

Satisfied with arrangements, Indian archers looking to find momentum after returning to practice post lockdown

New Delhi/Pune, October 9: Sporting facilities have been opened across the country, with special emphasis on India's Olympic hopefuls after being shut due to the lockdown imposed by the coronavirus. India's men's and women's recurve archers have been training at Pune's Army Sports Institute. The camp for the Archery team commenced on August 25 and the archers are very happy to be back training again.

"It was difficult for the first couple of days after returning to training as we were training very intensely in March prior to the lockdown being imposed. This was the longest gap between training that I have ever had," said Atanu Das who was honoured with the Arjuna Award earlier this year. Training is still in the initial phases with some athletes coming out of their quarantine only recently, coach Majhi Sawaiyan said that general fitness is more of a priority at the moment, "Players are gradually coming out of quarantine. We are working on general fitness with emphasis on strength and endurance. To work on the mental aspect, the athletes are doing yoga and meditation."

The archers are happy with the safety protocols and other preventive measures that have been taken at ASI to prevent coronavirus, and say that the environment is completely safe, former world number 1 women's recurve archer Deepika Kumari said, "The arrangements here are very good. It's very clean and food arrangements are good. We are being looked after very well here."

In a mentally challenging sport like Archery, adjusting to new safety protocols have brought their challenges but the archers are confident that it will not make much of a difference and a few months of training will help them find their old rhythm.

The men's recurve team and Deepika have earned quota spots for the Olympics which will be held in July-August 2021. The women's recurve team will get a final opportunity to qualify for the Olympics at the World Qualification Tournament scheduled to be held next year.

