

SECOND CHANCE

Evans has sights on berth in relay squad

By Scott Lewis

While Evans' first swimming event in London could give her a second chance to claim an Olympic medal.

Although qualified for the Games in the 400m individual medley, Evans spent the past three years targeting a start in the 200m freestyle.

An uncharacteristic effort and seventh placing at the national selection trials in March seemingly cost the West Australian a spot in the four top squad.

The added sting for the 21-year-old is the Dolphins' 4x200m freestyle relay team, headed by Britta Barratt and Kylie Palmer, was a

strong gold medal prospect in London.

Palmer, Barratt, Evans and Angie Mainwidge combined to take silver in the relay at last year's world championships in Shanghai.

At the Beijing Olympics, Palmer, Barratt, Stephanie Rice and Linda Mackenzie took gold in the event.

The top six placers at the nationals have traditionally been favoured when forming heats and final relay teams for major international events.

However, the Dolphins, who next week leave for their pre-Games camp in Manchester, are keeping their options open this year.

The depth of their 200m freestyle

squad is so deep national coaches have indicated they will consider a raft of combinations before the Olympic final on August 1.

That gives Evans scope to prove her Australian championship performance was an aberration and she can add speed to the Games quartet.

"We have about 10 or 20 that can swim a 2000 relay," Evans said. "It will come down to the day when they select the team — the gold medal winning team hopefully."

"It is wait and see. Kylie and Britta are such amazing freestylers. I idolise them so much. I hope everything I can from them."

"I hope I get the chance to swim

alongside them. All I can do is train my butt off."

Evans' medley event is on day one of the Games and her freestyle leg might not only decide her placing in the multi-discipline race but also her position in the relay pecking order.

"I can't go there thinking I have to prove myself to get on the relay team," Evans said. "I have to go there with the objective of getting up for my one and doing the best possible race for myself."

"If that results in a relay swim then that is a bonus. I'll be in the stands cheering for everyone regardless of whether I get in the team or not."



Flying the flag: Blair Evans hopes to add the 4x200m relay event to her program at the London Games. Picture: Lincoln Bahr