

AUTOMOTIVE

Lexus owner distances itself from Olympics advertising

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The Tokyo Olympics will not be allowing spectators. Image credit: Bryan Tumer

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Japan's Toyota Corp., parent company of automaker Lexus, will not be airing any Olympics-related advertisements in its home country as public support for Tokyo 2020 continues declining amid rising COVID-19 infections.

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The Tokyo Summer Games, scheduled to officially begin this week after a year-long postponement, have been increasingly mired by controversy with the primary concern being the Olympics could become a dangerous super-spreader event. **Toyota** is one of Tokyo 2020's top sponsors, having signed a nearly \$1 billion deal in 2015 to become a worldwide Olympic sponsor.

Olympic sponsors

A Toyota executive confirmed to Japanese media that the automaker will not broadcast television commercials related to the Olympics in Japan.

"It is becoming an Olympics where various things are not understood," said Jun Nagata, chief communication officer at Toyota, in a statement.

Additionally, top executives at the automaker, including president and CEO Akio Toyoda, will no longer attend the opening ceremony on July 23. Mr. Toyoda served as a torchbearer as part of the Olympic Torch Relay on April 6.

Public opinion in Japan has turned against the Tokyo Olympics, where about 21 percent of the adult population is fully vaccinated.

A recent poll from **Kyodo News** showed that 31.2 percent of respondents believe the Games should be canceled. Another recent poll from **Asahi Shimbun** shows that 58 percent of Tokyo residents oppose holding the Olympics.



Toyota CEO Akio Toyoda at the torch relay. Image credit: Toyota

The Tokyo 2020 Olympics will take place without spectators, as infections increase at a dangerous pace that necessitates a state of emergency in the Japanese capital.

On July 8, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga confirmed Tokyo will be under a state of emergency, the city's fourth since the start of the pandemic, from July 12 to Aug. 22 amid surging cases. As a result, **Olympics organizers** are prohibiting spectators at the Games' Tokyo venues further restricting economic activity in a key luxury market ([see story](#)).

Toyota is still providing more than 3,300 vehicles, including Lexus models, to transport Olympic athletes and staffers during the event. In an effort to reduce carbon emissions, 90 percent of these will be electric vehicles.

The automotive group is also sponsoring about 200 athletes from more than 40 countries participating in the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Toyota is the first automaker to become a top-tier global Olympics sponsor, joining other worldwide partners include Swiss watchmaker Omega, vacation rental platform Airbnb and beverage manufacturer Coca-Cola.

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