

Going for Gold

Featuring Lori Fung

Athlete Article



Lori Fung has the distinction of winning the first Olympic gold medal in rhythmic gymnastics. This sport was included for the first time at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. Lori began her own training in rhythmic gymnastics in 1976. Just one year later she was already competing in the National Championships. That same year Lori was also named Provincial Champion at the junior level. Sheilagh Andersen, an observant elementary school teacher, had recognized this natural talent. Sheilagh introduced Lori to Mall Vesik, who still coaches Lori and is herself a former national team member.

When they heard of plans to include rhythmic gymnastics at the Olympics Mall stepped up the training program and Lori left school and finished her Grade 12 courses by correspondence. Since 1977, Lori had been winning Provincial Championship titles. In 1981 she was nominated BC's Junior Athlete of the year and was also awarded a gold pin by the F.I.G. for achieving a 9.0 average in the World Championship in Munich.

In 1983 this promising young athlete gained first place overall at the Invitational Meet in Switzerland but her national ranking was still only 23rd.

While this was sufficient for the I.O.C. the Canadian selectors require their athletes to rank in the top 16.

Determined to improve her world standing Lori entered international competition in Europe and Asia and quickly raised her standing to 9th.