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Article :

Paralympic World's 'Two-way Player' Momoka Muraoka Says She 'Will Not Give Up'

Directions: Read the following article aloud.

Momoka Muraoka is an alpine skiing gold medalist at the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Paralympic Games and a qualified competitor for the Tokyo Game's women's short distance wheelchair track and field. Yet that is not enough for her. Muraoka (a Global Team Toyota Athlete) is also eyeing the 2022 Beijing Winter Paralympics.

During a short period of time she tackled the difficult challenges of going back and forth between racing in track and field and skiing. Firmly focused as her back-to-back participation in the Summer and Winter Games approaches, she says, "I want to show my best performances. I hope as many people as possible will become interested."

She didn't start to seriously engage in track and field sports until the spring of 2019. For Muraoka, who says her world was expanded through sports, a Paralympics Games held in her native country, where she will receive a great amount of support from the Japanese people, was the decisive attraction. In July, just two months after she started practicing the sport, she broke the then-Japanese record in the women's 100-meter track race (wheelchair T54 class). Quickly immersing in this new world, Muraoka says, "It felt wonderful to be going at top speed."

However, the challenge to becoming a "two-way player" was not without difficulties. Due to the Tokyo Paralympics being delayed for a year, the Beijing Winter Paralympics will be held only six months after the Tokyo Games have ended. Because of this, especially during the last few months, Muraoka has had to go back and forth between track and field and skiing competitions so that she could qualify to compete in both events. With her physical and mental condition both strained, she confesses, "More than once, I almost lost hope."

When Muraoka was 4 years old, she became paralyzed in the lower half of her body due to an illness and lost her ability to walk. Thus, her life in a wheelchair began. After that she became reclusive.

But with her father Hideki's strong encouragement and active efforts to get her out, eventually Muraoka began trying various wheelchair sports. Then her view of the world changed drastically as she found a goal in life, and the longing to become a Paralympian.

"Through sports, I learned to accept myself," says Muraoka.

Source: Paralympic World's 'Two-way Player' Momoka Muraoka Says She 'Will Not Give Up'
<https://japan-forward.com/paralympic-worlds-two-way-player-momoka-muraoka-says-she-will-not-give-up/>

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Article :

Paralympic World's 'Two-way Player' Momoka Muraoka Says She 'Will Not Give Up'

Directions: Read the following article aloud.

When she almost lost hope amid the challenges she faced as a “two-way player,” it was her ski and track friends who became her support system. Looking back on the hard times, Muraoka says her colleagues encouraged her over and over again, telling her, “you’ll be alright.” Those words gave her confidence, she explains, and the strong motivation to want to live up to her friends’ expectations.

Muraoka was also inspired by Ayumu Hirano (sponsored by IFing), a consecutive two-time silver medalist for snowboarding in the Winter Olympics who just competed in men’s park skateboarding at the Tokyo Games. “He’s just purely amazing. I know how hard it is to balance summer and winter competitions, so it’s encouraging for me that there is an Olympic athlete who is challenging the same ordeal. It gives me the strength to say, ‘I won’t give up!’”

In May, Muraoka competed in the 2021 World Para Athletics Grand Prix in Switzerland and felt firsthand the speed of the world’s best competitors. Her goal at the Tokyo Games is to make it to the championship’s finals. Then she will aim for Beijing.

“With everyone’s support still remaining in my heart, I think I will be able to make the shift from summer to winter,” says the 24-year-old. Believing in the power of sports that has changed her, Muraoka will charge forward to both big Games.

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2 Key phrases and vocabulary

Directions: First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. back-to back 立て続けの、相次ぐ、連続した、背中合わせの

He won two golf tournaments back-to-back.

2. due to ～が原因で、～のせいで、～のおかげで

Our company's financial losses were due to poor management.

3. strained 張り詰めた、緊張した、ピリピリとした、(ロープや筋肉などが)ピンと張って緊張した

Relations between the two countries are strained.

