Taekwondo among our WT stakeholders.

Please send your nominations to para-tkd@worldtaekwondo.org before 9 Jan 2021, 11:59:PM (GMT+01:00 Europe/Berlin).

Para Taekwondo Around the World

Africa:

Senegal's Seye Sensational Success Story

One of 2020's most pleasant surprises was the emergence of Senegal's Ibrahima Sèye. Moving down a weight class to compete in the up to 75kg division for the first time, Sèye raised eyebrows by posting 117 points in just three fights at Africa's Paralympic Qualification Tournament. He

polished off his remarkable run with a stunning 24-16 win over world championship bronze medalist – and perhaps Africa's top fighter – Morocco's Mohammed Aatif.

"It was a very tough continental tournament", the fighter told lesoleil.sn. "In my first fight, I broke my fingers, but I didn't stop. I continued to fight, despite my injury ... I gave my all – the best of myself – to get the qualification. It's a dream come true."

Becoming the only Senegalese fighter to win qualification to the Paralympic Games delighted the Senegal Taekwondo Federation (STF).

"For a year, we have been preparing the team to be able to win this qualification", STF President Balla Dièye told lesoleil.sn. "It's both extraordinary and historic for taekwondo, which is participating in the Paralympic Games for the first time."

To read the full article on Senegal's newest star, click [here](#).



Up-and-Coming Ghanaian Fighters Look to World Championships

Ghana continues to train its top fighters after sending two bronze-medal finishers to last year's Paralympic Qualification Tournament in Africa. Ahead of the tournament, Ghana's top Para Taekwondo fighters attended a training camp, with the very best – one male and one female – chosen to represent the country at the Paralympic Qualification Tournament. Ghana

selected its top athletes of 2019, Adizatu Shaban (women's over 58kg) and Emmanuel Kofi (men's up to 75kg), to travel to Rabat, Morocco for the chance to qualify for the Paralympic Games. Both fighters fell in the semifinals, with Kofi falling to eventual champion Ibrahima Sèye of Senegal. Ghanaian athletes continue to train and hope to medal at the 2021 Para Taekwondo World Championships in Wuxi, China later this year.



Pan Am

Para Taekwondo to Debut in Brazil's School Paralympics

Brazilian Para Taekwondo begins 2021 with a remarkable achievement for the growth of the sport with the introduction of Para Taekwondo to the Brazilian School Paralympics. Organised by the Brazilian Olympic Committee, the event sees teens between the ages of 12 to 17 across the country compete in different Para sports, with finals being held at the Paralympic Training Centre in Sau Paulo in November. Happening at schools in every state in the country, students will be able to compete in both kyorugi and poomsae (P20, P30, and P40). As travel expenses are covered by the government, this marks a fantastic way for Brazil to discover new talents. Para Taekwondo will also debut at the National School Camp in 2022, where winners of this year's School Paralympics will spend 10 days training with the Brazilian Paralympic Team.

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