

Continued from page 18

Working with former Olympian Steve Bauer when he joined the track program in Milton, Foley worked on technique and progressed quickly.

Within three years, he was representing his country in international competition. Now, he's set for his ultimate challenge, in Tokyo — with the qualifying round set for Monday (Aug. 2).

Foley, 22, is the youngest of a pursuit team who are all under the age of 26.

He helped Canada qualify a men's pursuit team for the first time in 30 years, doing so last fall.

"It's a timed event, so we have an idea of what we need to do," Foley said, "but it's also a complete mystery. At the last competition, we saw the world record drop by a massive amount."

At the 2018 Commonwealth Games, where Foley helped Canada win a bronze medal, Australia

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- Michael Foley

became the first team to break the three-minute, 50-second barrier in the four-kilometre race.

Then, at the world championships in February, Denmark lowered the record to 3:44.672. It had previously taken more than a decade to drop five seconds off the world record.

COVID-19 hasn't greatly impacted their training. Strict protocols are in place to make sure everyone is healthy, noted Foley.

"It (pandemic) doesn't affect my motivation," he

said. "Everybody understands what's at stake."

In what may have seemed a cruel turn of events for any ambitious athlete, Foley was named to the Olympic team just a day before Canada announced it would not be going to Tokyo in 2020.

Then 24 hours later, the Summer Games were postponed until this summer.

With a mental toughness beyond his years, Foley refused to be discouraged.

"It wasn't terrible timing," he said. "With everyone stepping up their game at worlds (in February), it gave us a chance to rethink our training philosophy."

Now Canada's team pursuit squad is ready to adopt Foley's simply mindset — put their heads down, dig deep and try to shave valuable seconds off their time.



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