

Covid – 19: Were the French Athletes in Wuhan Contaminated in October ?

Description

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These are words that did not make any noise at the time. Yet they could offer a vital insight into the difficult search for the origins of Covid-19. During an interview given on March 25 to the JT of the local television channel Loire 7, to evoke the news related to the postponement of the Olympic Games in Tokyo, Elodie Clouvel, the world champion of modern pentathlon, slipped a valuable answer. This testimony could be as disturbing as the retroactive analysis of tests held at the Bondy hospital, which identified a carrier of the virus as early as December 27 in France.

Elodie Clouvel had just been asked about her possible concern to consider a summer in Japan, “on a

continent where the disease has been declared". "No, because I think that with Valentin (Ed : Belaud, his companion, also pentathlete) we have already had the coronavirus, finally Covid-19", she then launched.

"We weren't talking about it yet"

And the young woman of 31 years to explain : "We were in Wuhan for the World Military Games at the end of October. And, in fact, it turns out that after that we all got sick. Valentin missed three days of practice. I've been sick too. [...] I've had things I haven't had before. We didn't worry more than that because we weren't talking about it yet."

His conclusion is also unequivocal : "there are many athletes of the World Military Games who have been very sick. We had contact with the military doctor recently who told us: I think you did because there are many people in this delegation who have been sick."

As a reminder, until today, the first recognized case of Covid-19, in China, dates back to November 17. The World Military Games-nearly 10,000 athletes representing 100 nations – were held from 18 to 27 October. They had already appeared in the timeline of events when Zhao Lijian, spokesman for the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, hinted on Twitter on March 12 that the coronavirus may have been introduced by the U.S. delegation that participated.

Several testimonials

This Tuesday, BFMTV also reported, under cover of anonymity, the testimony of one of the 281 French athletes present in Wuhan and "fell ill as well as several members of the French delegation" on his return.

Elodie Clouvel, for his part, did not wish to follow up on our requests to discuss the subject again. His media release of March 25 would not have necessarily been in the taste of the military hierarchy. Since then, most athletes have been asked to stop responding to journalists on the subject. As many have told us : instructions have been given to refer questions to the Directorate of communications of the armies. Tricolour athletes, present in Wuhan, had received, a few weeks ago, an appeal from the army to reassure them. "We are told: there is no risk, you left on October 28 and the virus arrived on November 1," says one of them.

In such a context, the French have no reason to have been the only athletes potentially contaminated. Many sick people have been listed in the Swedish delegation of about 100 members, some of whom suffered from severe fevers on their return. "But none of the people tested gave a positive result," the Swedish Armed forces communication service told NSD in mid-April.

Website l'Essentiel reports the testimonies of some Luxembourg sportsmen. Swimmer Julien Henx remembers an infrared body temperature control on the descent of the aircraft. Weightlifter Bob Bertemes remembers that "in the village they cleaned everything twice a day and at midnight they switched to cleaning the streets ". Before adding, about swimmer Raphael Stacchiotti: "he was sick there. Since then, he has been shot and told that he was the first case ."

This Wednesday evening, the ministry assured, in a statement, that there had not been, "within the French delegation of JMME, cases declared to the army health service (SSA) of influenza or hospitalization, during and on the return from JMME, that may be similar, posteriori, to cases of Covid-

19.”