

Petrova Not Worried Over Medal

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Petrova returning the ball during a match Saturday in Carlsbad, California. **Alex Gallardo**

CARLSBAD, California — Russian tennis player Nadia Petrova is aiming for an Olympic medal in London but insists she will not be devastated if she fails to win one.

Russia has a successful Olympic history; Elena Dementieva, Dinara Safina and Vera Zvonareva won the gold, silver and bronze medal in singles, respectively, at the 2008 Beijing Games.

“The Russian mentality is if you are going to the Olympics, you have got to be winning medals, and failure is not acceptable,” Petrova said from the Mercury Insurance Open in Carlsbad, California.

“In Fed Cup we have the same mentality. Russians are a bit hard on themselves, and we have high expectations. We want to achieve a lot of our goals in our careers.”

The Fed Cup, is the international tennis team competition for women.

In 2008, former world No. 3 Petrova missed the cut because her ranking was too low.

This year she is ranked No. 21 and was named to the team along with Maria Sharapova, Zvonareva and Maria Kirilenko, with whom she will also play doubles.

“I’m excited,” she said. “I missed Beijing, but not by much. But that year we had four players in the top 10, and it was almost impossible.

“I remember playing a tournament in Cincinnati and watching it on TV. Of course, I wished I was there. And I was a little frustrated because I had to play small tournament and they were there, but I was happy for them.”

Petrova doubts that any nation is going to sweep the medals stand again because tennis has become increasingly international, and there are no real powerhouse nations left.

The top 12 players in the WTA rankings are all from different countries. A former Grand Slam semifinalist, Petrova said Russia is sending a weaker team to London, but she added that every other country is too.

“I don’t think it will ever happen again in the history of tennis because we don’t have so many big names from the same country again like [Americans Lindsay] Davenport, [Jennifer] Capriati, [Monica] Seles, and the Williams sisters. No one has a really strong third player.”

Petrova, 30, is thrilled to have made the team because she acknowledges that it is unlikely that she will still be playing singles in 2016.

Her own chances in London aside, Petrova suspected that her country would be upset if the players failed to collect a medal in the women’s Olympic tennis.

“I’m sure something will be said in the press. For them, it’s hard to understand how you went and didn’t win a medal, but they don’t understand the whole picture,” she said.

“I won’t be disappointed if I leave the Olympics without a medal as long as I give my best effort. For me, life goes on.”

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