



KAYAK KAPERS

February 2007

No world record ... this time by Justin Paine

Tom Simmat's bold attempt to set a world record for the distance paddled by a solo male kayaker in 24 hours ended shortly before 4pm on Saturday, January 13. He pulled out just over 100km short of his target and with about 8 hours still left on the clock.

Although he missed the world record, his 139.74km in 16 hours 7 minutes 7 seconds was a monumental endurance achievement in still water under strict race conditions. His 115.08km in the first 12 hours is thought to probably be an Australian record.

The failure to win the top prize was obviously a big disappointment for him, but he has bounced back with his usual determination and is now setting his sights on another crack at the record later in the year. He is carefully analysing all aspects of the record attempt to pinpoint improvements that can be made, both in the organisation of the event and in the actual paddling. The attempt was a very valuable learning experience that will pay dividends next time.

Penrith Regatta Centre, a narrow 2km-long stretch of water used for Olympic kayaking and rowing in 2000, was the venue for the bid to break American Carter Johnson's mark of 241.95km. The attempt was approved by Guinness World Records (formerly the Guinness Book of Records) and the



strict conditions set out were all complied with.

Allowing for turning markers at each end, each lap measured 4.11km. Breaking the record required an average speed of just over 10km/h. In comparison, three laps is slightly longer than our Wednesday night time trial course on Lane Cove River, and Tom had to maintain for 24 hours an average equivalent to just under 72 minutes for the time trial course. Beating the record meant paddling 58.9 laps of the Regatta Centre course or the equivalent of 20.2 time trial laps.

The Regatta Centre was hired for the occasion for 24 hours, from the end of the NSW kayak sprint championships expected to finish at 10pm on Friday, January 12. As it turned out, lightning from an electrical storm filled the night sky and drove the sprinters from the water for a time, and they didn't finish their program until nearly midnight.

Tom began his attempt at

11.46.50pm, his blue/orange/white Sonic disappearing into the darkness. He had a schedule of times to be achieved in each lap to be on world record pace, and after paddling the first lap in 22.42 he was 1.42 ahead of schedule. This margin widened to 3.12 after 2 laps and by 9 laps had

reached 9.42.

Then the problems started. The Sonic felt heavy, as though it had water in it or weed on the rudder, and he came in after 11 laps. A 7-minute stop failed to uncover the cause of the problem.

"I thought we were screaming it in and then it all fell apart," Tom said.

His lap times slowed and by 15 laps he was 20 seconds behind schedule. Not a lot, but he now had to deal with badly blistered hands and the onset of fatigue. Around midday a light sou'easter strengthened and swept up the course. As well as making the into-the-wind leg of each lap tough, it also set up a bit of a chop on the water.

A lengthy stop was followed by a few more laps, then another even longer stop.

Finally Tom said: "One more lap and that's it."

Fellow LCRK paddlers accompanying him around the course – but being careful to avoid any washriding – set off again chasing the figure in the white cap and faded blue and yellow top. They pulled in at the end of the lap but Tom kept going, reluctant to finally pull the plug. Even at this late stage he was paddling fast enough to leave some of his companions in his wake. And the familiar "GO, GO, GO!" could not be repressed.

Eventually, after 34 laps, he came in and it was all over. All bar the shouting. And the post mortem, which didn't take long to start. Was the fresh water a factor? There was uncertainty over whether a salt water venue might have been faster (where is a salt water



Tom examines his blistered hands during a rest break

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MURRAY MARATHON 2006

Class	Class Place	Competitor(s)	Time	Day 1 92km	Day 2 96km	Day 3 78km	Day 4 62km	Day 5 76km	Hcp time	Hcp place
UN2 MO	1	Oliver Hookins/Timothy Hookins	31.33.35	7.13.43	7.24.46	6.00.20	5.04.41	5.52.05	30.55.40	37
RKL2 MO	1	Craig Elliott/James Mumme	32.27.01	7.28.50	7.39.26	6.04.07	5.11.07	6.23.30	29.31.45	21
TK2 W40+	1	Merridy Huxley/Marg Cook	33.58.16	7.35.37	7.54.45	6.30.22	5.28.38	6.28.54	26.50.12	5
K1 M40+	2	Richard Barnes	34.06.17	7.57.51	8.08.27	6.33.53	5.20.27	6.05.39	30.21.10	28

Washrides, massages & paddle steamers by Marg Cook



Pre Race. Merridy and I decided to do the Murray in Frank McDonald's TK2 in the women's vet 40 TK2 class. We hoped that by going TK2 rather than K2 we would get more company, fun and wash-riding.