4. almost (動詞の前に置いて)あと少しで～するところ・～しそうになる、(状態や進行度などが)ほぼ～に近い、九分通り

I almost failed the exam but I was lucky enough to pass it.

5. make it to ～にたどり着く、～に参加する、～に間に合う

We made it to the concert a two minutes before it started.

3 Questions

Directions: Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. When did Momoka Muraoka start track and field sports aiming to compete at Tokyo 2020 Paralympics?

2. Who inspired her as a two-way skateboarding/snowboarding player?

3. Have you watched any Paralympic games or heard any interesting stories about it?

4. What do you think is the most difficult thing to be a two-way player?

4

日本語関連記事：

パラ界の「二刀流」、村岡桃佳「負けないぞ」 東京から北京へ架け橋に

今夏の東京から冬の北京へ。アルペンスキーの2018年平昌冬季パラリンピック金メダリストで、東京大会では車いす陸上の女子短距離代表に内定している村岡桃佳(トヨタ自動車)は、22年北京冬季パラも見据えて、短期間で陸上とスキーの両競技を行き来するハードな挑戦に打ち込んできた。いよいよ迫る夏冬連続出場へ向け、「ベストパフォーマンスを見せたい。少しでも多くの人に興味を持ってもらえれば」と力を込める。

本格的に陸上を始めたのは19年春。スポーツで自分の世界を広げてきたという村岡にとって、多くの国民の声援を受ける「自国開催」のパラは、どんなものよりも魅力的に映った。練習し始めてからわずか2カ月後の7月、女子100メートル(車いすT54)で当時の日本記録を更新。「トップスピードに乗ると気持ちいい」と、すぐに新たな世界にのめり込んだ。

とはいえ「二刀流」への挑戦は、一筋縄ではいかなかった。東京パラが1年延期となった影響で、東京大会の閉幕から約半年後に北京冬季パラを迎えることに。そのため、特にここ数カ月は両競技の出場権を獲得するため、陸上とスキーの大会を行き来した。体力面と精神面がなかなかかみ合わず、「心が何度も折れそうになった」と打ち明ける。

4歳の時に病気の影響で下半身にまひが出て歩けなくなり、車いすでの生活となった。以来、「殻に閉じ籠もっていた」という村岡を、父の秀樹さんが連れ出し、さまざまな車いす競技に挑戦するようになった。目標ができ、パラリンピアンに憧れ、がらりと目の前の景色が変わった。「(スポーツで)自分自身を認められるようになった」という。

そして「二刀流」で心が折れそうになったとき、支えとなったのは、スキーの仲間であり陸上の仲間だった。幾度となく「桃佳なら大丈夫」と声をかけられ、「自分の中で自信が持てたし、その言葉に応えたいという気持ちが強くなった」と振り返る。

スノーボードの冬季五輪2大会連続銀メダリストで、スケートボードの東京五輪代表に決まった平野歩夢(イフイング)からも刺激を受けた。「純粹にすごい。夏と冬を両立させる大変さは私も感じているので、五輪選手でも挑戦されている方がいることは私の励みにもなる。『私も負けないぞ』って」

5月にはスイスで陸上の国際大会に出場し、世界の強豪のスピードを肌で感じた。東京大会での目標は決勝進出。そして北京へ。「みなさんの応援して下さる気持ちも残ったまま、夏から冬にシフトできるのでは」と24歳。自分自身を変えてくれたスポーツ、その力を信じて大舞台へ突き進む。

出典：パラ界の「二刀流」、村岡桃佳「負けないぞ」 東京から北京へ架け橋に

<https://japan-forward.com/japanese/%e3%83%91%e3%83%a9%e7%95%8c%e3%81%ae%e3%80%9d%e4%ba%8c%e5%88%80%e6%b5%81%e3%80%9f%e6%9d%91%e5%b2%a1%e6%a1%83%e4%bd%b3%e3%80%8c%e8%b2%a0%e3%81%91%e3%81%aa%e3%81%84%e3%81%9e%e3%80%8d/>