MILANO CORTINA 2026

Guide to Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Paralympic Games

Table of Contents

1. *MILANO CORTINA 2026*

1.1. Introduction to the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Paralympic Games

Italy has a deep connection with the Paralympic Movement: in 1960, Rome hosted the first Paralympic Games in history, marking the beginning of a new era for inclusive sport worldwide.

The Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Paralympics will take place on the 50th anniversary of the first Winter Games in Örnsköldsvik, Sweden. After Rome in 1960 and twenty years after Turin in 2006, the Paralympic Games return to Italy.

Milano Cortina 2026 will be the 14th edition of the Paralympic Winter Games and will introduce a new event: for the first time, a new medal discipline - the mixed doubles event for wheelchair curling - will be included in the official programme.

For further information: https://www.olympics.com/en/milano-cortina-2026/paralympic-games

1.2. Key dates

- The Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Paralympic Games will take place from 6 March to 15 March 2026.

- The Opening Ceremony will be held on 6 March 2026 at the Arena di Verona.

- The Closing Ceremony will be held on 15 March 2026 in Cortina d'Ampezzo at the Olympic Ice Stadium.

To view the Paralympic Games' competition schedule: https://www.olympics.com/en/milano-cortina-2026/paralympic-games/schedule/overview

1.3. Figures

- The competitions will take place in three locations: Milano, Cortina d'Ampezzo, Tesero (Val di Fiemme)

- 6 Paralympic sports will be featured: Para Alpine skiing, Para biathlon, Para cross-country skiing, Para Ice Hockey, Para Snowboard, Wheelchair Curling

- Up to 665 athletes representing approximately 50 countries will compete

- Athletes will compete in 79 medal events (39 for men, 35 for women, and 5 mixed events).

- There will be three Paralympic Villages: Milano, Cortina, and Predazzo.

- 89% of tickets are available for less than €35, with tickets starting at €10 for children under 14.

For further information: https://tickets.milanocortina2026.org/en/

1.4.   Ceremonies

- The Opening Ceremony of the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Paralympic Games will take place on 6 March 2026 at the Arena di Verona.

- This marks the first time a Paralympic Opening Ceremony will take place in a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

- In light of this important event, the government and the regions involved are promoting measures to improve accessibility to the iconic amphitheatre and the city. This legacy will benefit all tourists and spectators who visit the Arena during and after the Games.

- Tickets for the Milano Cortina 2026 Paralympic Opening Ceremony at the Verona Arena are available from €100.

- The Closing Ceremony of the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Paralympic Games will take place on 15 March 2026 at the Olympic Ice Stadium in Cortina d'Ampezzo.

- Important work has also been carried out to make this facility more accessible to athletes and spectators. The Olympic Ice Stadium in Cortina will also host the wheelchair curling competitions.

- Tickets for the Closing Ceremony of the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Paralympic Games are available from €150.

For further information on the Opening Ceremony: https://www.olympics.com/it/milano-cortina-2026/giochi-paralimpici/cerimonie/cerimonia-di-apertura

For further information on the Closing Ceremony: https://www.olympics.com/en/milano-cortina-2026/paralympic-games/ceremonies/the-paralympic-closing-ceremony

1.5.   Information for spectators with disabilities regarding the Olympic and Paralympic Games

- People with physical, intellectual or visual disabilities will be able to access the venues with a companion.

- People with hearing disabilities will be able to access the venues with a LIS interpreter or a communication assistant.

- The companion or assistant accompanying a person with disabilities has the right to a 30% discount on the ticket price.

- Areas reserved for guide dogs and assistance dogs for people with disabilities have been set up at all competition and ceremony venues.

- For the first time in the history of the Games, the Ticketing Policy allows ticket purchasers to specify that they are persons with intellectual disabilities, ensuring that facilitators such as quiet spaces, noise-cancelling headphones and lanyards for hidden disabilities are available.

- Each competition venue or ceremony venue will have a *priority lane* with trained staff and headphones for those who need acoustic isolation.

- Lanyards with the symbol of a sunflower, which identifies people with invisible disabilities or chronic illnesses, will be available. The sunflower lanyard has already been tested at airports and other major events.

