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ROAD TO TOKYO: SHUAI LUO (CHN) STAYS POSITIVE ON LONG JOURNEY TO DREAM DESTINATION

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Shuai Luo, 23, is part of a new wave of pentathlon talent coming out of China and making an impact not just at continental but also world level.

Luo (CHN) enjoyed a breakthrough win at the 2017 Asia/Oceania Championships in Gotemba (JPN) and then won bronze at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta (INA).

His progress could be charted by a series of top-20 finishes on the UIPM Pentathlon World Cup circuit, culminating in the highlight of his career to date: a silver medal at the Asia/Oceania Championships and Olympic Qualifier in Wuhan (CHN) in November 2019.

Luo (CHN) does not have to look far for inspiration when contemplating the Olympic Games. His coach is Zhongrong Cao, who became China's first Olympic medallist in Modern Pentathlon when he claimed silver at the London 2012 Games.

In the latest Road to Tokyo interview, Luo (CHN) discusses the difficulties in staying fit and

focused on the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games now that it has been postponed to 2021, reveals his sporting idol and tells us why he fell in love with Modern Pentathlon.

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

A: I feel great, I am very happy to have the opportunity to participate in the Olympics, it's like a dream come true.

Q: Can you remember watching the last Olympic Games in Rio in 2016? What were you thinking?

A: I was only 19 years old at that time and just became a rookie pentathlete. At that time, the Olympic Games were still far away from me and I was not very impressed.

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

A: The postponement of the Olympic Games has given me more time to prepare. I also feel a little anxious about the extension. But I think it's the same for all athletes, we all have a longer preparation period.

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Q: How have you been continuing to train during the Coronavirus crisis?

A: The pandemic made our training difficult. When the pandemic first started, we had to stay in our rooms for three months. However, the pandemic situation in China is now relatively well controlled. We are also allowed to gradually resume training in a closed environment. However, due to site restrictions, equestrian training has been greatly affected.

Q: What has been the most challenging part of the pandemic?

A: When I first stayed in the room, I couldn't train normally and my weight started to increase. Obviously this has had a great impact on my recovery training, and there are also hidden dangers of injury. The lack of competition for a long time also poses a huge challenge to my concentration in training.

Q: And what positive things have you seen?

A: The pandemic is gradually being brought under control worldwide, and our lives are gradually returning to normal. I think this is the most positive aspect.

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

A: In 2014, I started training for part of the Modern Pentathlon. I was instantly attracted by the charm of this sport.

Q: What motivates you in training?

A: Because I love this sport very much, training can improve my performance and enable me to achieve better results in competitions, which makes me feel happy.

Q: Describe yourself as an athlete in three words.

A: Confident, brave, positive.

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

A: LeBron James is my role model. His desire for victory, his perseverance and self-discipline in life are all worth learning.

Q: What is your ultimate ambition in Modern Pentathlon?

A: There is no doubt that winning the Olympic gold medal is my ultimate ambition. I am still young and I will continue to work towards this goal step by step.