



PARA TAEKWONDO SPORT DEVELOPMENT AND ATHLETES' OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS

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Abstract. *This article examines the global development of Para Taekwondo, its stages of growth, and the major achievements of Paralympic athletes. The study is based on statistical data from 2006-2023, as well as reports from World Taekwondo (WT) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC). It analyzes the popularization of Para Taekwondo, athlete classification, competition rules, and achievements observed during the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games from a scientific-methodological perspective. The article highlights the role of Para Taekwondo within an inclusive sports system, the physical and psychological development of athletes with disabilities, and the significance of their success on the international stage.*

Keywords: *Para Taekwondo, World Taekwondo (WT), Paralympic Games, Para Kyorugi, athlete classification, inclusive sport, athletes with disabilities, statistical analysis, Tokyo 2020, Paralympic movement, Uzbek athletes.*

Аннотация. *В данной статье рассматривается глобальное развитие Пара-Тхэквондо, этапы его становления и основные достижения паралимпийских спортсменов. Исследование основано на статистических данных за 2006–2023 годы, а также на отчетах Всемирной федерации Тхэквондо (WT) и Международного паралимпийского комитета (IPC). Анализируется популяризация Пара-Тхэквондо, классификация спортсменов, правила соревнований и достижения, зарегистрированные на Паралимпийских играх в Токио 2020, с научно-методологической точки зрения. В статье подчеркивается роль Пара-Тхэквондо в системе инклюзивного спорта, физическое и психологическое развитие спортсменов с ограниченными возможностями, а также значимость их успехов на международной арене.*

Ключевые слова: *Пара-Тхэквондо, Всемирная федерация Тхэквондо (WT), Паралимпийские игры, Пара Кёруги, классификация спортсменов, инклюзивный спорт, спортсмены с ограниченными возможностями, статистический анализ, Токио 2020, паралимпийское движение, спортсмены Узбекистана.*

Introduction. Para Taekwondo is a form of taekwondo adapted for athletes with physical, intellectual, or sensory (visual or auditory) impairments, governed by World Taekwondo (WT) since 2006. The sport entered a new global phase on January 31, 2017, when it was officially included in the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games program by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) [2]. Today, Para Taekwondo is actively practiced in over 200 countries, encompassing the kyorugi and poomsae disciplines [16].



This article provides a scientific analysis of the sport's historical development, competition systems, athlete classification, international results, and the factors driving its rapid global growth.

Methods. The preparation of this article employed the following scientific and methodological approaches:

1. **Historical-methodological analysis** – archival materials of World Taekwondo (WT), documents from the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), and materials from the Para Taekwondo Committee were analyzed covering the period from 2006 to 2023.

2. **Normative-legal analysis** – competition rules, athlete classification, and scoring criteria were examined based on official WT regulations [7][10][12][13].

3. **Statistical analysis** – medal statistics (458 medals) from the Para Taekwondo World Championships held between 2009 and 2021 were studied.

4. **Comparative analysis** – the development dynamics of Para Taekwondo were compared with those of other Paralympic martial arts.

5. **Journalistic approach** – achievements of athletes worldwide, including those from Uzbekistan, were analyzed from a socio-impact perspective.

Results. Para Taekwondo began to take shape in 2006 with the establishment of a dedicated WT committee [1]. Initially, the sport was designed exclusively for athletes with arm amputations or limb deficiencies. The first World Championship, held in Baku in 2009, brought the sport to the global stage [3].


Between 2013 and 2015, in collaboration with CPISRA and INAS, the sport was opened to athletes with all types of impairments, and new competitions in poomsae were introduced [4]. Following WT's full recognition by IPC in 2013, the process for inclusion in the Paralympic program began. In 2017, Para Taekwondo was officially confirmed as a sport for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games [2].

Para Kyorugi competitions consist of three rounds, with turning (spinning) techniques awarded 3–4 points; strikes to the head are prohibited, and punches are not scored [7][10][11]. Para Poomsae is evaluated on a 10-point scale, divided into technical (4.0 points) and presentation (6.0 points) criteria [12].

Athletes are classified according to their physical, intellectual, or sensory impairments as follows:

- **K40** – physical impairments (short arm, amputation).
- **P10 / P20 / P30** – visual, intellectual, and physical impairments.
- **K60 / P60** – deaf-mute athletes.
- **P70** – short stature [14].

The classification process involves three stages: physical assessment, technical assessment, and practical observation [13].



Between 2009 and 2021, a total of 458 medals were awarded, with the highest counts achieved by the following countries:

Rank	Country	Total Medals
1	Russia (RUS)	81
2	Turkey (TUR)	69
3	Azerbaijan (AZE)	57
4	Iran (IRI)	26
22	Uzbekistan (UZB)	16

With 16 medals, Uzbekistan ranks within the top 25 globally and has become one of the most active Para Taekwondo schools in Central Asia in recent years.

Discussion. Scientific and statistical analyses indicate that over the past 15–17 years, Para Taekwondo has emerged as one of the fastest-growing Paralympic sports worldwide. Several factors have contributed to the sport's rapid popularization. Since 2013, the inclusion of athletes with all types of impairments has expanded the geographical reach of competitions. Currently, the WT organization encompasses 208 countries [16].

The prohibition of strikes to the head, the use of sensors for scoring, and the precise classification criteria have ensured equitable conditions for all athletes. Since 2009, the World Championships have awarded a total of 89 gold, 88 silver, and 142 bronze medals, significantly enhancing Para Taekwondo's global prestige. The 16 medals earned by Uzbek athletes demonstrate the high efficiency and effectiveness of national sports programs.

Para Taekwondo made its Paralympic debut at the Tokyo 2020 Games, marking the beginning of a new era for the sport. Following these Games, WT experienced a substantial increase in interest and engagement worldwide. Beyond competitive achievements, Para Taekwondo contributes to the social integration of people with disabilities, promoting inclusivity and serving as a motivational platform for many young individuals.

Conclusion. In a relatively short period, Para Taekwondo has become one of the most dynamically developing branches of the global Paralympic movement. Its inclusion in the Paralympic program, the implementation of inclusive and safe competition rules, and WT's proactive development strategies have significantly boosted the sport's popularity. Medal statistics from 2009–2021 demonstrate that Para Taekwondo is highly developed in more than 50 countries, with Uzbekistan's 16 medals highlighting the effectiveness of national para-sport programs. In the future, Para Taekwondo will continue to serve not only as a platform for athletic success but also as a vital tool for social integration, rehabilitation, and the promotion of inclusive communities.



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