

Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games likely to be postponed

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After posturing that the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympic Games would go on as scheduled, officials admitted the possibility of postponement of the games for the first time.

The Olympics are the 'only silver lining' for Japan's economy right now, analyst says.

### **Domino Effect**

The movement of cancelled or suspended sporting events began nearly two weeks ago. Starting with the Ivy League cancelling their men's and women's basketball tournaments on March 10. Then Rudy Gobert of the NBA's Utah Jazz tested positive for COVID-19 the next day.

On March 11 the NBA announced the season suspended; breaking the dam and starting a deluge of copycats the next day.

By the end of March 12, The NBA G-League, International Tennis

Federation, Major League Soccer, National Hockey League, Major League Baseball and PGA Tour all postponed events. Nearly all conferences outright cancelled their basketball tournaments; with the ACC and Ivy effectively cancelling the rest of their sports all together.

Internationally the English Premier League, La Liga, Ligue 1, Serie A and the Bundesliga all suspended their seasons, and the Olympic Torch lighting relay in Greece was outright cancelled.

But despite the worldwide reaction to the global pandemic, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) stood firm in its position that the games would go on; and as the issue grows ever more serious, some countries have begun taking the decision into their own hands.

“While we recognize the inherent complexities around a postponement, nothing is more important than the health and safety of our athletes and the world community,” the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Committees said in a joint statement.

“This is not solely about athlete health – it is about public health. It is not safe for our athletes, and the health and safety of their families and the broader Canadian community for athletes to continue training towards these Games.”

The executive board of the Australian Olympic Committee also met on Sunday and came to the same conclusion.

“It’s clear the Games can’t be held in July,” said Ian Chesterman, Australian Team Chef de Mission for Tokyo. “Our athletes have been magnificent in their positive attitude to training and preparing, but the stress and uncertainty has been extremely challenging for them.”

Following the announcement of the two nations, IOC president Thomas Bach finally showed flexibility. In a letter to the athletes, Bach admitted that cancelling the games was still not on the table, but a decision regarding postponement would come in the next few weeks.

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“As successful athletes, you know that we should never give up, even if the chance to succeed appears very small. Our commitment to the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 is based on this experience,” the letter said. “Our basis of information today is that a final decision about the date of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 now would still be premature.”

The precedent for cancelling the Olympics all together is rare; with the only examples occurring due to World Wars I and II. The games are currently scheduled to run from July 24 to August 9.

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