

Max Maeder, buoyed by support, to resume racing in September

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Maximilian Maeder (second from left) pumping his fists during the Singapore Sailing Federation's (SSF) celebratory boat parade on Aug 17. ST PHOTO: ARIFFIN JAMAR

[Lin Tianbao](#)

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SINGAPORE – It has been just slightly more than a week since Singapore kitefoiler Maximilian Maeder [clinched a historic Olympic bronze in Paris on Aug 9](#), but the 17-year-old is not resting on his laurels, with a race in early September lined up.

Speaking to The Sunday Times after riding in a celebratory boat parade organised by the Singapore Sailing Federation at the Marina Bay on Aug 17, the two-time world champion said he is galvanised by the support from Singaporeans to return to racing.

“What invigorates me even more is to see what I’ve come back to, the pride of the people here... All that gives me way more motivation than just simply competitiveness, to continue to do well to try and improve and persevere in the sport.”

“I’m going to be (heading to the) gym and train,” he said. “I probably won’t be able to get out on the water much, but it’s getting back into the season.

“It’s about putting that practice in, and as long as I try to stay fit and get into the groove again, it’ll be good.”

Maximilian’s next race will be the Sept 4-8 Austrian leg of the KiteFoil World Series in Traunsee, where he may come up against Paris 2024 gold medallist Valentin Bontus and runner-up Toni Vodisek of Slovenia.

He is looking forward to facing the two rivals again, adding: “I think Valentin will be (there) because it’s his home country and near where he lives, so that’ll be fun. I don’t know about Toni though, he might be taking a break.”

When asked if losing to the duo in Marseille had given him extra motivation for the race, he replied: “Maybe.”



Maximilian Maeder (right) stopped for autographs after the boat parade. ST PHOTO: ARIFFIN JAMAR

But, given his competitive nature, Maximilian does not care who he will be racing against.

“I’m excited to race at any time with anyone, I don’t think it’s just with (Bontus and Vodisek) specifically,” he said. “I just love to compete.”

Earlier, he had hosted a meet-and-greet session for the public, organised by his sponsor DBS, at Esplanade Mall's Foreword Coffee. About 200 people turned up to cheer him on and queued for photos and autographs.



Singapore's sailors passing the Merlion Park during their boat parade on Aug 17. ST PHOTO: AZMI ATHNI

Another sailor who is eager to return to the water is Ryan Lo.

Although he revealed after the Paris Games that [he will be taking a break from sailing](#), the 27-year-old is keen to try his hands at wing foiling.

“I tend to do a bit of that with my brother, who’s also really good at it,” said Lo, who finished 25th out of 43 in the men’s dinghy event. “Maybe we’ll go to Bintan Island to have some fun, just to do something related to sailing, but for leisure.”

Compatriots Justin Liu and Denise Lim, who usually compete in the mixed Nacra 17, have also picked up wing foiling, together with laser racing and even pickleball.

The pair, who featured at the Rio Olympics in 2016 but did not qualify for Paris, explained that they wanted to stay fit while trying something new.





Ryan Lo (top), Justin Liu (far left) and Denise Lim (second from left) during the boat parade on Aug 17. ST PHOTO: ARIFFIN JAMAR

Liu said: “Both of us are back to work, so we have commitments to that. It’s also a good timing, because it sort of gives us a good chance to take a break, do different things and once that’s done, get back into the flow of sailing again and make plans from there.”

When asked if the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028 was still in the picture, given Liu would be 37 and Lim 36 by then, he said that they will not count themselves out.

“We haven’t closed (the chapter) yet, we know we still have something to give to the sport,” he added.

“For us, our (Paris) Olympic campaign didn’t end on the best note... we’ll see how it goes in these few years (plus) we still have the Asian Games before that.”