



## New Zealand team brings barista to Beijing

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MELBOURNE, July 23 (Reuters) - New Zealand's Olympic team are taking no chances when it comes to getting a good cup of coffee at the Games and have brought their own barista to Beijing to satisfy athletes' caffeine cravings.

"We have had a coffee machine for the past couple of Games," New Zealand chef de mission Dave Currie told Reuters by telephone from Beijing.

"We've (support staff) normally made it ourselves but it's not really our focus and we're not that bloody good at it anyway."

Currie said a New Zealand Olympic Committee (NZOC) sponsor had released one of their employees, Julianne Frith, to help satisfy the 182-strong team's caffeine cravings.

"The feedback we got from the last couple of games is that athletes want good coffee," he said.

"Getting good coffee in Athens (in 2004), you just couldn't, so one of the sponsors ran a competition and this young woman had to have a test and face a selection panel and she came up trumps."

The 21-year-old is expected to make up to 500 cups of coffee a day, though Currie said he did not expect any problems with caffeine being on the World Anti-Doping Agency's monitoring list after previously being a banned substance.

"If you inject yourself with a hell of a lot of it, it is going to come up, but they tell me you wouldn't be competing if you were drinking enough cups of coffee to be over the limit.

"It is an extraordinary amount and athletes are very sensitive to what may produce a positive test.

"We have had no concerns in the past and have no concerns now that somebody will drink 55 cups of coffee, or whatever it is, before competing."

Currie, who arrived in Beijing last week, said he and the first wave of support staff had begun turning the New Zealand section of the village into a slice of home with a large Maori carving and piece of pounamu (jade) adorning the entrance.

"Basically the support staff are there to create an inspirational environment for the team," he added. (Editing by Peter Rutherford)

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