



"I put down my personal goal"

"I can laugh and move on even if someone hits me in the back of my head on the street." When I asked Ko Young-joon (22), a midfielder of the Pohang Steelers in the K League 1, how he felt these days, he returned.

He played as a member of "Hwang Sun-hong-ho" at the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games, which ended earlier this month, and returned with a strong performance of one goal and four assists.

He was the only Pohang player to be selected for the national team, and he was also from Pohang's youth team, Pochuldong Elementary School, Pochul Middle School, and Pochul High School, which made Pohang fans shrug even more.

Ko Young-joon, who returned after being away for more than a month for the Asian Games since early September, met with Pohang fans again through the 34th round (1-1 draw) of the K League 1 against Incheon United at Pohang Steel Yard on the 20th.

He played full time and enjoyed the ground enthusiastically throughout, drawing cheers from Pohang fans with a "storming run" once in the first half.

He caught the ball that flowed after Incheon's set piece in the midfield of his camp and started running as it was and rushed to the penalty arc of Incheon's camp. Incheon's defense cut off just before shooting and did not even score, but it was a scene where his strengths were shown.

Ko Young-joon, who met after the game, said, "I thought the defense would clear it while I was running, but the road opened up. To be honest, it was hard, but I ran more because the Incheon player who was following me was my friend Min Kyung-hyun, so I didn't want to be caught, he said. "If I went in, it would have been a 'life goal,' but I got caught at the end." "I felt pressure ahead of the game because my performance has to be better when I'm there than when I'm not there. Coach Kim Ki-dong jokingly said, "Five people came back (from the Asian Games) in Jeonbuk, and you have to do five servings because we are alone," adding, "I tried to play as hard as possible because I was light in body and confident."

"When I came back from winning a gold medal, I was immersed in thoughts alone, or I've never made an impression," he said, adding that he became serious when he talked about Pohang's performance.

Pohang went winless (two draws and one loss) without scoring in the last three games of the regular round. In the first game of Final A against Incheon, where Ko Young-joon returned, Zeka scored a goal with a penalty kick, but the winless continued.

Ko Young-joon said, "I just wanted to win because the team is going to an important period rather than thinking about scoring a goal," adding, "So the result is even more regrettable." Pohang is trailing Ulsan, the leader, in the K League 1 with four games left, and is ahead of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Champions League (ACL) group stage and the Korea Football Association (FA) Cup semifinals.

Ko Young-joon, who has eight goals and one assist in the league this season, said, "I've put down my personal goals such as attack points for a while," adding, "I want to be helpful to the team somehow."

"In the K League 1, we should not be caught up with Gwangju FC (currently in third place), and Ulsan is in a position to follow. "If you win just one game, you will go to the final, and the ACL is also an important stage," he said. "I don't want to miss either one. I want to bring good results with 'power pitching,' he stressed.

"There are so many games that I've never seen such a schedule before. "It's a murderous schedule," he said, "I hope I can win all the competitions." I will prepare well for the games that will follow, paying attention to recovery so that I can catch the opportunity when it comes."

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