

People and Love of Macau

【Sports Life】 Five months after she was born, Hoi Long lost her innate ability to hear and speak forever due to her doctor's negligence. But it was not her nature to dwell in discontent and bitterness, and with her own efforts plus her mother's support, Hoi Long not only overcame her personal misfortunes but also lived her life as if it were a beautiful piece of music – "Can't hear but can catch". It was as though only the sky was her limit. Hoi Long became an outstanding and widely acclaimed athlete in triathlon. She won precious friendships and at the same time her character and her ways of dealing with life have since changed a lot. The lively and happy Hoi Long recalled, "I was quite shy before and did not know how to communicate with others. After spending nine years in triathlon, I have changed the course of my life. Now I have goals and I am confident. I know how to manage my time and have become bolder and more extroverted. Sports have changed my life and I am truly grateful to sports."

Taking part in sports changed everything

Being hearing-impaired is not Hoi Long's "taboo" in her daily life. She does not mind people focusing on her hearing. She said, "When I was little, children of the same age did not play with me and ignored me, and I was once very sad. I still do sometimes run into them but I don't pay attention to them. The most important thing is to do your own part well." Whenever Hoi Long is on the field, she is always the centre of attention of the media and she is constantly inundated with questions that revolve around the theme of "The World of Silence". With her dedication and efforts, Hoi Long excels in lip-reading in both Chinese and English. When facing reporters from different parts of the world, she always seriously answers: "I don't mind at all. I still remember my competitions in Taiwan, Singapore, Australia and Japan, etc. The local media would interview me and then be very surprised by how well I could use Chinese and English to answer their questions, without any problems at all."

Can't hear but can catch

Hoi Long living an optimistic life

Winning fourth place at the Guangzhou Asian Games

Hoi Long runs into problems at her competitions all the time, the most common being at the starting line. She can only follow her competitors with the start and then try to make up for that lost time during the race. However, difficulties have not defeated Hoi Long; they have only made her stronger. Last year in Guangzhou she almost won a medal in the Asian Games Triathlon competition. She said, "I am usually quite relaxed in competitions, but somehow I was very nervous at the Asian Games. Perhaps it was because the coach had set the goal for the fifth place. Before the race, I thought the goal was unreachable but I got fourth place at the end and was totally surprised."

Being courageous when facing life and surpassing oneself

Success is not a coincidence. Having joined triathlon, Hoi Long was practicing and training all the time. After her graduation from college, she worked with her Japanese coach Kenta Ando and started systematic training. Currently, she maintains a schedule of eleven training sessions weekly, and on Saturdays and Sundays she trains for as many as four to five hours. Hoi Long is so full of energy that she never complains about the hard work and even jokes that she will "play" until she gets old. An athlete's life has ups and downs, and so does Hoi Long's. She has run into "bottlenecks" when she could make no more progress no matter how hard she worked. She chose to solve the problems by herself: "Get on the internet more, read more and learn from the solutions used by athletes from around the world when they are facing the same problems. The coach can only teach the techniques and how to increase the speed but in order to get through the "bottleneck", the athlete must learn how to break through the psychological limits and barriers within himself or herself."

Not fearing hard work because success is not coincidental

The sport of triathlon has taken roots in Macau for many years now, but its development has been very restricted. There are very few female triathletes, and when it comes to international competitions, Hoi Long is often the only female athlete representing Macau: "Going to competitions alone is boring so I hope that more girls can participate in this sport and we can team up in the competitions. Unfortunately, many young athletes cannot take the tough training and give up easily when the going gets tough. Actually as long as you persevere, you will succeed one day."

Thanks to mother's support throughout the years

Growing up in a single-parent family, Hoi Long has a no.1 fan and that is her mother. Her mother supports her emotionally and physically and Hoi Long says with deep gratitude: "I wanted to take part in triathlon when I was in high school and mum bought me the first bike in my life. She even took me with her in finding a coach, believing the competitions are good for my body and health. Every time I am in the newspapers, she would buy the newspapers and collect them. She would also go to the competitions to support me. I am truly grateful to her."

