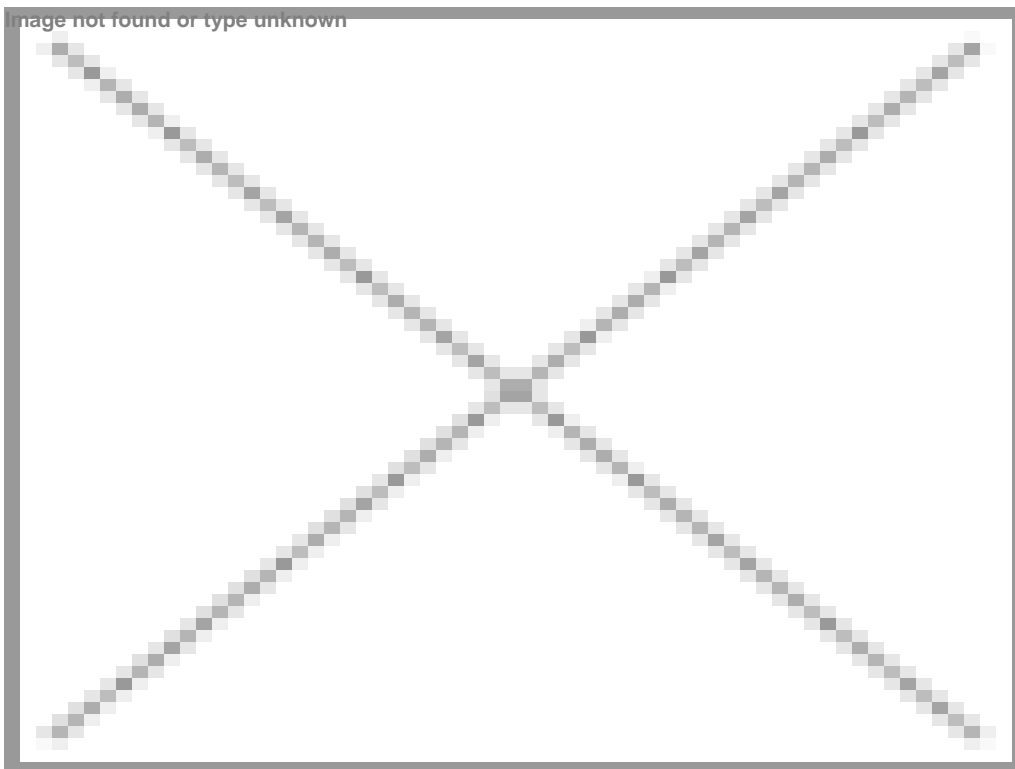


23 FEB 2021

ROAD TO TOKYO: LUKASZ GUTKOWSKI (POL) HUNGRY FOR SUCCESS AS HE HEADS TO DEBUT OLYMPIC GAMES



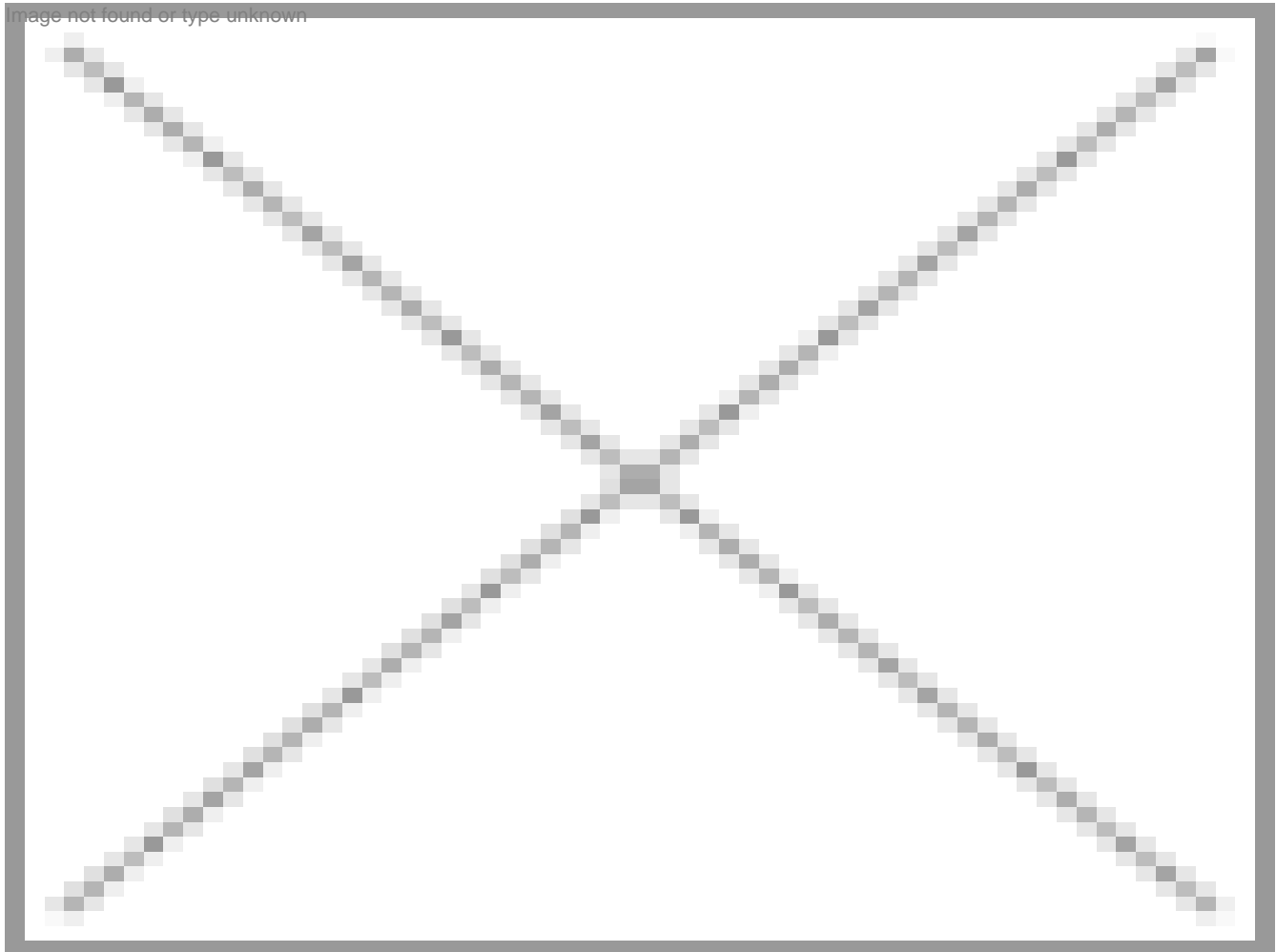
A steady curve of progression has led an exciting young talent to the Olympic Games.

