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Texte au verso
No foreign spectators at 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, but Chinese residents allowed to attend

Tom Schad, USA TODAY - September 29, 2021

The International Olympic Committee on Wednesday offered a first glimpse of the COVID-19 protocols that will be in place at the upcoming 2022 Winter Games in Beijing – including lengthy quarantines for unvaccinated participants, daily COVID-19 testing and the absence of international spectators.

The countermeasures, which were proposed by local Beijing organizers and detailed in an IOC news release, mirror those at the recent Summer Games in some respects and appear stricter in others.

Among the most notable differences: Unlike in Tokyo, where athletes mostly competed behind closed doors, Beijing 2022 organizers have indicated that some Chinese fans will be permitted to attend their Games, as long as they follow to-be-determined protocols. Foreign spectators, including athletes' family members and friends, will once again be barred from attending.

The IOC* and International Paralympic Committee said in the news release that they support local organizers' decision to sell tickets to Chinese residents. "This will facilitate the growth of winter sports in China by giving those spectators a first-hand Olympic and Paralympic experience of elite winter sports, as well as bringing a favourable atmosphere to the venues," the entities said.

"However, all parties feel for the athletes and the spectators from around the world, knowing that the restriction on spectators from outside mainland China had to be put in place in order to ensure the safe holding of the Games this winter."

Similar to the Tokyo Games, the Beijing Olympics and Paralympics will try to create a bubble-like atmosphere for participants – dubbing it "the closed-loop management system." Vaccinated participants will be permitted to enter the bubble immediately upon arrival, while those who are not vaccinated will have to quarantine in Beijing for 21 days. The bubble will have its own transport system, according to the IOC news release, and all of the participants inside will be subject to daily COVID-19 testing.

Team USA announced earlier this month that it will require all of its athletes and staff members to be fully vaccinated in order to travel to Beijing.

The principles that were unveiled Wednesday serve as a precursor to the full COVID-19 countermeasures, which will be outlined in what organizers call "playbooks." The first edition of the playbooks will be released next month, with a revised version to follow in December.

The Beijing Winter Games begin Feb. 4.

*IOC : International Olympic Committee