



What, it's over already?

Olympic sailor Vered Buskila, who is also a student of law and government at IDC Herzliya, has written a blog about her experiences at the Beijing Olympics and how she almost won a medal...

By Vered Buskila,
Third-year student of law and government

Don't be confused by the headline. The Olympic Games were very long, tense, tiring and nerve-wracking, and at the same time it is hard not to feel a certain emptiness at the end.



Group photograph of the IDC athlete. Right to left: Alex Havner, Rozovsky Yoel, Arik Zeevi, Vered Buskila and Tomer Or

I had an amazing week of competitions. There were moments when we sailed brilliantly, in a way we had never achieved before, secure at the top, sophisticated, sharp and smart. There were moments of mediocre sailing, when we did not follow through our decisions, and moments of lack of confidence or simple lack of courage. For anyone who hasn't totally understood, I'm talking mainly about our decisions, our strategy and tactics during the competition.

In fact, the preparations for the competition are the most important thing: choosing the equipment, training, getting in shape physically and mentally. Whatever we achieved during training, that's what we had to work with in the competition - there's nothing much left to change in the competition itself. In our case, the preparations were excellent. Ilan Tashtash, our coach, prepared and executed a brilliant, professional plan. I could not have come up with any better preparation, in every respect, and the fact is that we were able to fulfill our potential. Of course, there will be those who argue that if you don't bring back a medal, you're not worth anything, and will call us losers, and other similar epithets, but it is important to understand where we came from, and where we're going.



Vered Buskila with Sharas Jasikevičius



For Nika and I, this was the best competition of our career, especially because we had marked out this competition as our main goal since going back to sailing together. It is so hard to set such a high target and achieve it so unequivocally.



Arik Zeevi and Tomer Or

Although there are only 19 women's sailing teams in the Olympic Games, we are talking about the best of the best, those who have met the international and national criteria, and who have invested oceans of money, time and effort. This is the most professional event in Olympic sport, and so, even though we did not bring back a medal as we have done in the past in world and European championships, it is undoubtedly the event of our lives.

Along with the fun, happiness and excitement, it impossible not to feel a twinge of disappointment, especially since two days before the final sail we had a medal within our grasp - I could already feel it. The whole week had progressed in the most amazing way, so that reaching third place already felt right and fitting, rather than surprising or scary. But alas, after one day of mediocre sailing and one bad day, we dropped to fourth place while the Brazilians, who recovered from a poor

start to the competition, carried on improving and took the third place.

In my heart I knew that we were going to take the medal back. I felt it coming, I was ready for action. We set out for the medals race ready for the fight of our lives, and that's what happened. We took the lead right from the first leg of the race, and things were looking very promising. Unfortunately, in order to take the bronze medal we had to finish two places ahead of the Brazilians, in other words, there had to be one yacht between us and them, and the carnival queens did not give up, they stuck to us right from the start. We ended up in a situation in which we led the race together with the Brazilians, with the rest of the fleet far behind, sufficiently far that we could not sing the samba at the end of the race.



Vered Buskila and her sailing partner, Nika Kornitzky



After trying to stop or delay the Brazilians, the situation was already hopeless and we finished in second place in the medals race, and fourth place overall.

All in all, I can sum up the competition as a great success. The feeling is that we strived for an amazing medal, and I enjoyed every moment. The support I received from my family, friends, acquaintances, and just people I don't even know was wonderful, even the media were supportive - not always accurate in their reports, but very supportive.

I find it funny to read people's responses on the Internet, calling us losers because fourth place doesn't count, and those who reply to these good souls, saying that it's easy to talk but hard to do, and so on. I believe that so long as we succeed in arousing some kind of discussion, it means that we are interesting, and that is a good feeling in itself. So we packed the dinghies into the containers, and any minute we will be packing our bags and closing the Qingdao chapter of our lives. Dramatic? A little...

Vered

<http://israblog.nana10.co.il/tblogread.asp?blog=545466>