

LOCAL FOCUS

Newport Beach Rotarians Headed to Rio



Maggie Hogan paddles in Newport's Back Bay

BY CAROLINE LEEDOM | NB INDY

Newport Beach athlete Maggie Hogan and her coach Michele Eray will be headed to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on August 1 with dreams of taking home a gold medal at the 16 Olympic Games.

Hogan will be competing in the Canoe Sprint, a sport in which athletes race canoes or kayaks on a straight course in calm water.

Each boat races in their own lane over a distance of 200, 500, 1000 or 5000 meters.

There are kayak events in single (K1), double (K2) and four (K4) boats, and canoe events in single (C1), double (C2) and four (C4) boats. Hogan will be competing in the K1 200 & K1 500 races.

The two women are also new members of the Newport Beach Sunrise Rotary Club.

"I think the Rotary's commitment to service and spreading goodwill and peace aligns nicely with the Olympic ideals of fair play and peace through

sport," Hogan said.

Hogan has been on the U.S. National Team for Sprint Kayak for 10 seasons and has an impressive resume. She has represented the U.S. in nine Sprint Kayak World Championships while pursuing other paddle sports

In all, she has participated in 23 World Championships consisting of five different paddle sports (Canoe Sprint, SurfSki, Surf Lifesaving, Marathon Canoe and Dragon Boat).

Last season, along with the help of her coach Michele Eray, the duo won a bronze medal in the K1 1000 meter event at the Sprint World Champs in Milan. This was the first medal by a U.S. citizen in 20 years.

Eray is no stranger to competitions, nor the Olympics. Eray raced in the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing and made the final in K4. She also races at an elite level in Surf Ski and Marathon Canoe.

Hogan and Eray originally connected when Eray took the job as High-Perfor-

mance Director for USA, Canoe Kayak in Oklahoma City (a non-profit membership organization that promotes canoe and kayak racing in the United States).

At the time Hogan was training there, she asked if Eray would write her training program. Eray agreed.

"Qualifying for Rio has been a dream come true and I'm ready to leave the best race of my life on the course in Rio!" said Hogan. Hogan competes in Rio on August 15 through 18.

Hogan and Eray are the only U.S. athletes training out of the Newport Aquatic Center. The center (also known as NAC) was founded in 1982 and built in 1987 as a non-profit corporation offering the public unique opportunities in the Olympic water sports of rowing, canoeing, kayaking and outrigger canoe competition.

NAC used to be the hub for U.S. paddlers in the 1980s and 90s. However, NAC is also a haven for athletes from around the world who take advantage of the beautiful weather Newport Beach has to offer while their lakes back home may be too frozen to train on.

A fundraiser sponsored by the Newport Beach Sunrise Rotary will be held for Hogan and Eray on July 28 from 6 to 9 p.m. at The Back Bay Bistro located at The Newport Dunes Waterfront Resort.

Mayor Diane Dixon will issue a proclamation from the city. The night will include local dignitaries, community leaders, Rotarians and athletes. Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Muldoon, a new Rotarian, will offer a special send off to the athletes.

The event includes complimentary appetizers, a cash bar, and silent auction items. The event is free to attend but donations are welcomed. The funds raised will cover the athletes' air travel for the U.S. Trials.

Eray and Hogan plan on growing the sport of paddling here in the U.S. after they return from Rio with their business MultiCoach.fit. They want to share their journey with the community and hopefully spread human ideals through paddling.