

Tokyo 2025 Deaflympics

Bridging the Deaflympics to the Future, and Realizing an Inclusive Society Where Everyone Can Make the Most of Their Individuality



TOKYO 2025
25TH SUMMER DEAFLYMPICS

Japanese Federation of the Deaf
October 20, 2025

The Deaflympics

- An international multi-sport event for deaf athletes held in summer and winter every four years, organized by the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD)
- The first Summer Deaflympics was held in Paris, France in 1924
- The name “Deaflympics” was recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 2001
- The rules for sports are **based on the standard rules**, but the use of hearing aids is not allowed upon entering the field, and in addition to sports being officiated in International Sign, **visual information is used** such as starter lights and flags

Deaflympics Mission



Eugène Rubens-Alcais, Deaflympics Founder (1884-1963)

- © Professional auto mechanic, and a deaf athlete (cycling)
- © Founded the French Deaf Sports Federation and the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD)

The Dream of Eugène Rubens-Alcais

- © What led to him proposing the Deaflympics?
- © Improving social standing of deaf people, increasing awareness and adoption of sign language, social reform!

Unique Characteristics of the Deaflympics

Qualifications for Athletes to Participate

- A minimum hearing loss of 55 decibels without any hearing aids, must be registered with their country's National Deaf Sports Federation in

Events and Guaranteeing Visual Information

- While using the same rules as the Olympics in principle, International Sign is used for communication and all information is provided visually.
- From the perspective of fairness, so all athletes cannot hear equally the use of hearing aids is not permitted during events or practice.



A referee using a flag instead of a whistle in a soccer match



For athletics and swimming, instead of a starting gun lights are used



For basketball, lights by the net and the four corners of the court are used to indicate the referee's whistle

Handicaps Faced by Deaf Athletes

Being Deaf Is What Is Known as an “Invisible Disability”

You cannot tell from their appearance that deaf people cannot hear. However, research has shown that deaf people are at a disadvantage compared to hearing people when competing in sports.

There are two main disadvantages:

①Difficulty Maintaining Balance

...The ears play a major role in maintaining the body's balance

②Less Available Information

...For example, a hearing person can communicate with their teammates using their voice, saying they will pass or that they are open.

If you cannot hear, you have to continually make eye contact with your teammates or use hand signs to communicate.

For sports, sound is more important than sight.

The sound of the wind, the ball being hit, or the sound a racket makes are all important factors.



空手競技ではランプを設置

Overview of the Tokyo 2025 Deaflympics

Dates

Nov. 15-26, 2025 (12 days)

Opening Ceremony: Nov. 15

Closing Ceremony: Nov. 26

Number of Participants

Delegations from Each Country:

Approx. 6000 people

(Approx. 3,000 athletes and 3,000 ICSD officials, SDs, referees, and staff)

Sports

21 Sports

Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Beach Volleyball, Bowling, Cycling (Road), Soccer, Golf, Handball, Judo, Karate, Cycling (Mountain Bike), Orienteering, Shooting, Swimming, Table Tennis, Taekwondo, Tennis, Volleyball, Wrestling (Freestyle), Wrestling (Greco-Roman)

Participating Countries

70-80 countries and regions

Venues & Facilities

Competition venues, opening and closing ceremony venues (Tokyo Metropolitan Gymnasium), practice venues, Deaflympics Square, etc.

Towards Realizing the Vision of the Deaflympics

1 Connect people and society through the brilliance and values of deaf sports

- By making preparations with deaf athletes in a leading role so they can perform to their utmost, promote the wonder of sports itself and **the appeal and value of the Deaflympics and deaf sports**.
- Organize the Deaflympics while valuing a diversity of perspectives, with all types of people working together to run the competition and **children participating**.

2 Bridge the Tokyo 2025 Deaflympics to the world and the future

- In addition to taking this opportunity to promote and improve traditional access to information through understanding, adoption, and expansion of sign language, **promote the development of new communication tools using digital technology and their adoption by society**.
- Through these initiatives, have people understand the **appeal of Tokyo as a city where anyone can connect, regardless of nationality or whether they have disabilities**, and **strengthen bonds globally**.

3 Realize an inclusive society where everyone can make the most of their individuality and exert their abilities

- Take this opportunity to further promote communication between people with and without disabilities and to **promote the barrier-free philosophy in mindset, information, and city design**, by **increasing understanding of deaf sports and deaf culture** as part of the Deaflympics movement.
- Through the Deaflympics movement, contribute to recognizing and respecting each other's differences, and building an **inclusive society in which everyone can make the most of their individuality and exert their abilities**.

The Significance of Holding the Deaflympics in Japan

The Legacy of the Tokyo 2025 Deaflympics

“A world where no one is left behind”: Eliminate barriers of mindset, language, communication, and information, and create an inclusive society where everyone with or without disabilities can live comfortably

Beyond just an international sports competition, spreading awareness of deafness and sign language and aiming for an inclusive society

- ➡ • The Japanese Federation of the Deaf and Tokyo Metropolitan Government (mainly hearing people) worked together to organize the Deaflympics, introducing a new framework
- Deaf referees were recruited from overseas, to cooperate with hearing referees from Japan
- For both volunteers and staff, people fluent in International Sign and those who are not will work together, making the Deaflympics itself a place where everyone can “make the most of their individuality”
- By increasing awareness of deaf sports and the Deaflympics, giving deaf children a chance to dream.

Purpose

- Promoting awareness of and building momentum for the Tokyo 2025 Deaflympics
- Promoting and increasing understanding of sign language and deaf culture
- Promoting diversity and inclusive society (SDGs)
- Deliver encouragement from throughout Japan to athletes from Japan and around the world



In Closing



From November 15 to 26, approximately 6,000 deaf athletes, staff, and spectators will visit Japan from around the world.

This is a first for Japan.

There may never be another opportunity like this.

I hope all of you will visit the Deaflympics Square and the event venues to experience it for yourselves.

For the sake of the future, I would be glad if this could be the impetus for people to consider a society where everyone can communicate, regardless of nationality or whether they have disabilities.