

7. Khashaba Jadhav



Have you heard about the Olympic games? Sportsmen from many different countries of the world come together for the Olympic games. A number of events are held. There are games, athletics events like high jump, long jump, running, gymnastics events, swimming and diving competitions, boxing and wrestling matches and many many other things. The winners are given gold, silver and bronze medals. An Olympic medal is an honour. An Olympic winner is considered to be a world champion.

Few Indians have won Olympic medals so far. The first person to win a medal for independent India was a wrestler from Maharashtra. His name was Khashaba Jadhav.

Khashaba Jadhav was born in a very poor family in a village called Goleshwar in Satara district. But it was a family that loved sport, especially wrestling. His father, Dadasaheb, was himself a wrestler. He had five sons. The youngest of them was Khashaba. Dadasaheb himself taught his sons wrestling. They were all very good at it but the best among them was Khashaba.

From an early age, Khashaba loved to watch wrestling bouts. His father took him to see the bouts from the time he was just four years old. He would sit on his father's shoulders and watch the bouts. At ten, he was the youngest to get into the 'akhada.' Soon, it became clear that he was also the best - not only in his own 'akhada' but in the whole area.

Khashaba loved other sports, too. He was fond of kabaddi, mullkhamb, running, swimming and gymnastics. He took part in all of these. He became strong and agile. He loved to discuss sports with his friends.





He went to Rajaram College in Kolhapur where wrestling was encouraged. Khashaba took part in many wrestling bouts, and won them all. In that area, he was the champion. Therefore, he was sent to wrestle at the State level and national level.

Khashaba Jadhav became famous at the national level, too. He beat the national champion Niranjan Das in 1948. That is why, it was decided to send him to the international Olympic games.

When Khashaba Jadhav took part in the Olympic games for the first time, he found that the Indian and international rules were different. Also, he was used to wrestling in an earthen pit. At the Olympic games, the bouts were held on a mat. In spite of these differences, Khashaba Jadhav won a sixth place out of forty-two.

The Olympic games are held every four years. In 1952, Khashaba wished to take part in the Olympics again. But it was not an easy task. He had to prove his merit again and face the opposition of officials.

Also, in those days, Olympic participants had to spend their own money for travelling to and staying in the place where the games were held. It was very expensive. Khashaba did not have that much money and he did not get any money from the government. At last, the Principal of Rajaram College gave his own house to get the money. Other people in Khashaba's village also helped.

The 1952 Olympics were held at Helsinki. There, Khashaba Jadhav had to face opponents from Russia and the Gulf countries. He won the first five bouts quite easily. He won each bout within five minutes.

Then, he had to face a wrestler from Japan. They were both well-matched. The bout lasted for fifteen minutes. Khashaba lost the match by just one point.

He was exhausted after the bout, but he was asked to wrestle with a Soviet wrestler immediately. This was against the rules. According to the rules, Khashaba should have rested for at least half an hour before the second bout.

Khashaba lost in the bout with the Soviet wrestler. Still, he had won a bronze medal, by finishing third.

When Khashaba returned from Helsinki, many people honoured him. The people in his village gave him a grand welcome. A procession of 151 bullock carts waited for him in his home village of Goleshwar. The villagers carried their hero home to the sound of dhols.

Khashaba Jadhav did not forget those who helped him. After winning the Olympic medal, he played the first bout to raise money – not for himself, but for the Principal who had given his house for sending Khashaba to Helsinki. The Principal got his house back again.

Khashaba won great honour for his country even when he did not have much help or facilities. Today, sportsmen have many facilities. Shouldn't we all try our best to win greater honours for our motherland ?



Things to do :

1. Find the answers to the following from the lesson :
 - (a) Who takes part in the Olympic games ?
 - (b) What medals are given in the Olympics ?
 - (c) Where was Khashaba Jadhav born ?
 - (d) What sports did he like ?
 - (e) How many bouts did Khashaba Jadhav win at Helsinki ?
 - (f) How did the people in Khashaba's village welcome him ?
 - (g) Did the Principal get his house back again ?
2. Listen to the following carefully and write them down.
* wrestler * youngest * taught * people * facilities
3. Look at the following words carefully and copy them in your notebook.
 - especially • competition • encouraged • differences
 - international • participants • immediately • government
4. Use two or more letters from the word to make other words.
Example : heard – he, are, ear, hear, head, red, dare, hare
 - wrestling • wrestler • therefore
 - national • motherland
5. Read the words aloud and find the odd-man-out in each group.
 - * catch - match - watch * some - come - home * that - chat - what
 - * five - give - dive * those - nose - lose * here - there - where
6. Read the following sentences. On each sentence, frame a question starting with the given word.
 - (a) Khashaba loved to watch wrestling bouts. What
 - (b) His father took him to see the bouts. Who
 - (c) He would sit on his father's shoulders. Where
 - (d) He beat the national champion in 1948. When
7. Gather more information about the Olympic games or other important sports events.