For further information: https://www.olympics.com/en/milano-cortina-2026/paralympic-games/about-us/accessibility

1.6.   Sports

1.6.1.   Para ice hockey

- The Para ice hockey competition will take place in Milan, at the Santa Giulia Arena. Developed in Stockholm in the early 1960s, this is an extremely physical and brutal fast-paced spectacular team sport. It entered the Paralympic programme in Lillehammer in 1994, becoming one of the most popular events at the Games.

- Eight teams have qualified for the Para ice hockey competition. Group A features USA, China, Germany and Italy. Group B includes Canada, Czechia, Japan and Slovakia.

- At Milano Cortina 2026, USA is aiming to win a record-breaking fifth consecutive Paralympic title in Para ice hockey. HostItaly narrowly missed out on the bronze medal at PyeongChang 2018 losing to hosts South Korea.

1.6.2. Para Alpine Skiing

- The Para Alpine skiing competitions will take place in Cortina d'Ampezzo, at the Tofane Alpine Skiing Centre. Introduced at the Paralympic Winter Games in Örnsköldsvik, Sweden in 1976, at first it included two alpine events only: slalom and giant slalom. Today, it includes five different events: slalom, giant slalom, super-G, downhill and super combined.

- There will be 30 medal events in Para alpine skiing, 15 for men and 15 for women.

- In Para Alpine Skiing, athletes compete in either the vision impaired, standing or sitting class.

- Sit skiers can reach speeds of up to 115km/h in speed events like downhill and Super-G. Standing skiers reach speeds of 125km/h.

- Vision impaired skiers are guided down the course by a guide who skis in front of them sharing instructions via a Bluetooth headset. They can reach speeds of 100km/h.

- Italy's Giacomo Bertagnolli made his Paralympic debut at PyeongChang 2018 winning two gold medals, one silver and one bronze. The vision impaired skier won two golds and two silvers at the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games.

- Austria topped the Para alpine skiing medals table at Beijing 2022, winning 11 medals. Nine medals were won by the same family. Veronika Aigner won two gold medals. in vision impaired events, together with her guide (and sister) Elisabeth Aigner. Veronika's brother Johannes won two gold, two silver and one bronze medal together with his guide Matteo Fleischmann. Not to be left out, his sister Barbara won one silver and one bronze medal together with her guide Klara Sykora.

- Austria is the most successful nation in Para alpine skiing at the Paralympic Winter Games. To date, the country has won 94 golds, 93 silvers and 93 bronze medals.

- The sport's most successful female athlete is Germany's Reinhild Moeller. She won 19 medals, including 16 golds, between 1980 and 2006. Germany's Gerd Schoenfelder is the most successful male, with 22 medals, 16 of which are gold, won between 1992 and 2010.

1.6.3. Wheelchair curling

- The wheelchair curling competitions will take place in Cortina d'Ampezzo, at the Olympic Ice Stadium. Wheelchair curling became a Paralympic discipline at Torino 2006.

- At Milano Cortina 2026 there will be two medal events, mixed team and a new mixed doubles event which will be contested for the first time.

- The mixed team event will feature 10 teams, while eight pairs will contest the doubles event. Wheelchair curling events will begin on 4 March, two days before the Opening Ceremony.

- Wheelchair curling differs from curling as there are no sweepers. This makes the accuracy of shots and strategy all the more important for Paralympic athletes.

- China has won gold at the last two Paralympic Winter Games.

- Canada is the sport's most successful Paralympic nation with three gold medals. .

1.6.4. Para snowboard

- The Para snowboard competitions will take place in Cortina d'Ampezzo, at the Cortina Para Snowboard Park. In 2012, it was officially included in the Paralympic programme. Para snowboard made its debut at the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia as part of Alpine skiing.

- Para snowboard is extremely fast-paced and competitive. At Milano Cortina 2026 there will be six men's medal events and two women's. Athletes will compete in banked slalom and snowboard cross events.

- The sport's most successful female athlete is the USA's Brenna Huckaby (3 golds and 1 bronze) and the most decorated male is Finland's Matti Suur-Hamari (2 golds, 1 silver, 1 bronze).

