



World Para Taekwondo Newsletter

July 2021 | Issue #13

Para Taekwondo's Parfait Hakizimana to Star on Refugee Paralympic Team



Becomes 73rd - and Final - Taekwondoin to Qualify for Tokyo

Para Taekwondo will have 73 athletes in Tokyo.

Para Taekwondo star Parfait Hakizimana, a Burundian refugee living in Rwanda, was named to the Paralympic Refugee Team on 30 June. He will compete in the -61kg division.

Living in a camp for internally displaced people in 1996 because of the Burundian Civil War, he lost his mother and received an injury that left his arm permanently debilitated when he was eight. Fearing for his life, he later left the country permanently when unrest in Burundi flared up again in 2015.

He has since been living at the Mahama Refugee Camp – where day-to-day life can be quite difficult – in Rwanda ever since.

“Refugees don’t have a lot”, he told UNHCR (the UN’s refugee agency), “But sport helps them forget their troubles.”

The Refugee Paralympic Team represents more than 82 million people worldwide that have been forced to flee war, persecution, and human rights abuses – 12 million of whom live with a disability.

WT President is “Thrilled”

World Taekwondo President Dr. Chungwon Choue was over-the-moon about the decision.

“We are thrilled with the announcement that Burundian refugee Parfait Hakizimana will be representing the Refugee Team at the Tokyo Paralympic Games this summer. Few athletes have had to overcome the conditions of Mr. Hakizimana, who until recently lived, taught, and trained in Rwanda’s Mahama Refugee Camp.”

Dr. Choue noted the work of the Taekwondo Humanitarian Foundation (THF), created by World Taekwondo in 2016. The Foundation has supported Hakizimana and he is now a THF coach.

“World Taekwondo remains committed to empowering refugees through Taekwondo, which is why we started the Taekwondo Humanitarian Foundation in the first place”, he said. “Many refugees around the world, including those based in refugee camps like Mr. Hakizimana, have benefitted from its supports. Dr. Choue also thanked the different groups that helped Hakizimana along the way.

“We congratulate Mr. Hakizimana on his achievement and would like to acknowledge the work put in by the IPC, World Taekwondo, the Taekwondo Humanitarian Foundation, and the Rwandan Taekwondo Federation”, he said. “And we wish Parfait the best of luck as he pursues his Paralympic dream in Tokyo this summer.”

About Parfait Hakizimana

Until a few months ago, Hakizimana was based in the Mahama Refugee Camp – the biggest in Rwanda with over 50,000 refugees. More recently, he has been training in the Rwandan capital of Kigali.

At the camp, Hakizimana organised a taekwondo school and has trained over 1,000 refugee children. He has also prepared himself for elite competitions.

He competed in the 2017 African Open championships in Kigali, Rwanda, where he won his first match before losing to No. 1-seeded, 3-time world champion Aythami Santana Santana (ESP) 18-12 in the -61kg K44 division quarterfinal.

Hakizimana’s participation in Tokyo is contingent on his reclassification by 1 August. As a refugee, it has been hard to receive the necessary visas to travel to tournaments, making classification challenging.

World Taekwondo has confirmed that he will be reclassified before the deadline.

To read World Taekwondo’s announcement, please visit <http://www.worldtaekwondo.org/competition/view.html?nid=138238&mcd=M02>

For more information on the Refugee Paralympic Team, please visit: <https://www.paralympic.org/refugee-paralympic-team>

To watch the launch video (Parfait’s segment starts at 0:48), please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhICevl-vIM>

To read IPC’s profile on Parfait, please visit: <https://www.paralympic.org/feature/para-taekwondo-athlete-parfait-teaches-hope-rwandan-refugee-camp>

To read World Taekwondo’s profile on Parfait, please visit: <http://www.worldtaekwondo.org/wtnews/view.html?nid=136746&mcd=C07>

To learn more about the Mahama Refugee Camp, please visit: <https://www.unhcr.org/rw/559-559.html>



2021 Asian Open Championships



Champions Sharp, Favourites Falter at Asian Open

While some of Para Taekwondo's biggest stars showed why they are medal favourites in Tokyo – now just weeks away – others discovered just how difficult it will be to claim the sport's first Paralympic medals.

Many of Para Taekwondo's biggest stars were in Beirut, Lebanon last month for the sixth Asian Open championships – the final international tournament ahead of the sport's Paralympic debut this summer.

With mere weeks left to sharpen their skills ahead of the Paralympic Games, the tournament drew many Paralympic-qualified athletes among the 67 athletes from 14 countries that traveled to Lebanon.

While the men's divisions witnessed previous champions and top-ranked fighters see off challenges from newer foes, there were plenty of surprises on the women's side that are sure to shake up things before Tokyo.

