



ADOPTEE AMBASSADOR. Marissa Brandt holds a proclamation naming her an honorary ambassador for adoptee birth family searches during a lunch in Gangneung, South Korea. Also pictured is Neunghoo Park, right, the South Korean minister of health and welfare. Brandt, adopted as a baby by Greg and Robin Brandt of Vadnais Heights, Minnesota, played for South Korea's historic combined women's hockey team under her birth name, Park Yoonjung. (AP Photo/Teresa M. Walker)

Marissa Brandt named honorary ambassador for Korea adoptees

By Teresa M. Walker
AP Sports Writer

GANGNEUNG, South Korea — Marissa Brandt isn't quite sure what her new position will require, and she's only had a few days to start getting used to the idea of being an honorary ambassador.

The Korean-American hockey player is more than happy to do whatever she can.

"It's going to be nice to kind of have this platform, and hopefully I can help between Korea and America," Brandt said.

Brandt, who played hockey for South Korea's historic combined women's team under her birth name, Park Yoonjung, was named as an honorary ambassador for adoptees searching for their birth families on the final day of the PyeongChang Games.

Neunghoo Park, the South Korea minister of health and welfare, made the announcement at an intimate luncheon including Brandt, her parents, and two other adoptees taking part in the Olympics. Hanna Poeschl, or Young-hye Hwang, is an intern with the Olympic Broadcasting Services, and Isaac Myers, also known as Seung-lee Choi, was an

Olympic torchbearer.

Park told Brandt and two other Korean Americans that the government wants to help all adoptees following their adoptions and also with searches for their birth families.

"I'm really honored for this position," Brandt said. "My goal coming into the Olympics, it was bigger than hockey for myself and just to be a role model and hopefully inspire others. And now adoptees, hopefully inspire them to find their birth parents and reach out and kind of get to know their culture more."

Brandt was about 4 1/2 months old when she was adopted by the Brandts and grew up in Minnesota, where she played hockey along with her sister, Hannah, who plays on the gold medal-winning U.S. hockey team.

Since the Korean War, more than 170,000 Korean children have been adopted by families around the world. More adoptees are visiting South Korea looking for their birth families, but culture and language differences have hindered those searches.

Brandt thought her hockey career was over until she was asked to help Korea in the Olympics as the host country.

UNICEF says Pakistan is riskiest country for newborns

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while newborns in Pakistan, the Central African Republic, and Afghanistan face the worst odds," it said, noting that "more than 80 percent of all newborn deaths are caused by three preventable and treatable conditions."

The three are premature births, complications such as lack of oxygen at birth, and neonatal infections, including sepsis and pneumonia.

UNICEF says as many as 3 million children could be saved each year with an investment in quality care at delivery.

In Pakistan, Dr. Khalid said 80 percent of newborn deaths could be prevented with skilled birth attendants.

"I feel that no matter what tools we send, or how much money you spend, unless you improve the quality and the skill of midwives," babies in Pakistan will continue to die, she said.

"We have midwives in government hospitals who cannot deliver a baby," she added. "We don't need more doctors, we need more skilled midwives."

UNICEF also appealed on properly training midwives and allowing better "access to well-trained midwives, along with proven solutions like clean water, disinfectants, breastfeeding within the first hour, skin-to-skin contact, and good nutrition."

Khalid, who has conducted extensive research into mother and child health and has written international papers on the subject, said that lack of funding, corruption, and misplaced government priorities all contribute to insufficient investments in the training of midwives.

"Every year, 2.6 million newborns around the world do not survive their first month of life," said Fore. "One million of them die the day they are born."

After two Olympic golds, Hanyu wants to master quad axel

By Mari Yamaguchi
The Associated Press

TOKYO — After winning two Olympic gold medals, Yuzuru Hanyu of Japan wants to master a quadruple axel.

Hanyu, who at the PyeongChang Games became the first man to repeat as Olympic champion in 66 years, told a news conference he hopes to be the first, or at least one of the first, figure skaters to accomplish the 4 1/2 revolutions in competition. "No one in competition has achieved successful quadruple axel jumps and there are very few people actually practicing, even during training," Hanyu said. "I want to continue my challenge towards achieving my dream of successfully performing the quad axel, even if I may not be the first person to do so."

The usually articulate Hanyu struggled with questions at the Foreign Correspondent's Club of Japan, where he was asked to describe how difficult the jump is and to show something of it. He dropped his head to the podium, and said a quadruple axel is like jumping rope four times while revolving twice with one's eyes closed.

Even though top skaters have achieved success in five of the six quadruple jump varieties, only a few are practicing the more difficult quadruple axel, which requires an additional half-turn, he said.

Asked if he would go beyond that, Hanyu said he was interested.

Scientists say humans can go as far as quintuple, Hanyu said, and his childhood coach is encouraging him to go for it.

"I would like to give it a try in the future, if possible," he said. "A quintuple and half could be beyond my reach though."

He says those difficult jumps add to the artistry of a performance only when performed with excellent basic technique.

Hanyu, who was off ice until January while recovering from a right ankle injury, said his gold medal in PyeongChang was not easily won. The pain in the ankle was still only "20 to 30 percent" down from the worst.

"I bet my life for this gold medal," the 23-year-old Hanyu, who had just returned



QUADRUPLE AXEL DREAMS. Men's figure-skating gold medalist Yuzuru Hanyu of Japan competes at the PyeongChang Winter Olympics in Gangneung, South Korea. Hanyu became the first man to repeat as Olympic champion in 66 years at the PyeongChang Games. (Photo by Giuliano Bevilacqua/Abaca/Sipa USA/Sipa via AP Images)

home, told the packed news conference. "I am alive and here," he joked, "I am not dying."

Hanyu said he was proud to have repeated as champion in a sport traditionally dominated by Europeans.

"I believe it was a historic step forward that I was able to win the gold medal using Japanese music for my program," he said.

Conscious of his Japanese fans, Hanyu said he always eats rice to get energy for competition, instead of bread or pasta. But when he is not competing, he eats like most other youths and says he still stays in shape: "I go to McDonalds, I like carbonated soft drinks, and I even eat potato chips sometimes."

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