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Injured Annalise bakes her way back to health

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OLYMPIC hero Annalise Murphy is keeping her spirits high while out with injury – by baking bread and cakes.

Despite missing the World Championships due to a knee injury, the Dublin sailor is focusing on going for gold at the next Olympics.

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

Although she has had to

deal with huge disappointment since – 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 – the Rathfarnham athlete 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 difficult for any sports person to deal with, but Murphy has her own way of getting beyond the stress of injury – baking cakes.

"I've been baking since I returned from the Olympics,"

she said. "I wanted to do something else after 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 Co Cork.

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

"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," she explained.

Little by little, Murphy

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 tournament and I'm taking it one step at a time.

"As long as I'm enjoying it, that's what matters. I love my sport, and every time I go out I enjoy it – I never find it a chore.

"I'm not sure how long it'll take to heal, but hopefully it'll 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."

Murphy is a major Irish hope for the 2020 games.

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

"I'm really lucky with the support and sponsorship I

have," she said.

Murphy 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.

