



Keeping Excellence  
in Training Standards

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# EQUALITY MATTERS

KEITS Training Services Ltd

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THIS ISSUE:

## Tokyo 2020 Olympics

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- **PUTTING MENTAL HEALTH FIRST**
- **JOINT GOLD!**
- **X PROTEST**
- **IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE**



In this newsletter we look at Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics with the aim to raise awareness and spark conversations around them.

Whilst there are many Great British medals to be celebrated, it's important to also touch upon how the Games covers so many other topics, not just sport.

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# PUTTING MENTAL HEALTH 1ST



For every perfect, floaty flip performed in competition, there are thousands done in practice, many of them ending with scrapes, crashes, and haunting near-misses.

When Simone Biles (a USA gymnast who has previously won 4 Olympic gold medals) stepped out from most of the Olympic team final, she said it was not because of a physical injury, but her mental health. This didn't mean that she felt sad. For her, it means that her psychological state put her at significant physical risk. If her brain wouldn't play along with what her body knows how to do, she could be seriously injured.

Simone said that she had 'the twisties' which are mysterious phenomenon where suddenly a gymnast is no longer able to do a twisting skill they've done thousands of times before. Their body just won't cooperate, and their brain loses track of where they are in the air.

Simone pulled out of the rest of the team competition and said:

*"I just don't trust myself as much as I used to," Biles told reporters in Tokyo. "I'm a little bit more nervous when I do gymnastics. I feel like I'm also not having as much fun."*

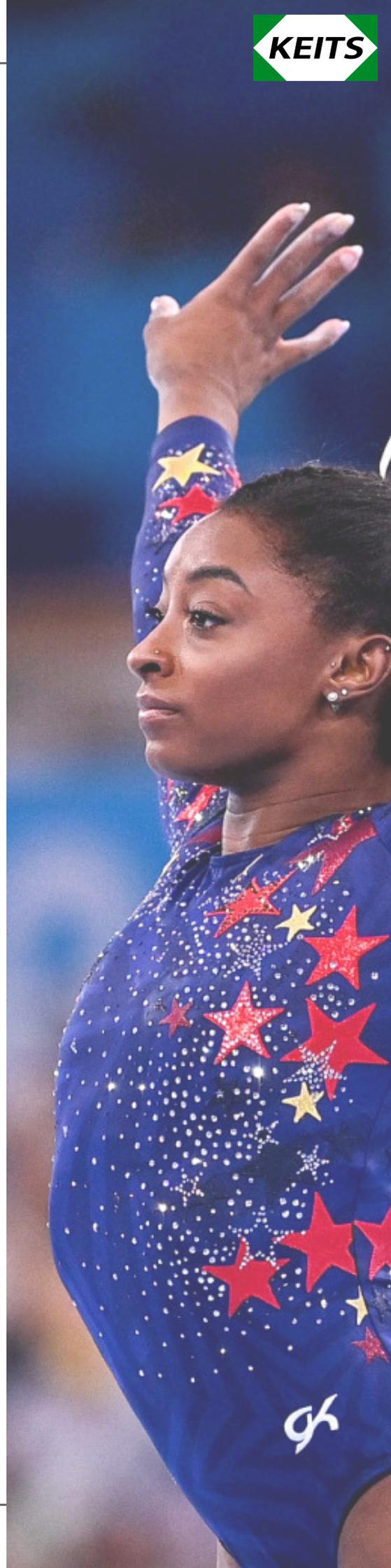
She then later also withdrew from the individual all-around competition, again saying she wanted to focus on her mental health. Simone said:

*"We also have to focus on ourselves, because at the end of the day we're human, too. So, we have to protect our mind and our body, rather than just go out there and do what the world wants us to do."*

This decision drew praise from many, but there were others who accused her of using mental health as an excuse for a below-standard performance as Simone went on to get a bronze medal in the beams final.

For many athletes, past and present, Biles' honesty could change the way mental health is dealt with in sport.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT SIMONE'S DECISION?**



## JOINT GOLD



The Olympic spirit was certainly alive and strong when two high jumpers decided to share a gold medal rather than take on a sudden-death contest that would have seen one of them miss out.

