

Postponement Presents Opportunities to Support the Paralympic Movement

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August 2020 was supposed to be filled with images and stories from the Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, a global celebration of human triumph over mobility limitations, many of which seem impossible to overcome.

Like the Olympics, the Paralympics have been postponed a year, and Paralympic athletes, their sports, and sponsors have been adapting to the new timeline. Instead of seeing this as a setback, Toyota is embracing an opportunity to further elevate awareness of the Paralympic Movement and the inspirational stories of those who are a part of it.

Toyota and the Paralympic Movement

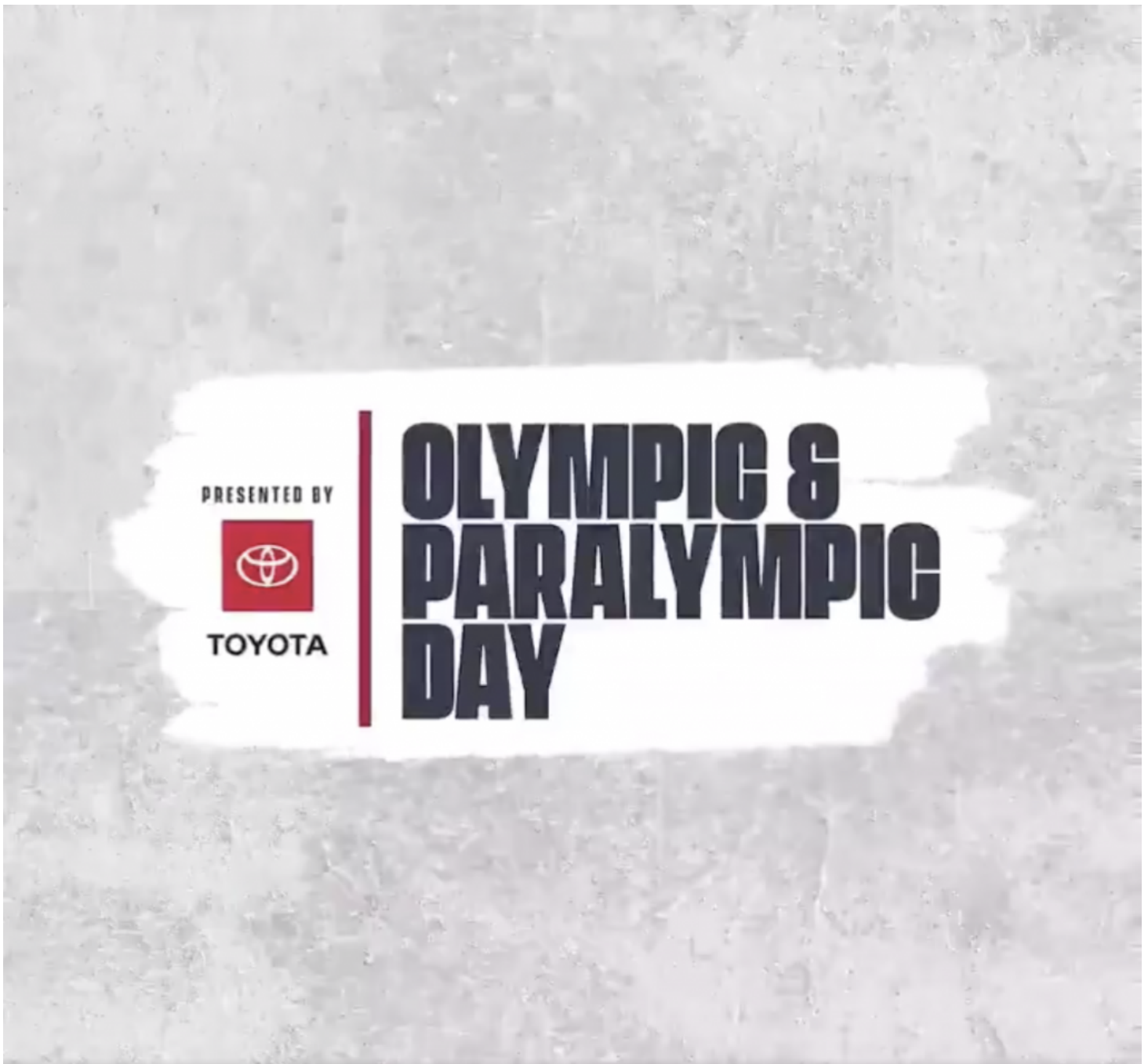
Mobility can mean different things to different people. For some, it's the freedom to move across town; for others, it's the ability to move across a room, or through life. As a mobility company that considers Respect for People to be its North Star, Toyota is acutely aware of these challenges, and is working to find ways to address them. The company is a firm believer that when a person is free to move, anything is possible, which is why it [proudly supports](#) the Paralympic Movement.



