

Sochi Prepares for Paralympics With Sled Hockey Tournament

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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With just months to go before the Sochi 2014 Winter Paralympics, the Olympic host city on the Black Sea is hosting the Four Nations sled hockey tournament from Aug. 27 to Sept. 1.

The tournament is the final international test event that will be staged ahead of the Games' opening next year.

Two hundred volunteers who have received special training in assisting individuals with disabilities will be on hand to provide support to athletes and spectators. The stadium to be used for the tournament has been specially outfitted with transparent walls in front of the players' benches, hand-operated exercise bikes for training, and welding stations for the repair of sleds.

Sled hockey is played on miniature one-person-sleds with each player having two hockey sticks that are used for propulsion and hitting the puck. The game was first developed in

Sweden in the 1960s.

During the tournament, Sochi will host 67 athletes from four countries: Russia, Canada, the Czech Republic and Norway.

The outfitting of the stadiums and other Olympics facilities comes as Sochi attempts to become the first "barrier-free" environment in a country traditionally unaccommodating to the needs of the disabled.

About 1,800 venues are on the priority list for disability outfitting, including the airport, train station, bus station and the marina.

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