

# IOC says no need for drastic decisions...

Olympic body amends qualifying competitions, says it is committed to the event being staged in four months' time despite the coronavirus outbreak

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE  
LAUSANNE, MARCH 17

THE INTERNATIONAL Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Tuesday it was not the time for "drastic decisions" over the staging of the Tokyo Olympics, which has not yet been postponed because of the deadly coronavirus pandemic.

"The IOC remains fully committed to the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, and with more than four months to go before the Games there is no need for any drastic decisions at this stage; and any speculation at this moment would be counter-productive," the IOC said in a statement after its executive board met in Lausanne.

The Tokyo Olympics are scheduled to run between July 24-August 9, but the year's biggest sporting event is as yet one of the sole sporting competitions to have survived a postponement in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak that has caused more than 7,400 deaths and infected more than 180,000 around the world.

The IOC statement fell shortly after both this summer's Euro 2020 and Copa America tournaments were postponed by one year to 2021. US President Donald Trump has suggested the Japanese capital also postpone the Olympics for 12 months, although Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe responded by pledging his country would host the Games as planned and saying he had no immediate intention to declare a state of emergency over the virus outbreak.

"This is an unprecedented situation for the whole world, and our thoughts are with all those affected by this crisis," the IOC said. IOC president Thomas Bach added: "The health and well-being of all those involved in the preparations for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 is our number-one concern."

"All measures are being taken to safeguard the safety and interests of athletes, coaches and support teams. We are an Olympic community; we support one another in good times and in difficult times. This Olympic solidarity defines us as a community." The IOC acknowledged preparations for the Tokyo Games had been impacted, and encouraged all athletes to continue training "as best they can". "The IOC has confidence that the many measures being taken by many authorities around the world will help contain the situation of the COVID-19 virus."

## Practical adaptations

One of the results of the virus outbreak has been the cancellation of qualifiers, in a number of sports, for the Tokyo Olympics. But the IOC insisted it would work to surmount any difficulties that threw up.

"To date, 57 percent of the athletes are already qualified for the Games," it said. "For the remaining 43 percent of places, the IOC will work with the IFs (international federations) to make any necessary and practical



The European football championship was due to take place from June 12 to July 12 this year at 12 venues across Europe. NYT

adaptations to their respective qualification systems for Tokyo 2020."

The IOC vowed to "continue to act in a responsible way and have agreed the following overriding principles about the staging of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020: "1. To protect the health of everyone involved and to support the containment of the virus. 2. To safeguard the interests of the athletes and of Olympic sport." The IOC will continue to monitor the situation 24/7. Already in mid-February, a task force was set up.

The body added any decision it takes on the staging of the Games "will not be determined by financial interests, because thanks to its risk management policies and insurance it will in any case be able to continue its operations and accomplish its mission to organise the Olympic Games."

A taskforce (consisting of the IOC, the World Health Organisation, the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee, the Japanese authorities and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government) was created in mid-February to ensure "coordinated actions by all stakeholders" and offer guidance the IOC said it would follow. Already, the format of all the test events in March and April in Japan has been "altered to allow for the testing of essential Games elements".

"The lighting of the Olympic torch in

## What are the changes to qualifying system

ACCORDING TO the International Olympic Committee, 57 percent of the athletes have already qualified for the Games so far. For the remaining 43 percent of places, the IOC will work with the international sports federations to "make any necessary and practical adaptations to their respective qualification systems".

The world governing said they will not make any changes to the quota places already allocated to the countries and athletes. However, the IOC added they might make changes to the qualification system based on, "on-field results (e.g. IF (international) ranking or historical results)" and use the results of continental or region-specific events.

Greece and subsequent elements of the Torch Relay in Japan are being adapted, the entire Games preparation supply chain has been analysed, and alternative plans are in place in the event of anticipated disruption," the IOC added.

## Olympic torch events downscaled

Tokyo 2020 organisers said Tuesday they had taken the "heartbreaking" decision to scale back parts of the Olympic torch relay due to the coronavirus, but stressed that spectators would still be allowed to watch from the roadside. Chief executive Toshiro Muto told reporters that the "grand start" of the torch relay from the disaster-hit Fukushima province would take place without spectators "in order to prevent the spread of infections".

Any spectators who are feeling unwell will be asked not to watch from the roadside and torch-bearers with high temperatures will be barred from taking part, Tokyo 2020 said. "Please be careful to avoid forming crowds," organisers urged, saying the programme could be changed in the event of "excessive congestion". The moves come as doubts increase whether the Games can open as planned on July 24, with the coronavirus decimating the global sports calendar, including Olympic qualifying events, and curtailing international travel.

Muto reiterated the Olympics would go ahead "as planned", although he acknowledged that "situations are changing from hour to hour".

