

TRANSCRIPT

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Interview with Heather Boyle, OFI via Zoom

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HOW TRAINING IS GOING

I'm still actually based over in Holland, sort of training with my club team. We've been actually back playing league games again which is so nice to have, like something to look forward to every weekend and kind of getting that game experience. And then with my goalie trainer as well, twice a week. So it's been actually pretty busy, but it's nice to kind of have that flow and consistency going in, especially after the year that's just happened. Most of it is just sitting, doing nothing. So yeah, training's been going really, really well. And I'm yeah, looking forward to seeing where that's going to take me.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TRAINING AND COMPETITION

In games, in a match, you can't predict what's going to happen. Like, it's very, you don't know what the other team's going to bring. You don't know like the threats and stuff from each kind of forward or what they're doing at the top of the circle, it's all very different. So most of the time, it's then trying to prepare yourself best for what they're going to do. So that's then what we do in training kind of focusing more on the control, like technical aspect of things, but then yeah. Games, you just can't replicate that, so it's, yeah. Having that experience of getting back into the games, it kind of prepares you more and gets more consistent flow in how you play.

RETURNING TO IRELAND TO PLAY

I'm so excited to get back to Ireland to train with the girls and have the series against GB. We had a training camp in January in Spain and that was the first time I was with them in over a year but I actually haven't been back playing in Ireland in longer, so yeah, really excited to get back to that.

I think this series is going to be really beneficial in terms of actually getting international games. Like that's huge. And I know everyone in the squad is so excited for that but then to just be back with the team, I'm really excited. Albeit it's going to be a little different with the restrictions and staying in bubbles and being safe and everything. But yeah, just being on the pitch with the girls. I'm so excited for it, just to have a bit of a craic with them again and see what's going to happen.

COMPETITION ENVIRONMENT SINCE COVID

It's actually hard to describe the differences between what it was like before and what it's like now. Like before, all of us would have come together, we would have sat, had

a cup of tea, maybe a little biscuit or two, not too many of those and just sat and chit-chatted. Like we all got along really, really well. Or we went out and like went to get a coffee together and things like that where we can't do that anymore.

And that's how we value that a lot, is coming together as a team and getting that kind of social experience with each other. I think that's how a lot of teams end up growing together 'cause you figure out more about people that you maybe didn't know so much about.

So from Spain where it was really restricted like that to before, it was just, it's so different that yeah, we ended up, we were all in single rooms. So not even having someone in the same room that was maybe an alarm clock to wake you up in the morning, that's, it provided a little bit different, different but yeah...

We're in a very luxurious place of being able to play right now. And unfortunately we have to stick with the COVID protocols and that's just the nature of the world and where we're at but we're happy to do whatever's needed so that we can just be together and play as the National Team.

UPCOMING MATCHES

The fact that the games are going to be on, yeah, BBC Northern Ireland and RTE is huge in itself. Yeah, I don't know the last time, I think it was maybe the world cup that games were streamed on TV, so to have that for people to watch I think is going to be huge, not just for us as the team but as a sport, is the people still having some sort of connection to us and the journey that we're on.

Yeah, with GB being Olympic Champions, us being the World Cup silver medalists, it's always a battle. Ireland, England, any sport, no matter what the sport, it's always a battle, like, yeah. We always say it's a dog-eat-dog world once we play each other.

But yeah, I think it's going to be a really attacking game, both teams like to go forward, they both have, our two head coaches used to coach together so I think they're going to try and suss each other out but I think it's going to be a really free flowing, attacking game. So fingers crossed that they'll have a bit for me to do but not too much, no.

So yeah, I think it's going to be a battle no matter what happens. And I think we're just excited to get back right in the pitch. Yes, we're going to focus on GB a little bit but we're all about us and continuing the journey that we're on. It's a long way until the summer. So we have to keep focusing on our processes so that we're ready to go when it really matters.

FEELINGS AHEAD OF TOKYO

Coming up to the Olympics it's, for me, it's still kind of weird to think about. Obviously I'm preparing as if it's still happening but everyone's saying it's going to be different than ever before, just with everything that's going on which is completely

understandable, but being able to pull on the Irish Jersey, going out into the Olympic Games as the first Irish female team to go there is huge. And it's a great, it's going to be a great honour for all the girls that are going there and the team and the staff involved to be part of that. But yeah, it's a huge, huge opportunity for us to kind of keep going on the path that we're on.

We're definitely in, on the way to do something special again. And yeah, I fully believe that that's going to happen again. We just have to stick to what we know, keep our heads in our own little bubble. Hopefully don't have to say bubble too much longer here, but yeah, we're really focused on it and we're so excited to get out there and just do the best we can and do something special again.

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