

Canoeing CV

JamesPralija

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Introduction:

I have competed and volunteered in canoe marathon for the past 8 years and am actively involved from a local level through to my roles at the Athlete Representative on the Paddle Australia Canoe Marathon Technical Committee, Australian Canoe Marathon Team Manager and Masters competitor at world championship level.

Membership status: Lane Cove River Kayakers
Paddle New South Wales
Paddle Australia (PA407139)

Canoeing International:

Australian Canoe Marathon Team – 2022 Open Men K2
Australian Canoe Marathon Team – 2023 to present Team Manager
Australian Canoe Marathon Team – 2025 Masters Men K1S, K1, K2

Canoeing National:

Paddle Australia Canoe Marathon Technical Committee - Athlete Representative 2024-Present
Paddle Australia Canoe Marathon Championships competitor - 2019-Present

Canoeing State:

PaddleNSW Canoe Marathon competitor - 2018-present
Lane Cove Rive Kayakers competitor - 2017-present

Employment:

Prokayaks Manager - 2019-Present

- Large scale sports management (seating up to 130 paddlers at any given time)
- Kayak and surfski supply and repair
- Flatwater kayak coaching L2
- Enclosed waters kayak guide

ICF Athletes' Committee Nomination:

James Pralija

Prior to my involvement in paddling I was a schoolboy and State (New South Wales) rowing representative level in juniors and Under 23. I have a keen understanding of the athlete experience and how they need to communicate with governing bodies. I represent paddlers external to high performance programs; still in close contact with elite paddlers and paddling at an elite level within the masters ranks but also attuned to the realities of community clubs and local racing.

I am the Athlete Representative on the Paddle Australia Canoe Marathon Technical Committee (PACMTC) I listen to athlete concerns. I have an understanding and appreciation from my own competition experience. Being approachable and understanding athletes I can raise their concerns at the appropriate level.

As the Australian Canoe Marathon Team Manager and PACMTC Athlete Representative, I take great pride in ensuring all of my athletes receive the utmost care and attention. At the 2024 ICF Masters Canoe Marathon Championships I was able to relay information about late changes to distances for Masters mixed K2 resulting in podium finishes for Masters athletes.

Athlete Committee Goals:

- Establish and maintain two-way communication with the athletes in our community at all levels of the sport.

Two-way communication with the athletes in our community is crucial and is equally important at a local level as it is at an elite international level. Through my role as Athlete Representative on the PACMTC, I ensure that I represent all paddlers regardless of their level and paddling expertise. Being the voice of the athletes is important, but so is communication flowing in both directions - athlete representatives must be able to feed information from the ICF back to the community. Some information and decisions may not be popular; however, I believe that I have the right rapport with the community to maintain open and productive discourse.

My rapport with local, state, national and international athletes is important to maintain, and I make very deliberate efforts to do so because those relationships are crucial to my role in the sport.

My role as the Australian Canoe Marathon Team Manager requires timely communication to Team members especially when seeking information for accommodation, boat hire, team uniforms and entries.

- Represent the athletes, be their voice within the ICF and work for the benefit of all athletes

When every athlete feels represented, their enthusiasm becomes infectious and will grow the sport organically. It is important to ensure a diverse representation of discipline and nationality in disciplines not represented at the Olympics. I represent a strong voice for marathon paddling and ocean racing community. These are disciplines whose voices have not been on the committee in a while, coupled with an Oceania perspective.

- Promote the professionalism of paddle sports worldwide, leading by example as involved, active and dynamic athletes

Athletes are the face of every sport and this comes with significant responsibility. There are opportunities for ICF athletes to be more marketable, promoting the sport in the community.

Paddle sports have great role models – Hank McGregor, Cory Hill, Jess Fox, these are the kind of athletes that are leading by example, and are involved, active and dynamic in what they bring to the sport - precisely

the kind of athletes we need to promote paddle sports. As a member of the Athlete's Committee, I would actively examine avenues for increasing the profile of leading athletes.

- Promote the involvement of athletes into international sports leadership development programmes

There are athletes capable of leading in every generation - identifying them is not always easy but it is important that we do. Taking each age group and giving them the opportunity to mentor the group below is invaluable.

The knowledge and experience that can be passed down from an Under 23s athlete to a first year Under 18s athlete cannot be underestimated. In the same way a Senior athlete can mentor an Under 23's athlete.

When athletes are involved and feel like they're being heard (and subsequently have a voice), they are almost always far more enthused not only their own competition, but of those around them too. This engenders team cohesion, and closes the loop, by ensuring that each subsequent generation receives the same opportunities.

For identified young leaders, non-discipline specific, we need to provide opportunities for access to programs like the IOC Young Leaders program, that will give them the tools and experience to help develop themselves and paddle sports.

- Promote our athletes for recognition in international and national sports awards to increase the profile of our sport and people

In paddle sports, there is a multitude of athletes, whose achievements are incredibly noteworthy. This harks back to the professionalism and the marketability of paddle sports overall.

In recognition of an athlete's effort, I have submitted nominations for several athletes for recognition at annual Paddle Australia Awards. Some receiving the ultimate recognition in winning the award whilst others have received recognition as a finalist. I have done the same at annual Paddle NSW awards.