

Major changes made to 2020 IWAS and IWAS Wheelchair Fencing calendar

The International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation (IWAS) has announced that competitions due to take place before 31 May, including the rescheduled IWAS World Games and remaining wheelchair fencing events, have either been postponed or cancelled.

The decision is in response to the growing challenges presented by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The cancellation and postponement of competitions covers the one remaining IWAS Wheelchair Fencing World Cup in Sao Paulo, Brazil, as well as regional Championships in Asia, the Americas and Europe. These all offered qualification points for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

The 2020 IWAS World Games, originally rescheduled from February to April, will now take place from 10-17 December.

IWAS President Rudi Van Den Abbeele said: "The major problems created by COVID-19 have made it all but impossible to offer certainty and stability to our membership, athletes and teams in the period before Tokyo 2020.

"In our liaison with Local Organising Committees in recent weeks we have experienced requests to change venues, had new travel restrictions put in place as governments and health authorities respond to the outbreak, and heard a growing level of concern from our stakeholders.

"This is an unprecedented situation but one which we have considered carefully as the situation has developed.

"We now have to act decisively to protect the welfare of athletes and give them some stability, as well as consider the impacts of cancelling competitions at even shorter notice for National Federations and Local Organising Committees.

"All my thoughts and sympathies go out to all athletes who were planning to compete ahead of May, especially wheelchair fencers. As a Paralympian myself I too am incredibly frustrated at the timing of this outbreak, and I would like to assure them that we have fought very hard to keep the calendar intact.

"We are now working around-the-clock to review the IWAS Wheelchair Fencing qualification process for Tokyo 2020, as well as fill all the gaps that this announcement will create, and will provide more information as soon as we can."

The IWAS Wheelchair Fencing Executive Committee, alongside the Athlete Commission, will now ensure that the impact on athletes on their road to Tokyo 2020 is minimised as much as possible. More information will be published on 12 March.

Summary of cancellations and postponements

Competition	Dates	Status
2020 IWAS Wheelchair Fencing World Cup, Sao Paulo, Brazil	11-14 March	Cancelled
2020 IWAS Wheelchair Fencing Americas Championships, Sao Paulo, Brazil	14-18 March	Cancelled

2020 IWAS Wheelchair Fencing Asian Championships, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand	2-9 April	Cancelled
2020 IWAS Wheelchair Fencing European Championships, Hatfield, Great Britain	26-31 May	Cancelled
2020 IWAS World Games, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand	2-9 April	Postponed – 10-17 December 2020

The 2020 IWAS Wheelchair Fencing World Cup and 2020 IWAS Wheelchair Fencing Team Sabre and Category C Foil and Epee World Championships, both scheduled to be held in Warsaw, Poland, from 3-9 July, will currently still go ahead. The competition is not a Tokyo 2020 qualifier.

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