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THE HAND OF HISTORY: Many would concur that our past experiences should act as a compass for our future decisions. Our sport, which in the last Century was the sole preserve of the Anglo-Irish gentry (see Ernest Shackelton right) is now the biggest inland water-sport in the country. Canoes and kayaks, like beacons, can be seen on roof-tops in any supermarket car-park. On the water, at this time of year, not a day goes past without paddlers taking to our major waterways. In fact, the footfall in the Liffey valley and Wicklow region is so frequent that we make a significant financial impact to the local economies. Competitions are now integral parts of festivals both in Dublin at the Docklands and Limerick with the Riverfest. Canoe-sport offers opportunities as a pastime, sport and even opens gateways for foreign travel. But historically, we tend to focus on issues of contention. It could be said that past disputes tend to recur in a cyclical fashion. In the late 1960's, a factitious debate ensued over the compulsory wearing of life-jackets for marathon racers. Some of these issues occur with predictable regularity, for example, arguments surrounding our Olympic participation. Dialogue and dissent are a sign of a healthy and vibrant canoeing community. We now have effective governance procedures for coping with issues and we welcome your discourse. As Easter approaches, typically a time for looking back both politically and spiritually, we should reflect upon what lessons we can learn from the our past in canoe-sport. Finally, we wish our Freestyle team the best of luck in their first official World Championships, a momentous occasion that signals a new future for this pulsating aspect of canoe-sport.



Eamon Devoy Irish Canoe Union President.

SLALOM MOVES: Selection for the International team took place on April 1st on the river Tryweryn, at Bala, North Wales. Reigning British Champion, Neil Caffrey wasn't fooled by the technical course and took first ahead of Olympic silver medallist Campbell Walsh. Next best of the Irish kayaks was Daniel Menton who showed his 2012 potential with solid performances. Another paddler showing consistency was Helen Barnes who was first of our Womens team, with Hanah Craig and Pauline Griffin, next best. This month sees the next two rounds of selection being held in Scotland on the river Tay, at Grandtully. Neil Caffreys record here last year was supreme with the fastest times in both races. Eoin Rheinisch is pre-selected on the basis of his 2006 World ranking and will be training in the interim. The duel between these paddlers for the Olympic qualification will start at the World Championships in Brazil, this September.



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CLUB PROFILE: RICHMOND CANOE CLUB- The address is the giveaway-Landsdowne boathouse is the home of Richmond Canoe club. Although based in London, this club founded in 1944, has effectively been London-Irish canoe club since the early 1980's. At one stage the signs were bi-lingual -“*Dun an doras.*” First of our foreign legions to arrive were the late Shelia O’Byrne and Mary Garrett who set the pace for the DW for several years. Also Devizies Champions Jimmy Kennedy (now of Atlantic Sea Kayaking) and Declan Donovan made it their home. A mass migration from Ireland in 1988 was to be a catalyst in the growth of racing at Richmond. For example, in 1988, Patrick Holmes and Alan Carey represented Ireland at the Seoul Olympics. In fact, for some years Patrick Holmes was the fastest paddler in the British Isles. In the same year, Richmond based paddlers Donal MacIntyre, Nick Garner and competed in the marathon World Championships. Less than five years later and Gary Mawer was to make the Thames his paddling playground. The input of both Mick Fegent and Brian Greenaway was substantial in the development of Irish flatwater racing standards. In 1994, while at Richmond, Gary Mawer finished fourth in the World Marathon Championships and qualified for the 1000m final at the Sprint Worlds a month later. More recently, Shane O’Cuinn and Gav Tyrrell, competed in Sprint K2 at Championship level. Since then, it has become an occasional training ground for visiting Irish and is now the second home for many of the generation '88. Richard Hendron and Sean Martin continue to fly the flag internationally in Wild-water racing. Now, while the signs *as gaeilge* are gone the Irish links are as strong as ever with Sean Martin elected as Commodore of Richmond Canoe Club for the last several years. This has arguably been the most important time for the club as they re-developed their clubhouse and they have created a vision for the future of canoe-sport. www.richmondcanoecub.com

