

USA Roller Sports Rewind to not that long ago, when Pan Am Coach, Renee Hildebrand, and three USA Roller Sports athletes (Kelsey Helman, Jonathan Blair, Herbie Harbison) were amazing representatives at the 2019 Pan American Games in Lima, Peru.

They had this to say about their experience:

“This was my third Pan Am Games and I love that roller sports is still included since we are not an Olympic Sport. I think this event is what keeps my hopes alive that someday our athletes can make it to the Olympics without switching sports. Or even better, be both winter and summer Olympians if they like both ice and roller speedskating!! This year I took three athletes who had never attended the Games before and they had a great experience! Staying in the Pan American Village with all the other athletes, many of whom are Olympic and World Champions in their respective sports, gives the feeling of excitement and importance. The speedskating events were extremely well organized with track and weather reports given daily prior to the first bus pulling out of the village. The races ran exactly according to schedule and there was good officiating. The only negative aspect of this trip was the long bus rides to the venue. We always had police escort on the way to the track and usually made it in about an hour or so. However, we often didn't get the escort on the return trip and it took up to two and a half hours! The American athletes that participated competed against the best skaters from South and Central America, the majority of whom were World Champions! The bronze medal in Senior ladies 10K elimination race earned by Kelsey was monumental! It was Kelsey's first international medal and it was a different race than she's ever skated before due to having only 11 skaters in an elimination race. I told her she had to skate from the front and not to be afraid to lead. She did a great job of listening and she kept going right back up to the front when she got shuffled by the pack. I think she even surprised herself at how well she did!! It is an important medal for USA Roller Sport, as we need the continued support of the USOC.” **Renee Hildebrand**

“My experience at the Lima Pan American games was great, I really felt honored to be a part of the games to represent my country. I enjoyed the city, the venue, and all the people that were involved. Huge thanks to the USOPC and everyone who made it possible.” **Jonathan Blair**

“My experience at the Pan American Games in Lima, Perú was really amazing, and a dream experience. This will be a memorable trip to remember for sure. After being the only girl to qualify, I wanted to make sure I went out there to compete at the best of my ability in all three races. Each race got better & better for me. I was able to take home my first individual bronze medal in the 10k elimination race for the USA. This trip will be unforgettable. But big thanks to the USOPC and others who were able to put this together for us athletes.” **Kelsey Helman**

“My experience at the Pan American Games has been a dream come true. It's always an honor and privilege to wear our nation's colors and represent our country. Although I'm leaving without a medal, I feel as if my skating exemplified the traits of Americans across the country - tough in the face of adversity, determined, and tenacious.” **Herbie Harbison**