

Ice Princess

An interview with Sara Stumpf, UAE's six-year-old ice skating champion

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How did you get into ice skating at such a young age?

In 2016, I went to the Dubai Ice Rink for the first time. I expressed a wish to be able to skate without the support of the 'penguin' so my parents registered me with the Dubai Ice Rink Academy. I took my first lesson on 25 March 2016, I was four at that time. By my sixth birthday, I was dancing on ice.

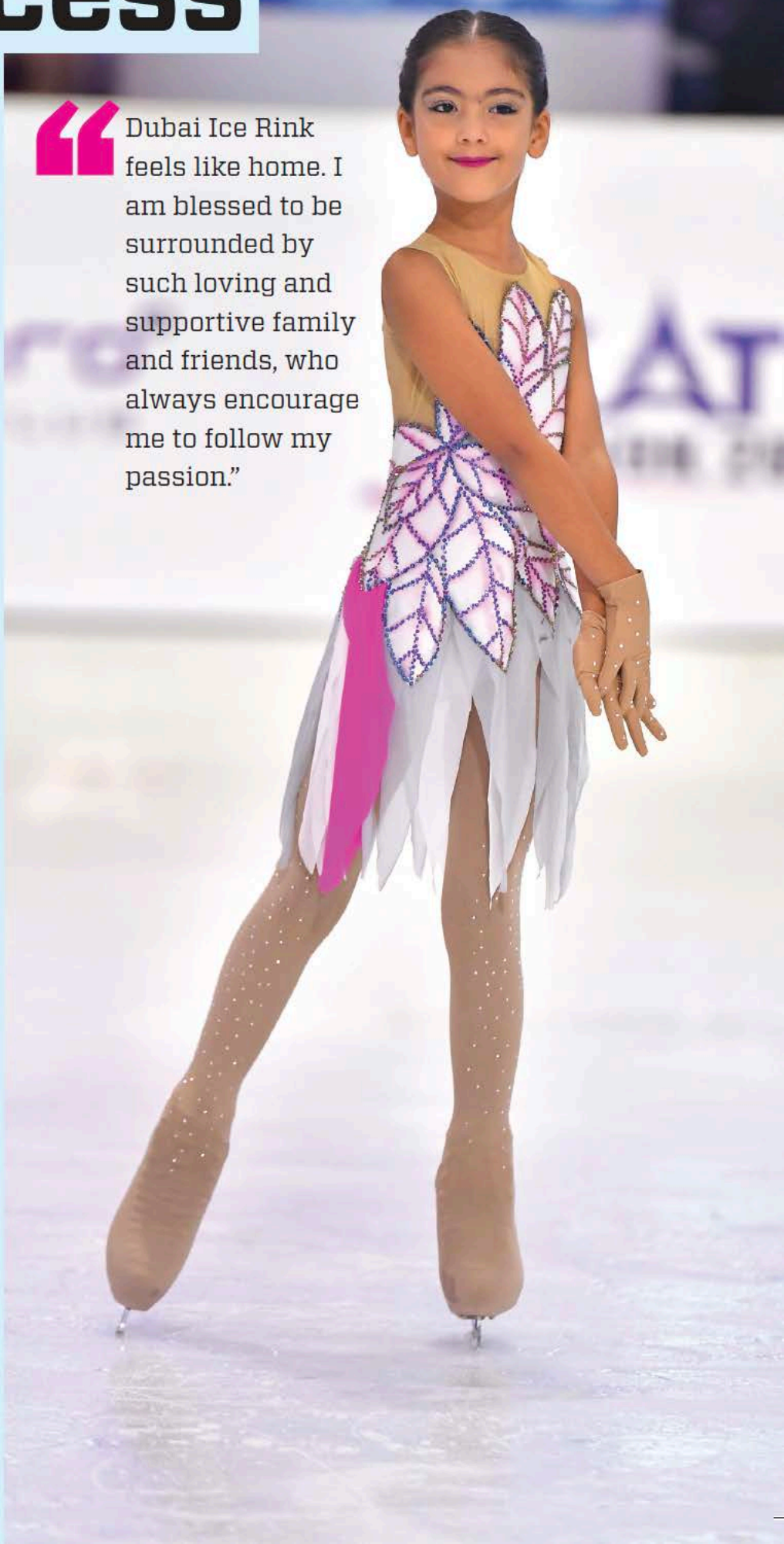
What according to you are the qualities of a good ice-skater?

To get better at any sport, you have to practise a lot. You have to be focused, only then you can stay safe. Be a good listener. But mostly, you have to really want to do it and stay motivated.

You represented the UAE on an international level at Skate Bangkok 2018. How was the experience?

The event saw participation from 300 skaters from seven countries and 14 ice rinks. I was so proud to be able to represent my team, Dubai Ice Rink. My coach, Royd Valino (who also competed) and I were the only skaters from the UAE. Everyone was so welcoming and helpful, and it felt very special to be there. I took part in eight events

“Dubai Ice Rink feels like home. I am blessed to be surrounded by such loving and supportive family and friends, who always encourage me to follow my passion.”





and won four gold, two silver and two bronze medals. I also won the trophy for the Best Performance. In the end, I was pleased that our hard work paid off. What a wonderful feeling!

Who are your idols?

I spend a lot of time watching different skaters and various styles of skating. This year, I was fortunate to be part of the masterclasses with world-renowned skaters like Misha Ge, Gary Beacom and Zahra Lari. I also got a chance to meet many coaches from across the globe, who gave me some useful tips and inspired me to get better at skating. However, my everyday inspiration comes from my coach. He is always pushing me to be better and never gives up on me.

What are your future dreams and goals?

I'd love to represent Dubai at the World Figure Skating Championships. I'm proud to be a Dubai resident and I'd like Dubai to be proud of me too. I love animals and would like to be a vet. They can't speak for themselves and I'd like to look after them.

Who do you turn to for constant support and motivation?

My mum, dad and baby brother. My parents make sure that I never miss a practice session. My teachers from Swiss International Scientific School, Dubai (SISD), coaches and teammates from the Dubai Ice Rink Team have been great guides and mentors too. Lastly, I'd like to give a shout out to all my friends and family in Germany, England and Dubai as well. Thank you for the encouragement.

What kind of movies or videos do you enjoy watching?

Christmas movies always have snow in them and so I like them. Other than that, I love to watch the ice-skating videos of performances by various figure skaters. Those are the kind of movies, I see myself in.

(Sara Stumpf is a student at Swiss International Scientific School, Dubai)

