

Olympic bronze medallist Sakshi Malik speaks at E-Pathshala, SAI's online training programme, says online training is need of the hour

New Delhi, June 17: There was a special guest at the wrestling session of

E-Pathshala, the Athlete and Coach Education Programme being conducted by the Sports Authority of India in association with the Wrestling Federation of India.

Young wrestlers in the junior and sub-junior category, who are part of this online training, got a chance to meet 2016 Olympic Bronze Medalist and Khel Ratna Awardee Sakshi Malik. During her interaction, Sakshi spoke on the importance of these sessions, her own journey as an athlete and of course her much celebrated Olympic bronze. Coaches including Jagmandar Singh as well as technical officials and referees from the Wrestling Federation of India were present during this session.

Speaking of her own journey and how she entered Wrestling, Sakshi said that no one in her family had previously been a wrestler, though her grandfather had done some mud wrestling. She also said that growing up she did not know what the Olympics were, and the desire to one day sit in an aeroplane fuelled her desire to become successful in sport as it would help her travel across the world, "I had been playing sports since I was a child but had little idea about the Olympics, Commonwealth Games and Asian Games. It was after I got into Wrestling and started winning medals at a junior level that the interest in these events started going up. Later on, as Sushil Kumar and Yogeshwar Dutt started winning medals including at the Olympics, it served as a huge motivation for me," said Sakshi.

Speaking of her Olympic bronze and the iconic moment when her coach Kuldeep Malik took her around the wrestling arena on his shoulders, Sakshi said it took some time for her to realise what she achieved, "When I reached that bronze medal match, I didn't want to lose at the final hurdle. My coach kept telling me that you are better than her (opponent). It was a tough match and only at the very end was I able to win. I can't explain in words what the feeling of winning was, I didn't know whether to laugh or smile or cry."

On the significance of her medal, she added, "My coach explained to me that my life will change after this medal but when I grow old, it is a precious memory that will always remain with me. I am very grateful for all the love the country has given me after I won the Olympic bronze."

Sakshi praised the Sports Authority of India and Wrestling Federation of India for the initiative on conducting the online classes, "This is a very good initiative by SAI and WFI. In these difficult times, when even we can't train properly, with these sessions you can stay at home and learn a lot. Please join these sessions, it would really encourage you to learn many things."

She signed off by telling the younger athletes that today there is a lot of internet and social media from which they can learn new techniques of the game. Taking her own example, she said if someone like her from an ordinary family can achieve success, any young athlete who is willing to work hard, can also be successful.

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