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## Ainslie to be given Olympic verdict by end of the week

**Sailing**  
**Bob Fisher**

Ben Ainslie is expected to learn by the weekend whether he is in the British Olympic team. The double gold medal-winner was omitted when the initial nominations were announced last week despite having just won the pre-Olympic regatta off Qingdao, where the sailing events of the Beijing Games will be held, after a year away from racing the Finn single-handed dinghy. It was a repeat of his performance in China a year earlier and should have convinced the Royal Yachting Association selectors that he can win another medal.

However, it is only 12 days since Ainslie was named as skipper of Britain's entry for the 2009 America's Cup – he had spent nearly two years steering the No2 boat for Emirates Team New Zealand – and the Olympic team manager, Stephen Park, is concerned that the 30-year-old might be taking on too much.

Ainslie is convinced he can manage the two campaigns and has expressed surprise that he was not nominated by the RYA. "To be honest," he said, "I thought they would either announce I was going to be selected or that they would want other trials either later this year or the beginning of next year."

He pointed out Qingdao's peculiarities of ultra-light breezes and roaring strong tides that he has mastered in the two regattas there. His only rival for selection in the heavyweight single-hander appears to be Ed Wright. "We haven't raced each other that much in the last couple of years," Ainslie said.

A delay in discussions with Team Origin's sailing director, Mike Sanderson, prevented the RYA from resolving the issue but it is likely to be settled at a meeting tomorrow. Either Ainslie will be nominated, with his Origin team-mates Iain Percy and Andrew Simpson, or he will be asked to race Wright, presumably in the Finn Gold Cup in Melbourne in January.



**Ben Ainslie, named as skipper of Britain's America's Cup challenge in 2009, also wants the chance to win a third gold medal in the Beijing Olympics** Ian Roman

Pitch