



Fouaad Mirza says nothing will stop him from giving his best in Tokyo2020

New Delhi, June 2: Equestrian sport is a unique in that the horse and the rider as well as their coordination as all important. It is no surprise that Fouaad Mirza, who secured his qualification for the Tokyo Olympics, developed an affinity for horses at a very young age. He has a strong family connection with his father being a veterinarian specialising in horses.

“My father is a vet who specialises in horses and that’s how I was pretty much introduced to the sport, I grew up around horses and other animals and I was very fond of being outdoors. I never had a Gameboy or a Playstation. I was a kid who was outside, playing with the dogs, horses, cats,” Fouaad Mirza said. “From a very early age I have been watching Equestrian sport and also following it at the Olympics.”

Fouaad Mirza had won a quota for the Tokyo Olympics in 2019 itself, but the coronavirus pandemic and the cancellation of events globally meant that he could only complete the Minimum Eligibility Requirements for the Olympics last week. He managed to do that at Baborowko in Poland , finishing second on Seigneur Medicott and third with Dajara 4.

He said that while he is happy with both his horses, he will make a call of which one to finally compete on, as a rider is only allowed to enter one horse. He will make that decision at the end of June depending upon which horse is carrying more form.

Fouaad Mirza has become the first Indian since Imtiaz Anees in Sydney 2000 to qualify for the Olympics. He had been in a strong run of form for the past three years, after winning two medals at the Asian Games, including becoming the first Indian in 36 years to win an individual medal. In 2019, he was honoured with the Arjuna Award.

Despite being based out of Germany over the last few years, he expressed his concern about the situation in India and the fact that his family is based here, he is grateful for how supportive they’ve been towards him and his ambitions despite the fact that there have been numerous occasions when they’ve not been able to reach him.

“My friends and my parents have been very supportive of this journey. They try to keep me in the best frame of mind and that helps me focus. They will understand if there are days when I am not able to contact them, because they know how focused I am and how badly I want this. I am solely focused and concentrated on this goal of mine and this dream of mine and nothing will stop me mentally and physically till I achieve it,” he said.

Fouaad Mirza was recently inducted into the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) and has received Rs. 1.5 lakh as financial support. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has also supported the sport through the Annual Calendar for Competition and Training (ACTC) and provided support of Rs. 2.26 crore to the Equestrian Federation of India in the last two budgets.

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