World champions dominate men's divisions

It was business as usual in the men's draws as world champion Bopha Kong (FRA) and former world champion teammates Mehdi Pourrahnama and Asghar Aziziaghdam (IRI) all struck gold in Lebanon. Kong (Ranked No. 1) and Aziziaghdam (No. 6) picked up their fourth Asian Championships, while Pourrahnama (No. 3) has yet to be beaten at the tournament, winning his sixth straight Asian Championship.

It was the 2019 world championships all over again in the -61 kg K44 division, as Bolor-Erdene Ganbat (MGL, No. 1) met Ali Can Ozcan (TUR, No. 4) – in a rematch of the fight labeled the 'Greatest of All-Time' – and Mahmut Bozteke (TUR, No. 2) faced Daniil Sidorov (RUS, No. 3).

All three fights left the spectators dazzled and the fighters gasping for air.

While Ganbat again bested Ozcan, Bozteke avenged his world championship loss and capped it by capturing his first Asian title. It was the second straight loss to a Turkish fighter at the Asian Championships for Ganbat, who fell in the 2019 semi-final to Ozcan, after winning the first four Asian Championships.

Turkey can send only one of Bozteke or Ozcan to the Paralympic Games this summer.

Two performances to note were Iran's Hamed Haghshenas (No. 17), who confidently beat Russia's Zainutdin Ataev (No. 3) 27-10 in the +75 kg K44 division before falling in a competitive final to teammate and Paralympic-bound Aziziaghdam. In the K43 bracket, Paralympic-bound Mehmet Vasif Yakut (TUR, No. 1) was surprised in the final by newcomer Malik Mukashev (KAZ, Unranked), who captured the Asian title in his first international tournament.

Upsets define women's divisions

In the biggest surprise of the tournament, Mongolia's No. 1-ranked former world champion Enkh TUYA Khurelbaatar (MGL) was dominated 28-4 in the -49 K44 semi-final by Parapan Am Games champion Angelica Espinosa (PER, No. 5). Khurelbaatar had won four straight Asian titles and had never been beaten in the tournament.

After claiming her second Pan American title last month, Espinosa confidently scored her first Asian title with a comfortable 43-21 win over Anna Poddubskaya (RUS, No. 4), who had a semi-final surprise of her own by beating No. 2-ranked Meryem Betul Cavdar (TUR).

In the -58 kg K44 group, it was Brazil's Silvana Mayara Cardoso Fernandez (No. 10) that put on a show, showing she could be a Paralympic medal favourite by outscoring her opposition – including Paralympic-bound Gamze Gurdal (TUR, No. 3) by a combined score of 133-29 to pick up her second straight continental championship.

Cardoso Fernandez is in top form right now; she won the Pan American title last month, outscoring her opponents – including previously unbeaten four-time world champion Lisa Gjessing (DEN, No. 1) – by a combined 66-18.

Both Espinosa and Cardoso Fernandez collected the maximum 60 points available at the two tournaments, which will help them with their Paralympic seeding.

Two new fighters made some waves in the +58 kg K44 division, won for the second time by Guljonoy Naimova (UZB, No. 4).

Hot off a heartbreaking golden point loss in the European Paralympic Qualification tournament final, Spain's Dalia Santiago Moreno (No. 14) made her first continental championship final, falling 13-11 to Naimova in a nervy final.

After qualifying for the Paralympic Games at last month's Asian Paralympic Qualification tournament without having to fight, Iran's Rayehe Shahab (Unranked) won her first international fight on the way to her first international medal – a bronze.

Next up for the fighters is Para Taekwondo's Paralympic debut this summer from 2-4 September.

Note: All continental championships are G4/G2 Open events. Athletes from the host continent win twice as many ranking points as those from outside the host continent.



Preparations for Paris 2024



New Rules to Come into Effect on 6 September

This is a friendly reminder that important changes are set to come into effect on 6 September!

Your athletes will need to declare their new weight categories.

These changes effectively kick off the beginning of the Paris 2024 Paralympic cycle!

New Weight Classes, More Medal Events

One of the biggest changes athletes will see is the increase of medal divisions from three to five weight categories.

The new weight categories are as follows:

Men

-58 kg
-63 kg
-70 kg
-80 kg
+80 kg

Women

-47 kg
-52 kg
-57 kg
-65 kg
+65 kg

All Member National Associations should respond to the survey about New Weight Categories as soon as possible.

Sport Classes Reviewed

To continue to make the sport safer, fairer, and more transparent, World Taekwondo completed a review of Para Taekwondo sport classes and medal events.

A Delphi Study was completed by using a series of online questionnaires and in-person roundtable discussions from the 2019 World Championships in Antalya, Turkey, and physical research with athletes at the 2019 Asian Open and European Open championships.

