**Laureus World Sports Awards 2017**

**MO FARAH - INTERVIEW**

*Mo Farah secured a historic ‘double double’, when he won*

*the 5,000 and 10,000 metres gold medals in the Rio Olympics,*

*repeating his success from London in 2012.*

*He is a Nominee for 2017 Laureus World Sportsman of the Year.*

**Laureus:** Six months on, looking back to Rio, what are your thoughts?

**Mo Farah:** Rio was a massive moment for me. To have all your hard work pay off like that on the ultimate stage was very rewarding – it made all those thousands of miles of training, the hard work and being away from my family for months at a time all worth it. Looking back, the atmosphere around Rio was intense and it made the Games quite dramatic. But I loved every minute. A completely different atmosphere to London 2012 but still amazing.

**Laureus:** Is there one particular moment from Rio that will remain in your mind for ever?

**Mo Farah:** It has to be that moment when I tripped in the 10k – that was honestly one ofthe hardest races of my life, so falling over nearly finished my chances there and then. The whole thing happened so quickly and all I could think about was all the hard work of training and sacrifice going to waste. I was lucky it happened quite early on and was able to get back up, to get my composure back and then get back up to speed for the final kick. When I crossed the line I was absolutely shattered - physically and emotionally exhausted. It was so great to have my wife Tania and daughter Rhianna in the crowd to celebrate with me afterwards as well.

**Laureus:** Before you went to Rio, did you think you could win both 5,000 and 10,000m?

**Mo Farah**: Leading up to the Olympics I was injury free and my training had gone well, so I went into the Games feeling good and confident. But four years is a long time in athletics. I’m getting older and it gets harder to recover between sessions, so I didn’t take anything for granted when it came to retaining my golds. At the same time, you have to believe you can do it. I kept reminding myself about the hard yards I’d put in – 120 miles a week, training longer and harder than my rivals. That gave me confidence. Plus, I had promised my kids Hussein and Rhianna that I’d win them a gold medal each, so there was no way I could let them down!

**Laureus:** What was your mood set going into each of the races?

**Mo Farah**: I felt confident. I knew there was expectation that I would be successful and was seen as the man to beat, which can be tough. There was also stuff in the media about the other athletes teaming up to beat me, which was obviously something I needed to factor in. But I knew I had trained hard so I believed in myself. The hardest point was before the 5k heats, when I was still very tired from the final of the 10k run and had to push my body very hard just to get to the final. For the 5K final I had to dig deep, but I knew that it was my final Olympic race and thought that if I performed to my best there was nobody who was going to beat me. It was an amazing feeling to come back to Britain with two more golds.

**Laureus:** What does being nominated for the Laureus World Sportsman of the Year Award mean to you?

**Mo Farah**: It’s a fantastic Award and to be nominated alongside some of the world’s best is a huge honour. Everyone in my category – Usain [Bolt], Andy [Murray] LeBron [James] – are at the top of their game and these guys will go down as true greats of their sport. To have my name amongst them is very special.

**Laureus:** Why are Laureus Awards so prestigious?

**Mo Farah**: Just look at the incredible people involved - these Awards have been bringing in the biggest names in sport since they were set up. There’s also a lot of great work supporting athletes and communities that is going on behind the scenes through the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation.

**Laureus:** Is it because great track athletes like Seb Coe, Michael Johnson, Edwin Moses are among the Academy Members who vote for the winners?

**Mo Farah:** Absolutely. Having Academy Members who’ve achieved such amazing things in their own right is one thing that really makes these Awards stand out. These people are legends, so to be recognised by them for my achievements is a big honour.

**Laureus:** Who was your role model?

**Mo Farah**: When I was growing up my hero was Muhammad Ali. I used to have posters of him on my bedroom walls. The Greatest! He stood for something and was proud of who he was. There was no compromise and he never backed down. I was so sad to hear he had passed away. He was a true icon.

**Laureus:** Do you have a sense of sporting history? Were you aware of the achievements of other great distance runners like Lasse Viren?

**Mo Farah**: Sure. When I was out in Rio I knew how close I was to matching Viren’s achievements. It’s crazy to think that we’re the only two people to win two successive distance doubles. Having that awareness of the history of your sport is important – there are heroes and stories that inspire you to push harder and try to create your own legacy. I’ve known Haile Gebrselassie for years and he’s been an inspiration.

**Laureus:** Many people are describing you as the greatest ever distance runner. What do you say to that?

**Mo Farah**: It’s every athletes’ dream to have your name in the history books. I never thought I would be up there alongside the sporting greats like Viren or Haile Gebrselassie. As a junior, I only thought one medal was possible, so to win four Olympic titles and five World Championship medals is a dream come true. I will leave it to others to judge where I rank against the others, but it’s great to be compared to some of the legends of the sport.

**Laureus:** What did being made a knight – Sir Mo Farah – mean to you?

**Mo Farah:** I was blown away when I was told the news. To receive an honour like that from the country that you’ve called home since the age of eight is special. I’ve been on an incredible journey and always been proud to win medals for the British people – they really have been behind me all the way. Without the support and love from them, my family and the team around me, none of it would have been possible.

**Laureus:** What are your career goals now, after Rio?

**Mo Farah:** I’m looking forward to a busy season, hopefully peaking at the World Championships in London this summer. I would love to end my track career by winning gold in the Olympic Stadium – going back to the place where I had my greatest ever moments during London 2012. After the World Championships, I’ll start looking at what I can do on the road and I’ve said before that I want to focus on the marathon. It’s a completely different discipline so it’s going to take time to learn about the event and understand what it takes, but it’s exciting to take on a new challenge. I’m very competitive and would love to try the marathon properly. Everyone knows I don’t do things by halves - so watch this space.

**Laureus:** Might you run in the marathon in Tokyo in 2020?

**Mo Farah**: Never say never.

BACKGROUND

Nominees for Laureus World Sportsman of the Year Award 2017

**Usain Bolt** (Jamaica) Athletics – won 100m, 200m and 4x100m gold medals for third straight Olympics

**Stephen Curry** (USA) Basketball – first unanimous winner of the NBA’s season MVP award

**Mo Farah** (UK) Athletics – won the Olympic 5k and 10k gold medal double for second time
**LeBron James** (USA) Basketball – led Cleveland Cavaliers to NBA Championship; was MVP in Finals

**Andy Murray** (UK) Tennis – won Olympic gold medal, Wimbledon, ATP Finals; became world No.1

**Cristiano Ronaldo** (Portugal) Football – won Euro 2016 with Portugal; Champions League with Real Madrid