

King's MacLennan bounces to second Olympic gold

By Jake Courtepatte

Rosie MacLennan flipped, twisted, and jumped her way to a defence of her Olympic gold last Friday, something no person has ever done in the discipline.

"It feels incredible," said MacLennan, who also won Canada's only gold at the 2012 London Games. "I don't know how it compares but it's just absolutely amazing."

Performing the same routine that she won gold with at the World Cup in Switzerland just a few months earlier, MacLennan went for a combination of height and cleanliness to secure her win.

"The first indication to me is always looking at my coach, and reading the expression on his face," said MacLennan. "So when I looked over and he had a smile on his face, I knew the routine was okay. It felt pretty good, but there was still two girls to go so you never really know."

Her performance earned her a score of 56.465, enough to put her in the top spot with two competitors to jump. After Tatsiana Piatrenia of Belarus bounced to a fifth-place score, the celebration began.

MacLennan's trip to Rio has been in doubt for much of the past year, battling a pair of head injuries that has left her with headaches and vision issues.

"In some ways it was really tough," MacLennan said of the comeback. "But it was also a reminder of how much I really did love the sport. Because if I didn't, I would have given up."

The effects were so bad, the reigning Olympic champ had to step away from the sport for a few months.

"They lasted a lot longer than I thought they would. It cut it close to the World Championships, which is the last chance to qualify for the Olympics, so during that time there was a lot of uncertainty and a lot of stress and emotional struggles. But it really did help me connect back to why I do the sport, all I wanted to do was get back on the trampoline."

MacLennan is looking forward to just cheering on the rest of Team Canada for the remainder of the Rio Games.

"It's been a phenomenal two weeks. It's been beyond my wildest dreams" when I get back home I just get back to school, and after a month or so get back to training."

She is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Exercise Science at the University of Toronto, but trampoline is certainly still on the radar.

"The Belarusian going into the final was 34," said MacLennan. "There's a bit of longevity in our sport, I think it's really up to each athlete but it depends what your motivation is, how you're physically doing, but I'm not done yet."

Jason Burnett of Nobleton was the only other Canadian athlete on the trampoline over the weekend, placing 14th in the men's individual competition.