

## **Sports Authority of India**

### **Press Release**

#### **TOPS announces athletes in Para-badminton and Swimming for Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024**

**New Delhi, March 19:** The Sports Authority of India's Mission Olympic Cell has selected five para-badminton players, for inclusion in the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) for Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. Six swimmers have been selected for the Developmental Group for Olympic 2024.

The meeting was chaired by DG, SAI and attended by Shri Narinder Batra, President, Indian Olympic Association as well as representatives from various federations.

The athletes were chosen in TOPS after a detailed analysis, in consultation with the National Sports Federations, to ensure the best possible medal prospects are identified. The review was undertaken on the following parameters:

- Global performance trends from most recent Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, 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

## **Para-Badminton:**

After analyzing the qualification process for Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, the five strongest men's singles probables have been identified for inclusion in TOPS:

Manoj Sarkar and Pramod Bhagat (Men's Singles-SL3),

Sukant Kadam, Tarun and Suhas Yathiraj (Men's Singles-SL4)

In addition, the names of a number of other athletes were also discussed and it was decided to place them on a watchlist where their performance will be reviewed over the year. In this period, they will be supported through the Annual Calendar for Training and Competition (ACTC) for camps and exposure tournaments.

Among the athletes on the watchlist were Parul Parmar and Manasi Joshi who could not be included in TOPS since the singles event they compete in has not been included in Tokyo 2020. It was instead decided to focus on their doubles event training, through ACTC.

## **Swimming:**

Six young swimmers have been identified and included in the TOPS Developmental Group for the 2024 Olympics.

The swimmers selected in the Development Group are:

1. Srihari Nataraj (100m and 200m Backstroke)
2. Advait Page (800m and 1500m Freestyle)
3. Kushagra Rawat (400m and 800m Freestyle)
4. Aryan Nehra (1500m Freestyle)
5. Kenisha Gupta (50m and 100m Freestyle)
6. Aryan Makhija (800m and 1500m Freestyle)

Sajan Prakash and Viradhawal Khade have been included in the watchlist, and their performance will be reviewed at the World Championships to be held in September, 2019. In addition, young swimmers Maana Patel, Neel Roy, Likhith SP, Khushi Dinesh and Lohith M, have been included in the watchlist.

**Other decisions:**

Wrestler Ritu Phogat who had earlier been inducted into the TOPS scheme, has been excluded from the scheme since she will not be participating in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, on account of her shifting to Singapore to train for Mixed Martial Arts.

In addition to these decisions related to selection of athletes for the TOPS scheme, financial proposals related to training, competition and equipment for Indian athletes who are part of the TOPS scheme in five sports Wrestling, Shooting, Athletics, Tennis and Weightlifting were also cleared by the Committee.

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.