



SPORT NEWS



A woman walking her dog in front of the Olympic rings near the National Stadium in Tokyo



IOC boss Thomas Bach in front of empty stands at the National Stadium

OVERSEAS fans will be banned from this year's Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Organisers made the announcement last week. The Games were postponed last year for the first time in their history, with the Olympics now due to begin on 23 July and finish on 8 August, and the Paralympics running from 24 August to 5 September.

But no fans will be allowed to travel to Japan to cheer on the athletes, and only limited numbers of Japanese residents are likely to be watching. The Tokyo organising committee explained that travel restrictions around the world and new variants of COVID-19 were behind the decision to ban international fans.

The 600,000 Olympics tickets purchased by overseas residents will all now be refunded, as will the 300,000

Paralympic tickets.

Thomas Bach, president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), said: "We share the disappointment of all enthusiastic Olympic fans from around the world, and of course the families and friends of the athletes, who were planning to come to the Games. For this I am truly sorry. Every decision has to respect the principle of safety first."

Organisers will meet again in April to decide how many spectators will be allowed into Olympic and Paralympic venues.

Before the pandemic, there was huge demand from Japanese people for tickets. Now, polls show a majority think the Games should not be held at all this year.

ACROSS

- 4) People highly skilled in an exercise, sport or game (plural noun 8)
- 6) Held off until a later time; delayed (verb 9)
- 8) Paid back money (verb 8)

DOWN

- 1) People who look or watch something (plural noun 10)
- 2) Versions of something that are different in some form, eg, a disease (plural noun 8)
- 3) A shout of applause or encouragement (noun 5)
- 5) A group of people who make decisions on a specific function (noun 9)
- 7) The desire for a particular service or item (noun 6)

