

GOLD RUSH 2008-TEAMWORK PAYS OFF: Whether you search for gold in the hills of Monaghan, the Olympic course at Beijing or at a major international canoe event, this task, alone you don't do. Paddling your own canoe doesn't mean you have to work in isolation. At the highest competitive level in our sport we rely upon professional coaches like Gabor Kulscar and volunteer managers, like Deaglain O'Driscoll, Olympic team manager for Beijing, to assist our elite performers. Former ICU president Micheal Feeney continues to travel to major events across the disciplines, with lens in hand and always lending a hand. Similarly, Dermot Keogh supports the slalom team annual World Cup pilgrimage. Recent official team managers have included Ashling Franzoni, Yvonne McCormack, Bernie Downes, Adrian Barber, Nikolay Valchinkovski (all in canoe-polo), Kevin Murphy, Eugene Ryan, Tom Egan and Michelle Barry (Sprint) and Andrew Redmond, Bruno Halter, and Jan Vachta (Wild-Water racing). All the above have of their own volition given up time to



assist generation 08. Their roles include providing moral support, shuttling, attending team meetings, planning and booking travel arrangements and protesting! As you can imagine the latter role is close to my heart but it only pertains to the process in slalom whereby you can appeal a penalty awarded to an athlete. In my role as president, one task I have had at the top of my agenda is to recognise excellence and commitment in our sport both on and off the water. I wish to personally acknowledge those who support our racers at home and abroad, and thank them for their commitment, courage and patience. On a final

matter I wish Neil Caffrey (see above), our top slalom boat for much of this season, well in his recovery from a serious illness. Our health is our wealth and I am confident I will see Neil in the European Championships next year in Nottingham.

Eamon Devoy
President, Irish Canoe Union

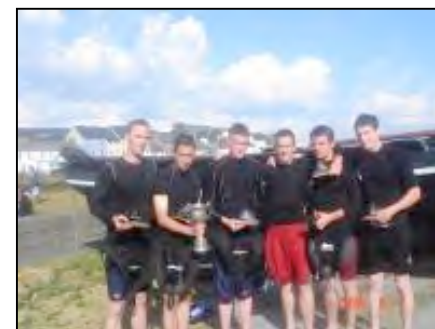
**AGM OF THE WILDWATER RACING COMMITTEE,
JULY 25TH, SPORT HQ, JOYCE WAY, PARKWEST AT 8PM**
www.irishwildwaterracing.com

WILDWATER WAVES-FROM YOUTH TO OLD AGE: According to Mick Feeney, not since 1981 has so it rained so much at a World Championships in Wildwater, and that was Bala, North Wales. Here on the foothills of the Val D'Aosta and only an hour from Milan, the weather had a major impact on the race. Training was cancelled for most of the week and the classic course was moved due to the spate conditions. The Classic course was on a flat section with a broken weir at the start while the sprint was held on a class IV artificial slalom course. The *ying* and *yang* of wild-water racing didn't change the podium positions too much (Vladi Panato 1st C1 sprint; Max Benassi 1st K1 Classic), but let to much carnage among the rest of the field. The most interesting results were the comeback of former four times World Champion Marco Previde-Massara from Italy who finished 16th in the classic-He is 50 years old. And at the other end of the spectrum Jessica Oughton (20 years old) took fourth place here, a silver in the team sprint event with Sandra Hyslop and Radka Felingerova, and at Lofer produced an outstanding second run (it would place her in the top 10 men) to win the sprint race. Ireland had top twenty finishes for the team of three, Liz Shouldice (18th in Classic), Keith McGuirk (20th in Classic) and Tadhg MacIntyre (18th in Sprint)-see www.wvcommittee.com. The four race World Cup series saw Cillian Duggan join the team for races in Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic and on the Saalach at Lofer, Austria. At the latter site Keith McGuirk was unfortunate to injure his shoulder in the sprint runs and we wish him well in his recovery. Cillian looked more comfortable in the sprint event but found the last corner challenging, as did most of the field. Best performances for the team were at Lofer where Liz took 9th in the classic and where our C1 took 12th in the sprint, both close to the pace. Many thanks to our team leaders and supporters including Andrew Redmond, Bruno Halter, Mick Feeney, Patrick Hynes, Caoimhe Ni Chuinn and Jan Vachta. However, the outstanding achievement of the 2008 season is the preparation of a team for the Junior Europeans-never before have we had a full Men's and Women's kayak team- MK1: Adam Sweeney, Charlie Blount, Lorcan Feely, Sean Heal & Tom Burke; WK1: Aisling Conlan, Clodagh Doyle & Olivia



Manning Well done to the committee, the clubs, parents and above all best wishes to the athletes involved. Follow their progress at: <http://www.valtellinariver.it/en/european2008>

