

Kelly aims to banish bad memories

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Kelly Sibley in action in the semi-final of the Heritage Oil Open. Picture by Michael Loveder

Kelly Sibley has a score to settle with the Commonwealth Games.

Having returned empty-handed from her debut Games at Melbourne 2006, she suffered the same fate in Delhi in 2010 when she and her team-mates finished in the cruelest position – fourth.

It is not an experience the 26-year-old from Leamington Spa cares to repeat, and she is using the unhappy memories as motivation to help her and the team go at least one better this time out in Glasgow.

"I really hope we can get a medal because obviously in Delhi we finished fourth, which was heartbreaking," said Sibley.

"It's the lowest point of my career. The feelings I felt there were horrendous and those feelings have stayed with me.

"I've been trying to use those feelings and emotions in the practice hall and hopefully put that right in Glasgow this year.

"I've always said that my goal is to get a medal at the Commonwealths. Obviously gold would be fantastic, but we've put so much hard work in and to come back with a medal would be brilliant."

And Sibley identifies team spirit and the preparation time they have put in during pre-Games camps in China and Lilleshall as key factors that can help them to succeed.

"We're all feeling really positive. We have a great team spirit, we all get on really, really well and we all support each other," she said.

"When one of us is struggling or nervous or down or whatever, we all pull together.

"We do have a really good atmosphere and I think that's really important going into the Games knowing that we're full of confidence not only in ourselves but as a team.

"I think we are really fully prepared and I'm excited really to see what we can do at the Games.

"It's been good to have all the support staff here (Lilleshall) helping us because obviously we're putting our bodies through quite strenuous training.

"And also we're focusing a lot on doubles because the team event has changed, with singles and doubles now. We're just trying to get as prepared as we can so hopefully in a couple of weeks when the games start, we'll be ready.

"I'm just excited, really looking forward to it. We've put in a lot of hard work and we're well prepared. I can't wait now for the Games to start and get on with it."

Kelly goes into the Games fresh from her appearance in the final of the Heritage Oil Open where, having beaten Charlotte Carey 3-2 in the semi-finals, she lost 3-0 to China's Fangxian Yi in the final.

She said: "Overall I'm quite happy with how the tournament has gone, because obviously I wasn't seeded to get to the final.

"The semi-final was a huge battle and I thought Charlotte played really well. I had a 2-0 lead but she threw everything at me and I had to work really hard to overcome that.

"In the final, I had nothing to lose. On paper, she was the better player and she showed it on the day. She was far too quick for me and had lovely timing on all her shots. Hopefully I can take some of her game and put it into mine.

"But overall, I got a lot of confidence to take into the Commonwealth Games."

By Paul Stimpson (July 14th, 2014)

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