

**REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
OCEAN RACING
IN THE PERIOD 2007 -2008**



**Report from Tim Cornish
Ocean Racing Working Group Chairman
For the XXXII. ICF Congress in Rome, 2008**

At the Board meeting in January 2007 I was asked to take the lead in forming an Ocean Racing working group.

Initially time was spent gathering information and contacts. I arranged for a notice to go into the e-Canoeing Express and initially I had a reasonable response.

Approximately 30 contacts have been made from Australia, New Zealand, West Indies America, Europe, South Africa, France, Portugal, Spain and Tahiti and Hawaii:

The plan was to start a discussion group to look at rules and how the different types of races can fit together. The first notice to the discussion group is attached to this report for the information of the Board. This notice was sent out by email on 25 July 2007 and sets out some of the challenges and questions to be decided for Ocean Racing. Unfortunately there has been very little further response/comment since sending out the notice. Only one reply was received.

I was surprised that my request for comments did not at least attract some debate about trying to group all Ocean racing together but the response was very limited.

I have been involved in the following activities:

- I produced an introduction for the ICF website – Ocean Racing page.
- Following requests from South Africa and Portugal the Executive Committee were requested to approve World Cup status for two events in 2007. These were an event in Durban, South Africa which was held at the beginning of July 2007 and event in Portugal at the end of July 2007. These were both approved and held as ICF World Cups.
- I attended the event in Durban which was very successful but this was a purely Surf Ski event.
- I have been contacted for advice re events in Dubai, Mauritius and Malaysia but I have not had much success or interest in forming a proper working group.
- I have sent the draft rules to the organisers of events.
- In October 2007 I attended an event in New York which involved all forms of Ocean Racing and which could be a model for a combined event involving all types of craft. It is not a huge event but it attracted some international competitors in the Surf Ski and Outrigger classes.
- During 2008 my activity has been reduced for personal reasons but I have continued to research Ocean racing activity and respond to enquiries from interested people.
- In September 2008 I met with Paul Owen from the British Canoe Union. Paul recognizes that in Britain there is a lot of activity in sea kayaks and sit on kayaks which is not formalized. There are also events which do not fall under the structures of the BCU.

Surf Ski would seem to be the most established form of Ocean Racing from an international perspective. They have formed their own unofficial World Series which is administered by a few leading paddlers and event organisers in Surf Ski. This series is now getting international television coverage.

Although I was initially asked by South African Surf Ski to try and obtain ICF recognition I think there is now reluctance in some people from Surfski to go the official ICF recognition route. They may want to form a Surf Ski only International Federation although I am not aware of any real intention to try and do this. There has been no recent contact with me to establish Surf Ski within the ICF even from within South Africa.

Many surfski and ocean racing events are not linked to National Federations and participation is on an individual basis and not a National Team basis

I am a bit at a loss as to where to go from here due to the lack of interest in the forming of a working group. The activity really needs a bottom up approach and not a top down and at the moment there is not enough activity that is linked to the existing National Federations to start the discipline in the same form as the current ICF disciplines.

In Portugal, France and Spain there is Ocean Racing activity which is mainly in kayaks but is starting become open to surfski with just one open class. This activity is more formalized than elsewhere and is under the control of the National Federations. National Championships are held for Sea Kayaks.

If a formal working group were to be formed I would recommend that representatives be looked for from some of the following countries – Portugal, Spain, France, West Indies, USA, Great Britain, South Africa and Australia. Most of these countries would be able to nominate someone through their national federation but in Australia, Great Britain and USA the current activity does not fall under the control of the national federations.

The ICF need to decide if we are to continue with trying to actively establish this discipline or wait until there is more interest from ICF member countries to do so. If there is an interest in forming a working group now I could produce another letter but targeting specific countries or people to be part of the first working group.

Although I have been doing this work up to now I still believe that it would be better for someone more directly involved with Ocean Racing to take the lead with this work.

Tim Cornish

Chairman - ICF Ocean Racing Working Group