

New Zealand Olympic Ambassador

Juliette Drysdale (née Haigh)

Olympian number:

907

Discipline:

Rowing

Specialist events:

Coxless pair

Juliette Drysdale (nee Haigh) was born in Auckland in 1982. When she was at high school, she decided that she wanted to go to an Olympic Games. She wasn't sure which sport she would compete in, she just knew she wanted to get there.

Juliette first started rowing at Takapuna Grammar School, when one of her teachers suggested she try it out and her friends dragged her along to training. In rowing, you either tie your own shoes to the footplate in the boat, or tie your feet into shoes that are bolted in to the boats. Juliette wanted to do her best, so she tied her feet in as tightly as possible. At the end of her first row, her team fell out of the boat, which made Juliette regret tying such good knots! Nevertheless, Juliette quickly fell in love with the sport. As part of the school rowing team, she had great coaches and made lifelong friends.

Quick facts

Favourite food: Marshmallows

Favourite movie: *The Notebook*

Favourite music: Ed Sheeran

Childhood hero: Anne Audain

Current favourite athlete: Roger Federer

Most rewarding moment in sport: Olympic bronze!

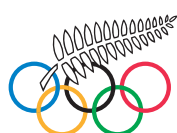
Talents other than sport: Playing the piano

Biggest injury: Back injury in 2011

Biggest sacrifice: Missing out on family events and weddings while I was training

Job outside sport: Still deciding on my career path

Other fun facts: I have a dog named Dasha and a pet pig too



In 2003, Juliette debuted on the international rowing scene, when she made the under-23 New Zealand women's rowing team. Her high school Olympic dream came true shortly after. She placed sixth in the women's coxless pair with Nicola Coles at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games.

The pair showed the world what they were truly made of when they won the coxless pair at the 2005 World Rowing Championships in Gifu, Japan. As world champions, Juliette and Nicola competed in their second Olympic Games together, placing fifth in Beijing in 2008.

Juliette took a year off rowing in 2009. But it wasn't long before she was back on the water. She had been inspired by New Zealand's medal-winning athletes at the Beijing Olympic Games. They motivated her to train even harder to achieve that herself. In 2010, Juliette made the New Zealand rowing team again. This time, she was determined to perform to her full potential. She partnered with Rebecca Scown, and the pair made a dynamic duo, winning the coxless pairs at the World Championships in 2010 and 2011.

World champions Juliette and Rebecca were favoured to win Gold at the London 2012 Olympic Games. Prior to the Games, they had only been beaten once – by Great Britain at the 2011 Lucerne World Cup. The Great Britain pair was definitely Juliette's and Rebecca's top Olympic competition. At the 2011 World Championships, Juliette and Rebecca beat Great Britain by just eight one-hundredths of a second.

In a very close London Olympic Games final, Rebecca and Juliette won the Bronze Medal, finishing behind Great Britain (Gold) and Australia (Silver). Their Bronze Medal contributed to a significant moment in New Zealand's sporting history – the London Games was New Zealand's best Olympic rowing performance ever. The New Zealand rowing team collectively won three Gold and two Bronze Medals.

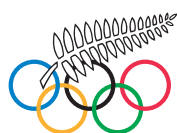
After competing at the 2012 London Olympic Games, Juliette and Rebecca went to Kenya to work as volunteers for two weeks. They worked on an International Volunteer HQ teaching project, providing support and education to children living in the slums.

Career highlights

- 2012** London Olympic Games: Women's pair (Bronze)
- 2011** Lake Bled World Rowing Championships: Women's pair (Gold)
- 2010** Lake Karapiro World Rowing Championships: Women's pair (Gold)
- 2010** Lucerne World Rowing Cup: Women's pair (Gold)
- 2010** Munich World Rowing Cup: Women's pair (Gold)
- 2008** Beijing Olympic Games: Women's pair (Fifth)
- 2007** Lucerne World Rowing Cup: Women's pair (Gold)
- 2007** Amsterdam World Rowing Cup: Women's pair (Silver)
- 2005** Gifu World Rowing Championships: Women's pair (Gold)
- 2005** Munich World Rowing Cup: Women's pair (Gold)
- 2005** Lucerne World Rowing Cup: Women's pair (Gold)
- 2004** Athens Olympic Games: Women's pair (Sixth)

Honours

- 2008** Bank of New Zealand/Auckland Sportswoman of the Year, Blues Award



Upon returning to New Zealand, Juliette decided to retire from rowing, after 15 years in the sport and 9 years representing New Zealand at World Championships and Olympic Games.

On 2 December 2012, she said in a statement on her website:

“I’ve had time to reflect on the great memories and opportunities that rowing has given me over the last fifteen years and I know that rowing will remain part of my life. It’s helped me develop as a person and given me a wide range of skills that I feel will benefit me in whatever path I choose to take.”

Throughout her rowing career, Juliette still found time to study public relations at the University of Auckland, University of Waikato and Massey University.

Outside of rowing, Juliette likes to spend time with her friends and family, including her husband, fellow Olympic rower Mahé Drysdale. Her hobbies include cycling, playing the piano and photography. Juliette was named a New Zealand Olympic Ambassador in 2013.

Links

Juliette Haigh’s Olympic Museum profile:
<http://imuseum.olympic.org.nz/museum/athlete/profile/25492>

Follow the NZ Olympic Team here:



NZ Olympic Team



@nzolympics



nzolympics



www.olympic.org.nz

