

Tokyo 2020 postponed

Wednesday March 25, 2020

Latest update:

The Tokyo Olympic Games will be postponed by one year until the summer of 2021, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told reporters Tuesday after speaking by phone with International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach.

The much awaited decision comes after weeks of uncertainty for athletes, fans, sponsors and the Japanese public over an event that has cost the country \$12.6 billion to stage.

Tuesday March 24, 2020

The Summer Olympics, the largest sporting event in the world is scheduled to be held in Tokyo, Japan from July 24th 2020 onwards, but amidst the upheaval caused by the global Coronavirus pandemic (read our Covid-19 coverage here), the fate of the Games hangs in doubt.

There has been a lot of debate over the last few weeks as to whether the Olympic Games would, or should be cancelled or postponed this year, in light of the rapid spread of Coronavirus which has led to the suspension, postponement or cancellation of numerous sporting events all around the world.

Japanese President, Shinzo Abe has maintained his position that the Games will go on as scheduled with Japan playing the host. The International Olympic Committee or IOC has also not indicated that they are planning to cancel or postpone the games.

That is, until today....

Early this morning, Canada became the first country to withdraw from the 2020 Olympic Games, saying that it will not send any athletes to compete this year. Is it only a matter of time before other countries follow Canada's example and withdraw their participation as well?

Preparation for the Olympic Games for athletes begins a long time before the actual games, with qualifying events and training taking place right from the beginning of the year. As a result of the global pandemic, many qualifying events have been forcibly cancelled. This means that even if the coronavirus situation has stabilized by July, countries are unlikely to have enough athletes who have qualified to participate in the Olympics.

Why won't the IOC cancel?

Cancelling, or even postponing an event as large as the Olympic Games is a very difficult job. There are many many factors that need to be taken into consideration including the huge costs to both the IOC as well as the host country, logistical difficulties in changing things around and the TV and news networks that have purchased the rights to broadcast the Games around the World. Even though the IOC and Japan as the host country both have insurance policies, they may not be enough to cover all the losses that are likely to occur.

Following Canada's announcement however, the IOC has been forced to reconsider its position and has imposed a 4-week deadline on itself within which to make a final decision about whether to cancel the Games or to postpone them for one or even two years. Let's wait and see what the result will be in one month.

The Olympic Games have only ever been cancelled three times in the past, all during the two World Wars. The Berlin Olympics in 1916 due to World War I and the Games in both 1940 and 1944 because of World War II were called off.



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