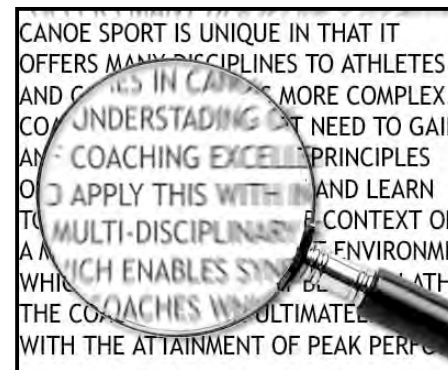


worldfreestylekayakingchampionships.com
April 29th-May 5th

Best wishes to the Irish Team

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UNDER THE MICROSCOPE: SPORTS DRINKS-DO THEY “ADE” (AID) PERFORMANCE? In recent times one might think that fashion has as much to do with what we eat and drink as sports-science. The use of sports drinks is one area where fashion, if you take Brian O’Driscoll as an example, is congruent with this analogy. According to one study conducted by Dr. Gareth Davidson at the University of Ulster, “performance notably increases if powerade is ingested prior to exercise.” Powerade is one example of a sports drink *aka* isotonic drink. But what exactly does isotonic mean, do these drinks improve performance or are we better off drinking water? Well, according to Dr. Edel Duffy, a qualified nutritionist and canoe-polo international, sports drinks are fundamental in performance and recovery. Improving our recovery rate from exercise training means that we can train harder and longer next time, which in turn can result in increased gains in fitness, muscle tone and a better overall sports performance. A sports drink is designed to help athletes rehydrate, as well as replenish electrolytes, carbohydrates and other nutrients, which can be depleted after strenuous training or competition. Most isotonic drinks have a carbohydrate level of between 6 and 8% (i.e. 6-8g/100ml if you are reading the label) and are emptied from the stomach at a rate similar to water. Electrolytes, especially sodium and potassium, in a drink will reduce urine output, enable the fluid to empty quickly from the stomach, promote absorption from the intestine and encourage fluid retention. Isotonic drinks are superior to water as they provide energy and electrolytes and in some cases water can cause bloating, suppresses thirst and thus further drinking. However, in all disciplines it is important to note that thirst is a poor indicator of hydration. By the time you are thirsty you are already dehydrated. Ideally you should drink 300-600mls in the 15 minutes before exercise and the general recommendation is to drink 150-200mls every 10-15 minutes during prolonged exercise but everyone will be different in this respect, so it is important to experiment with fluids during training as opposed to trying it for the first time during an event. So unlike the fleeting fads of fashion, sports drinks have earned their place in optimising and enhancing performance and should be a permanent fixture in the diets of athletes and sports people. Interestingly, the origins of the name of the Worlds largest selling sports drink *GATORADE* was in combination of the Florida “Gators” football team and Dr. Robert Cade, the scientist who invented this performance “aid.”



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:

FLATWATER RACING COMMITTEE April 4th SPA HOTEL LUCAN, 8PM.

FREESTYLE AGM MAY 5TH LIMERICK (SEE WWW.IRISHFREESTYLE.COM)

OPEN CANOE SYMPOSIUM MAY 5-6TH CAPPINALEA OEC (SEE TDU WEBSITE).

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FAMILIAR FACES: ANITA GORDON is the voice of the Irish Canoe Union for the thousands that phone the office at Sport HQ. She has been working here for almost five years. Prior to her appointment with the Irish Canoe Union, she had gained extensive experience working in adventure sports with the Association for Adventure Sports (AFAS), the Mountaineering Council of Ireland and at Tiglin. Consequently, she has been actively engaged in the administration of adventure sport for over a decade. Anita's pastimes include walking her dogs (among them are a German Shepherd, a Jack Russell and a Golden Retriever), listening to classical music and loves all things Italian. While Anita's dogs are her first love she is a strong animal welfare advocate. Among her roles in the Irish Canoe Union are managing the membership databases, providing administration support for the Liffey Centre and training courses, and doing the accounts. She brings a passion to her work that belies her years and combined with her good humour brings mirth to those who work with her-viva voce.



