

Press Release

Nataraj and Likith ready for World Championships after big gold medal haul at KIYG 2019

Pune, January 16: Srihari Nataraj is already assured of the star status at these Games, even though Khelo India Youth Games are still some days from being over. He had a 100 per cent record, winning gold in each of the seven events he took part in.

On an exciting final day's action, Srihari Nataraj, who was also the star at the 2018 Khelo India School Games, made merry in the U-21 boys' category winning two more gold medals, making it a stunning seven gold in all. Last year he won six gold medals at Khelo India School Games and this time he went one better.

Another Karnataka swimmer who caught the eye was Likith S.P. who ended his campaign at the KIYG 2019 with six medals, including five gold.

When asked about their friendship, the Karnataka boys, Likith and Srihari, mentioned that they enjoy spending time together and they always help each other improve as swimmers. Likith said, "I see great potential in Srihari and I am sure he will achieve big things in the time to come."

With the help of these two classy swimmers, Karnataka topped the medal tally as the swimming competition ended after an eventful six days here at the Balewadi Sports Complex in Pune.

Speaking about his exploits, Srihari said, "It feels normal now, to be honest. I just wanted to enjoy myself to the fullest. I did not have expectations with regards to my timings at this tournament and I just focused on bagging the gold medals."

The 18-year old was thankful to his coach as well and mentioned how having the same coach for a long time has helped him as they now understand each other very well.

Having already represented India at the Youth Olympics and the Asian Games in 2018, Srihari will now turn his focus towards the World Championship in South Korea later this year as he hopes to bring laurels to the country. "I have a few important exams to finish now, after which I will begin my preparations for the World Championship," added Srihari.

While Nataraj has been a star for some time, the KIYG saw the emergence of another star, also from Karnataka and it was Likith, a friend of the former.

Likith, who has been training under a new coach for the last month, mentioned that his journey as a swimmer has been filled with ups and downs but he is grateful with regards to where he is now. "I see a lot of potential for the future and I am positive that all the changes that have been happening around me, personally, as well as with regards to my coaching team, will bring about results in the time to come," added Likith.

Despite having trained for just three weeks prior to the KIYG, Likith was at his very best at the games and he hopes to continue what has been a great start to the year.

Likith, like his friend Nataraj, will now look forward to the World Championship in July and will begin his preparation at the earliest.

Likith also mentioned how the Khelo India Youth Games is a great platform for young athletes. He added, "I would like to thank the Government for introducing these Games and I am impressed with the way the tournament has been organized as it has given all the athletes the opportunity of experiencing everything that takes place at a major tournament. It will certainly help when we go for big tournaments in the future."