The academic study looks at key areas for future research into Para Taekwondo's classification system. The results were published in a research paper titled 'Expert consensus statement to guide research into evidence-based classification of athletes for Para Taekwondo – A Delphi Study, written by classifiers including Hee Seong Jeong, David M. O'Sullivan, Primoz R. Rus, and Ashanti Ramirez Montes de Oca.

The study and physical research composed the basis for the full review of the Kyorugi sport classes, which were proposed by the Classification Committee and passed by the World Taekwondo General Assembly (93-1).

As of 6 September all athletes will be assigned an "R", review Sport Class Status, and must go through classification again at their first tournament under the new World Para Taekwondo Athlete Classification Rules. It is essential that a new MDF be submitted to the WTCS for this purpose.

To read the full academic paper on classification in Para Taekwondo, visit <https://jomh.org/articles/10.31083/jomh.2021.019>.

To review the new rules, please visit http://www.worldtaekwondo.org/viewer_pdf/external/pdfjs-2.1.266-dist/web/viewer.html?file=http://www.worldtaekwondo.org/att_file/documents/World%20Para%20Taekwondo%20Athlete%20Classification%20Rules%20as%20of%20September%206,%202021.pdf.

If you have any questions, please contact World Para Taekwondo at para-tkd@worldtaekwondo.org.



UPCOMING COURSES REGISTRATIONS OPEN NOW!



Here's a quick 'shout out' to all those coaches and federations that **sent in clips of their training sessions**. They look wonderful! Be sure to keep sending those videos to para-tkd@worldtaekwondo.org.

Now is the time to get your coaches and classifiers certified!

Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II is required to coach at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games

To facilitate the process of new athletes being internationally classified, it is important for your MNA to certify its own national classifiers.

If you have any questions about the trainings or registration, please contact the World Para Taekwondo office ASAP.

15th Para Taekwondo ONLINE International Coach Certification Course [Level I] (English)

- Course: 4-6 July (18:00-21:00 CET). Registration **Deadline: 2 July 23:59 CET**

11th Para Taekwondo ONLINE International Coach Certification Course [Level II] (English)

- Course: 12-14 July (18:00-21:00 CET). Registration **Deadline: 8 July 23:59 CET**

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

Para Taekwondo Competition Calendar



- Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games - September 2-4 -Tokyo, Japan
(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)
- World Taekwondo President's Cup - Asia - November 18 - Nablus, Palestine
(International Para Taekwondo Coach Certification Level II required for all coaches)
- 2021 Asian Youth Para Games - November 28 - December 7 - Bahrain
- 2021 World Taekwondo Grand Prix Final G10 - December - TBA

Para Taekwondo Around the World

Africa:

Burundian Refugee Hakizimana Becomes Media Hit

After being one of six athletes named to the Refugee Paralympic Team, Burundian refugee Parfait Hakizimana has been a sought-after media target. Within hours of the announcement, he had stories up on IPC, UNHCR, and World Taekwondo websites and was being chased by media outlets in Korea, Japan, and elsewhere. Check out the links in our feature above for more information.



For more, please visit <http://www.worldtaekwondo.org/competition/view.html?nid=138238&mcd=M02>



Asia:

Stymied by Travel Ban, India's Aruna Elated with Bipartite

It's not the way she might have preferred to go, but India's Aruna is still happy to have accepted a bipartite invitation to compete at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. The 2019 World Championship bronze medalist was planning to win her way there at the Asian Qualification tournament before a spike in COVID cases in India and Nepal meant athletes

from the countries were not welcomed in many countries abroad. "I was so upset to lose out on a chance in Jordan", she told the Hindustan Times. "It is like a dream come true now with World Taekwondo giving me a go-ahead [to compete at the] 2020 Paralympics."

For more, please visit <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/india-bets-on-aruna-for-a-medal-in-paralympics-2021-101623355223772.html>

Japan's Awatari Answers the Important Questions

Japanese taekwondo star Kenta Awatari continues his web series answering questions about what it's like to live with a disability. Last month, he covered an interesting topic. "This time I had a request, I'd like to introduce it to you", he said on Facebook. "How do you use the toilet?"

He then goes on to – gracefully – demonstrate during the video.



"For me, it's a normal thing that I've been doing since I was a kid", he wrote, saying he was inspired to make the video when able-bodied people kept asking him "If you don't have both hands, I'm curious about how you wipe."

To watch Kenta's video, please visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBAAsw2isA0>



Nepal Taekwondo Association Supports Para Team During COVID

During the recent spike in COVID in Nepal and India, the Nepal Taekwondo Association – through its Mercury Committee – provided food support to members of Nepal's Para Taekwondo team, including Palesha Goverdhan, who will represent the nation at the 2020 Paralympic Games. The committee provided 40,000 Rs (~\$500 USD) worth of food to the team, which was delivered door-to-door, reports hamokhelkud.com. Unable to compete at the Asian Paralympic Qualification tournament, Goverdhan was awarded a bipartite invitation in the -58kg division.

