

Supermaxi to take on race

JAMES BRESNEHAN | December 01, 2011

THE courage of Kurt Fearnley knows no bounds and it will be put to the test when he sails in this year's Sydney to Hobart on a supermaxi.

The triple Paralympic wheelchair-racing gold medallist will be part of the crack crew of 100-footer *Investec Loyal*, second-favourite for line honours.

The Sydney to Hobart fleet can expect a wide range of conditions on the 628 nautical mile race to Hobart, but that does not concern Fearnley.

"Crossing Bass Strait, seeing a 10m wave coming at me, I know it's going to be a roller-coaster. But I can't wait," said Fearnley, 30, of NSW.

"I'm dreading a lot, but they are the same things that I am also excited about."

Fearnley has crawled the Kokoda Track, climbed the 1504 stairs of Sydney's Centrepoint Tower faster than the average able-bodied person, and won four New York and Chicago marathons four times each.

But he is no stranger to danger.

"Every time I go out training on the roads I have cars buzzing by sometimes at up to 100km/h," he said.

Fearnley thrives on being out of his comfort zone.

"When everyone else is as well, it's a level playing field. And it's when I am at my best."

Fearnley will work in the middle of the supermaxi.

He will wear a safety harness and tether when he is on deck, and a personal flotation device and emergency locator beacon at all times.

His job will be to operate winches, tidy sheets on deck and help bag sails.

"I'll do anything they yell at me to do," he said.

To help him around the deck, Fearnley will wear the same knee and hand guards he used while crawling the 96km Kokoda Track in 2009.

Many of his 22 crewmates are round-the-world and America's Cup sailors, while at least one other is a complete novice - presenter of the Today Show Karl Stefanovic.



HIGH SEAS CHASE: Supermaxi *Investec Loyal* is second favourite to take out line honours in this year's Sydney to Hobart.