



**ATHLETE GROUPS DEMAND THAT THE INTERNATIONAL PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE AND THE INTERNATIONAL WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL FEDERATION REINSTATE ALL WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL ATHLETES WHO RIGHTFULLY QUALIFIED FOR THE 2020 TOKYO GAMES.**

Athlete groups have taken notice of the International Paralympic Committee's (IPC) decision to change athlete classification rules at the end of a Paralympic cycle, resulting in a direct and drastic impact on athletes. These athletes have sacrificed and worked tirelessly for years to qualify for the 2020 Tokyo Games. They had been assessed by the IWBF and found to be eligible for participation in IWBF competitions.

The unilateral decision made by the IPC to remove players from their teams who rightfully qualified for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics is illegal and violates the athlete's fundamental rights. The IPC is not legally permitted to exclude individual athletes who have qualified for the 2020 Tokyo Games and whose eligibility under the International Wheelchair Basketball Federation's (IWBF) classification rules has not been formally contested. Further, the IPC is not legally permitted to exclude Wheelchair Basketball from the Tokyo Paralympic Games in its entirety so shortly before the beginning of the event.

The IPC has demanded changes from the IWBF. However, the IPC has not exercised the option to suspend the IWBF nor to manage the sport on an interim basis. Instead, Wheelchair Basketball players are being placed in the middle of a governance dispute between the IPC and the IWBF. The fact that the IPC has made this unilateral heavy-handed decision without athlete consultation is another reason why effective and independent athlete representation for matters of the IWBF and the IPC is so important.

A broad consensus exists among athletes and legal advisors internationally that the belated reassessment of certain players is unlawful and grossly violates the athletes' rights. Thus, the IPC's attempts need to be vigorously opposed, and the issue must be resolved expeditiously. A [letter](#) has been sent directly to the IPC requesting amicable resolution - to agree to a transitional period ahead of Tokyo 2020 - by no later than September 7, 2020.