

IT'S THOSE WHO STAND BEHIND YOU, WHO COUNT: As a leader within the canoeing community I am often at pains to emphasize the need for teamwork. Last month, I highlighted this very point in the *Ezine* and it is with great pride that I heard that our U21 Mens Canoe Polo team won bronze at the European Championships in Thury-Harcourt. This is Ireland's first ever medal at Championship level in canoe-polo and given that these players are all eligible for next year's World Championships, to be held in Edmonton, Canada, the gravity of their successes may take them further. They showed fighting spirit throughout the tournament, coming from two goals down in matches against the Netherlands and Britain. This latter match was particularly sweet as it was their third-fourth place play off. The significance of this result cannot be overstated. They are the product of both canoe-clubs in Kilcock, former Coach Deaglain O'Driscoll, club coach Cathal Gorman and current National coach Vincent Pierce, their manager, Bernie Downes and above all, their own efforts. This month we had two other major results. Firstly, Barry Watkins made the podium at the Marathon Worlds, where we continue to achieve success. He won bronze in the 21k junior event, to add to his sprint medal last month. An outstanding individual athlete, Barry is the product of our coaching from his father, his club, Salmon Leap, and the Irish Sports Council funded high performance squad with coach Gabor Kulscar. In Brazil, Eoin Rheinisch, achieved his primary goal for 2007, he secured a place for Ireland in Beijing 2008. Finishing 17th of the 92 starters he narrowly missed out on the final. In conclusion, many of you will have attempted our flagship event, the Liffey Descent. Somebody had to drive you there, you may have been in a crew boat, and if you didn't receive support at the portage, you most definitely got help at the finish. There is a lesson from these events for all of us-By working together we can achieve more than we ever thought possible-Bainigi taitneamh as a bhuachaillí!



Eamon Devoy Irish Canoe Union President.

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LIFFEY LINES-HOMEGROWN SUCCESS IN FAST FLOWING CLASSIC: Our flagship event, the International Liffey Descent lived up to its reputation as a top class marathon racing classic, with entrants from South Africa, U.S.A, Australia and several hundred from Britain. With 890 competitors it still ranks among the biggest canoeing races in the World. K2. Our foreign entrants dominated the K1 class with South African, Barry Lewin first. British based Irish paddlers, the O'Regan brothers, Graham and Stewart, performed well to take silver and bronze. In the K2 class, Malcolm Banks and Dermot Hudson of Salmon Leap took first in a respectable time. Among the home talent, Wildwater kayak club dominated the main racing classes with the Kevin and Vincent Pierce taking second in K2, and Cillian Duggan first in Wildwater kayak, with clubmate Simon McGarry in third. Andrew Redmond took silver in this class. The Liffey pilgrimage produced the usual spills with K2 being particularly difficult this year. Only have the crews entered completed the race and more than half took a swim at Straffan-thanks to all the divers and paddlers who performed rescue. See www.liffeydescent.com



COACHING CORNER-COACHES TO QUALIFY IN NOVEMBER: The second round of assimilation will occur on the 24-25th of November. If you are a former International paddler (5 years on the team), an active coach for several years or were previously assimilated under the scheme in the 1990's, then you are eligible to apply. At the coaching weekend we will run the second round of assimilation with inputs on coaching styles, physiology, planning the training and multi-disciplinary approaches to paddle-sport. It is hoped that those who participated in March, will have made the necessary steps so that they can qualify. On the Saturday afternoon a white-water rescue session will be held to prepare coaches for various scenarios with competition craft. Coaches from round one will need to ensure they have their first aid qualifications and logged hours (across two disciplines) to ensure they will graduate. If you require any further information on either applying for the next coaching round or your requirements please contact canoemedia@gmail.com. It is hoped that with the cooperation of NCTC, soon to be re-branded *Coaching Ireland*, that we can roll-out further levels in 2008, which will be discipline specific.



