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ROAD TO TOKYO: ALEXANDER LIFANOV (RUS) FEELS READY TO CONVERT YOUTH POTENTIAL



No winner of a Modern Pentathlon medal at the Youth Olympic Games has yet achieved the same feat at the Olympic Games, but it would surprise few observers if the teenager who won gold in Nanjing in 2014 converted his potential in that way.

Alexander Lifanov has the pedigree, the support and, on the evidence of his career to date, the mentality to succeed at the highest level like so many male Russian athletes have before him.

Still only 24, could the extra year provided by the postponement of Tokyo 2020 help his cause? Lifanov (RUS) proved his calibre in October 2019 when he won gold at the CISM Military Games in Wuhan (CHN). A year earlier, he finished 5th in the UIPM Pentathlon World Cup Final in Astana (KAZ). This came on the back of a strong youth and junior career that saw him become the second male to achieve the ultimate accolade for a teenage pentathlete.

That triumph in Nanjing (CHN) six years ago has been a powerful source of motivation to the man from Samara, as he tells us in the latest Road to Tokyo interview.



Q: How did it feel in 2019 when you earned a qualification place for the Tokyo Olympics at the European Championships?

A: I was really happy because it was my dream after the Youth Olympic Games. I had a chance to compete in Rio, but had problems with an allergy and missed the qualification period. Of course, I was the happiest man at that moment.

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

A: in 2016 I had National Junior Championship on the day of the Olympics and could only watch the Laser Run. I was happy for Aleksandr and wrote him a message of congratulations.

Q: What will it mean to you to be selected to compete for Russia at Tokyo 2020 (in 2021)?

A: It's an honour to compete for your country, everybody dreams of that chance.



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

A: I think for me it can be an opportunity to prepare better.

Q: How have you been keeping up your training and your mental health during the Coronavirus crisis?

A: I tried, but lockdown was everywhere and I could only run in the forest and do home training.

Q: What positive things have you seen?

A: I am from Samara and all trainings camps are in Moscow, so of course I was happy to be with my family.



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

A: I started swimming because I was a sick boy and after some years I moved into Pentathlon because my swimming pool was a training venue for pentathletes.

Q: What motivates you in training?

A: My motivation is love for Pentathlon. I like sport because you see that every day you progress in something, and I couldn't sit at home.



Q: Describe yourself as an athlete in three words.

A: Purposeful, persistent, attentive.

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

A: Roger Federer in sport; my father in life.

Q: What is your ultimate ambition in Modern Pentathlon?

A: A medal at the Olympics.

