

Davies aiming to make waves in torrid TJV

But Briton dismisses chances in Transat Jacques Vabre

By Kate Laven

SAM DAVIES will be at sea, naturally, when she finds out whether she has been voted the most outstanding female sailor on the planet in the 2009 ISAF World Sailor of the Year Awards this week.

Despite coming fourth in the Vendee Globe earlier this year, she is not guaranteed to win – the judges historically prefer Olympic sailors to their long-distance counterparts.

But however disappointed she is, she is unlikely to let it affect her performance in the Transat Jacques Vabre.

Davies established perfect

equilibrium as her signature mode in the Vendee Globe. Whether she was being buffeted by winds and waves in the Southern Ocean or posing cheekily in the skimpy outfits provided by her sponsor Roxy, a look of contentment prevailed.

Her blithe daily media returns became a feature of the race and were in stark contrast to the tortured sentiments that came off Dame Ellen MacArthur's B&Q on the 71-day record breaker that effectively put an end to her career in 2005.

MacArthur returned triumphant but burned out and never went racing again, so news of her retirement just a few weeks ago came as little surprise to Davies.

"I know how passionate she is about her environmental



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and charity work and I can totally understand it," Davies said. "But I think it's a shame when people do too much, too early. Ellen was full on – everyone makes their own choices about how they will get results and the only way for some people to do it is full on and hard.

"It was the same with Emma Richards – she did so much so quickly and now she doesn't even want to step on a boat. It is not a criticism because they have both found other things in their lives, but I would be horrified if it happened to me."

Davies, who is campaigning her Open 60 [Artemis Ocean Racing](#) with French co-skipper Sidney Gavignet, says she is not concerned with winning the Transat Jacques Vabre. Her focus is instead on learning and improving so that she is a serious contender for the 2012 Vendee Globe.

Although many see her and Gavignet as the TJV's dark horses, Davies is playing down her chances.

"There will be a lot of time spent going downwind with the spinnaker up, which is Artemis's hardest point of sail in terms of performance," she said. "We may struggle to stay with the leaders, so getting a podium position would be

incredible. We are two tonnes heavier than the other boats, so we have to go as light as possible."

Latest weather forecasts for the Bay of Biscay this weekend predict 10-metre waves and up to 40 knot headwinds. These conditions will suit the heavier Artemis, says Davies's rival, Mike Golding, billed as the Brit most likely to end France's 14-year domination of the TJV.

"An upwind slog and a lot of gales might favour the heavier boats, so Artemis could be the surprise runner of the race and BT is bound to be fast. But a light airs downwind race would suit us better," said Golding.

Golding has spent around £200,000 on his Open 60 since retiring from the Vendee Globe with broken keel and ruptured rigging. And although he is racing without a sponsor, he is keen to make sure his sixth attempt on the TJV is the one that seals a deal with a new sponsor and kicks off the next phase of his career.

Davies and Golding will compete with Dee Caffari, racing with Brian Thompson on Aviva, and Alex Thomson on Hugo Boss. If the forecast proves correct, they are all in for a torrid time.

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Sam Davies
prepares on
her yacht
Roxy**