

He has collected more than 20 medals in the sport of athletics, at first, He didn't know about track and field or Athletics, so where did he get the inspiration from? How did he do it? how does he stay focus?

Primo's Early life

Primo Higa hails from Naram village, located in the western region of Wainoni within the East Makira Constituency. He was born on June 15th, 1972, which places him at the age of 50.

Primo's educational background includes completing only up to grade two at Rama School in West Wainoni. However, he later had the opportunity to attend Stuyvenberg Vocational Training Centre in Star Harbour, which is a school owned by the Catholic Church. It was at this institution that Primo had the privilege of being taught by Brother George Venderson, a late expatriate from Holland, who was his teacher during his time at the vocational centre.

Primo's introduction to the world of athletics occurred in the 1990s when he first met Brother George, who introduced him and other schoolmates to the sport. Brother George provided them with training and encouraged them to participate in competitions. Primo's first competitive event in athletics was a 21-kilometre race that took place during Makira Day.

Primo's natural talent in athletics became apparent during his first trial, where he was selected to run in a 21-kilometre race in Kirakira, which he won. Recognizing his potential, Brother George provided him with invaluable advice that has stayed with him throughout his career. Brother George emphasized the importance of focus and discipline, advising Primo that these qualities would be crucial if he wanted to achieve success as an athlete.

Primo's passion for athletics was ignited during his time at Stuyvenberg Vocational Training Centre. His intense interest in the sport motivated him to travel to Honiara to compete in the Easter road race, where he finished in an impressive third place.

International Career Begins

Primo's consistent training and dedication to athletics enabled him to make significant strides in his performance, which ultimately led to him being selected to represent his country in the 1993 Vanuatu Mini Games. Despite feeling inexperienced and unsupported, Primo persevered and placed fourth in both the 10,000-meter and 5000-meter races.

Primo understands the value of consistency in achieving success in athletics. Therefore, regardless of the outcome of any competition, he always remains dedicated to his training upon returning from championships.

“every time I return from championships I always Consistent in my training whether I win or lose in any competition “

Primo's talents in athletics did not go unnoticed, and he was invited to participate in several trials held in Papua New Guinea (PNG). During these trials, Primo performed remarkably well, taking first and second place. As a result, he was awarded an Australian scholarship for track and field in Canberra, where he trained for three months. In 1997, Primo represented his country in the Mini Games held in American Samoa, where he demonstrated his athletic prowess by earning four

medals across different categories, including the 10,000-metre race, the 5000-metre race, the 3000-metre steeplechase, and a full marathon spanning 42 kilometres.

Primo's athletic achievements extend far beyond his success at the Vanuatu Mini Games. He has also competed in five South Pacific Games (SPG) and six Mini Games held across the Pacific region, including events in Tahiti, Guam, American Samoa, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Fiji, Tonga, and Vanuatu. Furthermore, Primo had the opportunity to represent his country at the Atlanta Georgia Olympic Games in 1996, where he finished in seventh place in his heat. The Atlanta Games were the 23rd modern Olympic Games, and Primo's participation at this prestigious event highlights the extent of his athletic prowess.

“During the Olympic games timing is everything I finished 7th in my heat it gives me new experience, having witnessed high quality of performance in other international athletes motivates me to keep striving to be better in my career.”

Primo Higa's career as an athlete has seen him represent his country at various international sporting events. He has participated in two Olympic Games, as well as the Commonwealth Games held in Spain in 1999. His selection to represent his country at these prestigious events is a testament to his skill and dedication as an athlete.

Achievements and Motivation

Throughout his illustrious career as an athlete, Primo Higa has amassed an impressive collection of medals. He has earned a total of 45 medals, including 12 gold medals, 15 silver medals, and 18 bronze medals. Primo's consistent performances at various international competitions have cemented his status as one of the most successful athletes from his country.

“My biggest motivation in life is the very words from late brother George Venderson he said if you want to be successful in your career discipline yourself and stay focus”

Primo Higa's unwavering focus and discipline in his athletic career has brought him immense success and numerous opportunities to travel and compete around the world. Athletics has been a passion for Primo and he has been fortunate enough to represent his country in various international competitions across the Pacific region, United States of America, and Europe. His dedication and commitment to the sport have not only earned him medals but also unforgettable experiences and memories that he cherishes to this day.

“In my career I travel a lot to many countries for competition and trials and gain more experience in the bigger stage like the Olympics.”

“I abstain from social life and chewing of betel nut, eating healthy local food helps a lot in my career.”

Primo Higa firmly believes in the power of a positive mindset and its ability to produce favourable results in any competition. Unfortunately, injuries ultimately forced him into early retirement from his athletic career. Primo's last participation was in the Sydney Olympics in 2000, after which he decided to hang up his shoes. Despite retiring, he remains passionate about athletics and continues to inspire and encourage young people to participate in sports. Primo has taken it upon himself to gather young people in his community of Wainoni and train them in athletics, hoping to cultivate the same love and dedication for the sport that he has.

Primo Higa strongly believes that sports can take anyone anywhere in the world if they dedicate themselves and stay focused on their game. He engages with many young people in his community and surrounding areas, giving talks about his career and urging them to be like him if they want to become successful athletes in any sport. Despite retiring from his sporting career after participating in the Sydney Olympics in 2000, he still has a passion for motivating and encouraging young people to get involved in athletics or any other sport. Primo gathers young people around Wainoni and trains them, and he sees it as his way of giving back to the sport that has given him so many opportunities and experiences.

Primo is committed to mentoring and training young athletes in the West Wainoni communities, and he believes that sporting institutes in the country should collaborate with experienced athletes like him to provide coaching and motivation to budding athletes. Currently, he is coaching the athletics team in their preparation for the upcoming 2023 Pacific Games. Primo's dedication to supporting young athletes shows his passion for sports and his desire to inspire the next generation of athletes in the Solomon Islands.

As a veteran athlete and coach, Primo Higa emphasizes the importance of discipline and focus to aspiring young athletes. He believes that these two values are crucial in achieving success in any sport. Through his coaching and motivational talks, he continues to inspire and help young people in their athletic pursuits. Primo also calls for closer collaboration between sporting institutes and community coaches to support athletes in their career development. His dedication and passion for athletics serve as a shining example for the younger generation to follow.

By Ezmie Oge.