

## **Interview With Lee-Kyung Chun, Legendary Olympian, Olympic Coach, and Television Commentator**

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Citizens of a country swell with pride whenever they talk about their homeland's sport legends. Such legends are recognized for not only their athletic achievements but also the contributions they have made to the whole society. Lee-Kyung Chun is considered such a legend for having elevated Korea to a global powerhouse status in winter sport. A four-time short-track gold medalist in the 1994 Lillehammer and 1998 Nagano Winter Olympic Games, Chun reigned the ice track in the 1990s. With Jong-Oh Jin (shooting) and Soonyung Kim (archery), Chun holds the most gold medals in the history of Korean Olympic sport.

Chun was only 12 years of age when she received her first nomination to the national short-track team to represent her country. At 16 she made her Olympic debut at the 1992 Albertville Winter Olympic Games. Shortly after Chun reached the quarter-final match in the 500-m race in Albertville, she assumed the position as the leading short-track speed skater until her retirement in 1998, ending her career with numerous medals including four Olympic gold medals, nine gold medals at the World Short Track Speed Skating Championships, four gold medals at the World Short Track Speed Skating Team Championships, two gold medals at the Winter Universiade, and one additional gold medal at the Asian Winter Games.

On her retirement, Chun commenced her activity in various fields. She began her part-time career as a commentator in 2002 and remained athletically active as a professional golfer and ice hockey player. She was nominated to the women's national ice hockey team in 2006 to participate in 2007 Asian Games, but she was unable to participate because of an injury shortly before the event. In addition, she was appointed to the Athletes' Committee of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) by the IOC's president, Jacques Rogge, in 2002, serving a 6-year term in that position.

Since 2015, Chun assumed the responsibility as the coach of Singapore's national short-track team, where she aims to develop the competitiveness of short track, as

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**Lee-Kyung Chun** (center) — Legendary Olympian, Olympic coach, and television commentator (with the authors).

well as to promote the values of winter sport in Singapore. Within a short time span, under Chun's management, Cheyenne Goh earned her ticket to the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games when she qualified for the women's 1,500-m race. Goh's success under Chun's tutelage marked Singapore's first appearance in short track on the global stage.

In addition to Chun's participation as a coach and television commentator at the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games, she acted as a symbolic figure as she carried the Olympic torch into the main stadium at the grandiose opening ceremony. During the Olympic Games, Chun stepped away for a lengthy exclusive interview for the *International Journal of Sport Communication*.

During her conversation with us, Chun shared stories about her life after her legendary career and various aspects of sport communication ranging from media relations to interpersonal communication.

**Yoon and Gang:** In the minds of many Koreans, you remain a legend in short-track speed skating with the four gold medals you captured in the 1994 and 1998 Winter Olympics. How has your life been after your retirement in 1998?

**Chun:** I was honored to represent my country as a national short-track skater for about 11 years, in which my life was solely focused on giving continuous effort and hard work to remain number one in the sport. Although I left the ice track at the age of 22, I still had a thirst for the next challenges I would face in my life. That's why I tested myself as a professional golfer and ice hockey player after my retirement. I wasn't as successful in these quests as in my short-track career, but they