# ...but French Open, Copa America and Euros get postponed

AFP & REUTERS  
LAUSANNE, MARCH 17

UEFA HAS proposed postponing this year's European Championship until 2021, a source close to European football's governing body told AFP on Tuesday, as the continent battles with the coronavirus pandemic.

The source's confirmation of the proposal came after the Norwegian FA tweeted that the new plan is for the tournament to take place from June 11 to July 11 next year, turning Euro 2020 into Euro 2021.

The proposal was made as UEFA held crisis talks with its national associations as well as clubs and players bodies via video-conference on Tuesday. The proposal is likely to be ratified at a UEFA Executive Committee meeting in the afternoon. The move comes with most of Europe's domestic leagues having ground to a halt over the last week as football confronts its biggest issue in modern times.

The UEFA Champions League and Europa League competitions for clubs have also been suspended, with both still in the last-16 stage, but postponing the European Championship for national sides means they, along with national leagues, will have the chance to be completed, assuming travel restrictions are lifted in time.

Euro 2020 was due to be held in 12 different cities across the continent, from as far apart as Dublin and Bilbao, to Saint Petersburg and Baku. The semi-finals and final were due to be played in London and there would be considerable knock-on effects to postponing the competition — the women's European Championship is scheduled to run from July 7 to August 1 next year in England, with the final at Wembley. UEFA have also planned to stage an Under-21 Euros in Hungary and Slovenia in June next year.

Twenty of the 24 teams set to take part in the Euro have already qualified, but play-offs to determine the final four participants, due to be played later this month, will have to take place at a later date.

The Copa America due to kick off in June in Argentina and Colombia was on Tuesday postponed by a year to 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic, organisers CONMEBOL said. The announcement came shortly after UEFA's similar decision to also push back Euro 2020 by 12 months.

The Copa is South America's premier

## EXPLAINED How this creates logistical hurdles

THE EUROS have been postponed to clear the month this summer to finish the club competitions. Leagues across Europe, including the Champions and Europa League, have currently been suspended. However, postponing the tournament will have a massive ripple effect. The expanded Club World Cup, organised by FIFA and scheduled for the summer of 2021, now looks unlikely to take place as planned. The women's European Championship, which is to take place from July 7 to August 1 next year, Nations League finals and European Under-21 Championship are also scheduled for those months.

continental competition between national sides and had been scheduled to run between June 12-July 12. The competition was being staged for the first time in two countries rather than one. The finals featuring 12 teams, for this edition included invitees Australia and Qatar. "It's an extraordinary measure due to an unexpected situation, and therefore responds to the fundamental need to avoid an exponential evolution of the virus," said CONMEBOL. The tournament is now rescheduled to run from June 11-July 11 2021. The decision was taken in conjunction with UEFA's decision to postpone Euro 2020 to 2021.

## Roland Garros delayed

The French Open tennis tournament has been postponed until September 20-October 4 amid the coronavirus outbreak, the organisers of the Grand Slam event said on Tuesday. The first major tournament to be hit by the spread of the coronavirus was initially scheduled to be played from May 24-June 7.

"In order to guarantee the health and safety of all those involved in the preparation of the tournament, the French Tennis Federation decided to organise the 2020 edition of Roland-Garros from 20 September to 4 October 2020," the French tennis federation said in a statement.

## Resolving Disputes by Instilling Trust

### VIVAD SE VISHWAS SCHEME 2020

**Settle your Income Tax disputes by 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2020 to avail higher benefits**

SALIENT FEATURES... PAYMENT TERMS		
Payment made on or before	Appeal relates to disputed tax or interest or fee	Appeal relates only to disputed penalty
31st March, 2020	100% of the disputed tax (125% in search cases)	25% of the disputed penalty or interest or fee
End date (30th June 2020)	110% of the disputed tax (135% in search cases) such that it does not increase total demand	30% of the disputed penalty or interest or fee

If an issue in taxpayer's pending appeal already decided in his favour by appellate forum or if Department has filed appeal on an issue, amount payable is 50% of aforesaid amount

**ELIGIBILITY**

- Appeals/writs filed on or before 31.01.2020 and pending
- Orders for which time for filing appeal has not expired on 31.01.2020
- Cases pending before Dispute Resolution Panel (DRP) on 31.01.2020
- Cases where DRP issued direction on or before 31.01.2020 but no order has been passed
- Cases where assessee filed revision (Section 264) on or before 31.01.2020
- Search case if the disputed tax is less than Rs. 5 Crore in a year

- The appeals/writs filed by taxpayers or the department
- Disputes where the payment has already been made shall also be eligible
- Cases in arbitration in India or Abroad

**DISPUTES COVERED**

- All disputes, subject to some exclusion, in relation to the-
  - (i) Disputed tax
  - (ii) Disputed penalty
  - (iii) Disputed interest
  - (iv) Disputed fee
  - (v) Disputed tax deducted at source (TDS) or tax collected at source (TCS)

**Income Tax Department**  
Central Board of Direct Taxes

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