



## Yesterday's **Highlight**

# The first preliminary round of the World Championships was held. in a fierce battle

The second day of the Kobe 2024 World Para Athletics Championships, continued with clear skies and mild winds as a Day 1, perfect weather conditions for athletics. On Saturday, many spectators came to the venue to cheer and applaud the para-athletes. As a result, new world records were set in the women's 1500m T11 (4:31.77) and women's long jump T37 (5.42m), and many championships records were broken.

### ■ Men's Long Jump T47



The men's long jump T47, a class of upper extremity disability, was performed. There were many entries in the men's long jump T47, and for this reason, the preliminary round was held on for first time in its history of "Para Athletics World Championships", on May 17th. in Athletics, was held on May 17th. A total of 16 players, including 4 players who made it through the preliminary round, participated in the finals on the 18th.

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In the final of the main game, the top eight players advance to the final based on the record of the first three trials. World record holder Robiel Yankiel Janchiel Sol Cervantes of Cuba, the gold medalist in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics and Paris World Para Athletics last year, as well as Roderick Townsend of the United States, the silver medalist in the Tokyo 2020 Games and Paris World Para Athletics, took their place in the final. From the fourth round of the finals, the jumping order will be decrescent, starting from 8th position. Defending champion Sol Cervantes, who made a big jump of 7.60m in his second attempt, and won the championship with this record in the preliminary round.

"My goal today was to break my personal best, which is to break the world record, so I'm not satisfied with my record, but I'm happy that I won the world championships for second consecutive time." Sol Cervantes said.

It seems that he could not break his personal record, due to the injury that he suffered in his left foot (ankle).

He just got the injury around his ankle, and seems that not is in perfect condition, in recalled that he suffered a scratch near the medial ankle of his left foot and was not in good



shape, which did not lead to a good record. Many spectators gathered in the main stand to cheer the athletes. "From the first round of the preliminary trials to the finals, there was warm clapping not only for me but also for all athletes, and the competition was very enjoyable."

Japan's Hajimu Ashida marked 6.53m on his first trial, but was fouled on the second and third attempts, failing to advance to the final and finishing in 11<sup>th</sup> position.

## ■ **Men's High Jump T64**



The men's high jump T64, in total 9 athletes (combining T44 and T64 class) including the medalists from Tokyo Paralympic Games and previous Paris Championships, have participated in this event. The competition starts at a bar height of 1.72m, and then rises to 1,77m and to 1,82m, the athlete who fail 3 times will be withdrawing one by one.

When the bar achieved to 2.01m, there are only three athletes continues the survival race for medal.

Jonathan Bloom Edwards of England, Tokyo Paralympics champion where marked 2.04m in the first trial, but the others failed to clear it two times (Derek Loccident (USA), Maciej Lepiato (Poland)). Derek Loccident cleared it in third times under the big pressure, but Maciej Lepiato could not. Broom Edwards, who had previously cleared 2.04m, took the provisional first place, while Loccident, who had cleared in the third attempt, took the second place. Bloom Edwards and Loccident tried for 2.07m but failed to clear it, and the colors of the medals were decided.



Bloom Edwards, defending champion said, "I am very happy to win in Japan, one of my favorite countries. I was able to continue my clean jumps today, and I can go for my biggest goal of the year, the Paris Paralympics, without losing. I'm also happy to see new faces in this event today. It's really great." The champion was pleased that the number of athletes was growing and the number of events was expanding.

One of the new faces is the silver medal-winning Loccident. He specialized in the long jump, but he just started to try the high jump this year. He had his left leg amputated in a train accident in 2018, and he competed with a prosthetic leg. With his natural physical ability, which he trained in American football, he improved his personal record by 12 cm, changed his T64 record by 12 cm, and additionally he qualified getting the ticket to the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

"I'm very happy, and it was my first visit to Japan and I am so grateful that people greeted me with smiles. Cheering inspired me." he said with a big smile and gesture.

In addition to the high jump, I will participate in the long jump, 100 meters, and javelin. "I want to make the most of my short athletic career, and I want to inspire the next generation, regardless of disability."

Japan's Toru Suzuki was ninth with 1.77m. "I couldn't show the good performance today because I couldn't correct the timing of my jumping step." he said. The veteran, who is aiming to participate in the Paris Paralympics for the seventh time, has indicated that he will retire from Paraspport at the end of this year, but Suzuki, who has led the sport as one of the few T64 athletes, was also pleased with the success of the Loccident.

"I've always insisted on jumping with a competition blade (prosthetic leg) as the number of T44 athletes has increased, but today I was pleased to see a new star emerge. I want him to take over his artificial leg jumper and play well with the T44 players." he said.



## Competition Schedule and Results



# GO KOBE 2024!

## Focus on next-generation universal steering

Outside the main stand and around the Medal Plaza, event booths are set up by event sponsors. One of them, the Toyota's booth is popular. Many people are gathered at the Land Cruiser displayed near the entrance of the main venue.

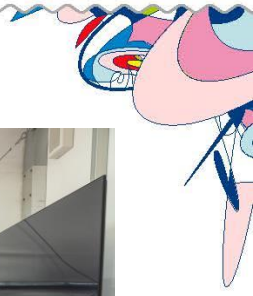


The Land Cruiser has a new steering system called **NEOSteer**. Wheelchair users can operate the accelerator, brake and steering wheel with their hands, and it has a revolutionary function that overturns the conventional wisdom of ordinary vehicles as well as welfare vehicles. According to Yasuhiko Fukuzumi from the Body Development Department of the Toyota Motor Vehicle Development Center, "In a typical car, you turn the round steering wheel and depress the accelerator and brake with your foot. The **NEOSteer** is equipped with an accelerator and brake on the steering wheel so that it can be operated by hand. And while a typical round steering wheel requires two and a half revolutions around the wheel to move the tire all the way around when turning a corner or parking, a **NEOSteer** can turn the tire all the way around by swerving about 90 degrees while operating the accelerator and brake. That's the big thing."

The development of the **NeoSteer** started with a conversation between Morii Daiki, who has won 5 consecutive medals in para-alpine skiing since the 2006 Paralympics in Turin, and Toyoda Akio, the president of the company. "When you saw my Land Cruiser with a manual steering system, I told you that it was unstable because I was steering with one hand, and the chairperson told me that it was a "bi-wire." Morii said.

Bi-wire is a driver assistance system that operates the steering, accelerator, and brakes by electrical signals rather than by mechanical routing. By applying the technology, Morii set out to develop a system that would dramatically change the way he drove, something he felt anxious about on a daily basis.





The event booth at this competition not only displays a Land Cruiser equipped with a **NEOSteer**, but also has a simulation where you can experience the operation. In the simulation, even children without a driver's license could experience it as if it were a game, so there was a long line from the first day of the competition. In the Land Cruiser on display, para-athletes gathered at this year's event are curiously briefed on the system.

Apart from the booths, there is also a venue where you can actually test drive a car equipped with **NEOSteer**, and there is a section for people with disabilities to experience it by reservation. There was also motorized mobility near the booth to assist with daily walking, which also had people waiting in line for a test run.

"People with various disabilities can relate to the system and offer more ideas and tips. I think the new steering system, which can be enjoyed by both the able-bodied and the disabled, will become a new movement for welfare vehicles." said Morii, who enthusiastically commented to the para-athletes gathered in the Land Cruiser at the venue.