COACH PROFILE: HAN BIJNEN NATIONAL SLALOM COACH-He hails from Holland, is an active slalom paddler and has a coaching pedigree few can compare with. Han has been the Irish team slalom coach for most of the duration since his first appointment in 2002. His coaching vision is unique with his emphasis on the long-term development of paddlers. In common with other coaches in the discipline, technique is paramount to Han. However, the way in which he facilitates technical development is unique. For example, during certain phases of training during the year he is not a strong advocate of using a stopwatch. Instead, he urges his athletes to focus on the "feel" of the boat. He also has a strong interest in advances in sports-science especially in physiology. His current partnership with Eoin Rheinisch saw them at work together at the Athens Olympics. While luck wasn't on their side that day, a World Cup win at La Seu D'urgell World Cup race in 2004 has been their peak so far. Last year Eoin returned to form with a series of top ten World Cup finishes leading to a top 10 World ranking. Beijing should be their zenith, depending on the race for qualification but Han is also developing a 2012 squad which includes Hannah Craig and Ciaran Heutrau. Han brings strong leadership, 100% commitment and a technical *nous* which pays dividends for his paddlers. Keep your eyes on his paddlers in the World Cup Series and World Championships this year. See <http://www.hanbijnen.nl/>



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D ID YOU KNOW: HOW OLD IS YOUR SPORT? We tend to look across the water for the origins of canoe-racing activity, as the first races were held on the Thames in the 1860's. In fact, while Royal canoe club, named by Queen Victoria, was founded just four miles upstream of Richmond in 1873, in that same decade, the landed gentry were competing on the Barrow for a canoe trophy (now in the Carlow Museum). In 1900, kayaks participated in the Cork Cup races on the Lee. While, 1924 marked the inception of the International Canoe Federation and our sports entry to the Paris Olympics, WW II was to be a turning point. Operation Frankton was a British Combined Operations raid on shipping in Bordeaux harbour, France in by 12 men of the Royal Navy, in two-man Cockle MK II Canoes. A fictionalised version of the story was later told in the film *The Cockleshell Heroes*, but the planner, Major Hasler is immortalised in canoeing with the Hasler trophy awarded for the annual club championship. Military technology led to innovations in boat design and more robust craft being built in the typical *klepper* design. In fact, glass-reinforced plastic, first used for constructing submarines in the War, would become the norm for kayaks decades later. The first slalom Worlds were held in 1949 and Wild-water a decade later (see photo). At this time paddlers in Ireland would buy a kit from the hobby shop and construct their own kayak, virtually from scratch. The crafts, still tied to the Rob Roy design (based on rowing boats) were unwieldy and fragile and took a great deal of skill to negotiate courses like the first unofficial Liffey Descent held in 1960. A decade later and fibreglass reigned and consequently boats were stronger and critically, boat shape was no longer defined by a wooden frame. Innovations in slalom boats and pushing the envelope by the Washington DC based c-boat paddlers (Lugbill, Hearn & McEwan) led to “enders” and play moves being invented-a precursor to freestyle which will have their first official ICF Worlds this year. The plastic revolution of the 1980's literally broke the mould and canoe-craft could now be made virtually unbreakable and design more innovative. Canoe-polo and marathon both became part of the canoe-sport family in the 1970's with the World Championships in marathon held in 1988 and in canoe-polo in 1993. Since then radical rule changes for boat design in flatwater and slalom and categories for Women in canadian classes are now on the statute books. The future? Only time will tell.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

Dates	Event	Venue	Contact
April 14-15 th	Sprint Regatta	Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham.	Eamon Fleming
April 14-15 th	Irish Slalom Selection	R.Tay, Grandtully, Scotland.	
April 21 st	Junior Marathon Series	R. Liffey, Lucan-Palmerstown.	irishmarathoncanoeing.com
April 22 nd	Celbridge Ranking Marathon	Grand Canal, Celbridge.	Eamon Devoy
April 29 th -5 th May	Freestyle Worlds	R. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.	Irishfreestyle.com

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