

The Oceania Canoe Association (OCA) has seen two years of activity which has resulted in increased membership and athlete participation. With nine nations now recognised by the International Canoe Federation (ICF) and two further nations undergoing the affiliation process, the emphasis has been on the Olympic disciplines of Flatwater and Slalom Racing.

The Oceania Flatwater Racing Championships were conducted in Auckland, New Zealand on 2 – 3 March 2007 with the successful participation of Samoa and Guam for the first time.

The Development Program enabled the representation of Sean Pangelinan from Guam and Rudolf Williams from Samoa to participate in the 2007 Flatwater Championships in Duisburg, following a Training Camp, with Rudolf successfully progressing to the semi-finals.

Sean Pangelinan also represented Guam at the 2007 World Slalom Championships in Brazil along with Ella Nicholas from Cook Islands. All the development athletes have received assistance from the Australian and New Zealand training programs, and much positive publicity has been generated (television and print media).

The ONOC and OSFO meetings in March provided valuable contact with the island nations and personnel who were able to support the work of the ICF, particularly with respect to increasing participation at international events. As a direct result, Rudolf Williams was endorsed by the Samoan Outrigger Canoe Federation, and the Cook Islands applied for membership of the ICF. In addition, the support of the NOC's for commencing activity in both Fiji and Papua New Guinea was encouraging. As a special consideration, the ICF has waived the membership fees for all Oceania countries (except for Australia and New Zealand) until 2011 (five years).

During April 2007, the 3rd Oceania Canoe Polo Championships were held in Adelaide with strong support from the Australian and New Zealand teams as well as visiting teams from Asia. This bi-annual event will next be held in Penrith, Australia in October 2009.

The OCA has deliberately pursued the concept of incorporating canoeing (as an alternative discipline), within the island outrigger organisations, as these are already recognised by the NOC's and their members can already paddle. Many of the island nations have quite small populations, with few people prepared to take on leadership roles, so to impose another organisation on top of their current available sports would not achieve the outcome we desire.



Flatwater canoeing coaching clinic in Guam

Canoeing in Guam has benefited by the flatwater coaching of David Hunter (N.Z.) who visited on two occasions for coaching clinics and achieved excellent results. He was well supported by the Guam Canoe Federation and NOC, gaining their respect and displaying a genuine affinity for island culture. The heightened interest

from local paddlers and good media exposure has encouraged the Guam Kayak & Canoe Federation to include K1 and C1 events in all future OC1 competitions.

At the 2007 World Flatwater Championships, Australia and New Zealand both qualified an Olympic berth in the K1 Men 1000m event, leaving one place available to another Oceania country at the continental qualification event. Additional flatwater qualifications were: NZ K2 M 1000m; AUS K4M 1000m, and K4W 500m. Australia also qualified C1M and K1W boats at the Slalom World Championships.



A Cook Island athlete (Ella Nicholas) competed for the first time at the 2008 Junior Slalom World Championships in the Czech Republic finishing 24th.

Three athletes (two flatwater, one slalom) from our developing nations had the opportunity to attend the pre-Olympic training programmes organised and funded by the ICF.

The Oceania Olympic Qualification Flatwater and Slalom Racing Events were held at Penrith, Sydney from 12 – 16th March, 2008 in conjunction with the Oceania Championships. Four nations (Australia, Guam, New Zealand, Samoa) qualified boats to compete in the Beijing Olympic Games. Notably, Sean Pangelinan (Guam) and Rudolf Williams (Samoa) were the inaugural representatives from their countries in canoe/kayak at an Olympic Games. Both athletes reached semi-finals in their categories. Guam and Samoa have experienced a significant increase in interest in the sport. Five medals (one gold, two silver, three bronze) were won by Oceania athletes at the Games.

The World Masters Games will be conducted in Sydney from 10 – 18th October, 2009, utilising the Olympic venues for the canoeing events of Flatwater, Marathon, Canoe Polo and Slalom Racing.

The Oceania Development Plan has recently been updated to include training for coaches and officials as well as ongoing athlete support. A key focus continues to be provision of paddling equipment to underpin canoeing programmes in our developing nations, with an emphasis on the C category. We are grateful to Queensland Canoeing (Australia) for donating some used K1s to assist.

We have commenced the process to recruit an athlete representative to the OCA Board.

The OCA would like to express sincere thanks to the ICF, ONOC and OSFO Executive and staff for their understanding and support of our work over the last twenty-four months. In addition, the interest and cooperation from the Oceania national federation's and their respective National Olympic Committees has been sincerely valued. This outstanding collaboration has enabled much to be achieved across the Pacific and we look forward to working with our member nations to further develop canoeing in 2009.

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