

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Laura Garcia

Laura Garcia is a 24-year-old Mexican multimedia journalist. She is currently finishing her MA in Multimedia Journalism degree at the University of Kent. Laura works as a freelance photojournalist and writer for different websites, like Waging Non-Violence, Narco News, Mahindra Rise, Reporte Indigo in Mexico and the Sport Feed.

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BADMINTON 21/05/2012

TSF EXCLUSIVE: FROM NINJA SPY TO BADMINTON HERO



Irish Badminton player Scott Evans is ready for the Summer Games and hungry for more. His shinning career started at 14, but now a decade later, Evans has just begun to show what he's got.

"I'm not even close to being close to being finished," said the 24 year old.

It is not news that Evans has put the name of Ireland in a sport mainly dominated by Asian competitors. He won the Leicester U19 open at the tender age of 14 and then went on to win his first senior singles at 17. He holds 36 championship titles and is currently ranked 4th in Europe and 42nd in the world.

Being an athlete wasn't always his dream. Like all little boys as a kid he had crazy dreams and goals "I thought I would be a ninja spy. I was a big fan of The Karate Kid," he said.

Even at 24 he still has "heroes" he looks up to. He loves watching tennis legends Nadal and Federer play. He admires basketball players in America and has bought most of Lance Armstrong's books.

A couple of years later, he started playing football in school. His career in Badminton started early when he decided he felt he "would have more success in badminton" than in football.

"It is really challenging. It is the fastest racket sport in the world." he said. "In football there are a lot of other things. [In Badminton] it's only down to me."

A couple of years into his training, he decided to quit school and move to Denmark to be "a full time badminton player". His parents were not sold on the idea at the start, but after a while, they understood his dream.

"For me, it was quite easy to quit school," he said. "My parents needed more time."

Now, they never miss any of his matches and watch attentively on their TV to see their son shine.

But it has not all been an easy road. Evans has had "quite a few of those periods" where he has

thought about quitting. November 2011 was the latest challenge he had to overcome. After he lost the quarterfinals of a tournament he disagreed with the umpire and argued. Evans became the 4th player in the history of Badminton to get a black card.

"I've got a lot of passion. I find it so difficult to keep my feelings in," he said. "I felt cheated and said some things to him I shouldn't have."

The other players served with a "black card" have been banned for up to a year from playing or asked to pay substantial fines. Fortunately, Evans got off easy and has learned from his mistake.

"It was unbelievably difficult, but I have changed for the better," he said. "I don't want to get in trouble again."

In times of uncertainty, then and now, his brother is a big help. Two years his senior, he has been Evans' rock through it all.

"He is why I am what I am and where I am in my career," said Evans. "He is my best friend and he is also my brother."

Evans has even named his new puppy "Mario" in honour of childhood games with his brother.

"I was always Mario and he was Luigi, so I named the puppy thinking of that," he said.

His brother works in banks and has a busy life of his own, but whenever Evans gets home they don't miss an opportunity to hang out together.

"We just enjoy being around each other. We have so much fun together," he said.

Music is also a big part of his life. Before tournaments David Guetta is a "good beat to get ready to" or "some crazy dance music to get high on energy with." His favourite bands are U2, Coldplay, Snow Patrol.

"My music comes with my moods," he said. "It's such a big part of me."

Armed with his music and the dream of Olympic gold Scott Evans pushes through day by day. A typical day starts at 7:20 in the morning. He wakes up, walks his puppy "Mario", eats some breakfast, and watches the news.

At 9AM he heads for his first training session. After a couple of hours he goes home to eat, rest and walk his doggy again. Afternoon training sessions vary from 3-7pm depending on the day, but by 11PM the Olympic athlete is ready in bed to get his beauty sleep and wake up fresh the next morning.

He has no regrets for the life he has chosen and there is nothing he "feels like is missing." So after a rough 2011, a black card, a swift recovery and loads of training, Evans is gearing up for London2012 and the years to come. Hopefully we will hear a lot more from this shining Irish star, during the Summer and for many years yet.

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