

Government funds biggest ever overseas Team GB

- Sports Minister talks of national “pride and excitement” as Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games begins today
- Team GB benefiting from £342 million of funding since Rio 2016
- 376 athletes from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales unite as biggest ever overseas Olympic team dispatched to Tokyo

Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston and Olympic legend Dame Katharine Grainger have expressed the nation’s “pride and excitement” in the prospects for Team GB, ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games officially launching today.

The team, which includes 272 athletes from England, 52 from Scotland, 29 from Wales and six from Northern Ireland, have benefited from a funding package of £342 million for our Olympians and Paralympians since the Rio 2016 Games, thanks to the Government and National Lottery players. This has been channelled through UK Sport, of which Dame Katharine is its Chair.

With the challenges of disrupted training schedules, lockdowns and additional safety measures, this funding, coupled with hard work and extreme dedication, has enabled 376 Team GB athletes to reach their full potential ahead of these extraordinary games – making it the biggest Team GB at an overseas games.

It will also be the first summer Olympic Games to have more female athletes than male. 201 female athletes and 175 male athletes will be competing across 26 sports.

Ahead of travelling to Tokyo for a few days later this month, Nigel Huddleston recently visited some of the Team GB athletes at Bisham Abbey training camp, and witnessed how hard they have worked and the sacrifices they have made, in order to prepare and be in peak condition at exactly the right time.

Sport Minister Nigel Huddleston said:

Our Olympic and Paralympic athletes are an absolute credit to the United Kingdom. I’m in awe of their commitment and the sacrifices they’ve made leading up to Tokyo 2020.

Throughout these challenging times, we’ve remained committed to Team GB and supporting the athletes to reach their full potential. I’m extremely confident that our athletes will create extraordinary moments, lift the nation’s mood and inspire millions of people to get active and take up new sports as we continue to recover from the pandemic back home.

It’s an honour to be travelling to Tokyo for the competition, and I know the whole nation will unite in feeling immense pride,

excitement and is wishing Team GB and Paralympics GB the very best of luck.

Dame Katherine Grainger, Chair, UK Sport, said:

The pride that we feel in the efforts made by UK athletes to make their dreams come true is profound and unshakeable. However, that pride has never been more heartfelt than it is as we look forward to Tokyo.

I am confident the world will witness a celebration of sporting excellence that delivers a much-needed boost to people everywhere. I am also confident that, while these Games take place in unique circumstances, our athletes will deliver many extraordinary moments and performances for the British public to enjoy. We know how much their endeavours mean to sports fans – and how they can be a beacon of hope to inspire and reconnect us all after such a difficult year.

We must never forget that none of this would be possible without the support of the Government and National Lottery players over the last quarter of a century.

First-time Olympic athletes have not been deterred by the unusual circumstances, with almost 70% of the team making their Olympic and Paralympic debut in Tokyo.

Recent research published by UK Sport has revealed that more than three quarters of the UK will follow the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, engaging in their favourite sporting events, which will help inspire millions across the nation to get more active as we emerge from the pandemic.

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