

Tokyo Games delayed to 2021

IOC and Japan agree to postpone Tokyo Olympics easing athletes' angst

● The decision came after swelling resistance from nations and athletes to holding the Games amid the coronavirus pandemic

● The games will most likely happen next summer and will not be postponed any later than that

Reuters | Tokyo

The Tokyo Olympics were postponed yesterday into 2021, the first such delay in the Games' 124-year modern history, as the coronavirus crisis wrecked the last international sporting showpiece still standing this year.

Though a huge blow to Japan, which invested \$12 billion in the run-up, the decision was a relief to thousands of athletes fretting over how to train as the world headed into lockdown over the disease that has claimed more than 16,500 lives.

Pressure had been building on the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and its powerful president Thomas Bach, with some athletes and sporting bodies critical of the time taken to make an inevitable decision.

After a call with Bach, Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said the July 24-Aug. 9 competition would be rescheduled for the



A woman walks past the Olympic rings in front of the Japan Olympics Museum in Tokyo

summer of 2021 at the latest as proof of victory over the virus.

"We asked President Bach to consider postponement of about one year to make it possible for athletes to play in the best condition," Abe said.

"President Bach said he is in agreement 100 percent."

The IOC confirmed that.

Though it was the first Olympics' postponement, they were cancelled outright several times during the two 20th century World Wars. Major Cold War boycotts also disrupted the Moscow and Los Angeles Games in

1980 and 1984.

Athletes sad but relieved

Athletes were disappointed but broadly endorsed the delay, given health risks and disruption to their training as gyms, stadia and swimming pools shut down around the world.

"I compete in a little bike race, which is nothing compared to what is going on in the world right now," American Olympic BMX champion Connor Fields said, before the official announcement. "No sport is more important if it means more peo-

ple might potentially die from this."

Australia's two-time Olympic champion swimmer, Cate Campbell, said she was reeling but ready for the new challenge.

"The goal posts haven't disappeared - just shifted," she said, after her nation had announced it would not go to Tokyo 2020 if it went ahead.

U.S. skateboarder and gold medal hopeful Nyjah Huston was frustrated, though, especially given his sport was scheduled to make its debut at the Tokyo.

"When skating finally makes it



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Jumper with no sandpit

In a crowded sporting calendar, which will be making up for this year's cancellations, World Athletics said it would be willing to move the 2021 world championships, scheduled for Aug. 6-15 in Oregon to clear a path for the Olympics.

The Athletics Association said a survey of more than 4,000 track and field competitors showed 78% wanted the Games delayed.

The association's American founder, twice Olympic triple jump champion Christian Taylor, is among athletes unable to train due to social distancing and closure of facilities.

"There is no sandpit for me, I have not put on jump spikes for two weeks," he told Britain's Times newspaper.

Yesterday's decision came 122 days before the planned opening ceremony at Japan's newly built National Stadium, which was to usher in the 16-day carnival of sport featuring 11,000 athletes from 206 nations and territories.

It was not the first time a Japanese Olympics has run into problems. Both the 1940 Summer and Winter Olympic Games were due to be held in Japan but were canceled due to World War Two.

It was not yet clear whether the 57 percent of athletes who had already secured spots in Tokyo would need to qualify again for the re-arranged Olympics.

Kooheji represents Bahrain in global awareness campaign against coronavirus

TDI | Manama

One of Bahrain's biggest sporting idols has joined the fight against Coronavirus. BRAVE Combat Federation Bantamweight fighter Hamza Kooheji has become one of the voices of the #BRAVECombats-Covid19 worldwide campaign, which is set to impact thousands of fans around the world with awareness over the dangers of the virus and how to better protect yourself and your loved ones.

BRAVE Combat Federation, Bahrain's premier sporting organization, has recruited fighters from around the world in the fight against Coronavirus, asking them to send videos and to make sure their own followers, fans, as well as their own communities, are aware of what's needed from them to make sure that the virus doesn't



Hamza Kooheji looks on before a bout

spread. In the video posted to his social media profiles, "The Pride of Bahrain" urges his fans to only trust official guidelines put forth by the World Health Organization, as well as to not spread information that has not been verified by authorities. Kooheji also asks everyone to

be strong in this difficult moment, and thanks everyone that's working hard to contain the virus.

Hamza Kooheji was scheduled to fight Jaures Dea, from Cameroon, at BRAVE CF 37, in Sweden. However, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, his fight has been postponed and will be rescheduled soon, a decision Hamza says was "wise" on the part of BRAVE CF.

Under the KHK Heroes Foundation, BRAVE CF fighters are empowered by the strong platform of BRAVE CF to share a vital message, to educate, remind and gently guide their fans to work together in unity, to reach out to others and show compassion.

#UnitedWeFight #BRAVE-CombatsCovid19 is executed by KHK Heroes Foundation, under His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

HH Shaikh Nasser directs to distribute prizes of his endurance race to stables

TDI | Manama

HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa has given directives to distribute the prizes of his endurance race, which was scheduled to be held this Friday to the stables that participated in this season's races.

The Representative of HM the King for Charity Work and Youth Affairs, National Security Advisor, Supreme Council for Youth and Sports Chairman and Honorary President of the Royal Equestrian and Endurance Federation (BREEF) yesterday directed BREEF to cancel his endurance race, the last race of the 2019-2020 season.

HH Shaikh Nasser's directives to distribute the awards of the race to stables are in line with his pride in the key role they have played in enriching the Bahraini endurance sport



A participant in action during a race (file photo)

through their effective participation in this season's races.

HH Shaikh Nasser's initiative will reflect positively on the stables' preparations for next season, as it will support them in developing their administrative and technical staff, as well as in devising strategies that

meet their various needs.

Stable owners expressed their sincere thanks and appreciation to HH Shaikh Nasser for his distinguished initiative that affirms his constant keenness to support local stables, as well as develop the endurance sport in the Kingdom.

Kane hopes to feature if Premier League returns after chaos

AFP | London

Harry Kane says he is on track to be fit when the Premier League returns as the Tottenham striker urged people to "stay safe" from the coronavirus.

Kane has been sidelined since suffering a torn hamstring tendon in Tottenham's New Year's Day defeat at Southampton.

The England captain needed surgery on the injury in January and Tottenham boss Jose Mourinho did not expect him back until the last games of the season.

But the enforced break due to the virus has given Kane an opportunity to play more matches if the Premier League is able to conclude the campaign eventually.

The 26-year-old has stepped up his rehabilitation and should be fit by the time the season can restart, with the top-flight schedule currently postponed until at least April 30.

"I'm not too far away, I'd normally hope to be back with the team in two or three

weeks' time," Kane told Tottenham's website yesterday.

"I'm at a good stage, pretty much doing everything, now it's about building up my fitness. So from my personal point of view, I'm in a good place.



Harry Kane

Olympic athletes in impossible position: Canada

AFP | Montreal

Canadian Olympic chiefs said Monday the health and safety of athletes had prompted the country's decision to withdraw its team from the Tokyo Olympics amid the coronavirus pandemic.

A day after Canada became the first team to announce its withdrawal from the July 24-August 9 Games, Canadi-

an Olympic Committee (COC) chief David Shoemaker said athletes had been left in an "impossible position."

With public health authorities urging individuals to stay inside to curb the spread of COVID-19, athletes had been caught between a desire to heed health and safety advice while trying to minimize disruption to training programs.