Letter of reference – Michael Langridge

Mike Langridge has impressed my ski boots off. There are so many deserving athletes, but I can vouch that Mike has really **earned** to be nominated for Canada’s most outstanding male athlete. The overall transformation I witnessed over the past few years has been truly inspiring. When I first met Mike in 2014, he didn’t have as much self-confidence and acted according to how people viewed him. He didn’t put much effort in what he did as he didn’t see the point. But Mike has a true gift in alpine ski. It was his passion for most of his life, but he didn’t think much of it until he won gold medals at the 2015 Provincial Games in Kamloops. I was recommended to be Mike’s coach leading to the National Games and this is when I got to witness his true transformation.

With the confidence boost he received from Provincials, Mike took his National’s training very seriously. He saw that he had a chance to accomplish much more and he enjoyed the new-found recognition from peers and coaches alike. With family, peer and coach support, he committed to the training regimen I provided and to the healthy diet his family recommended. Mike trained harder in the Club Fit program and he would also consistently show up every Saturday morning to train at the track with me throughout the summer of 2015. He committed to completing his training log every day and he would show me what he accomplished throughout the week. He would also be very honest about when he fell short in his dietary or sleeping habits and how he would be improving next time. Mike continued this dedication to training throughout the fall and winter season with his SpecialO sports, even though he didn’t have much access to a mountain to ski on. He had to travel 3 hours to Mount Washington to practice feeling the snow under his skis and to get used to skiing in different weather patterns. But the time came for Mike to reap the rewards of his dedication and positive attitude. Mike won all 3 gold medals at the 2016 National Games in Newfoundland.

Mike’s confidence kept increasing and he kept training hard. He became a role model in SpecialO Victoria by showing how hard work can lead to great accomplishments. He was getting interviews in the local paper and peers looked up to him for what he had accomplished. It all culminated in Mike going to the 2017 Winter World Games in Austria and winning gold medals in his two events. This led to more interviews and more exposure in SpecialO Victoria, including doing something very difficult for Mike: stand up in front of all athletes and coaches of SpecialO Victoria at the year-end banquet and delivering a lengthy speech on his experience at the World Games. Mike’s parents have been deeply affected by his accomplishments and what Special Olympics have done for Mike. His accomplishments have had ripple effects for his family and for his community. He has had the pleasure to get invited to a celebration by the Mayor of Esquimalt and also to the Parliament in Ottawa with fellow World Game athletes.

I’m extremely proud of Mike. Yes, he did extremely well in his ski boots but he has touched so many people in his own shoes. Mike exudes what an athlete is through and through. SpecialO has provided him the best gift…to believe in himself. There’s no telling what else Mike will accomplish in the future and who else he will inspire along the way.