



Juggling is second nature to windsurfer Kendall

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WELLINGTON, July 15 (Reuters) - Juggling the different demands of life has become second nature to New Zealand windsurfer Barbara Kendall as she prepares for her fifth Olympics.

A hard training schedule, international travel and the needs of her two young children have all been programmed into the three-times world champion's run-up to next month's Beijing Games.

"It took me two months to work out what exactly I wanted to do for these last two months," Kendall, 40, told Reuters by telephone from Auckland.

"Just juggling all the ideas and talking to the other girls to see who was going to be in China to train with and just working out all the little details.

"I had to make sure all the little bits that worried me were taken care of and that I'd be happy with it and then I'll be fine (on the water).

"There are a lot of logistics involved. You want to get it just right as well, because if you blow it, that's it."

Kendall, Olympic champion in 1992, had just completed a 60-minute run around the hills of Auckland and was organising visas for herself and her husband Shayne ahead of a regatta at Qingdao, the venue for the Olympic sailing programme.

She also had to arrange visas for her two children, Samantha and Aimee, who will join their parents for the last five days of the Games.

"It's a bit of a complicated itinerary actually as we juggle children and comings and goings. And our sanity," the former dance school manager added, laughing.

"It's like that a lot, just trying to work out what is best so you feel like you're being a mother, I couldn't just up and leave them. There is just no way I could do that.

"It's too hard emotionally and so it's just juggling what is the most amount of time you want to leave them."

BROTHER'S EXAMPLE

Now that she was on her final preparations, Kendall said she could concentrate on adding to her impressive Olympic record.

She won New Zealand's only gold medal at the 1992 Barcelona Games, following the example of her brother Bruce who was Olympic windsurfing champion in 1988.

Barbara added a silver in Atlanta in 1996 and bronze at Sydney in 2000. She finished fifth in Athens.

She has also won three world titles, with the 2002 win in Thailand coming just months after the birth of Samantha, and has been named New Zealand's sportswoman of the year three times.

Despite Beijing being only weeks away, Kendall said she was not getting excited about competing. The length of the regatta at a Games meant she rarely did.

"I don't think I have really been excited for the Olympics. You get the odd little excitement buzz and I get that now but really you're going into something that is quite intense.

"If our regatta was like two days then you'd have a lot more adrenaline going but knowing that our regatta lasts for 10 days then it's going to be a real mental toughness to be able to stay within that focus or zone for 10 days.

"That's never an exciting thought, knowing that you're going to be keeping yourself in a mental zone where you're stress (free) and calm but so focused that you're ready to go at the drop of a hat.

"That's one of the hardest things in sailing."

LIGHTER CONDITIONS

Conditions in Qingdao would be difficult, she said. "It's just not a windy spot. If we're lucky enough to have a typhoon come past then we'll have some great sailing. If it doesn't, there is going to be a lot of waiting around for a decent amount of wind." "It's such a tidal place that if we don't get enough wind then we could be fighting against the current."

Kendall said she had been training specifically for the lighter conditions to try to get her weight down while retaining the strength needed to pump the sail in the conditions.

"Everyone knows that it is going to be light conditions so that is what everyone is going to be working on. They're not my favourite conditions but I'm not too bad in it."

No-one should write her off because of the conditions, however, she said.

"Maybe they (other competitors) think I'm too old," she said laughing again.

"They'll probably be thinking the winds are too light and that you have to be really fit and strong and that I'm too old and won't be able to recover, well, ha ha ha, guess what?"

Kendall, who turns 41 on Aug. 30, said she had not ruled out the possibility of competing in London in 2012.

"I haven't written it off, no. I'm never going to say never because you just don't do that," she said.

"But who knows? I'll be 44 or 45 and there won't be anyone that old. I'd like to but it depends on what happens."