

Written by John Crumlish
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Slovakian Olympian **Barbora Mokosova** told IG that, although competing at the 2016 Rio Games was a career highlight, she aspires to give an even better performance at this summer's Tokyo Games.

"We want to add new elements and connections to my routines to have higher difficulty," said Mokosova, who qualified for her second Olympic Games through her results at last fall's World Championships in Stuttgart. "I will have to be 100 percent ready to show everything I know, and I believe we will succeed and improve my personal maximum."

Mokosova said she shifted her focus to Tokyo right after Rio, where she placed 45th all-around in qualifications.

"The Olympics in Rio has always been my biggest dream to come true, and when I came home I knew this was not the end of my career," said Mokosova, who was born March 10, 1997, in Bratislava. "I wanted to experience that feeling again and get to the Olympics even though I knew it would be very difficult."

To optimize her chances to qualify for Tokyo, Mokosova and her coach, **Martin Zvalo**, upgraded her program between Rio and Stuttgart. She gained psychological calmness in the process.

"In my gymnastics we added new elements and changed the routines," Mokosova said. "I was much quieter in my head and I knew what I wanted. I fulfilled my dream and everything else was just a bonus for me."

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Mokosova, who won a total seven Challenge Cup medals in 2017 and 2018, said she has also become more mature and conscientious since Rio.

"I think I have not changed but I have grown up and understood the things I have to do to qualify for Tokyo," she said.

While Tokyo was Mokosova's target, her path leading there was nearly blocked by consecutive injuries. She injured her right ankle in September 2018 and had surgery on it in December 2018. She injured her left heel just prior to the 2019 Worlds.

"The goal was clear for me," she said. "It is always difficult to keep motivated especially when it is not possible and I have a hard time. Last year was for me very mentally and physically demanding. I got injured (right ankle) and I had to have surgery. This moment was very difficult for me but I knew I could not give up and I fought. A week before Stuttgart, I tore ligaments in my (left) heel and it looked like I wouldn't even start, but I said, 'This is your one and only chance, and you have to risk it,' and I succeeded."

Mokosova's pre-Tokyo agenda includes a possible training camp in Russia and "above all to keep healthy."

Beyond Mokosova's competitive career, she would like to own her own gymnastics academy, and work with the Slovak Olympic and Sports Committee. Tokyo may not be her competitive finale, however.

"I love gymnastics, I love competing, I love training and everything about gymnastics," Mokosova told IG. "If my health is all right I will continue to do what I love."

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