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ROAD TO TOKYO: PAVEL ILYASHENKO (KAZ) AIMS TO BENEFIT FROM EXTRA YEAR OF PREPARATION



Fifteen years after his early involvement in UIPM Sports as a youth athlete, Pavel Ilyashenko of Kazakhstan is feeling primed for a peak performance at the Olympic Games.

The accumulation of experience is never-ending, and Ilyashenko (KAZ) not only has two Olympic Games (London 2012 and Rio 2016) and an impressive track record – world junior silver in 2011, Asian champion in 2013, bronze in the UIPM 2015 Pentathlon World Cup Final and UIPM 2018 Pentathlon World Cup Cairo – in his favour.

He also has an extra year to prepare, because of the postponement of Tokyo 2020 to 2021, having already secured a quota qualification place for his country on account of finishing 4th at the 2019 Asia/Oceania Championships and Olympic Qualifier.

In this interview the Russia-born athlete talks about the unexpected change of pace brought about by the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic and how he has refused to let it interfere with his motivation.



Q: How did it feel in 2019 when you finished 4th at the Asia/Oceania Championships and secured a qualification place for the Tokyo Olympics?

A: I was very happy, it was the best day of 2019.

Q: If selected to represent Kazakhstan at Tokyo 2020 (in 2021), it will be your third Olympic Games. Will you do anything differently this time?

A: I have learnt a lot of new things.

Q: How do you feel when you think back to London 2012 and Rio 2016?

A: I feel the bitterness of defeat, I try not to recall it.



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

A: I believe this is good news for me. I have time to improve some of the disciplines I am not good at.

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

A: I worked out (practised, exercised) at home, and trained online with my coach.

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

A: The hardest thing was to get used to new rules and norms in life and, of course, being unable to leave my home.



Q: And what positive things have you seen?

A: I was able to get busy with other things, not related to sports. There were other things to do outside of sports.

Q: Where did you grow up and what made you take up the Modern Pentathlon?

A: I grew up in Russia, in Ufa. My brother introduced me to Modern Pentathlon.

Q: What motivates you in training?

A: Winning motivates me.



Q: Describe yourself as an athlete in three words.

A: Calm, brave, hardy.

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

A: Andrejus Zadneprovskis

Q: What are your favourite disciplines in Modern Pentathlon?

A: Fencing, Riding, Laser Run.