

## 《乒乓球混双将成东京奥运会正式比赛项目》

A mixed-gender event has been added to the table tennis program for Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games as the mega-sporting event aims to bolster female participation, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Friday.

The existing games will also grow by 15 more events in basketballs, cycling, triathlon among others to 33 in total.

Mixed Doubles in table tennis will be held for the first time in the 2020 Summer Olympics, in addition to the Men's singles, Women's singles, Men's team and Women's team.

The IOC has been trying to reinforce the diversity of the Olympics by increasing the number of female players and mixed-gender events.

Mixed Doubles has been a constant fixture in the world championships of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) since 1926. A week ago, Japanese pair Kasumi Ishikawa and Maharu Yoshimura were crowned Mixed Doubles World Champions in Dusseldorf, Germany, becoming the first Japanese duo to snatch the world title in this event in 48 years.



Japanese pair, Kasumi Ishikawa (L) and Maharu Yoshimura (R), won the gold medal at the world table tennis championship in Dusseldorf, Germany. /CFP Photo

Following DPRK's historic win in 2013 and the victory of an international pair from South Korea and China in 2015, the event has kept the audience at the edge of their seats and has been regarded as the most unpredictable table tennis game in a domain where Chinese players usually dominate.

The organizing committee of Tokyo 2020 has been pushing for the proposal under the condition that each national team will be entitled to participate in only four of the five table tennis events. Given the probable absence of Chinese table tennis players in the Mixed Doubles event, Japanese athletes might have a chance at bagging one extra medal on home soil in three years.

ITTF President Thomas Weikert said "The ITTF is extremely happy to have Mixed Doubles added to the Olympic Programme. Table Tennis obtained very high television and social media numbers at Rio 2016, so we feel that a fifth gold medal was deserved. At last week's World Championships, a sellout crowd of 8,000 people watched the Mixed Doubles final, so we know that the public has an appetite for this exciting event and it will be a huge success at Tokyo 2020."