Rob and I left Sydney about 6.20 Boxing Day morning and drove via Wagga Wagga, Urana and Finley to Tocomwal, arriving 8 hours later. We had planned to camp at the official Murray sites, so selected a shady and protected, somewhat rough underfoot area to take the Huxleys, ourselves and two tents from Team Kermit (the Richard Barnes green Mirage double, which was in the relay with Mardi and John Barnes, Amanda Ryan, Lee Killingworth and Rob Cook).

We managed to catch up with all the Lane Cove paddlers as well as many other NSW people at the briefing.

Day 1. Yarrowonga to Tocomwal. 92km. It was very cold overnight with a stiff S to SW breeze. At the start there was the usual chaos at Yarrowonga, with not enough space for too many nervous paddlers and land crews. Also very cold.

We had a good start and wash-ride to A, where we stopped for a vest for warmth and the usual food/fluid in-and-out break. We elected to stop at 3 checkpoints (AB&C) for the loo stop as well as a chance to eat.

We got a tremendous wash-ride for 20km into C behind three school relay TK2s paddling side by side. It doesn't get much better than that.

From C to Toc felt slow and tiring (26km), but we finished OK in 7hr 35min and found ourselves 5th on handicap. Jill and Judy from Windsor were 9 min behind in time but ahead on of the Murray – a marvelous massage for the donation of a couple of gold coins. Waiting in the long massage queue is made easier by listening and talking to all the other characters who have paddled that day.

Day 2. Tocomwal to Picnic Point. 96km. We all packed up camp and were ready to go by 7.15am for our call at 7.30am. At 7.40am there was no Merridy!!!! Their car had failed to start. She got there before the run down to the line, (not a good way to commence a long day's paddle.) It was the first time we had done the full course for day 2 so was looking handicap.

Once at the campsite it was off to the showers and then to have a massage. It is one of the wonderful luxuries forward to the new scenery. (In previous years day 2 would be the day 1 course again – not good for the psyche).

We managed a few wash-rides and had quite a bit of "solo" paddling. The entry, by river, to Picnic Point is very picturesque.

Day 3. Picnic Point to Echuca. 78km. The first 20km of paddling are the most beautiful of the event, through a fast-flowing, narrow river with wonderful forests at the edge. It passes too quickly. We seemed to miss all the good wash-



rides and felt a bit tired and flat all day. We didn't manage to "stick" to the washes of boats that passed us. I think the fatigue of the past 2 days had caught up a bit. We had a good last 20km into Echuca with the help of Peter Anderson and Steven Pizze's wash, and then had the huge rolling washes of three large paddle steamers to barge through to the finish.

Day 4. Echuca to Torrumbarry. 66km. RED DAY. Everyone is encouraged to wear red, for the Red Cross. Richard Barnes also made sure as many NSW paddlers as he could find should wear

blue. Richard turned up with blue balloons all over his K1 and Kermit, and sported lovely red lipstick, on his face as well as his lips.

The river is wider and slower at this point as the water banks up at Torrumbarry Weir. There are also fewer snags, these having been removed for the vast numbers of water-skiers who use the river.

Day 4 finished after 5 hr 30min, which gave us lots of time to enjoy a shower and massage as well as ice cream, lazing on the cool shaded grass of Cohuna. We drove on to the "unofficial" campsite at Murrabit and shared a terrific meal in the sport clubhouse, courtesy of the Murrabit AFL club. This left us a 5min drive the next morning, allowing us a sleep-in till 5.30am!

Day 5. Murrabit to Swan Hill. 77km. Last day!! Photos taken with the "Bishop" and lots of friendly repartee with fellow paddlers. The water level was a lot lower than usual and the eddies and boils made steering interesting. The checkpoints took ages to appear. However the end of 404km was near. People along the bank would clap us as we paddled past, quite a feeling. As we rounded the corner to the finish we were greeted by a huge crowd on the shore cheering, yelling at clapping.

