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Story Headline: Rising star Harimoto celebrating Olympic Day in Lausanne, Switzerland and aiming for table tennis gold at Tokyo 2020

Location: Lausanne, Switzerland.

Date: 23rd June 2018

STORY SCRIPT

Japan’s Tomokazu Harimoto, youngest-ever winner of an ITTF World Tour Men’s table tennis singles title, already has one eye on Olympic success.

“If selected, it [the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020] would be my first Olympics and my most recent on home soil,” said Harimoto, speaking at the 70th annual ‘Olympic Day’ in Lausanne, Switzerland. “I’d love to win the title with the home supporters behind me,” added the youngster.

His thoughts were echoed by fellow Japanese representative Ai Fukuhara: “I am very happy the Olympic Games will be held in my own country.”

“I don’t know what I’ll be doing in two years’ time, but I would love to be a part of it in some way,” continued Fukuhara, table tennis silver medal winner at London 2012.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) hosted top-level athletes and officials from the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) of the Republic of Korea (KOR), the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the
hosts of the upcoming Olympic and Olympic Winter Games, Japan (JPN) and the People’s Republic of China (CHN).

Harimoto and Fukumara both took part in a friendly mixed exhibition match, with the athletes subsequently presenting IOC President Thomas Bach with a signed table tennis bat.

“Olympic Day is, of course, an occasion to remind ourselves of the spirit of Olympism,” said IOC President Thomas Bach, in his address. “The Olympic Games are where the Olympic values of peace and respect come to life. Sport must continue to build bridges and show what it can to bring people together.”

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