



SPORTS

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Wiebe showed the world just how much a coach can mean



The Olympic Games are a time to celebrate some of the most dominant athletes in the world in their respective sports. Night after night for the past couple of weeks we have had highlights of those medal-winning performances. Announcers will often talk about the athlete's focus, determination and hard work leading into the Games. For those two weeks, every major TV network in the world wants that 30-second interview with the new medal winner.

One moment that struck a cord with me during these Rio Games was when Canadian wrestler, Erica Wiebe, won the fourth gold medal for our nation.

There were so many moments about her gold medal match that had me cheering, yelling and shedding a tear. There was the moment she grabbed the Canadian flag and held it to her face as almost to give herself a brief second of silence before coming back to her golden reality. Or when she proudly stood atop of the podium singing the Canadian anthem with tears unapologetically streaming down her face. However, the moment that made me laugh and then cry was when Wiebe, who may I remind you just finished an Olympic wrestling match, ran over to her coaches to give them a hug and then proceeded to lift one of her coaches, Paul Ragusa, up on to her shoulders.

Wiebe, who is known for her spontaneity, may have gone a step further than most athletes by lifting her coach up on her shoulders, but this act resonated so deeply with me. At a time when some athletes are waving to the camera or running up to hug their family in the stands, this athlete ran over and wanted the world to know who she shared this medal with. The average viewer does not always realize that for the past four years (and often much longer) the person she just carried atop her shoulders around the wrestling mat met her every day at practice, prepared video analysis for her and traveled with her to competitions. That person took time away from his family and friends, possibly having to miss big moments in his own life, so that he could help her achieve one of the biggest moments of hers.

Coaching is a profession, whether paid or volunteer, that requires sacrifice as it does not follow the typical work week schedule. It can be tough and Olympic coaches just like Olympic athletes know how much work it truly takes to get to the top. However, I can bet you at that moment when Ragusa was sitting high on Wiebe's shoulders that he would not trade his coaching job for anything else in the world. A big thank you to Erica Wiebe, who without words, explained to everyone watching just how much a great coach can mean to an athlete.

Tara Chisolm is the head coach of the Canadian National Women's Sledge Hockey Team. She was born and raised in Medicine Hat and is the program coordinator of the non-profit organization, Medicine Hat Adaptive Sport and Recreation. She can be reached by email at tara@parasports.net.

Tara Chisolm Training Matters



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