



Mission Olympic Cell approves swimmer Kushagra Rawat's three month training with top coach Dave Kelsheimer in USA

The Mission Olympic Cell has approved a three month training-cum competition trip in USA for swimmer Kushagra Rawat who is a part of the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (Development group). During his three month stint in the USA, he will train with Dave Kelsheimer who was the assistant Open water swimming coach for the 2016 USA Olympic Swimming Team. He will also be participating in competitions in USA to achieve the Olympic A cut for direct qualification.

Rawat said, "I trained under this coach in 2020 when I was in Australia. Some of the swimmers whom I trained with, have already achieved the Olympic A cut. I know the coach and his training patterns, which will be beneficial."

The freestyle swimmer has already made the Olympic B cut in three events, 400m, 800m and 1500m. He is confident that with his stint in the USA, he will achieve an Olympic A cut. He was last week in Bengaluru training under renowned international sports scientist Genadijus Sokolovas, who was on a visit supported by TOPS. On his stint with Sokolovas, Rawat said, "I learnt a lot about swimming techniques. After all the analysis, I am more aware of myself."

Kelsheimer is currently the head coach of Team Santa Monica, California and was the USA swimming coach at the 2017 and 2019 World Championships. He has trained a number of Olympians including Jordan Wilimovsky who finished fourth in the 1500 metres and fifth in the 10000 metres open-water marathon at the 2016 Rio Olympics.

Secretary General Swimming Federation of India, Monal Chokshi has welcomed the decision to allow Rawat to train abroad saying, "We are very glad that Kushagra Rawat's proposal to train in USA with one of the leading coaches has been approved under the TOPS scheme. Kushagra is aiming for the A qualification standard for Tokyo 2020 having achieved the B qualification in 3 individual events. He is one of the top 5 Indian swimmers in contention for the upcoming Olympics along with Srihari Nataraj and Sajan Prakash who have already achieved the B standard."

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has written to the Ministry of External Affairs to expedite the visa process so that there is no delay in him travelling to the USA.