High jumpers Gianmarco Tamberi, of Italy, and Qatar's Mutaz Essa Barshim have been close friends for a long time and together they made Olympic history together after becoming the first track and field athletes to share gold in over a century.

The two men had matched each other blow for blow throughout the competition, with identical perfect records as the bar rose up to 2.37 metres.

Another increase to 2.39m then proved a step too far for both of them and they suffered three failures each. New rules that were introduced a decade ago (only for the high jump and pole vault), the pair were given the option of either sharing gold or competing in a jump-off which would have seen them take one attempt each at lower heights

*"I look at him, he looks at me, and we know it," said Barshim.  
"We just look at each other and we know, that is it, it is done.  
There is no need."*

This decision showed a remarkable end to a journey between two friends who have supported each other through major injuries suffered during their careers.

**HOW HIGHLY DO YOU VALUE FRIENDSHIP?**

**WOULD YOU HAVE DONE THE SAME?**

**DO YOU SUPPORT YOUR COMPETITORS?**



# X PROTEST

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has confirmed it is looking into a gesture made by an American shot putter who became the first athlete to openly defy the rules that ban podium protests at the Olympics.

Raven Saunders raised her arms in an X shape as she stood on the podium on Sunday after collecting her silver medal. She explained:

*"X is a place, it's the cross-intersection where all people who are oppressed meet. I represent a couple of those communities, so I pretty much wanted to use my platform to stand up for everyone."*

The 25-year-old, who is black and gay has spoken a lot about her struggles with depression, said she just wanted "to be me, to not apologise".

After competing, she said she aimed to give light to:

*"people all around the world who are fighting and don't have the platform to speak up for themselves".*

The IOC relaxed a ban on protests ahead of the Tokyo Games, allowing athletes to "express their views" during news conferences - but political demonstrations are still banned on the medal stand. It's unclear what reprimand Saunders could face, as the IOC hasn't outlined potential penalties.

*"At the end of the day, we really don't care. Shout out to all my black people. Shout out to all my LGBTQ community. Shout out to all my people dealing with mental health. At the end of the day, we understand it's bigger than us and it's bigger than the powers that be. We understand that there's so many people that are looking up to us, that are looking to see if we say something or if we speak up for them."*

## WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT RAVEN'S X PROTEST?





# IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE

It can never be denied that the Paralympics Tokyo 2020 brought us some sensational stories of triumph, success and unbelievable determination. With Great Britain finishing 2nd in the medals table with an outstanding 33. But it is not always about winning, or is it? What is winning?

Ellie Robinson inspired such emotion in her post race interview to Channel 4. On her 20th birthday she took to the block in the S6 Butterfly final and narrowly missed out on a bronze medal finishing 5th. This was not a story of disappointment but a story of triumph.

Ellie was diagnosed with Perthes disease in her right hip joint in 2012 which has left her unable to swim between November 2020 and May 2021 and quite often unable to walk and in unimageable pain.

*"There have been so many times where I have said, 'If I have to crawl to the block on my hands and knees I will do it',"*

*"I have been in agony this whole year, and this is a story of triumph, not a story of defeat."*

*"I've spoken to physios in the past year and they have said we have no idea how you will carry on swimming."*

There were also tears of joy as David Smith retained his Boccia 1 title after fighting back from being 2 points down to win 4-2. David is quite a character and says

*"I like to put on a show"*

*"Without Boccia I wouldn't be a Paralympian"*

David who is world number one took his third Paralympic gold in a sport he says he 'likes to win!' and without he wouldn't be a Paralympian.

Dame Sarah Storey also made history by becoming Britain's most successful Paralympian of all time after she won her 17th Gold in the C4-5 Road race which was her 3rd of the games. She has not only overcome her physical disability but an eating disorder and bullying at school. She now has a total of 28 medals after making her debut in Barcelona 1992.

**WHAT IS DISABILITY?  
WHAT IS ABILITY?**