A great way to complete the great Murray Marathon.

After the presentation ceremony the Lane Cove crowd celebrated the end of the Murray and 2006 at a Swan Hill restaurant. We had a great night with Tim, Ollie & Jude Hookins, James & Debra Mumme, Craig Elliot & Christine, Merridy & Warren Huxley and Rob and me. The New Year saw itself in without our help, too tired. We woke to find we were camped in a large puddle. 2007 had brought soaking rain to Swan Hill, a good beginning for the New Year.



Up close and personal at the Murray by Tim Hookins

Ever since I land-crewed for Tom Simmat on the Murray Marathon in December 2005, I had been aiming to do it myself. When Oli and I bought the Supersonic, the aim was to do the Hawkesbury Classic and the Murray in it.

The first surprise (at the Murray Marathon) is that we are not in the 8.10 start, but have been reallocated to the 8.30 last start with the fastest boats including 3 K4s, 2 K2s and about 5 K1s. This means we'll not be streaking ahead of the TK2s etc, but be struggling with mainly faster boats than ourselves. Will we be last?

The gun goes off and echoes around against the concrete dam wall. It seems we are able to keep up with the K4s after all! So we go at it. By the time we have done about 60kms, the gloss has worn off the event completely and the pain has set in. The surprise is that though I had been feeling lower back and shoulder pain in the weeks before the event, neither of those is showing up; only the bum pain is prevalent. Oli and I both have blisters on our hands and we have to go to the first aid people at 8.45pm and have them pricked and dressed.

Next morning seems like miracle at starting time when the gun goes off and there are Oli and I streaking away at the start just like yesterday! How can this be? We are getting used to the constant bends in the river with the banks lined with river red-gums, a moderately flowing river and snags and logs constantly appearing in front of us.

All the time we are passing slower boats. We keep thinking how tough they are, just sticking to the job. Each time we takes a wide bend we hear the washriders behind us break out in disagreement about our route. Good to cause a bit of consternation behind!

(At Echuca) I go to the disposals and camping shop and buy some inflatable fisherman's seats. Today is "red day" and we all have to wear something red. As you would expect, the Barnes family come around offering us all blue balloons to indicate we are from NSW. Oli doesn't want balloons because they will slow us down, but we end up with one on the boat. (That night we go) back to Cohuna and we get the blisters done. While I am being treated a young guy is crying in the next cubicle. It seems he can't take any more and has just broken down. The first aiders are saying: "Pull yourself together!" And such things.

Final day at last! We are in our usual position battling it out with the K4 when two K1s overtake. We like to battle with pairs of K1s so we take off after them. On a sharp bend we are right on their wash when we hear the loud bang of our hull hitting a snag and then again as the snag hits the rudder. After we recover Oli can't steer any more. Somehow we have the energy for the drive to the finish and then it's over!

Some other finishers: Team Kermit (Mardi Barnes with [taking turns] John Barnes, Amanda Ryan, Lee Killingworth and Rob Cook) 36.45.13; Liz van Reece and Greg Smith 31.40.42, 6th on handicap; Ian Cooper 35.12.16, 20th on handicap; Peter Anderson and Steven Pizzey 33.18.14, 30th on handicap.

These are extracts from a lengthy report by Tim Hookins. If you want to read the full magnum opus, prepare a tasty lunch, grab a couple of cold ones, get a very comfortable chair and tune in to our website www.lcrk.org.au.



Richard Barnes ... the man in blue



Craig Elliott and James Mumme test the water



Oli and Tim Hookins dodge a typical Murray snag



New Year's Eve in a Swan Hill restaurant: Craig Elliott, Christine Gordon, Debra Mumme, Marg Cook, Rob Cook, Jude Hookins, Oliver Hookins, Tim Hookins, James Mumme, Merridy Huxley, Warren Huxley

More than a quickie on a Wednesday night

by Tony Carr

Now that the pontoon versus ramp controversy has run its course, we need something else to get the emails humming!

I've reckoned for some time that our beloved club should get into **recreational kayaking** and right here ... right now ... I want to put up the case for it and talk about how it could be organised.

