

Press Release

Artistic Gymnastic winner Rafey follows in brother Anas' footsteps

Pune, Jan 9: Mohammed Rafey followed in the footsteps of his elder brother Mohammed Anas to emerge as a champion in Boys Under-17 Artistic gymnastics on Tuesday at the Khelo India Youth Games. It was the first success of the Games for Uttar Pradesh, and in fact the first medal to be decided at these Games.

Sport is a big test of mental strength and undying hope in the toughest of situations. Such spirit is what separates the men from the boys and it is brightly evident in the way young Rafey conducts himself inside as well as outside the gymnastics arena.

Speaking after clinching the first gold medal of KIYG 2019, Rafey said, "It feels great that the hard work paid off. I was scared after a nervous start, but I kept pushing myself with the end goal in mind."

Rafey credited a major part of his success to his coaching team, family, and fellow gymnast and brother Mohammed Anas who was one of the stars at the Khelo India School Games 2018. "The support from our family has been very vital for us, and coach Raja Babu Sir always backs us to excel. Anas has always motivated me and I can't thank him enough for that."

Rafey, 15, is just under two years younger than his brother Anas, who will now compete in the U-21 section.

The Allahabad siblings share a healthy rivalry but are always there to support each other. "There is a strong sense of competition among us, and at the same time we help each other a lot as we both understand the other's game very well," says Rafey.

After being on the verge of quitting gymnastics at a very early age back in 2010, Rafey grew from strength to strength as he realized that gymnastics was his true passion. He then became a national champion in 2012 after which he had a great run of form, bagging more national medals in the years to come."

Early success can be distracting, but young Rafey always has the bigger picture in mind. "I am happy for the first gold, but I also have the apparatus finals to focus on now to try and get more medals for my team," said Rafey talking about what's next for him. "My coach always does his best to help keep me focused on my game and achieve bigger things."

There's no doubt about the fact that the Uttar Pradesh gymnast is one of the finest talents in India who now has his sights set on representing the country. "I will try to consistently add to my skill set. Representing India at the 2022 Commonwealth Games is something I aim to achieve next and I will give it my best shot," says the young man who seems ready to take the next step.