MARATHON MOVES-BRONZE KEEPS UP TRADITION: Our success in marathon racing at World level continues with Barry Watkins narrowly pipped for third in the Junior World Championships. In the past at junior level, Neil Fleming, Jenny Egan and Jonny Mawer (unofficial Worlds) have all medalled. At senior level, Gary Mawer took silver over a decade ago and had more fourth places than golfer Padraig Harrington. Marathon canoeing is the pathway to sprint success for many and Barry's dual-discipline achievements (European Junior Champion 500m) supports this. In fact, it could well have been double gold this season but for a collision with his rivals at the last turn which left him with too much work to do in the last 1000m of the modified 20k course. Due to a rise in the river level the organisers were forced to change the course for the championships-the portage was totally submerged so the course was reduced to a 5 kilometre circuit with juniors completing 4 laps, women and men C1 5 laps and men K1 6 laps (all without portages). Arguably with a portage Barry would have taken gold, this skill being one of his strengths. In the K2 race, Barry again teamed up with Brian Keogh and finished just one place off their fourth from 2006, in fifth place. In the Senior classes, Jenny Egan took 13th, and Neil Fleming competing for the first time in the Senior event, pulled out after a difficult 15k. Gary Mawer was team manager and over twenty traveled as supporters including our most persistent fan, Mick Feeney. See www.irishmarathoncanoeing.com



POLO SCEAL-ALLEZ "LE VERT": A small hamlet in Normandy, Thury-Harcourt, hosted the seventh European Canoe-Polo Championships with 14 countries participating. For the first time ever, Ireland was represented in all categories, both Senior and U21. Like Everest, the podium is a place rarely visited by any Irish person, and this adage had held through for canoe-polo competitors since the first World Championships in Sheffield in 1993. No longer does it hold such elusive properties, since the Mens U21 team, coached by Vincent Pierce and managed by Bernie Downes, climbed onto the third step after winning five matches. En route to their bronze medal they beat Poland, Belgium, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Britain. The team, captained by Patrick Mooney, comprised of Brian Devlin, Gareth Carroll, Niall Reilly and brothers James (pictured in the poster) and Michael Mahon. They displayed a mental toughness our rugby team will hopefully emulate, coming from behind in key matches. The Men's team finished in eighth place and were managed by Nikolay Valchinkovski. Our Women's team after a loss, by one goal to Spain in their first match, were left to fight out for the minor placings, as the eventual finalists France and Germany (Champions) were in their group. Coached by Mark Cummins and managed by Ashling Franzoni, they finished ninth. An U21 Women's team participated for the first time and hopefully the experience will take them forward to greater things. The pitches situated in a natural amphitheatre, had in addition a 2,000 seater grandstand, with up to 6,000 spectators for the main pitch one venue. On return from Europeans we had the Irish Open with 48 teams, including the US Women's team (coached by former Irish International, Karl Wall) and the Iranian Men's teams (not sure if they interacted). Sunshine, polo and the excellent set-up at Kilcock, led to fun for all. See www.canoepolo.ie



FORTHCOMING EVENTS:			
Dates	Event	Venue	Contact
September 30 th	Ranking Marathon	Grand Canal, Robertstown, Co.Kildare	Irishmarathoncanoeing.com
October 6 th	Blessington 500	Blessington Lakes, Co.Wickow	www.siairl.org/
October 7 th	Wildwater Classic	River Liffey, Templemill-SLCC.	www.canoe.ie
October 13 th	Wildwater Classic	River Liffey, Templemill-SLCC.	www.canoe.ie
October 20 th	Wildwater Sprint	River Liffey, Castletown, Celbridge..	www.canoe.ie

See www.canoe.ie homepage for upcoming events and our competition calendar.

BLESSINGTON 500-SPINAL INJURIES IRELAND FUNDRAISER: The Spinal Injuries Ireland Blessington 500 event takes place on 6th October 2007. The aim is to paddle an accumulative 500 miles on the beautiful waters of Blessington lake. Choose your distance in intervals of 4,6,10 or 20 miles. This years event is a tribute to Niamh McGrath who died in a tragic accident in 2005. Niamh introduced kayaking as an option for people with a spinal cord injury in 1998. With Niamh's support and endless enthusiasm, kayaking became a wonderful reality for people who have sustained a spinal cord injury and it has been included as an ongoing part of Spinal Injuries Ireland's venture sports activities programme. The key fundraising project for 2007 is to build a transitional housing unit to facilitate the transition for patients from hospital back into their community. At present at least 16 individuals per year who sustain spinal cord injuries end up in unsuitable accommodation. Spinal Injuries Ireland wants to change this practice by building its own transitional housing units, offering housing alongside physical and emotional support to those coming to terms with their injuries. It will enable them to re-establish their confidence and begin to regain a sense of self worth and direction in their lives needed to live at home and in the community. The event will run from 10am till 4pm and is open to all types of craft (canoes/kayaks) and the minimum sponsorship is €20. See www.siairl.org for an entry form.