I have been leisurely paddling Sydney's waterways for 20 years and folks, there's a whole different world out there! There's no city in the world that can offer so many spectacularly beautiful spots to drop a boat into H-2O.

Take Bundeena on Port Hacking in the Royal National Park. An east-west waterway that wends its way up into the park, with sandy bits here and there and a shady picnic ground at Audley Weir. Up north there's Brisbane Water and a great circular route from Ettalong Beach that takes you past an

island devoted to pelicans, a nice restaurant or two and on to a little beach over the water from Gosford that's probably got a name but we call our secret beach, because there's never anybody there - it's west-facing and perfect! For a bit of a challenge, you can paddle from Rose Bay to Manly Cove. Crossing the heads is fun and getting back if the winds turn southerly can be a gut-buster. Then there's Berowra Waters - deep, lush in a valley

that opens out into the mighty Hawkesbury. Also up that way is Mooney Mooney Creek, where you can easily combine a paddle with a wander along a section of the Great North Walk. From Bobbin Head you can paddle up Cowan Creek or head off in the other direction via Apple Tree Bay to Cottage Point and one of Sydney's most spectacular restaurants. At Garigal National Park, north of the Roseville Bridge, a friend of mine regularly organises twi-

our partners. At many of the places I've described, hire boats are available. The cost is low - around \$40 per person for four hours. A couple of the more enterprising companies are now making boats available on trailers, so even out-of-the-way places can be on the agenda.

Reason 3: day paddles help develop endurance - I'm talking about the kind you must have for the Hawkesbury, not the sort you need to cope with the wife on the water - "which end of the paddle goes in the water first and where's the clutch?"

Recreational paddling would add an extra element to what the club provides members. What would the club need to do to make this happen? We'd want to be sure the idea had the

backing of members. There would not be big numbers of participants to start with - people would warm to the idea over time, providing the trips were well organised and word of mouth was good.

Someone would need to take charge - a member of the club executive. Their task would be to develop and run a program of say monthly paddles to begin with and then fortnightly and weekly if demand warranted. They would need to set up arrangements with hire companies, book people in and collect their money. On every outing there would need to be a trip leader who knew the area. Kayak hire companies all carry liability insurance, so those taking part who were not members of NSW Canoeing would be covered. The club could commit to this for a trial period - say six months - then evaluate.

Let's do it! All of Sydney's beautiful waterways await - and it sure beats shopping or doing the lawns on a Saturday afternoon!

What do you think? For or against? Why? Pass your comments to the editor any Wednesday night at the river or email to tonycarr@ozemail.com.au. We'll publish the results next issue.



Bundeena the beautiful. Audley Weir and a picnic lunch are two hours away. Recreational kayaking is lots of fun.

light paddles for groups of friends with dinner under the stars on a sandy strip deep in the park. Not forgetting our own Lane Cove River, which looks stunning at a few kilometres an hour on a sunny afternoon. Those tantalising glimpses of bush and cleared parkland that flash by on Wednesday night are fun to explore.

So, there is no shortage of great places to go! Which brings me to Reason 2. It's social and we can involve

Doing it the Span way

Span is an outdoor adventure club with over 400 members in Sydney. Bushwalking and kayaking are the two most popular activities and the club runs up to 15 trips every weekend. The club publishes a directory of trips every four months and update emails are issued regularly.

I have been involved with Span for five years. I am a Trip Leader and organise kayaking, skiing, scuba diving and bushwalking events. The trick is to minimise administration.

Virtually all communication is by email. If a member wishes to hire a kayak, they must transfer the kayak hire fee electronically to me before I accept them for a trip. No pay, no play. When everyone has paid, I then pay the hire company via electronic transfer. They like it that way and give us good rates.

Trip Leaders are responsible for planning and leading trips. Some of the larger trips have co-leaders to spread the load. Trips are graded by degree of difficulty. All members must adhere to a code of behaviour. There is an emphasis on safety - the club runs technique workshops for those new to kayaking and self rescue is taught.

For more on Span, go to www.spanbush.com.au.



Circumnavigating Tassie by Richard Barnes

Participants: Phil Newman (pictured above off North Head), Richard Barnes

Timing: March 27 till end May; no time seems particularly good or bad weather-wise.

