

**Statement on Deafblind Athletes' Refusal to Participate in the Paralympic Games Due to being denied an Accompanying Personal Care Assistant
"Reasonable Accommodations for Deafblind Paralympians"**

The Tokyo Association of the Deafblind is an organization working toward the social participation and independence for those with visual and hearing difficulties. Because of their disabilities, they have three main difficulties: Communication, access to information, and mobility. However, with one-to-one support from guide-interpreters to resolve these three issues, deafblind people are able to participate in society more easily and take on various challenges.

Ms. Becca Meyers, a deafblind swimmer from the U.S., was scheduled to participate in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics being held on August 24. She has overcome many challenges due to her visual and hearing impairments to win three gold medals at the last Paralympics. Since 2017, her mother has accompanied her to international competitions as her personal care assistant (PCA). When given the PCA support she needed, Ms. Meyers was able to go on to win the 2019 World Championships. She was expected to compete at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, but has decided to withdraw. According to reports, the reason for this was because she was not given permission to be accompanied by her PCA as a precaution against the spread of the COVID-19.

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) believes that the power of Paralympians symbolizes the Paralympic Games and emphasizes the four values of courage, determination, inspiration, and equality. Despite being deafblind, Ms. Meyers is an athlete who takes on challenges with courage and strong will, who achieves remarkable results, and inspires people. Not being allowed her PCA is against one of the four values that the IPC emphasizes, "equality" (the ability to recognize diversity and realize that everyone can reach the same starting line with ingenuity). In order to achieve "equality," allowing deafblind athletes to be accompanied by a PCA is an appropriate and necessary response, and is considered to be "reasonable accommodation," as stated in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Our hope is twofold.

First, we would like to request that the relevant organizations engage in a constructive dialogue and reconsider the needs of deafblind athletes in order for them to participate in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics with their PCAs.

The other wish is that Ms. Becca Meyers, a beacon of hope for deafblind people, will be at the starting line of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, just like any other athlete.

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