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VALENTINE'S DAY SPECIAL: THE UIPM COUPLES WHO LOVE THE SPORT THEY SHARE

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It's Valentine's Day and we asked a couple who compete alongside one another in UIPM sports to tell us how they benefit from being in a relationship with a fellow athlete.

Amro El Geziry and Isabella Isaksen are a married couple who competed together at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games.

Here they tell their stories of love and commitment on one of the world's most gruelling sporting circuits.

AMRO EI GEZIRY

What is the best thing about having an athlete as your spouse?

A: The best thing about having Isabella as my spouse and fellow athlete is that we are always together. We spend most of our days together doing something we both love. We also get to share the same dreams and interests.

What are your favourite things to do together when you are not training or competing?

A: When we are not training or competing we love to be outdoors. We love to go hiking and take picnics on rivers. We love to go new places and go to the beach.

What do you like to eat?

A: We love to eat local organic food, but we also like to cook our meals - by that I mean Isabella cooks for us (I'm so bad at cooking I'm not allowed in the kitchen unless it's just eggs and toast or to clean the dishes). We actually love all kinds of food, especially American, Italian or Asian. Isabella's favorite breakfast meal is Egyptian falafel and egg sandwich.

Do you attend cultural or sporting events?

A: We love to go to concerts. Whenever we are travelling we like to go and explore the culture and go to different places. Seeing new places is great but we also like to go home (Arkansas, Usa or Egypt) to connect with family.

Is it easier to achieve your sporting goals because your partner is working towards the same goals?

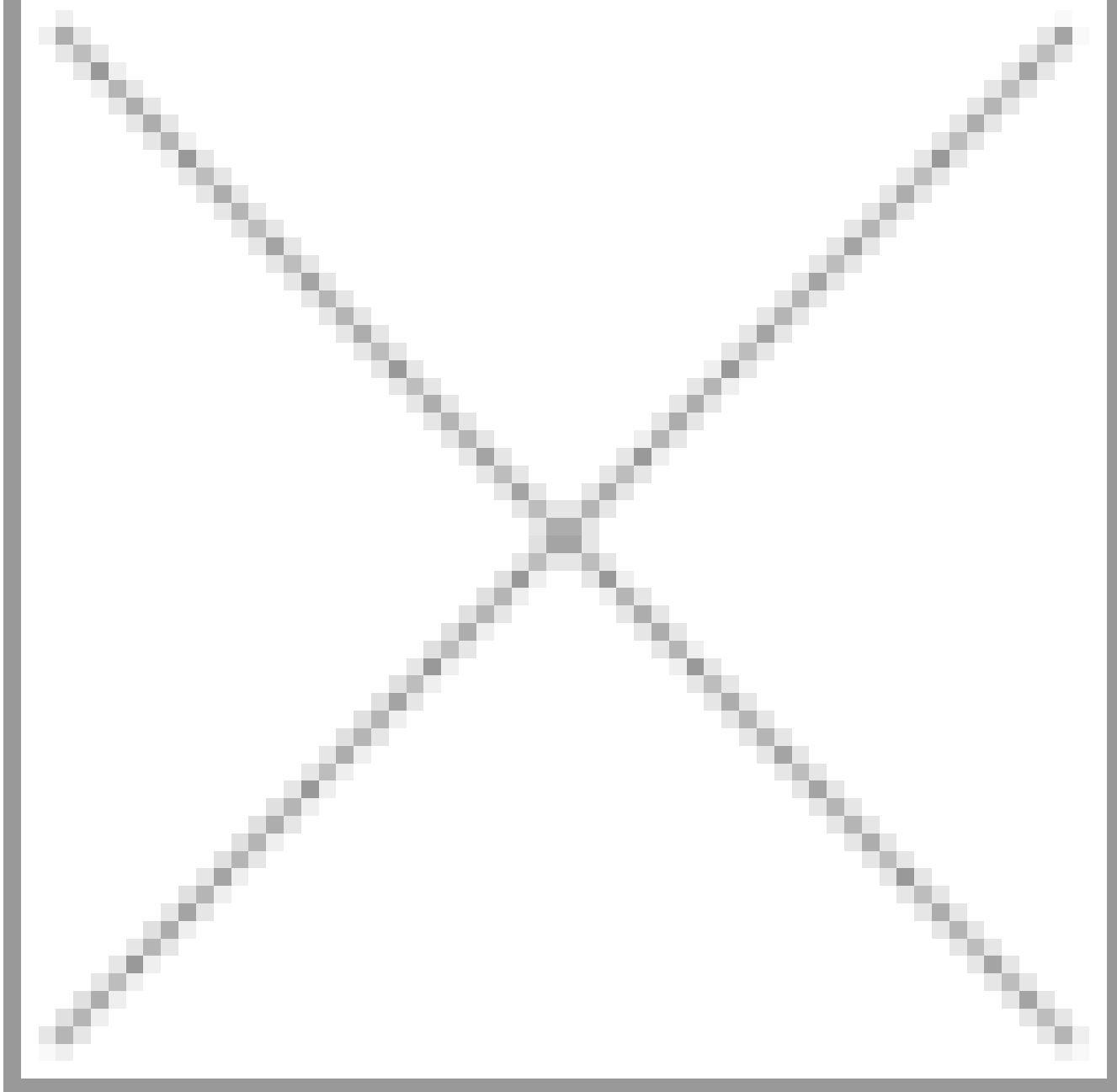
A: I think it's easier to achieve my goals having Isabella doing the same thing because of the support and the understanding. We go through the same thing emotionally, mentally and physically. She also knows me very well on the personal side so she always knows how to help me and support me when I need it. Also, watching her train and compete makes me learn a lot and give me another perspective. She is my spouse, best friend, training partner and life coach.

What is the sweetest thing your partner has done for you before or after a competition?

A: I think the sweetest thing is just having her always by my side when I compete. How she is always there for me whether it's a good or bad day. How supportive and understanding she is.

Do you think your shared interest in elite sport makes you a stronger couple?

A: "I think sport definitely strengthens our relationship, because we see each other in all kind of conditions, so we get to understand each other more. Watch each other grow in life and sport. Be there for each other in the ups and downs."



ISABELLA ISAKSEN

How often do you think about your spouse when you are training and competing?

I: I think about Amro a lot during my training, although not so much that I lose my focus on what I'm doing. I think it helps me a lot that we are both athletes, because Amro has been doing this longer than me, so I got to learn from him.

How much does it help you achieve your sporting goals to know that your partner has the same goals?

I: I watch how hard he trains and how dedicated he is and I think that made me a better athlete. At the end of the day we go home and we talk about how we felt during practice and I think sharing our experiences and feelings make us stronger and better.

What's the sweetest thing your partner has ever done for you before or after a competition?

I: I always compete one day before Amro and no matter how hard or important the competition he

is always there for me, cheering and supporting me, even though he could be resting. I think that's so sweet.

Do you think your common interest in elite sport makes you a stronger couple?

I: I think we push each other to be the best we can. It's more motivating when you try to achieve your dreams with the person you love. I think that's how we both felt in Rio. It was awesome to qualify but it was even better because we did it together.

We mostly do everything together. We train together every day, we share the same lane in the pool, we run together. We also go to most of the competitions together. We always travel together.

What would be the perfect day for you as a sporting couple?

“A perfect day for us is doing some outdoor activities together, cooking our own food while listening to music. Meeting friends or watching a movie.”