POLO PROGRESS-GALWAY GROOVE: July first is International Canada day and next month sees three teams represent Ireland in the World Championships in Edmonton, Alberta. Closer to home we have had a fantastic competition in Galway with competition taking place in the midst of street theatre and music. Huge crowds got to see the rough and tumble of canoe-polo for the first time. Sean Mullins and Pierce Kennedy and U CG organised the event, the first of its kind in the city of the tribes. Kilcock (see photo) had the distinction of having two teams in the Division one final. Band of Brothers, from Belfast, won Division two convincingly. The Irish Women participated in Division two, losing a 3-4th play-off in a penalty shoot off. At the Flanders Cup, in Mechelen, Belgium, they tested their tactics prior to the Worlds finishing 12th in a tough field. Next up on the national front is the excellent Killaloe event on July 5-6th. www.canoepolo.ie/competitions.



UNDER THE MICROSCOPE-INNOVATION IN CANOESPORT: Performance enhancement takes us down many routes-sport science, supplements and old fashioned craftsmanship. The latest idea comes from the Czech boat designer Tomas Zastera (www.zastera.cz) and simply comprises adding a handle to one side of the cockpit of a flatwater racing kayak-to aid portaging. Each season new innovations occur-hard-shell moulded knee cups, fixing rigid buoyancy into the boat with composites and moving weights in the boat to change the balance depending on the type of course e.g., flat versus moving water. The Liffey Descent has inspired many creative ideas-Canadians with wheels, kayaks with stabilisers and plastic ducks attached to your helmets (not sure about the impact of the latter). Bouyancy aids have taken a step forward with the slimline versions by Sandiline (www.sandiline.com) developed specifically for avoiding poles in slalom. In flatwater paddling, it was de rigeur to use anything resembling a 1979 Harishock (usually without any floatation merit) but now the racers are using bum bag life-jackets to comply with the Department of Marine directives. Regulation changes have led to advances in slalom boat design as boats are now typically half a metre shorter than they were in the Athens Olympics. Eoin Rheinisch has designed a boat, the Double-Dutch Scimitar and a number of evolutions of this design, that counter the trend of short bow long tail-and has an arrowhead type profile making it very quick but hard to handle. Look out for it in Beijing.



SLALOM SCEAL-HOW NOT TO GET "TACENED": The second round of the World Cup series was on the vigorous slalom site developed in 1990 on the river Sava, Tacen, Slovenia. But first the Irish team took to Prague for round 1 where they would good their first taste of World competition this season. Mens kayaks were to the fore with Eoin Rheinisch taking 13th place, just two seconds outside the final. Ciaran Heurteau and Helen Barnes made the semi-finals and took 24th and 29th position respectively. Tacen would see an improvement in the overall team performance and perhaps a sign of the future in Men's kayak. In the qualification round Eoin showed good form with another 13th place with Ciaran Heurteau in 20th position. Patrick Hynes, making his World Cup debut felt the full power of the water with a twenty-second paddle back on a "S" move at the last stopper. In the semi-finals, Ciaran paddled confidently and gliding his boat on top of the water tamed Tacen. This was all the more astonishing as his paddles had come apart in his morning warm-up and when he fixed them the blade angle didn't match exactly. He was the only paddler in the final to go faster on second runs, with times of 94.45 and 94.15 displaying cool consistency. Eoin on the other hand had a less distressing morning with his support team of Han Bijnen and sport psychologist Brendan Hackett but the river was to throw up a surprise for him later that day. Gate one was on the main drop and the next gate was a left upstream below the main stopper-you could choose to go left and run a tight line or right which would allow you to carry more speed. Our Beijing bound paddler took the high line to go left of the monstrous hole but got spun, hit the hole backwards and did well to recover and finish the run in 32nd place-truly "Tacened." As in the previous World Cups at this slalom site a local paddler won, Peter Kauzer, with an astonishing time of 88 seconds on his semi-final run. Both Helen Barnes and Hannah Craig found their best form yet in the semi-finals finishing in 18th and 16th position respectively. The team now travels to the historic Eiskanal, site of the 1972 Olympics, on the river Lech in Augsburg, Germany. See <http://kanu-schwaben-augsburg.de/> for results.



FORTHCOMING INTERNATIONAL EVENTS:

- July 3-6th European Junior Championships Wildwater Racing, River Adda, Italy.
- July 4-6th World Cup Slalom Augsburg, Germany.
- July 12-13th Pre-Worlds, La Seu d'Urgell, Spain.
- July 11-13th European U23 Championships, Solkan, Slovenia.
- July 19-25th Canoe Polo World Championships, Edmonton, Canada.