

# Neighborhoods

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## Olympic hopeful ranks No. 1 in America in windsurfing

By WENDI WINTERS  
 For The Capital

Farrah Hall, 25, the windsurfer who is hoping to represent the United States in the 2008 Summer Olympics in China, is now ranked No. 1 in America in RS:X windsurfing.

As the games approach, only the No.1-ranked female will be sent to China to compete, with all expenses paid. The No. 2 contender is expected to attend, too, but has to pay her own way.

The former Cape St. Claire resident and 1999 graduate of Broadneck High School, moved up from the No. 3 spot after racing in the World Championships July 6-13 in Cascais, Portugal.

According to her mother, Linda Hall, an art instructor at Annapolis High School, her daughter still needs to attend other races this season, but right now she is on top for the United States. Ms. Hall's father, William, as well as her mother, were in Portugal for the races.

It hasn't been easy. Ms. Hall was dogged by bad luck at first.

The windsurfer arrived in Portugal with a sinus infection, after a training session in Poland.

She missed her flight transfer dur-

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ing which her board was lost, and not recovered for three days. That mishap allowed her only one day of practice.

To add to her woes, she had to find a new place to stay before her parents arrived.

"I went out the first day and did just fine," Ms. Hall reported on her Web site. "Suddenly everything clicked, and even though both the venue and conditions were completely crazy all the time, I was calm and happy to race.

Nonetheless, she did pretty well. "I had consistently the best starts I have ever made. I raced the way I wanted to and that made me happy. Of course, I made many mistakes, but they were my own mistakes and didn't happen because of not understanding the conditions, or following the mistakes of other sailers."

During another race, the wind went from 25 knots to about 4 knots. "Many sailers were left spinning in circles at an upwind mark while the front of the fleet had the remainder of the breeze and finished the race," Ms. Hall said.

The final two days of the race exhausted the competitors as there

was a one-hour commute from the beach to the race course, as well as "manic" weather conditions.

"For the last half of the regatta, the girls were on the craziest course possible, 3.3 nautical miles from the beach, right next to cliffs, and with a ripping current right through the middle. Great!"

But she finished strong, many points ahead of the next U.S. competitor Nancy Rios of Cocoa Beach, Fla.

"Although we didn't qualify the country for the Olympics in women's RS:X — and we were close — 21 out of the top 20 countries by my count — we still have one more World Championships in which to do it, in New Zealand, January 2008," Ms. Hall said.

Currently, Ms. Hall is in Gdynia, Poland, for Gdynia Sailing Days, a four-day series beginning July 30. If she spends too much more time training in Poland, "I'll have to get a visa," she quipped.

To follow Ms. Hall's Olympic quest, visit her Web site at [www.farah-hall.com](http://www.farah-hall.com)



Photo courtesy of Linda Hall

Farah Hall has jumped to the No. 1 spot in the United States for RS:X windsurfing. The Broadneck High graduate took the top ranking after this race last week in Cascais, Portugal. Next stop: Poland.