

What Is Paralympics?

How are the Paralympics Games different from the Special Olympics? The Paralympics and the Special Olympics are similar in that they both focus on sport for athletes with a disability and are run by international non-profit organizations. Apart from that, the Paralympics and the Special Olympics differ in three main areas: 1) the disability categories of the athletes that they work with, 2) the criteria under which athletes participate, and 3) the structure of their respective organizations. The Paralympics, as the largest sports competition for athletes with a disability worldwide, involve athletes from several disability categories. The six main disability categories are: amputee, cerebral palsy, intellectual disability (currently under suspension), visually impaired, spinal injuries and Les Autres (French for "the others", a category that includes conditions that do not fall into the categories mentioned before). In contrast, the Special Olympics are solely for athletes with intellectual disabilities.

To participate in the Paralympics Games, athletes have to fulfill certain criteria and meet certain qualifying standards in order to be eligible. These criteria and standards are sports-specific and are determined by the IPC Sports Chairpersons, the Sports Technical Delegates and the relevant international sports organizations. The Paralympics are about elite performance sport, where athletes go through a stringent qualification process so that the best can compete at the Games. On the other hand, the Special Olympics does not make as clear a distinction between elite and recreational sport as the Paralympics. No qualifying events are held and there is instead a system of random selection of participants for the Special Olympics. Thus, while the Paralympics emphasizes high-level performance, the Special Olympics emphasizes participation from those who can and will.

The Paralympics are run by the International Paralympics Committee (IPC). As the international representative organization of sport for athletes with a disability, the IPC comprises elected representatives from around the world. The General Assembly, its highest decision-making body, includes around 160 member nations, represented through their National Paralympics Committees, and five disability-specific organizations. The Special Olympics are run by Special Olympics International (SOI). SOI has established national foundations around the world, which are financed mainly through charity.

For more info go to; National Paralympic

http://www.paralympic.org/release/Main_Sections_Menu/