Malaysian athletes have participated in international paralympic sports events since the 1972 Stoke Mandeville Games, the precursor to today’s Paralympic Games. In recent times, Malaysian athletes with a disability have given medal-winning performances around the world. At the 2006 FESPIC Games held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysian athletes won 44 gold medals.

Hosting international events
Malaysia has hosted two major multi-sport and multi-disability competitions: the first ASEAN Para Games in 2001 and the sixth FESPIC (Far East and South Pacific Games for the Disabled) Games in 2005.

The ASEAN Para Games were organized in Kuala Lumpur from 25 to 30 October 2001. Athletics competitions were conducted at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil, while swimming competitions were held at the National Aquatic Centre. A total of 548 athletes from the ASEAN countries—Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam—participated in the competition. Malaysian competitors succeeded in setting 11 new Southeast Asian records in athletics, powerlifting and lawn bowls.

The 2006 FESPIC Games held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysian athletes have given medal-winning performances around the world. At the Paralympic Games. In recent times, Malaysian athletes with a disability have participated in international paralympic sports events since the 1972 Stoke Mandeville Games, the precursor to today’s Paralympic Games. In recent times, Malaysian athletes with a disability have given medal-winning performances around the world.

A tradition of success
Malaysia first took part in the third FESPIC Games in Hong Kong in 1982. Malaysian athletes in three disability categories—physical disability, visually impaired and cerebral palsy—participated in the event. Since then, Malaysia has taken part in all the subsequent FESPIC Games, which are held every four years. Malaysia has won medals in all the FESPIC Games in which it has participated. However, the best performance was at the 2006 FESPIC Games in Kuala Lumpur when Malaysia won 44 gold, 60 silver and 71 bronze medals.

Malaysia has been taking part in the Paralympic Games since 1988. The Malaysian contingent participated in the 1988 Paralympics in Seoul, and P. Mariappan won the country’s first Paralympic medal, a bronze, for powerlifting. Malaysia also brought home medals—one silver and one bronze in powerlifting and one bronze in athletics—from the Barcelona Paralympic Games in 1992. These games marked the first time that medal-winning Malaysian athletes with a disability received cash incentives from the government.

Since 2002, the Commonwealth Games has integrated events for elite athletes with a disability (EA) under the banner Commonwealth Games for the Physically Disabled, while the Commonwealth Games for the Mentally Physically Disabled was renamed the Commonwealth Games for the Mentally Physically Disabled. Malaysia has won medals in all the FESPIC Games in which it has participated. However, the best performance was at the 2006 FESPIC Games in Kuala Lumpur when Malaysia won 44 gold, 60 silver and 71 bronze medals.

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Since 2002, the Commonwealth Games has integrated events for elite athletes with a disability (EA). Malaysia sent EAD participants to both the 2002 Manchester and 2006 Melbourne editions of the Commonwealth Games. In 2002, Malaysia won one silver medal in athletics, two bronze medals in lawn bowls and one bronze medal in powerlifting.

Other disability sports events
The Special Olympics is a separate programme from the Paralympics. Whereas the latter has, since its 2000 edition in Sydney, been open only to athletes with a physical disability, the Special Olympics caters to athletes with intellectual disabilities. The Special Olympics World Games, like the Paralympic Games, take place once every four years. Malaysia participated in its first Special Olympics World Games in Ireland in 2003.

The first Special Olympics state body in Malaysia was established in Sabah in 1980, and, as of 2006, Sarawak, Penang, Selangor and Perak also have their own governing bodies. Special Olympics Malaysia is awaiting registration under the Sports Development Act 1997 to be recognized as the national governing body of the Special Olympics programme. The first Special Olympics event in Malaysia, held in Kuala Lumpur in 1992, offered track and field events. The inaugural National Games for the Special Olympics were held in Sabah in 2006.

The hearing impaired do not take part in the Paralympic Games, but in the Deaflympics, which is a single-disability competition. Hearing-impaired athletes play the full spectrum of sports which the able-bodied play. Hearing-impaired sports are governed by the Malaysia Sports Federation for the Deaf.