For more, please visit

<https://www.hamokhelkud.com/others/90383.html?fbclid=IwAR0hB3p2WGTaTmQ6ozkTcNkp4FOo7XzLrVftOmGAAuHqtNd8pVNYNjixYA>

Europe:

Azerbaijani Government Spotlights Paralympic-Bound Mammadova

The Government of Azerbaijan continues to show its support for the Para Taekwondo team by producing a sleek video about three-time world champion Aynur Mammadova's journey to the Paralympic Games. One of the sport's earliest stars, Mammadova memorably booked her ticket to Tokyo with a nail-biting Golden Point win at the European Paralympic Qualification tournament in May. The sleek, 75-second video features interviews with Mammadova at her home and gym and was produced by the Azerbaijani Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population.



To view the video on Facebook, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/100005206594175/posts/1650001001850104/>



Denmark's Gjessing Named Paralympic Flagbearer

Denmark's four-time world champion and No. 1-ranked Lisa Gjessing was named one of Denmark's flagbearers at the 2020 Paralympic Games by Denmark's Crown Prince Frederick last month. Both Olympic and Paralympic flagbearers were named – a female and male athlete at each event. Gjessing will share the honour with 3-time Paralympic medalist Daniel Wagner (Athletics). At the ceremony, the athletes were also provided with the Danish flags they will take to Tokyo to carry during the Opening Ceremonies.

For more, please visit <https://royalcentral.co.uk/europe/denmark/crown-prince-frederik-hands-out-danish-olympic-flag-and-unveils-tokyo-flag-bearers-162246/>

For the video on Facebook, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/dankochboyter/videos/1464051657279821/>

Oceania:

Paralympics Australia Profiles Paralympic-Bound Watson

"History Made" is how Paralympics Australia introduced 3-time Poomsae world champion Janine Watson after her selection for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic team. Watson made the move to Kyorugi in 2018, picking up a bronze medal at the Korea Open. She showed her mettle at the 2019 Oceania Open championships, falling to reigning world champion Debora Menezes (BRA) in the semi-final based on the referee's decision (6-6). Watson is the only Para Taekwondo athlete with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) to qualify for the Tokyo Paralympic Games.

For more, please visit <https://www.paralympic.org.au/2021/06/history-made-as->



[australia-names-first-taekwondo-paralympian/?fbclid=IwAR1TJZD4IYzI8s46djjxM_mwuJoidXDdegDt--40SgMKExjBBidI4hpq9DU](https://www.24ora.com/elliott-lefty-loonstra-haciendo-historia/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook)



Pan Am:

Aruba's Lone Paralympian Gets Featured at Home

Local news agency 24ora.com was the latest to feature Aruba's Elliot Loonstra, as he looks to make history as the first Aruban to win an Olympic or Paralympic medal. 'Lefty', as his friends call him, was awarded a bipartite invitation in the +75kg division and will be Aruba's lone Paralympic athlete. Loonstra will become just the second Paralympian from Aruba, after the nation sent a swimmer to the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. Ranked No. 18 in the world, his best results came at the 2019 Pan Am Open, where

he won bronze.

For more, please visit https://24ora.com/elliott-lefty-loonstra-haciendo-historia/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook

Mexican Paralympic Committee Profiles Martinez

Mexico's Daniela Andrea Martinez Marshal was recently profiled by the Mexican Paralympic Committee's #YoLuchoPorMexico (#IFightForMexico) series. The nearly one-minute video features video, photos, and recorded messages from the Paralympics-bound star. The Mexican star has won her last three tournaments, including the Parapan Am gold and the 2021 Pan American Open to move up to No. 7 in the world rankings.



To view the video on Facebook, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/604432682999704/posts/3816925731750367/>



Para Taekwondo Gets a Spanish-Language Newsletter

As World Taekwondo moves into Year #2 of its Para Taekwondo newsletter, our Spanish-speaking community will get a newsletter of their own. Launched last month by Taekwondo Para Todos, the first issue is an amazing 47 pages and includes information on upcoming events and training, athlete profiles, and plenty of other useful information. Taekwondo Para Todos is a community of Spanish and Portuguese Taekwondoinos that state that they are “Normal people like you. People who train, who compete, and who take exams!”

NOTE: This newsletter is not affiliated with World Taekwondo.

To read the first issue, please visit

<https://tkdparatodos.files.wordpress.com/2021/06/revista-taekwondo-para-todos-no4junio-21-7.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0WA-8GkXqmTKIj3RPrsDP8VH6bPVV4A-OA7n32AHI5GITB7c1SglwbTvA>

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