



SCHOOL PROGRAM

THE JOURNEY

KIM BOUTIN

(Grade 6 and up)



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 a short track speed skating race.

The short 111 metre oval track has tight corners. Between four and six competitors usually race against each other and it's common for skaters to 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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(Grade 6 and up)

Just qualifying for 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 it was announced that South Korea's Minjeong Choi had been 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 physical sport, but her move was a violation of the rules. Kim would move to the bronze medal position.

She was jubilant! 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 horrified! People were threatening to hurt her, 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."*

She mustered the bravery to attend the podium ceremony, but the emotions were almost too much. How could she regain her focus for 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 time to uncover her inner strengths. Shortly

after being named Speed Skating Canada's Rising Star of 2015, she stopped skating for six months. She was exhausted and needed time away from the sport. Time to contemplate her future in the sport.

Kim needed to discover what she wanted and what she valued. She frequently met with a psychologist, and they worked to sort through her questions and to become mentally strong and focused. No one knew it at the time, but during this time of searching she was developing the strength required to face the threats three years later at the Games.

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 determined. She skated courageously to another bronze medal, fighting valiantly throughout the race. 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 received many 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."*

In the end, it was knowing her strengths that empowered her to overcome the fears. *"It's not as important to have self confidence as it is to know your strength. Focus on your strengths."*