- USA top the sport's all-time Paralympic rankings with 6 gold, 7 silver and 4 bronze medals.

1.6.5. Para cross-country skiing

- The Para cross-country skiing competitions will take place in Val di Fiemme, at the Lago di Tesero Cross Country Stadium. Athletes used the classic technique in all long-distance races until the introduction of the skate skiing technique in Innsbruck in 1984. Since then, the events have been divided into two separate disciplines: classic technique and free technique. However, it was only at the Albertville Paralympics in 1992 that the freestyle technique was officially used in a medal race.

- Athletes compete in either vision impaired, standing or sitting class. Vision impaired athletes are led by a guide.

- There will be nine men's and nine women's medal events, as well as two mixed/open relay events.

- China topped the medals table at Beijing 2022, but Norway is the most successful Paralympic nation in the sport to date.

- Norway's Ragnhild Myklebust is the sport's most successful female. She won 16 gold medals between 1988 and 2022. The sport's most successful male is Brian McKeever of Canada. He won 19 medals, 16 gold, between 2002 and 2022.

1.6.6. Para Biathlon

- The Para biathlon competitions will take place in Val di Fiemme, at the Lago di Tesero Cross Country Stadium. Para biathlon was added to the Paralympic Winter Games at Innsbruck 1988 for athletes with physical disabilities. Athletes with vision impairments first competed at Albertville 1992, and women's events were added to the Paralympic programme at Lillehammer 1994.

- Athletes compete in either vision impaired, standing or sitting classes.

- There will be nine men's and nine women's medal events.

- Athletes with a vision impairment use a rifle that uses sounds to indicate to the athlete the accuracy of their aim.

- Ukraine topped the medals table at Beijing 2022 and Russia is the sport's most successful nation.

- Germany's Verena Bentele is the sport's most successful female athlete. Between 1998 and 2010, she won 6 medals, including 5 gold. Ukraine's Vitaliy Lukyanenko is the most successful male with 12 medals, including 8 gold, won between 2006 and 2022.

For further information: https://www.olympics.com/en/milano-cortina-2026/paralympic-games/sports

1.7. Paralympic Ambassadors of Milano Cortina 2026

- Alessandro Andreoni, Para ice hockey

- Andrea Macrì, Para ice hockey

- Gabriele Lanza, Para ice hockey

- Giacomo Bertagnolli, Para Alpine skiing

- Andrea Ravelli, Para Alpine skiing

- Antonio Fantin, Para swimming

- Davide Plebani, Para cycling

- Giada Rossi, Para table tennis

- Giulia Ghiretti, Para swimming

- Giuseppe Romele, Para cross-country skiing and Para triathlon

- Lorenzo Bernard, Para cycling and Para rowing

- Martina Caironi, Para athletics

- Orietta Bertò, Wheelchair curling

- René de Silvestro, Para Alpine skiing

- Simone Barlaam, Para swimming

1.8.   Paralympic Torch Relay

- The Paralympic Torch Relay will last 11 days, from 24 February to 6 March.

- The Paralympic Flame Lighting Ceremony will take place on 24 February in Stoke Mandeville (United Kingdom), the spiritual birthplace of the Paralympic Movement.

- 501 torchbearers will carry the Paralympic Flame

- The Paralympic Flame will travel 2,000 kilometers.

- Flame Festival will be held in 5 cities: Milan, Turin, Trento, Bolzano, Trieste.

- The Flame Unification Ceremony will be held in Cortina d'Ampezzo.

- The City celebrations will be held in Venezia e Padova.

For further information: https://www.olympics.com/en/milano-cortina-2026/paralympic-games/paralympic-torch-relay

1.9.   The Paralympic Mascot

- Milo is the Paralympic Mascot.

- He's a brown-coated stoat born without a paw. Thanks to his creativity and determination, he has learned to walk using his tail, turning his difference into a strength.

- He loves to perform practical jokes and play in the snow, and in his spare time, he invents musical instruments.

- The sentence that represents him is: "Obstacles are trampolines".

