

# Regina kayaker Kia Byers to compete in canoe sprint world championships

By Rob Vanstone, Leader-Post - August 10, 2009



*Regina kayaker Kia Byers*

*Photograph by: Roy Antal, Leader-Post files*

REGINA — Kia Byers feels like she is on top of the world after qualifying for a world-class event.

Byers, a kayaker from Regina, is to compete in three events at the International Canoe Federation canoe sprint world championships, to be held Thursday to Sunday in Dartmouth, N.S.

"I am super-excited to have made the senior worlds team," said Byers, 21. "I have been a part of the process since 2007, but have always been eliminated from the process earlier in the season, so this is a huge step towards my ultimate goal, the 2012 Olympics."

Byers will compete in the K1 200-metre and K2 500m events, along with the K1 200m relay.

"Right now, I feel like I have everyone behind me, believing I can do it," she said.

Byers has had plenty of reasons to celebrate of late. In June, she helped Canada's women's K4 team finish second in the 500m at the Canoe-Kayak World Cup in Szeged, Hungary. She received a silver medal alongside Canadian teammates Genny Orton (Dartmouth), Emilie Fournel (Lachine, Que.) and Kristin Gauthier (Ottawa). As part of a different crew in the K4 200m, Byers missed out on a bronze medal by 3/100ths of a second.

A member of the Wascana Racing Canoe Club, Byers also won gold and silver medals while representing Canada at the 2007 Pan American Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

As much as Byers appreciates the aforementioned accomplishments, she is focused on looking ahead to the world championships.

"This event, racing these races, was my goal for the year when I sat down in the fall and made my four-year plan," she said. "This is the first step and getting to this point reminds me how wonderful it feels to work hard for your goal and know that my hard work and determination have brought me to this point. Achieving a goal makes me want to set my sights even higher and see what can be accomplished.

"I would like to thank everyone who has supported me because I could never have done this on my own."

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