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ROAD TO TOKYO: HOW SEHEE KIM (KOR) SEIZED HER MOMENT



The 2019 Asian Championships was a big deal. It wasn't just the usual continental supremacy at stake, but a once-in-a-lifetime chance for athletes to earn the right to compete in an Olympic Games in Asia.

And in Wuhan (CHN), just a few months before the city became infamous as the origin of a global pandemic, Kim Sehee of Korea seized the moment better than anyone else.

Aged just 23 and ranked lower than her more established team-mate and namesake, Sunwoo Kim, a fine performance by Kim Sehee (KOR) enabled her to win gold and stake her claim to represent her country on the other side of the Korea Strait in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

In the latest Road to Tokyo interview, Kim Sehee (KOR) talks about her sources of motivations and inspiration and the sleepless nights she has endured during the turbulent journey to her debut Olympics.



Q: How did it feel in 2019 when you won gold at the Asia/Oceania Championships and secured a qualification place for the Tokyo Olympics?

A: Actually I couldn't sleep that night. Setting up my goal for Olympic qualification gave me a lot of pressure, so I changed my goal and focused on getting the gold medal. I tried not to think about the Olympics, but to focus on the competition.

At the end of the competition I took gold but I didn't feel anything at that moment, I was just feeling great like after other competitions. Soon I realised that I got a ticket for the Olympics and I can't explain that feeling I felt.

Q: Did you watch the last Olympic Games (Rio 2016)? What are your memories?

A: I just supported the Korean athletes because I didn't think of myself as an Olympic player at that time. Just had a dream in my mind that I would be at that place one day.

Q: If selected to compete for Korea at Tokyo 2020 (in 2021), what difference will it make to have the Games close to home?

A: Best thing is not to suffer from jet lag. Every time I go to international competition, the hardest part is overcoming jet lag. Also the good news is my families or my friends in Korea don't have to watch my competition late at night.



Q: What do you think about the Olympics being postponed until 2021?

A: At the first time I heard that news, it felt complicated. Soon my body and mind came loose. Then I thought it can be a chance to prepare more and I changed my mindset that I have one more year.

Q: How have you been keeping up your training, and your mental health, during the Coronavirus crisis? A: Training normally as before was not possible, so I tried to train at home and to control my mind thinking positively. Most importantly, I tried to train everyday not to lose feeling.

Q: What has been the most challenging part?

A: The most challenging part is that I can't train normally. I think training every day is very important to keep my performance levels high but without training, I can't maintain it.

Q: And what positive things have you seen?

A: I don't think I'm a great athlete, so I can complement my body and skills in one year. It is necessary so I told myself it's a chance!

Q: When, and why, did you take up the Modern Pentathlon?

A: At first, I was swimming at high school. And one pentathlon coach saw me while I was running during the physical test, then he asked me to change to Modern Pentathlon. I did because it looked wonderful with five different events.



Q: What motivates you in training?

A: Every time I train, I fight against myself. It motivates me to overcome my limit. And I try to do that in competitions. Consequently, I think it helps a lot and I feel I'm getting better and better every moment.

Q: Describe yourself as an athlete in three words.

A: Sincerity, hard worker, roly poly.

Q: Who are your role models in sport, and in life?

A: Figure skating athlete, Yuna Kim. Her passion and endeavour to reach the top of the world motivate me.

Q: What is your ultimate ambition in Modern Pentathlon?

A: At first, to be remembered as a hard worker was my goal. But now I want to be a historical athlete in Modern Pentathlon as a great and hard-working athlete.

