

Publication: Evening Herald - Dublin  
Date: 29 August 2017



## Olympic sailing star Annalise Murphy tells **Laura Lynott** how she is keeping her spirits up after a devastating injury

DESPITE missing the World Championships due to a knee injury, Ireland's favourite sailor is keeping her spirits up by baking and focusing on going for gold at the next Olympics.

It's just over a year since Annalise Murphy (27) claimed a silver medal at the Rio Olympics.

Although she has had to deal with huge disappointment since the - injuring her knee just as she was due to fly out to the

World Championships in the Netherlands - the fighting spirit hasn't left her.

"Winning silver at the Olympics was one of the best moments of my life - everything went to plan. You always make mistakes, but it worked and it was a pretty great feeling," she said.

Earlier this month, however - and on the anniversary of her Olympic success - Rathfarnham athlete Annalise had to deal with the "devastation" of

injuring her knee and missing the competition she had set her heart on competing in.

Such disappointment is bitterly difficult for any sports-woman or man to deal with, but Annalise has her own curious way of getting beyond the stress of injury - by baking cakes.

"I've been baking since I

returned from the Olympics," she said.

"I wanted to do something else af-

ter the tournament because so much of my life had been about the Olympics, so I went away for three months to the Ballymaloe Cookery School in Cork.

"I did a cookery course and I really enjoyed cooking, and particularly baking.

### THERAPEUTIC

"I've been trying to stay busy and not think about missing the World Championships too much, so I'm baking friends cakes and cooking healthy foods like curries and Mexican and Thai dishes.

"I love making bread. I find it therapeutic having to knead bread. It's hard missing out, but I have to look at this like I've been sailing competitively for eight years on the circuit and this was the first time I had to pull out - it's my first injury.

"Only recently I'd been bragging about how I'd never had an injury. It's hard, but you have to be positive and not let it bother you too much."

Little-by-little, Annalise is working her way back to fitness. She realised it was better to

rest and recover with her knee and prepare for the next major event - the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo - than risk further injury.

"It's frustrating not being there, as I thought I was sailing really well, but I have to look at the big picture," she said.

"It's just three years until the next Olympics, so that's my priority - it's a huge tour-

be better soon. It could be another few weeks or months, and then I'll be back in the gym and on the water again."

Annalise is a major Irish hope for the 2020 Games in Tokyo and she has a lot of support.

Sport Ireland has been backing her since her teenage years and sponsors Mercedes and Liberty Insurance are right behind her too.

"I'm really lucky with the support and sponsorship I have," she said.

Annalise has already helped inspire a whole new cohort of young women entering the world of competitive sailing.

Many girls were struck by the image of the elated young woman when she claimed silver in Rio, just after the Irish boxing team's journey ended in utter misery.

Her down-to-earth attitude won her many fans and followers hoping to achieve similar success.

"A whole group of girls are coming up now. They're saying to themselves, 'If Annalise can do it, so can we,'" she said.

"They're training hard and

it's great to see I've managed to show what's possible.

"For a long time we didn't know if we would compete against bigger countries, or if we had a chance, because Ireland is such a small country and we don't have the budget of big sailing nations.

"It's been very cool to prove you can do it without anything - just lots and lots of belief.

"Being a teenage girl is difficult, but taking part in a sport, whether that's sailing, tennis, boxing or rugby, whatever, it's a really good way to make friends, stay active and be confident.

"I'm very tall at six-foot-one, and I was self-conscious of the fact I was a lot taller than a lot

of girls.

"Sometimes I'd slouch round the place, then I realised being tall was a big advantage in sailing.

### EMBRACE

"I thought I didn't like being tall, but it's made me good at my sport. I learnt to embrace it rather than wish I was smaller.

"And I'm trying to be a good role model and promote being involved in sport and staying healthy and active - I want to inspire young kids to see they can do it too.

"Sport helped me become more confident and I made so many amazing friends and I don't ever sail for the glory - it's because I love it."

Annalise is single, and she says that being someone's girlfriend isn't a priority for her right now.

"I've just been so busy. Trying to find the time to have a boyfriend is hard when I don't even have the time for myself," she said.

"I've a little more free time on my hands right now so I just need to find a guy who can keep up with me."

**'I thought I didn't like being tall, but it's made me good at my sport'**



Publication: Evening Herald - Dublin  
Date: 29 August 2017