

Taichung to appeal Games' cancelation

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Taichung Mayor Lin Chia-lung, second right, speaks to reporters in Taichung yesterday.

Photo: Ou Su-mei, Taipei Times

Taichung Mayor Lin Chia-lung (林佳龍) yesterday said that the city would soon submit a petition to the East Asian Olympic Committee (EAOC) over its decision to revoke Taichung's right to host the first East Asian Youth Games next year.

Expressing regret and dissatisfaction with the decision, Lin said that the city would submit the petition after consulting with the Sports Administration and the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee.

The EAOC on Wednesday nullified its host city contract with Taichung, one day after the committee voted to cancel next year's games at an extraordinary council meeting in Beijing.

The meeting was called by the representative from China, which is unhappy about a proposed referendum in Taiwan that seeks to have the nation take part in international sporting events, including the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, under the name "Taiwan" instead of "Chinese Taipei," which has been used and authorized by the International Olympic Committee since 1981.

Taichung is to base its appeal of the EAOC's decision on four arguments, Lin said.

First, the EAOC's decision to cancel the Taichung games violates the spirit of the Olympic charter to promote sporting events in East Asia, he said.

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Second, Taichung was not informed either before or after Tuesday's meeting in Beijing, and the city has no knowledge of which EAOE regulations it has breached, he said.

Over the past three years, the city has complied with its contract with the committee and has followed its rules in preparation for the event, he said.

Third, as Taichung officials were not present at the Beijing meeting, they had no chance to explain or answer relevant questions, he said.

Fourth, Taichung received notification from the EAOE on Wednesday about the cancelation of the games, but the committee provided no concrete reasons, which contravenes Section 24 stipulated of their contract, he said.

"We are not fully respected as a signing party," Lin said.

Taichung's objection has gained support and encouragement from Taiwanese based on the belief that politics should not interfere with sports, Lin said.

"We will side with the athletes and defend their rights in line with the Olympic spirit," he said, adding that Taichung would seek support from other EAOE members after submitting the petition.

The East Asian Youth Games, originally set to take place in Taichung in August next year, were expected to draw more than 2,000 athletes aged 14 to 18 from nine countries and territories.

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