

Amy Wilson Hardy

Q: How did it feel to fly into Rio as part of team GB?

A: Firstly we got to fly business class which was very exciting and made us feel very important! We flew out with other athletes who were performing early on in the games like the shooters, sailors and weight lifters. It was the first realization that all our hard work had paid off and that this was going to be an amazing adventure!

Q: How would you describe the opening ceremony?

A: As we were competing on the first day we didn't get to go to the ceremony itself but it was amazing to watch all the countries gather together with their national flags and there was a real sense of excitement in the athlete's village that night. We trained for this moment so ultimately it was about performance and that's where my focus was.

Q: Who was the most famous person you met?

A: Usain Bolt, twice!

Q: And who was the most inspirational person you met and why?

A: Shortly after we arrived we were lucky enough to meet Andy Murray who was leading out Team GB. He spoke with real passion about the Olympics, and opened up wearing his heart on his sleeve which was not what I'd have expected of him. He showed such interest in our sport, asking lots of questions and I realized at that moment that we were all there as equals, that we shared the same motivation; to win gold!

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Q: What was it like living in the athlete's village?

A: It was a totally unique experience, team GB had its own apartments so it engendered a real team spirit especially once people started

winning medals. The best bit though was the dining hall in the village which could seat 6,000 and was open 24/7!

Q: Did you get to see much of Rio and meet Brazilian people?

A: Yes, I did once we finished competing. I was lucky enough to spend five days with my family and friends and we got to visit various venues to support other teams including the hockey and the men's rugby. I loved Rio and its people. I got to see all the main attractions like Copacabana beach and as a member of Team GB I was able to make use of 'The British House' which was located underneath Christ the Redeemer, with a view I will never forget.

Q: What do you think Brazilians made of the games?

A: They loved it and really embraced it. I think they felt honored to be part of it. They wanted to have photos taken with us and loved a hug!



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Q: The rugby sevens were very popular with audiences at home. What is it about the sport that makes it so compelling?

A: Firstly, it was a new sport at this Olympics and the format of the game is short and intense, as a viewer it's just 14 minutes of your time! With less players on the pitch it's easy to see what's happening and it's fast and exciting with the potential for lots of tries. It had a kind of festival atmosphere playing in front of very vocal supporters!

Q: On a personal level we know you must have been disappointed not getting to the final of the rugby sevens but what have you learned from this experience and what advice would you give to aspiring athletes about dealing with disappointment at any level of competition?

A: I learned how much it meant to me! To go with the aim of winning gold and to come so far in the competition but to leave without a medal was devastating. I cried like a baby and as my mum said on TV, I never cry! Now that I'm over

the initial disappointment I know that when you put your all into everything you do both on and off the field people will always support you and that's an amazing feeling and it spurs you on to improve.

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Q: Has your life changed now that you are an Olympian?

A: Not really but I do still have to pinch myself sometimes as it was the most amazing experience and the two years working towards it was definitely worth every second of the hard work I put in.

Q: What's next for you?

A: I'm back training again working towards the 15 a side World Cup in Ireland this time next year.

Q: Will you be going to Tokyo in four years' time?

A: That's the aim as I feel I still have many more games in me and my Olympic experience has left me wanting more success on the big stage!

Q: You've been very generous with your time in the past doing coaching sessions here at the college, will you have time to come back to help inspire a new generation of women on the rugby pitch?

A: I really hope so, both Worthing Rugby Club and Worthing College were a huge part of my journey towards elite sport, developing my professional attitude and the discipline required to play my sport at this level. When I was at college I never imagined that one day I would represent my country at the Olympics but I have and I want every young athlete to know it is possible with the right attitude, lots of hard work, guts and determination!

