

ACASON: GLASGOW NOT THE RESULT I WANT TO FINISH ON

Even before she attempted her final snatch in Glasgow, Deborah Acason didn't feel comfortable.

The bright lights were making it hard to see the crowd, and she loves seeing and entertaining the audience.

She was also really missing having her regular coach, Mike Keelan, by her side.

And then, as she bent down for her final attempt, the bar rolled.

Not a lot. But enough to throw the 31-year-old veteran at her fourth Commonwealth Games.

"Apparently there was a slope on the platform," Acason said this week from her home in Miles, Queensland.

"I don't know if any of the other athletes particularly noticed it. I didn't really notice it – I got my first two snatches, but on the last one, one of the coaches mentioned it.

"When I bent down to lift, the bar rolled away from me a little bit. It probably would have been fine in any other circumstances, but it just got away from me a little bit."

Acason missed the lift, at 110kg, and also missed her final clean and jerk at 130kg. Another two kilograms would have won her bronze, to add to the gold, three silver and one bronze she won at previous Commonwealth Games.

She finished fourth, and was devastated.

"I think it's the only International competition that I've actually been really upset about, because I've done so well at all the other ones," she said.

"I was just really disappointed with the competition. I had worked so hard and really wanted a better result.

“My last training here was really good. I was lifting weights that would have got me the bronze. I did 130 here in training.”

Even at the Commonwealth Games trials, when Acason looked like she was cruising, she lifted two kilograms more.

Acason, husband Josh and baby daughter Eva took time out after Glasgow to get away from it all. They did a whirlwind trip around Ireland, visiting half a dozen cities in eight days.

“We won’t do it like that again,” Acason laughed.

But if the two-time Olympian was hoping to come back to Australia with a clear idea about her future, it didn’t happen.

“It’s probably a little early. I’m a little bit undecided,” she said.

“It’s more than likely I won’t be lifting after the end of this year, but I remember saying that I thought Delhi was going to be my last Commonwealth Games. I remember thinking four years away, that’s too far.”

What is definite is she will be pushing on until the World Championships in Kazakhstan in November. Even though she might not be in Rio herself, she has an important role to play.

She wants to help qualify two Australian women for the 2016 Olympics.

“I’m going to get quite good points for the team,” Acason said.

“I should get a high placing, to be able to get good points for whoever’s going to make the team for Rio.

“It would be so good to have two girls at the Olympics. It would have been nice to have someone else there with me in Athens and Beijing.

“I mean it was great to be there as the only one, but the more that we get representing Australia, the more we can break into the world scene.”

It typifies the attitude of Deborah Acason that's been apparent from the moment she burst onto the Australian weightlifting scene as Deborah Lovely more than a decade ago.

Only just 19, Lovely won three silver medals at the Manchester Commonwealth Games. Two years earlier she'd been winning medals for Australia by hurling the discus and the hammer.

Her move to weightlifting gave the sport an enormous boost, and her longevity and attitude has been oft-quoted, admiringly, by junior and senior weightlifters alike.

If Acason does decide to hang up the belt at the end of this year, she won't be lost to the sport. She's already training the next generation of lifters on her concrete slab at the back of the Miles Church that has becoming her training venue.

But back to Glasgow. Acason loved the experience, loved the weightlifting team she got to hang out with.

And loved seeing the Royals. Everywhere.

"Having the Royals there was really cool," she laughed.

"Every time I looked around the village I saw Kate or Wills and Harry and the Queen."

But it's not the note she wants to end her career on.

"In some ways I just would like to finish out this year with a good performance, six out of six and lifting the weights I know I can lift," she said.

"It took so much effort to get into this form. It's taken me a year and a half to be lifting these weights, so I think to myself I don't want to look back and wish that I'd trained just for those extra two months.

"I've done that in the past, competed in an Olympics and Commonwealth Games, and then taken six months off because you think that your career is going to last forever.

“But I guess when you get near the end of your career, I just want to make the most of the competitions I have left and not take it for granted.”

Her Glasgow results, though, have given her cause to re-evaluate her approach to the sport.

“I’m not up to the 140kg clean and jerk that I’ve done before, and to me that’s disappointing,” she said.

“I really have to treat the 130 clean and jerk like my 140, I can’t just rest on my laurels and think 130 will come easily. Because it doesn’t, I have to put a lot of effort into it.”

Don’t expect Deborah Acason to dwell for too long though on what happened in Glasgow. In her own words, she now has for more important things in her life to occupy her thoughts and time.

Three-year-old Eva is keeping Acason well and truly grounded.

“I was really upset after the Glasgow competition, I just really wanted a medal,” she said.

“It would have been great to share it with Eva, but she didn’t care. It really brings you back down to earth, that ‘I’m a mum, when’s the next meal’

“And that’s really nice. It can be frustrating when you’re training and you’re putting in the hard yards, but when you’re coming off a crap competition it’s nice to have her to bring me back down to earth.”