

Jeremy Wilson talks: Rest of the World

Author: Paul Stimpson

Posted On: November 18, 2011



Gao Jun, Liu Song and Wu Xue

It would be one of the major upsets of the entire Olympics if anyone from outside of Asia or Europe were to win a medal in table tennis. It has never happened before in each of the six previous occasions that table tennis was included in the Olympics and there will only be a handful of distant hopes for a medal from outside those two continents in London 2012.

The most interesting of these players is Gao Jun, who will be 43 at the time of the Olympics in London. Jun left China in 1994 after marrying an American and now represents the United States. She was a world doubles champion in 1992 and actually won a silver medal in the Olympic doubles' for China in 1992. She is still ranked as high as 57 in the world, although believes that the decision to move to the US has ultimately harmed her table-tennis career.

"I understood that if I left China, I would say good-bye to my life as a professional athlete," she said. "Of course sometimes I think about the opportunities I might have missed. I have always been very driven as an athlete. Sometimes I think I might have missed a chance to win a gold medal in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. But one has to make certain decisions at certain points in time. I love my husband, and family is the most important thing to me."

Aside from such exceptions as Jun, the quality in Latin America is the best outside of Europe and Asia. Wu Xue from the Dominican Republic has an outside chance in the women's event while her compatriot, Lin Ju, is rated 88 in the world's men's rankings. Argentina's Liu Song is also just inside the world's top 100. Brazil also do have four men's players (Gustavo Tsuboi, Thiago Monteiro, Huo Hoyama and Cazuo Matsumoto) ranked between 100 and 200 in the world.

The top African women are Han Xing and Fen Yang from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who are ranked 148 and 166 in the world respectively.

On the men's side, the Egyptians are the best African nation and have three players in the world's top 200. Ahmed Ali Saleh is the highest ranked at 132.

Downloaded From:

<https://newsarchive.tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/archived/jeremy-wilson-talks-rest-of-the-world/>