

PH cancels hosting of 10th ASEAN Para Games

The PSC and Philippine Paralympic Committee agree to cancel the 2020 ASEAN Para Games due to the coronavirus pandemic.

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Published 4:42 PM, April 30, 2020

Updated 4:42 PM, April 30, 2020



CANCELED. Swimmer Ernie Gawilan, the country's most bemedalled athlete in the 2018 Asian Para Games, won't see action this year. Photo courtesy of Janet Tenorio

MANILA, Philippines – The Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) and the Philippine Paralympic Committee (PPC) decided to cancel the country's hosting of the 10th ASEAN Para Games due to the coronavirus pandemic.

PPC president Michael Barredo confirmed to Rappler after PSC decided that it will not hold any of its sports events this year until a coronavirus vaccine will be widely distributed. (READ: PSC: No coronavirus vaccine, no PH sports events)

"While this is disheartening news for our local and ASEAN para-athletes, who have trained and sacrificed so much to represent their respective countries, their health, and safety as well as their coaches, members of their team, and families, remain our top priority," said Barredo in a statement.

"We understand that this is a global concern and this is a very difficult decision to do. At this moment, sports must take a back seat to address a greater issue."

The PPC chief has yet to receive the PSC board resolution before officially forwarding the decision of the ASEAN Para Sports Federation (APSF).

The APSF board was slated to further discuss the issues in July after the ASEAN Para Games was delayed to October. Given the situation, however, the board will have to meet earlier in order to make an official decision as a regional council.

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"If any other country will be able to consider hosting because of the virus, it's very difficult," said Barredo.

Despite the cancellation due to uncontrollable circumstances, Barredo told Rappler that PSC chairman William "Butch" Ramirez reaffirmed his commitment to support the country's differently-abled athletes. – **Rappler.com**

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