

Sports Authority of India
Press Release

23 athletes in 4 Olympic and Paralympic sports included under TOPS scheme
in preparation for Tokyo 2020

New Delhi, January 30: The Sports Authority of India's Mission Olympic Cell held a meeting today, chaired by Director General, Sports Authority of India, Neelam Kapur, in which 23 athletes were selected from badminton, cycling, para-athletics and para-shooting, to be included in the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, Paralympics and 2024 Olympics.

Some athletes have been included in the developmental group for Olympic 2024, and a watchlist was also announced from among athletes competing in badminton, para-athletics, para-shooting, para-swimming and para-powerlifting. Athletes who are in the watchlist will be considered for TOPS on the basis of their performance in the coming months.

The athletes were chosen after a detailed analysis to ensure the best possible Olympic medal prospects are identified, in consultation with the National Sports Federations. Those who attended the meeting from the federations, included, Adille Sumariwalla, President, AFI, Gursharan Singh, vice president, PCI, Onkar Singh, general secretary, CFI and Khajan Singh, national observer, swimming.

The review was undertaken on the following parameters:

- Global performance trends from most recent Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, World Cups and World Championships
- Performance of competing international counterparts (athletes) in the last three years
- High performance age of a typical Olympic medalist specific to each event
- Performance of Indian athletes in 2016, 2017 and 2018 and their progression chart
- Feedback from NSF, National Observers, High Performance Managers, Project Officers and Coaches, wherever applicable

The list of selected athletes is as under:

Badminton:

The following athletes were included for Tokyo 2020

1. Kidambi Srikanth (Men's Singles)
2. Sameer Verma (Men's Singles)
3. HS Prannoy (Men's Singles)
4. PV Sindhu (Women's Singles)
5. Saina Nehwal (Women's Singles)
6. Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty (Men's Doubles)
7. Ashwini Ponappa and Siki Reddy (Women's doubles) (Till World Championships)
8. Pranav Chopra and Siki Reddy (Mixed doubles) (Till World Championships)

In addition, the following players are on the watchlist:

Manu Attri and Sumeeth Reddy (Men's Doubles); Meghana Jakkampudi and Poorvisha Ram (Women's Doubles)

In women's doubles and mixed doubles, it was decided in consultation with representatives of Badminton Association of India that the athletes shortlisted in TOPS will be on the list till the World Championships in August, and their further retention would be subject to their performance during the period of review.

Cycling:

Given India's improved performances in the recent past at the junior level, four athletes were picked in the developmental group for the 2024 Olympics. India recently won 10 medals at the Junior Asian Track Cycling Championships. The decision to select these cyclists was made taking into consideration their personal best timings, which are superior to those recorded by many top cyclists including those who have been Olympic medalists when they participated at a junior level. The Committee believes these athletes will be ready as medal contenders for the 2024 Olympics.

The following four athletes were shortlisted in the developmental group:

- 1) Esow Alben;
- 2) Ronaldo Singh;
- 3) James Singh;
- 4) Rojit Singh (all team sprint)

Para-Sports

For the four disciplines under Para-Sports that were reviewed, the Committee chose those athletes under the TOPS schemes who are considered the best medal contenders for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics. In addition the Committee had a detailed discussion over a number of other athletes. It was decided to place them on a watchlist where their performance will be closely monitored. In this period, they will be supported through the Annual Calendar for Training and Competition (ACTC) for camps and exposure tournaments.

Para-Athletics:

The selection criteria applied for Para-Athletics were the current world rankings of the athletes and their most recent scores that were being attained in comparison to global best standards.

The following athletes were included (Tokyo 2020)

1. Varun Bhati (Men's High Jump T63 (42,63))
2. Sharad Kumar (Men's High Jump T63 (42,63))
3. Sandeep Chaudhary (Men's Javelin Throw F64 (42-44, 61-64))
4. Sumit (Men's Javelin Throw F64 (42-44, 61-64))
5. Sundar Singh Gurjar (Men's Javelin F46 (45-46))
6. Rinku (Men's Javelin F46 (45-46))
7. Amit Saroha (Men's Club Throw F51)
8. Virender (Men's Shotput F57 (56-57))
9. Jayanti Behera (Women's 400m T47 (45-47))

In addition, the following athletes are on the watchlist:

Mariyappan Thangavelu; Deepa Malik; Devendra Jhajharia; Sandeep Singh Mann; Mithan; Amit; Rampal Chahar; Dharambir; Ekta Bhan; Karamjyoti Dalal; Radha; Rakshita.

Para-Shooting:

The criteria for selection applied for selection under TOPS was the average score being attained over the last 11 events participated in, and if this score was above the Minimum Qualification Score required at the Paralympics. In the case of the selected athletes, their most recent scores are amongst the world's best currently.

The following athletes were included:

Manish Narwal and Singhraj (Both Men's 10m Air Pistol SH1 and Mixed 50m Pistol SH1)
Deepender (Men's 10m Air Pistol SH1)
Avani Lekhara (Will be reviewed at World Championships)

In addition, the following athletes are on the watchlist:

Rubina Francis, Pooja Aggarwal, Sonia Sharma

Para Swimming and Para Powerlifting

The Committee met to review Para-Swimming and Para-Powerlifting and decided to name 8 para-swimmers and 6 para-powerlifters in the watchlist. The performance of the latter will be reviewed at the World Para Powerlifting Championships in July.

The athletes in Para Powerlifting who are on the watchlist are:

Jaideep, Sachin Chaudhary, Manpreet Kaur, Rajinder Singh Rahelu, Sakina Khatun and Farman Basha.

The athletes in Para Swimming who are on the watchlist are:

Suyash Narayan Jadhav, Niranjan Mukundan, Swapnil Patil, Chetan Giridhar Raut, Shridhar Nagappa Malagi, Devanshi Satija, Kanchanmala Pande, Sharath Gayakwad.

Other issues:

At the meeting, financial proposals related to the equipment and ammunition requirements of a few Indian shooters, for their preparation for the upcoming ISSF World Cup in Delhi, were also cleared. The Target Olympic Podium Scheme is a flagship program of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports which is a scheme to provide assistance to India's top athletes.