



## SCHOOL PROGRAM

# THE JOURNEY

**KIM BOUTIN**

(Grade 4-5)



## SPORT DESCRIPTION

Short track speed skaters need more than strength, speed, and endurance. They need the tactics to outsmart their competitors and surge ahead at a key point in the race. It's often the smartest skaters that win in short track speed skating.

The oval track is only 111 metres around and the corners are tight. Usually four to six skaters race against each other at a time. Often, they lose control and fall. There is frequent bumping and pushing as the athletes try to get ahead. The passing skater can't cut in or block the other skaters. If they do, they will be disqualified.



## ABOUT THE ATHLETE

### KIM BOUTIN:

Born: December 16, 1994

Age: 23

Height: 165cm

Weight: 58kg

Birthplace: Sherbrooke, Quebec

Sport: Speed Skating - Short Track

Games: PyeongChang 2018

*"Sport is a school for life, says Kim Boutin.  
The Olympics are part of my journey."*





# THE STORY

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Just reaching the Olympic Games is a journey of perseverance. An athlete must endure years of training, overcome injuries, and stay focused through the ups and downs. It's all worthwhile when you find yourself at the Games, even more when you win a medal at your first Games.

Short track speed skater Kim Boutin found herself in this dream-come-true moment at the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games. She was thrilled about her fourth-place finish in the women's 500 metre final. But then the news was announced. South Korea's Minjeong Choi was disqualified. There had been bumping on one of the last corners, as Minjeong tried to cut in on Kim. Short track speed skating is a rough sport, but her move broke the rules. Kim would move to the bronze medal spot.

She was overjoyed! The happiness continued until an hour before the medal ceremony. It was then she checked her social media messages. *"If I find you, you will die!" "Medal thief." "I will cut your hands and leg dirty girl."*

Kim was terrified! People were threatening to kill her. *"You prepare for the Olympic Games and for staying in your bubble during the races. But not for this! I was so scared. I didn't want to continue with the Games."*

Bravely, she attended the ceremony. The emotions were almost too much. How could she keep focused on her next race? Was she really in danger?

She had to stay calm. She had to reach out to those who could support her. It was a big comfort to know that her team was behind her. They were a big help. But the courage she needed to continue racing came from within.

*"There is a strength inside each of us, and you need to recognize what it is, so you can be strong through tough times," Kim explains. "For me, my strength was my belief that I could stay focused on my objectives and deliver when it counted."*

While no Olympic athlete prepares for this type of nightmare, Kim had already spent the time to learn her inner strengths. Shortly

after being named Speed Skating Canada's Rising Star of 2015, she stopped skating for six months. She needed time away from the sport. Time to think.

Kim needed to discover what she wanted and what she valued. She met regularly with a psychologist. They worked to sort through her questions and to become mentally strong and focused. No one knew it at the time, but she was uncovering the strength that she would need three years later to face the threats.

Surrounded by her team and believing in her strengths, Kim toed the start line for the 1500 metre event. She raced through the qualifying rounds and found herself in the final. Again, she faced the Korean for a medal. Again, she would have some of Choi's fans wishing her to fail.

But Kim was strong. She skated bravely to another bronze medal. This made her more confident and a few days later she won silver in the 1000 metres.

It's very special for an athlete to win an Olympic medal. It is rare that an athlete wins two in their lifetime. But Kim's journey of bravery and perseverance earned her three medals in a single Olympic Games.

*"I got lots of messages on social media, but the ones that stuck were the ones that hurt," recalls Kim. "I decided to focus on the positive messages from people who liked me and not on the ones from people that said they didn't like me."*

*"It's not as important to have self confidence as it is to know your strength. Focus on your strengths."*



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