

Japan's Figure Skating Gold Pair Open Up on Incredible Comeback

ミラノ・コルティナ冬季五輪の舞台で注目を集めるフィギュアスケートの「りくりゅう」ペア。氷上で息を合わせる二人の演技は、多くの観客を魅了しています。その一瞬の美しさの裏には、長い時間をかけて築かれてきた信頼と積み重ねがあります。二人で挑む競技では、どのような協力や覚悟が求められるのでしょうか。あなたは人と力を合わせることの難しさや強さをどう考えますか。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

Riku Miura and Ryuichi Kihara, who won Japan's first-ever Olympic gold medal in pairs figure skating at the 2026 Milan Cortina Winter Olympics, held a press conference on February 25 at the Japan National Press Club in Tokyo.

Affectionately known in Japan as "Rikuryu," the pair looked back on their sensational comeback after placing fifth in the short program. Kihara **expressed** his gratitude to Miura, saying, "She helped me **regain** a strong state of mind."

After fumbling a lift element in the short program, Kihara admitted that "a comeback seemed almost impossible." Even on the morning of the free skate the next day, he could not stop crying. What lifted his spirits was a message Miura had written on the container of the stick-on moxibustion patches they share: "We've got this."

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1. Article

Encouraged by those words, Kihara washed his face in the restroom, told Miura, "I'm OK now," and headed into the free skate. There, the duo delivered a stunning performance that earned a world-record pairs score of 158.13 points, **securing** the gold medal.

Reflecting on the moment, Kihara said, "This shows the bond we've built over seven years." Miura nodded in agreement and added, "What matters most is how you reset and move forward. That mistake helped us grow tremendously."

They also said they were surprised by the warm welcome they received at the airport upon returning to Japan. "I couldn't believe it was real," Kihara said. "If Urashima Taro existed, this might be how he felt." (Urashima Taro is a folktale hero who returns home after visiting an undersea palace, only to find many years have passed.)

As for whether they will aim for the next Olympics four years from now, both said the decision remains undecided. Miura was firm, however: "When Kihara retires, I'll retire too. I would never continue skating with a different partner." Looking ahead, the pair said they hope to become coaches and help strengthen pairs skating in Japan.

When asked about the nature of their relationship, Kihara replied, "Comrades in battle?" Miura followed with, "It goes beyond that — more like family."

The two then smiled and said in unison, "We'll leave that to your imagination," bringing the press conference to a close.



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2. Key phrases and vocabulary

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

1. **expressed** 表明する

Diane **expressed** her opinion clearly during the town hall meeting.

2. **regain** 取り戻す

After months of rest, Yuki worked hard to **regain** her strength and return to work.

3. **encourage** 励ます

Encouraged by her teacher's kind words, Hiroko decided to try the difficult exam again.

4. **secure** 確保する

Helena worked two part-time jobs, **securing** enough money to pay her rent.

5. **reflect** 振り返る

Reflecting on his childhood, Joe realized how much his parents had supported him.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What place did they finish in after the short program?
2. What message did Miura write that helped Kihara before the free skate?
3. What do they hope to do in the future to help pairs skating in Japan?
4. Do you think athletes should always stay with the same partner? Why or why not?
5. How can mistakes help people grow stronger in sports or in your own life?

4. 日本初の金メダルペア、奇跡の逆転劇を語る

ミラノ・コルティナ冬季五輪のフィギュアスケートペアで日本勢初の金メダルに輝いた「りくりゅう」こと三浦璃来（りく）、木原龍一組（木下グループ）が2月25日、東京・内幸町の日本記者クラブで会見。ショートプログラム（SP）5位からの大逆転を振り返った木原は「もう一度、強い気持ちに戻らせてくれた」と三浦への感謝を口にした。

SPで大技のリフトに失敗した木原は「逆転は厳しい」と一夜明けたフリー当日も朝から涙が止まらなかったが、共用する貼るタイプの「お灸」の容器に三浦が記した「私たちなら大丈夫」の文字を見て奮起。トイレで顔を洗い、三浦に「もう大丈夫」と告げて臨んだフリーで世界歴代最高の158・13点をマークして頂点をつかんだ。

木原は「これが7年間積み上げてきた絆」と振り返り、三浦は「どう切り替えて臨むかが一番大切。ミスが私たちを大きく成長させてくれた」とうなずいた。

帰国時の空港での大歓迎には驚いたそうで「現実なのかな、と。浦島太郎さんがいたら、こういう気持ちなのかな」と木原。

4年後の次回五輪を目指すかはともに未定だといい、三浦は「木原選手が引退するときは私も引退する。違う人と組んで続けることは絶対はない」と断言。将来的には国内でのペア強化へ、ともに指導者を目指すという。

強い信頼で結ばれた2人の関係を尋ねる問いには木原が「戦友?」、三浦が「それを超えている。家族みたい」と応じた後、そろって「ご想像にお任せします」と笑顔で話し、会見を締めくくった。