

Asian Para Winter Games

Context	<p>Over the last three decades, the development of the Paralympic movement in Asia has been spectacular. This phenomenon is largely due to the FESPIC Games, which provided opportunities for the emergence of elite level athletes among Asia's talented youth with a disability since 1975.</p> <p>As a result, Asian athletes claimed more than 200 medals at the ATHENS 2004 Paralympic Games, and the prospects are even higher for the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games. This performance constitutes solid proof that Paralympic summer sports now have secure foundations in our continent.</p> <p>The same cannot be said for Paralympic Winter sports, however. Asian athletes won 9 medals at the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games, all of which came from one out of only 4 Asian participating nations (10% of the total). To put this into perspective, three Asian nations (Korea, China and Japan) shared 23 medals at the Torino 2006 Olympic Winter Games.</p> <p>The reasons for this performance and the general lack of winter sport tradition in Asia can be summarized as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perceived lack of necessary weather conditions in Asia (even though Sapporo hosted the 1972 Olympic Winter Games, Nagano hosted the 1998 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, and PyongCheang has bid for the 2010 and 2014 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games)• Lack of appropriate training facilities for winter sports in Asia• High cost of equipment and training for winter sports (compared to summer sports)• Lack of exposure means low popularity of winter sport in Asia• Low popularity of winter sport translates into low interest of marketing sponsors <p>In order for Asia to develop winter sports and become competitive, it is important that these challenges are dealt with through bold initiatives that will muster widespread support for winter sports for athletes with a disability.</p>
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	<p>The proposed Asian Para Winter Games is an initiative toward that direction that can providing the necessary impetus for winter sport development, just as the FESPIC Games did for summer sports.</p>
<p>Vision</p>	<p>The Asian Para Winter Games is a new event for winter sport athletes with a disability in Asia. The purpose of this event is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reveal the potential of winter sport to athletes with a disability in Asia, especially women • Spread the principles of sport and the Paralympic movement to Asia’s mountainous regions • Encourage the creation of appropriate infrastructure for winter sport in Asia • Provide opportunities for Asian talent to compete in elite level winter sport competitions • Strengthen Asian performance at the Paralympic Winter Games <p>The legacy of the Asian Para Games (FESPIC Games) steers the development of the Asian Para Winter Games and their establishment as a key event in the Paralympic Sports Calendar.</p>
<p>Sports</p>	<p>The inaugural Asian Para Games sport program can consist of the following three sports (which are also Paralympic Winter Games sports):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alpine skiing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Downhill, Slalom, G-Slalom, Super-G • Nordic skiing (Cross-Country skiing and Biathlon) • Ice Sledge Hockey (four team tournament) <p>The reasoning behind the selection of these three sports takes into consideration several factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Asian delegations in the Paralympic Winter Games participate in skiing events and therefore have a pool of available athletes in these sports • Existing Alpine and Nordic skiing facilities in Asia require relatively modest investment in order to meet Paralympic Games standards

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nordic skiing requires only one venue as the Biathlon shooting range makes part of the Cross-Country course • Ice Sledge Hockey is by far the most popular event of the Paralympic Winter Games and therefore the most attractive from a sponsorship perspective <p>Other events may be added in the future, such as Wheelchair Curling, Ice Sledge Speed Racing or Snowboard, which may or may not yet be part of the official Paralympic Games sport program.</p> <p>Either way, it is important that ice sports are included in the sport program as they guarantee spectacular performances and significant media interest.</p>
<p>Participation</p>	<p>The Asian Para Winter Games is an event open to athletes from all NPCs that are members of the Asian Paralympic Committee. The disability groups involved should be the same as those of the Paralympic Winter Games.</p> <p><u>Proposed quotas for the sports:</u></p> <p>Alpine skiing: 100 athletes (70 male, 30 female)</p> <p>Nordic skiing: 80 athletes (60 male, 20 female)</p> <p>Ice sledge hockey: 60 athletes (4 teams x 15 players)</p> <p>The total number of athletes for the inaugural edition may therefore be 240 athletes, with an approximately equivalent number of accompanying team officials (total number of delegates: 500).</p> <p>In order to meet these quotas and maximize participation, qualification standards will need to be lower than the Paralympic Winter Games equivalent.</p> <p>At the same time, the Games aspire to evolve into an elite sport event for winter sport athletes with a disability. The ambition is that it will develop into a key event of the competition calendar leading to the Paralympic Winter Games.</p>

	<p>Consequently, participation in the Games can eventually also be extended to athletes from non-Asian NPCs. This would be greatly beneficial for Asian delegations, as it would raise the competition standards and provide great experiences for Asian athletes, who usually have to travel to Europe or North America for competitions.</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>The Asian Para Winter Games will take place every four years, starting in 2012. In order to comply with the Paralympic standard, it is proposed that they take place in February-March.</p> <p>Depending on the number of events selected for each discipline, the Asian Para Games should not exceed five days (including the opening ceremony), and should be scheduled to maximize attendance by schools as well as television coverage (e.g. Wednesday through Sunday).</p>