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ALL SYSTEMS GO AS LYDIA RETURNS TO COMPETITION

Dual Olympic medallist Lydia Lassila will compete in her first event, since her Sochi bronze medal in 2014, this weekend at the Aerials World Cup in Lake Placid, USA.

The gold and bronze medallist and mother of two thought long and hard before returning to training for an historic fifth Olympics, which would equal summer Olympians Natalie Cook, Jian Fang Lay and Mary Hanna for the most Olympics by an Australian woman.

“I was hoping that retirement feeling would come – but it kind of never did. It was also exciting that I had the drive to keep going,” Lydia said late last year when she joined the Australian Aerials team in Finland.

With on-snow training ticked off – the time to compete has arrived.

“Yep I’m going - and leave Finland on January 9th,” Lydia confirmed.

“It was a solid month of training in Ruka in December and I kept the focus on building up slowly and having fun which I certainly did.”

“I’m pretty excited to head to Lake Placid and start competing again. I’m not sure I’ll be in peak form (probably a bit rusty) however I’m going to stick to the same focus and keep building up slowly and having fun.”

Renowned for her quad/triple in Sochi as much as her Vancouver gold, Lydia’s expectations for a fifth Olympics are more about consistency and strategy – but according to Australia’s Aerial coaches Jeff Bean and Joe Davies, Lydia is ready to go.

“Lydia has a special drive and is just starting to get back into comp mode,” Coach Bean said.

“She’s calm on the outside but there is fire inside – I can’t wait to see it. Her body is in shape and we will see Lydia continuing to build. She’ll be ready to go.”

That Lydia has been able to return is not a surprise to co-coach Jeff Davies but she has exceeded his expectations.

“Lydia is impressive to watch as she goes about the day-to-day business of being an athlete,” he said.

“She has exceeded my expectations in some areas. I coached her via email in the summer (northern hemisphere). That, to me, is the mark of a veteran athlete who knows her body and sport so well.”

Whilst Lydia says she is feeling good and all is going to plan, her last words are those of a mother.

“I’m happy with where my jumping got to and feel it’s a good base to keep building of for the rest of the season. I’ve had a good break over the holidays and spent it skiing with my family in Northern Finland. Kai is getting pretty good.”

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