



IT'S GAMES ON

NINA CURTIS IS ON HER WAY TO LONDON WITH A SHOT AT BRINGING HOME A GOLD MEDAL, WRITES **AMY HOSKING**

NEWPORT champion sailor Nina Curtis has left the northern beaches ahead of her toughest challenge yet — the London Olympic Games.

The 24-year-old has already conquered the match racing world championships in Sweden and received medals at several World Cup events — but last week she flew to London with the hope of an Olympic gold.

"I can't wait, it's going to be an incredible experience," she said.

"It's been a four-year journey so it's exciting to see it all come together."

Curtis was selected in a squad of 20 in 2008 and has made it through four years of gruelling competition to be chosen for the Australian women's match racing team.

"It has been fiercely competitive, especially the last two years. I was competing against who I would consider some of the best sailors in Australia," she said.

"To be honest I didn't let myself believe I was going to be selected. I just tried to keep my head down and sail to my full potential and I guess that worked for me in the end."

It is the first year a women's match racing event will be held at the Olympics. It is also the last, as it hasn't been included in the sailing schedule for Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

"It's an incredible opportunity to be

Nina Curtis can't wait for the Olympics.
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Nina (second from right) and crew at the world match racing championships.

the one and only women's match racing team going to the Games," Curtis said.

The team is made up of Curtis as middle, Olivia Price as skipper and Lucinda Whitty as bow. Their recent results have been very promising — bronze in the Nation's Cup in 2011, and a silver and a bronze at two World Cup events this year. And now they are aiming even higher.

"We're hoping for a gold medal, obviously, and we've been sailing really well in our lead-up so medals are a reality at this stage," Curtis said.

The team has two more regattas

before the Olympics — the Sail for Gold Regatta at the Olympic venue and the world championships in Sweden.

"For us it will really show us where we're at against the rest of the world," Curtis said. They are a young team, as Curtis is the oldest at 24, and she said this was part of what made them gel.

"We're best friends off the water but we're able to switch on into team mode and be productive on the water so we've got a good balance I think," she said.

Curtis was raised on the peninsula and has been sailing with Royal Prince

It's an incredible opportunity to be the one and only women's match racing team going to the Games

Alfred Yacht Club in Newport since 2000. "I grew up on Pittwater and my parents were both sailors and me and my brother — there was no doubt we were going to be sailors," she said.

"I sailed at most of the yacht clubs on Pittwater when I grew up. I'm a proud Pittwater girl."

And she isn't perturbed by the lack of opportunity for another Olympic match racing campaign.

"I see it as opening up new challenges in the future," she said.

"I can really see myself doing another Olympic campaign. I really enjoy it so I'll be back."

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