

Press Release

J&K's lone wrestler, who learns the nuances by watching Sushil and Bajrang's videos on YouTube

Pune, January 11: Not every heart-warming story is from the medallists. Some come from the likes of Deepak Singh from Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).

For Deepak, the opportunity to come and compete at the Khelo India Youth Games is in itself a major step in his young career. He dreams of getting into one of Sports Authority of India's scheme to ensure that he gets more opportunity, coaching and competition. Whatever he has learnt is from his coach and by watching videos of Sushil Kumar and Bajrang Punia.

He lost his first bout against Maharashtra's Parveen in the boys U-17 freestyle wrestling 55kg weight category on Friday. Yet, the 16-year-old is not as dejected as you would expect from an early loser. He calls it a learning phase.

"I am from Kathua, and not a single kid in my school (GHSS Badnota School) or in that area is into wrestling. So I can't practice unless I participate in any tournament. Therefore, every such event is a learning step for me and try to improve my performance by learning from my mistakes," said Deepak.

"We have traditional wrestling but modern wrestling infrastructure, training and support system does not exist in J&K. There are no coaches or even mats in our area," he added.

Naturally, Deepak is a lone entry from his state in the wrestling discipline in Khelo India Youth Games, Pune and this is the first national tournament for the wrestler. In November, he won the state-level championship and was selected for the nationals.

Deepak's father Shriguru works in agriculture department while mother is home maker. It was his mentor Sahil Kumar, an army personnel who inspired him to take up wrestling.

"He is my coach and guide and I learnt the basics of the game from him. Then I started watching Sushil Kumar and Bajrang Punia's bout videos on YouTube, read about training methods and diet and trying to follow in their footsteps on my own," said Deepak.

"I feel envy when I see Haryana wrestlers. They have plenty of opportunities, facilities, training and support from the state. I know it would be too early to say, but if I manage to do something in wrestling, it will change the wrestling scenario in my town," he added.