In March of 2015, Toyota signed on to become a Worldwide Partner of the International Olympic Committee and International Paralympic Committee in the newly created mobility category from 2017 through 2024. In addition to its global relationship with the IOC and IPC, in the U.S. Toyota is a proud partner of Team USA, various Paralympic National Governing Bodies (NGBs), and [13 Paralympic athletes](#). Since [2018](#), Toyota's "[Start Your Impossible](#)" global corporate initiative and campaign has brought attention to Paralympic sport and its athletes, as has the company's sponsorship of the [world's first wheel park](#). Furthermore, Toyota was the presenting sponsor of NBC's coverage of the Paralympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018.

"While we were heartbroken at not being in Tokyo this summer, we see the postponement as an opportunity to further the work we were already doing to elevate awareness of the Paralympic Movement," said Dedra DeLilli, group manager, Olympic and Paralympic marketing, Toyota Motor North America. "The additional time means more opportunities to work with partners such as the USOPC, NBC, our Paralympic NGBs, and our amazing Paralympic athletes."

To date, that additional support has been seen in a [few different ways](#), including Toyota's presenting sponsorship of [Olympic & Paralympic Day](#) in the U.S., the first time the International Olympic Day (June 23) was renamed to include Paralympic in the U.S., as well as the presenting sponsorship of the re-airing of the Paralympic Games Rio 2016 on [NBCSN](#), which included a number of integrations and Paralympic-themed advertising within the programming.



The additional time leading to Tokyo means not only finding new ways to support the Paralympic Movement, but also being flexible with plans that were already in the works, such as Toyota’s sponsorship of the first-ever Team USA hospitality house during a Paralympic Games, the evolution of the “Start Your Impossible” campaign, and an on-the-ground ambassador program.

“While there is still a lot to be determined, the extra time allows us to flesh out some additional ideas, and look to bridge the summer and winter Games, which will now be just months apart,” says DeLilli. “We’d love to see summer and winter sports as well as athletes supporting each other, working to really amplify the conversation around the Paralympic Movement.”



TRD Lends its Technical Know-how to Advance Paralympic Technology in the U.S.

Looking towards the Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, the conversation will also include technology advances in Paralympic sports. In addition to numerous mobility products that Toyota will have [on the ground](#) in Tokyo, its U.S. racing arm, Toyota Racing Development (TRD USA), is working on a [sit-ski project](#) with the USOPC and U.S. Paralympics Alpine Skiing.

“TRD is always looking for ways to utilize its engineering know-how to innovate both on and off the track,” said David Wilson, president, TRD USA. “The Toyota core pillar of continuous improvement is something we practice every day, and we can think of no better way to support our Para partners and athletes than by finding ways to offer our technical expertise to them.”

While details won’t be revealed until a later date, TRD does offer up some information on the project. Says Wilson: “We are currently working with our partners and four-time Paralympic Winter Games medalist Chris Young to use his vast experience for prototype testing and feedback. We’re trying to understand if there are better methods to get sit-skis customized to each athlete and their unique size and shape. We’re also developing and tuning the sit-ski suspensions that allows the athletes to race down some of the most difficult terrain in the world.”



Bringing People Together in an Uncertain Time

Ultimately, the COVID-19 pandemic will chart the course forward for the Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 and possibly the Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. Says DeLilli, “There’s a lot of uncertainty, but we look forward to the day when we can finally cheer on our Team Toyota Paralympic athletes as they compete on the world stage, celebrating their amazing accomplishments in mobility.”

To learn more about Toyota’s support of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, [click here](#).