

My mind is my hardest challenger

The second athlete going to the Paris Olympics and participating in the 25m Lapua European is Ruslan Lunev from Azerbaijan. 35-year-old Lunev has the same number of Olympic Games as Peeter Olesk. Paris 2024 is the 3rd Olympics for both athletes.

Ruslan Lunev started training shooting when he was 12 years old. Before pistol-shooting his father Vladimir guided him into secrets of judo and chess. Young Ruslan didn't like judo at all, chess was a little more interesting. When Ruslan's father recognized that these two sports did not interest Ruslan enough, his father took him to the shooting range and gave him an air pistol. Ruslan trained and trained, but the results were not good enough. After 13 years of shooting, he decided that something must change to continue shooting.

- At the age of 25, I started to think more deeply about my shooting. I realized what I had to do and why. Then the results started slowly to be better and better, explains Lunev.
- I am participating in the Lapua Cup while Center Fire Pistol and Standard Pistol shooting are strengthening my career and skills in 25m Rapid Fire Pistol and in Air Pistol too. My main disciplines are 10m Air Pistol and 25m Rapid Fire Pistol, says Lunev.

Vladimir Lunev who guided Ruslan to sport is still Ruslan's coach. He has been the coach from the beginning since 2012. When asked about the relationship between him and his father, Ruslan honestly says that it is sometimes very complicated and challenging.

- The father-and-son coaching system works, but it is also more difficult. We are too near and too present sometimes. When athletes normally go home from training, they can be in peace and relax, but when I went home, I had the coach with me all the time. We had quite often hard discussions and shooting sport was surrounding me the whole time. It was hard to relax. Now I am living with my wife and 2-year-old daughter, the shooting sport is not all the time present. Now there are many other issues to think about, explains Ruslan.
- Honestly speaking I have learned everything concerning the shooting sport and I am thankful for that help to my father. I will always remember my father's advice "Be honest and do not cheat yourself whatever you are doing, it will bring finally good results, believe in yourself", says Ruslan.

When asking who is highest at the Olympics, Ruslan Lunev's answer is the very polite and diplomatic answer:

- There are 60 other athletes who are excellent and can win the Olympic gold. My mind is my hardest challenger. So, I am not making any guesses. My mind is my hardest challenger, but I must believe in myself and my skills and my father's advice, which he has given to me. We will see it then in Chateauroux what will happen, says Ruslan with a mysterious smile on his face.

Now this father-and-son coaching system is carrying Ruslan Lunev with his father Vladimir for the third time to the Olympic Games. A little bit more than two weeks we can see the results.