

Russian World Champion Delivers Food to Raise Money for Tokyo Paralympics

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Mikhail Astashov has said he needs 350,000 rubles (\$5,600) to compete in the Paralympic qualifiers. **astashov03 / Instagram, screenshot** **Znak Znak**

A world paratriathlon champion from Russia has started working as a food delivery courier to raise money to compete in the 2020 Paralympics after regional sports officials allegedly failed to provide financial assistance, Russian media reported Monday.

Mikhail Astashov, 31, [won](#) the 2019 Paratriathlon World Cup. In November, Astashov [told](#) fellow athlete and newly minted federal lawmaker Anton Shipulin that he needed 350,000 rubles (\$5,600) to attend the Paralympic qualifiers.

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Sports officials in the Sverdlovsk region where Astashov lives “aren't particularly helping him” cover the costs of the Paralympic qualifying rounds, Telegram channels have [reported](#).

Bystanders [filmed](#) Astashov wearing [prosthetic legs](#) and a delivery service uniform in Russia's fourth-largest city of Yekaterinburg this week. The Russian tech giant Yandex's food delivery arm told Russian media that Astashov's first official workday began Sunday.

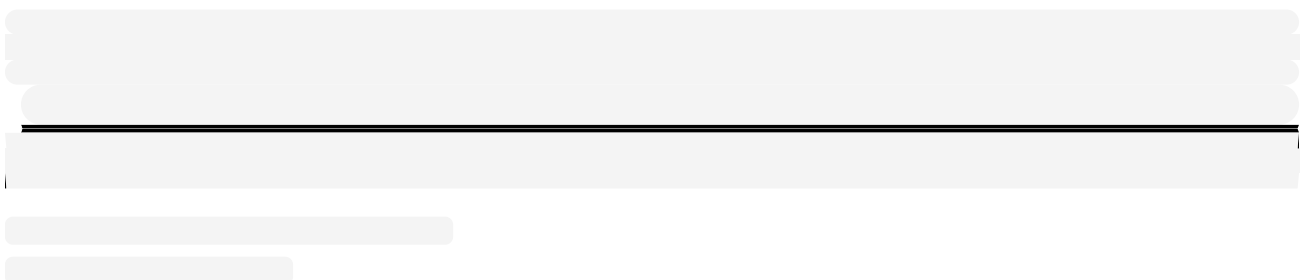
"He's very motivated to work. He went on his first shift and completed his first deliveries," Yandex Food [told](#) the TJournal.ru news website.

It noted that, despite his missing limbs, Astashov easily overcomes obstacles and is able to handle the equipment needed for delivery work. Yandex Food added that it employs people with disabilities in other Russian cities where it operates.

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The Sverdlovsk region's sports administration will provide Astashov the needed help to take part in the Paralympic qualifiers, the administration's top official Leonid Rapoport [said](#) Tuesday.

"We found the resources for him to go through all the stages of preparation," Rapoport told the state-run TASS news agency.

Russia's republic of Buryatia, where Astashov was born and which he represents in national championships alongside Sverdlovsk, [has the budget](#) to support the athlete once he qualifies for the Paralympics, according to its chief of youth policy.

"I don't consider myself a disabled person," Astashov [told](#) the u-mama.ru website in a November interview.

Tokyo will host the Summer Paralympics between Aug. 25 and Sept. 6 this year.

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