To learn more about the Milano Cortina 2026 mascots: https://www.olympics.com/en/milano-cortina-2026/brand/mascots

2. THE PARALYMPIC GAMES

2.1. The history of the Paralympic Games and the Paralympic Movement

- On 29 July 1948, the day of the Opening Ceremony of the London 1948 Olympic Games, Dr. Guttmann organised the first competition for wheelchair athletes, the Stoke Mandeville Games. Sixteen wounded military personnel, both men and women, took part, competing in archery.

- The Stoke Mandeville Games later became the Paralympic Games which first took place in Rome, Italy, in 1960.

- The first edition of the Paralympic Games, held in Rome in 1960, featured 400 athletes from 23 countries competing in 57 events across eight sports.

- Since then, the Paralympic Games have taken place every four years, just like the Olympics.

- After the Second World War, many wounded soldiers and civilians tried to return to their skiing activities, encouraging the development of prosthetics and adapted sports equipment and leading to the gradual rise of winter sports for athletes with physical disabilities.

- The first Paralympic Winter Games were held in 1976 in Örnsköldsvik and saw the participation of 198 Para athletes (161 men and 37 women) from 16 countries who competed in two sports (Alpine and cross-country skiing) and 53 medal events. A demonstration was also held in ice sledge racing.

- Since the Paralympic Games of Seoul, Korea in 1988 and the Paralympic Winter Games in Albertville, France in 1992, the Games have been held in the same cities and venues as the Olympics due to an agreement between the International Paralympic Committee and the International Olympic Committee.

- The Paralympic Winter Games have been held in Austria, China, France, Italy, Japan, Norway, South Korea, Sweden, Russia and USA. Milano Cortina 2026 will be the 14th edition of the Paralympic Winter Games.

For further information: https://www.paralympic.org/paralympic-games?_gl=1*hovmo6*_up*MQ..*_ga*MTgyMzA4NTQzNi4xNzYzMTI3MDk0*_ga_6TNCMVEHQ6*czE3NjMxMjcwOTQkbzEkZzAkdDE3NjMxMjcwOTQkajYwJGwwJGgw

2.2. The Paralympic logo

- The Paralympic symbol is known as the Agitos (from the Latin meaning "to move") and represents the union between mind, body and spirit.

- The Paralympic symbol consists of three elements in red, blue and green – the three colours that are most widely represented in national flags around the world.

For further information: https://www.paralympic.org/logo

2.3. Interesting facts about the Paralympic Games

- The Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games were watched by a cumulative TV audience of 2.4 billion people in more than 100 countries.

- Although they topped the medals table at Beijing 2022, China had never won a Paralympic winter medal until 2018 when it claimed gold in wheelchair curling.

- A record 343,000 spectators attended the PyeongChang 2018 Paralympic Winter Games.

Worldwide Paralympic Partners

airbnb · Alibaba · Allianz · Coca-Cola · Corona Cero · Deloitte.

OMEGA · P&G · SAMSUNG · TCL · VISA

Paralympic Premium Partners

enel · eni · Gruppo FS · INTESA SANPAOLO · LEONARDO

Posteitaliane · SALOMON · FIAT | Alfa Romeo | LANCIA | Maserati

Paralympic Partners

a2a LIFE COMPANY · autostrade per l'Italia · Deloitte. · EA7 EMPORIO ARMANI · ESSELUNGA · FiberCop · FIERA MILANO

GL events · HPE JUNIPER networking · ITALIA.IT · ottobock. · PIRELLI · randstad · TIM

Paralympic Sponsors

cdp · esaote HEALTH WITH CARE · FINCANTIERI · FNM GROUP · GRANA PADANO · Herbalife

intercom DR.LEITNER · IPZS · ITA AIRWAYS · KIKO MILANO · Lilly · PROSECCO DOC · RINASCENTE

salesforce · SÜDTIROL · TECHNOGYM · Terna · TRENTINO · Uber · Valtellina Taste of emotion

Official Supporters

AIRWEAVE · ESSILORLUXOTTICA · KÄSSBOHRER ITALIA · LISKI · RAPISCAN · RGS EVENTS · RIELLO UPS

SEA MILAN AIRPORTS · TECHNOALPIN · TICKETONE · TINEXTA INFOCERT · VENEZIA AIRPORT · VERSALIS

Official Hospitality Provider

ON LOCATION