At 22, after a wide array of under-age success but only one top-10 finish at the highest level, Lukasz Gutkowski of Poland might have felt a little too green for the world's grandest sporting event. In 2021 he will be 23, thanks to the postponement of Tokyo 2020 – one year older and one year wiser.

Gutkowski (POL) has firmly established himself as one of the world's leading junior pentathletes. And it was after winning bronze at the UIPM 2019 Pentathlon Junior World Championships in the familiar venue of Drzonkow (POL) that he gained the confidence he needed to have a real shot at Olympic qualification.

In Bath (GBR) one month later, he kept pace with many of the best in the business at the European Championships and did enough to secure his country a quota place at the Tokyo Games.

In the latest Road to Tokyo interview, the youngster talks about the simple philosophies that drive his athleticism: train hard, eat well and enjoy every moment of what you are doing.



Q: How did it feel in 2019 when you finished 6th at the European Championships and earned Poland a qualification place for the Tokyo Olympics?

A: It was amazing. To be honest, I couldn't believe it. During the competitions I was so determined. I owe this result to mental strength. I was prepared very well and did my best. Even now when I'm thinking about the qualification place for the Tokyo, it generates a lot of emotion.

Q: Did you watch the Rio 2016 Olympic Games on TV? What were you thinking at that time?

A: Yes, of course I did. When in 2016 I watched the Olympics, I thought it was a long path in front of me. Now I'm preparing for the next Olympic Games, and this is amazing.

Q: What would it mean for you to be selected to compete for Poland at Tokyo 2020 in 2021?

A: I am proud of that. It's also an amazing opportunity to be a part of something big. Participating in a sports event like the Olympic Games is a distinction.

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Q: What did you think when you heard the Olympics was postponed until 2021?

A: I was expecting this. Many athletes couldn't train during the lockdown so it was the only right decision.

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

A: The first period I spent on keeping up my physical activity, then when the first competition appeared in the calendar I decided to prepare by trying new training methods that could help with my preparations in 2021.

Q: What has been the most challenging part?

A: I didn't have problem with motivation. You know, an aim like the Olympics gives a lot of power. But the worst was to find places for training.

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Q: And what positive things have you seen?

A: I'm a young athlete so one year more is a lot of for me. And also as I mentioned above, I had the opportunity to try new training that has given me a better feeling of my body, for sure.

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

A: I was at school with a swimming profile. Honestly, I wasn't very good at swimming. In most competitions I was at the bottom of the scoreboard. Finally I took part in combination of swimming and running. After swimming as usual my position wasn't good but after the run I jumped up and I liked it.

The next step was shooting, it turned out that I'm good and my position was higher. At this time the only path was Modern Pentathlon.

Q: What motivates you in training?

A: I really like what I'm doing. I also like to get tired. So the best training is one that is hard. What's more, I love to eat tasty things so more training = more treats after it. Simple equation!

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Q: Describe yourself as an athlete in three words.

A: Positive-thinking, patient and... always hungry.

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

A: In sport I could write many names but if I have to pick one, it will be my older brother; in life my family and friends.

Q: What is your ultimate ambition in Modern Pentathlon?

A: I will not speak, I will do!

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