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# From swimming, to rowing, to solo round-the-world sailing

## MySchoolSport

*Sailor Sam Davies starts a 4,720-mile race from Le Havre to Costa Rica on Sunday*

### Where did you go to school and was sport an important part of your school life?

Portsmouth High School, and not really, because the school didn't do the sports I was passionate about. No swimming, no sailing, just netball and lacrosse. However, sport was a major part of my young life as I was a synchronised swimmer and swam for Portsmouth Victoria SC. I trained six times a week, and swam for Hampshire.

### Did you excel at other sports apart from sailing?

I was pretty good at synchronised swimming. Then I took up rowing at Cambridge University [where she gained a Masters in Mechanical Engineering at St John's College]. I rowed for four years, and was boat club captain for Lady Margaret Boat Club and rowed for Cambridge at the National Championships.

### How did your sailing career progress?

My family have always been involved in sailing. My parents had a boat on Hayling Island, and we'd all take off after school. My sister and I would do our homework on the boat.

### Who were your sporting heroes growing up?

Tracy Edwards. My other sailing heroes include Peter Blake. In other sports, I admire the British athlete Paula Radcliffe and the French swimmer Laure Manaudou.

### How important is sport in schools?

Really important for fitness, for team building and because taking part in sport helps you to learn respect for others.

### Best sporting advice you were ever given?

It came from my parents – they just encouraged me to enjoy everything and didn't put pressure on me to perform, or train too much, or stop training/competing because of school work.

### You finished the Vendée Globe 2008-09, the solo non-stop round-the-world yacht race, as leading Briton and the first woman home in fourth place, after 95 days alone at sea.

### What can you tell us about your next race?

It is the double-handed Transat Jacques Vabre from Le Havre in France to Costa Rica, an epic tussle across the Atlantic starting on Sunday. A fantastic fleet of boats and sailors are competing. I'm sailing as co-skipper with a very experienced French sailor, Sidney Gavignet.

*Follow Sam Davies in the double-handed race at [www.artemisoceanracing.com](http://www.artemisoceanracing.com)*

**Interview: Gareth A Davies**



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Ready to race:  
Sam Davies on  
board Artemis  
and, below, with  
Sidney Gavignet,  
her co-skipper