

Tsukuba International Academy for Sport Studies (TIAS) International network performance and topics

Wednesday, April 11: Event report

Swiss Olympic Association, University of Tsukuba, Ibaraki Prefecture, Municipal Tsukuba Conclude Basic Agreement on Pre-Olympic Camp

While providing Olympic education at the world’s highest levels, the University of Tsukuba and TIAS are also leveraging international networks as we actively work to promote the spread of the Olympic movement within Japan. One example of these efforts is the conclusion in Lausanne, Switzerland, on Wednesday April 11, of a basic agreement between the Swiss Olympic Association, the University of Tsukuba, Ibaraki Prefecture and the city of Tsukuba on pre-Olympic camp activities in advance of Tokyo 2020 Games. The agreement stems from a partnership agreement with the International Academy of Sports Sciences and Technology (AISTS), a graduate school specializing in Olympic education formed in 2014 by the IOC.



(From left: Tsukuba Mayor Igarashi, University of Tsukuba President Nagata, Swiss Olympic Association Director for Tokyo 2020 Stöckli, Ibaraki Prefectural Governor Oikawa)

A ceremony marking the basic agreement on the pre-Olympic camp project was attended by Swiss Olympic Association Director for Tokyo 2020 Ralph Stöckli, University of Tsukuba President Kyosuke Nagata, Ibaraki Prefecture Governor Kazuhiko Oikawa and Tsukuba Mayor Tatsuo Igarashi. It demonstrated the strong bond that has been formed in preparation for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

This basic agreement on pre-Olympic camp activities paves the way for the scheduled implementation by the University of Tsukuba of roughly two-week camps for track and field, judo and gymnastics in the run-up to Tokyo 2020 Games competitive events. University of Tsukuba will provide the Swiss Olympic Association with its gymnasium, Japanese martial arts hall, athletics field and other facilities. At the same time, graduate students of University of Tsukuba will join in helping take care of the athletes by using university facilities for physical rehabilitation and measurement of physical function in support of the programme. Ibaraki Prefecture and municipal Tsukuba, for their part, will introduce city and prefectural facilities to the programme, and will also hold a welcoming ceremony for the Swiss athletes. They also plan to hold events to facilitate interaction with the local community.

At the ceremony marking the accord, Swiss Olympic Association official Ralph Stöckli spoke of the high hopes he has for the four-way partnership: “To everyone from the University of Tsukuba, Ibaraki Prefecture and the city of Tsukuba, welcome to Switzerland. It is gratifying to be able to

conclude this kind of partnership agreement with the IOC and so many other sporting organizations in this Olympic capital. Before the Nagano Olympics, I visited the pre-Olympic test camp at Karuizawa as a representative for the curling event. As I experienced Japanese culture, met the local people, and tried Japanese food at that time, I became fond of Japan. This time, we believe that the University of Tsukuba provides an ideal location for the pre-Olympic camp that will support the athletes on a day-to-day basis, helping them prepare for impending competition in the run-up to Tokyo 2020 Games. In addition to its environment for competitive preparation, I also think that the city of Tsukuba that is home to the university in Ibaraki Prefecture is a wonderful place to experience Japanese culture. In addition to the partnership established by the conclusion of this four-party basic agreement, I hope that it also represents a real friendship."

"I am extremely happy to be here at the conclusion of this basic agreement with the Swiss Olympic Association," said University of Tsukuba President Nagata, who will welcome the Swiss Olympic team. "I'd like to express my gratitude to everyone who did their utmost in working toward this agreement. Sports and the Olympics are something very special at the University of Tsukuba. Jigoro Kano, the founder of modern judo, served for 23 years as the principal of Tokyo Higher Normal School, the predecessor of our university. In 1909, he also became the first IOC member from an Asian nation, and he worked tirelessly to further Japan's Olympic movement. Since Prof. Kano led Japan's first two competitors to the Olympics in 1912, University of Tsukuba has given rise to more than 70 Olympians who have won a total of 63 medals. The university has also established Olympics Promotion Office in preparation for 2020. Not only is it a great honor for us to welcome the Swiss Olympic Team members competing in judo, track and field and gymnastics, but I think it will also be a valuable experience for our students and staff as well. We will work together with Ibaraki Prefecture and the city of Tsukuba to help enable the Swiss athletes to focus on the Games."

"Hosting Tokyo 2020 Games is a crucial opportunity for Japan," said Ibaraki Prefecture Governor Oikawa, who spoke next at the ceremony, emphasising his hopes for beneficial interaction between the Swiss athletes and his local community. "In 2011, Ibaraki Prefecture suffered enormous damage in the Great East Japan Earthquake. For the areas that were damaged, the critical significance of hosting the Olympics is that it orients them toward recovery, and will be their next step toward the future. Ibaraki's Kashima Stadium has been selected as a soccer venue of Tokyo 2020 Games. I welcome you all to come visit, and see the progress we are making toward recovery. The Olympics bring more than sports. They promote cultural exchange. I think that the conclusion of this pre-Olympic camp basic agreement will bring courage and hope not just to the youth of our prefecture, but to many others as well. By deepening mutual national and cultural understanding, it is an opportunity for friendly relations between our countries to expand."

"We in the local administration will do our utmost to ensure that the Swiss team can acclimatise themselves and train with peace of mind," said Tsukuba Mayor Igarashi, who took the podium last, expressing his hopes for the future. "By creating opportunities for the team members, coaches and others to meet with the children of our community, I hope to encourage their dreams and admiration of sport. And when it is time for Tokyo 2020 Games, I want the people of Tsukuba to cheer for the Swiss team just as they do for the Japanese team. Tsukuba is proud to claim Sawao Kato, who won eight gold medals in gymnastics, more than any other Japanese competitors, as one of our distinguished residents. My hope is that this will provide an occasion for the children of the community to aim for the Olympics, so that we can bring up another competitor like Sawao Kato."



Ceremony commemorating the conclusion of a basic agreement on the pre-Olympic camp programme: Swiss Olympic Association, the University of Tsukuba, Ibaraki Prefecture and municipal Tsukuba

- Schedule: Wednesday, 11 April 2018, 11:00-11:45 (local Swiss Time)
- Place: International Academy of Sports Sciences and Technology (AISTS)
Lausanne, the Swiss Confederation
- Event details: Opening remarks: François Bussy, Chairman, AISTS
Swiss Olympic Association Director for Tokyo 2020 Ralph Stöckli
Tsukuba University President Kyosuke Nagata
Ibaraki Prefectural Governor Kazuhiko Oikawa
Tsukuba Mayor Tatsuo Igarashi
- Signing of the basic agreement
 - Gift exchange
 - Toast and closing remarks

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