Distance: 1500km

Route: Start at Devonport, then anticlockwise. Some easy north coast to start, followed by warm-up wild west to Strahan. Round SW Cape is the defining, risky stretch, then a leisurely cruise up the sunny east side, rounding back into Bass Strait.

Food: Carry two weeks supply, replenish at towns along the way. No habitation for 400km between Strahan to near Hobart. John and Mardi Barnes aim to meet us with a food drop near Port Davey.

Water: Carry around 15 litres. Rely on filling up from streams at overnight camps.

Kayaks: Mirage 580 for Richard, solar-powered (instruments only) Greenlander for Phil

Biggest risks: Rough landings or launchings. Reports of breaking surf up to 3km offshore, and swells up to 20m.

Highlights: Aim to visit Maatsuyker Lighthouse, on an island off SW Cape; the dolerite cliffs of Tasman Peninsula and Tasman Island; golden sands of Wineglass Bay, to name but a few.



Fun day on Sydney Harbour

LCRK paddlers once turned out in force for the annual Surfboard Challenge across Sydney Harbour on Australia Day. 33 kayaks, some of them doubles, and skis escorted hundreds of surfboarders who raced from the Opera House across to Kirribilli, then under the famous Coathanger and around Lavender Bay to Blues Point. For pictures of the event, go to our website at www.lcrk.org.au.

Trivia question: Which double went for a swim on the way to the marshalling area? For the answer, ask Mark Sier (who went to their rescue).

World record bid

Continued from front page

venue without tides or currents?) but Tom felt the warm, fresh water caused blistering of his hands. Normally he doesn't blister and he paddles without gloves, but one of the blisters this time was enormous, the size of the top of



his little finger.

Did he have the right boat? He thought a surf ski might be better, maybe a Mako 6.

And his preparation needs to be a lot better. Unfortunately, due to the clash of a holiday booking at Coffs Harbour and the only time he could hire the Penrith venue, he returned from holiday only the day before the attempt.

He feels he needs someone to manage the preparations and someone to oversee and direct his progress during the actual attempt, leaving him to concentrate on the paddling.

It's early days, but he's looking at having another shot somewhere around September, after the Yukon in June and before the Hawkesbury Classic in October. Stay tuned, as they say.

The Simmat family was out in force to urge Tom on - Christine, Kobi and Daen, and Carina was across from WA with boyfriend Tristan Kemp.

Tom had great support from LCRK members. Roger Deane controlled the official timing and manned the start/

Marathon winners

Two of the eight divisions in last year's NSW Winter Marathon Series final results were won by Lane Cove kayakers.

Rob Vallis finished a season in which he persistently had his hand out for a trophy by taking out the hotly contested division 4.

Veterans Tony Walker and John Greathead capped a steady but consistent year by winning division 6. Age shall not weary them.

In the over-populated division 5, Ian Purves was second (won by a mixed double).

In the contest for the highest individual points overall, Merridy Huxley was equal first in the open womens classification. She also won a prized Kajner paddle in the lucky draw, so she came home feeling well rewarded.

Tom Simmat won division 4 for the most improved time per division. Good to see he's still lifting his game. Watch out next year.

LCRK was 2nd in the club point score with 78 points (won by Manly Warringah with 138). Paddlers who completed all 8 races in the series included Greg Appleyard, John Greathead, Merridy Huxley, Bert Lloyd, Rob Vallis and Trevor Williamson.



LCRK President Tim Hookins holds aloft the Commonwealth Bank Cup, presented to the top club in the Hawkesbury Classic

finish mark for each lap non-stop. At the other, eastern end of the course, Tim and Oli Hookins and Tim Sindle set up camp and stood watches through the night to record each passing.

Others who turned up, both to offer encouragement and to provided company out on the water, included Mark, Rhiannon and Liam Sier, Roger Aspinall, Julie Stanton, Ian Hofstetter, James Mumme, Craig Elliott, Marg and Rob Cook, Rob Vallis, Justin Paine, John Greathead and Frank McDonald. Many more phoned the mobiles to check progress.

A big thank you to Philip Thomas and Matthew Greig of North Sydney surveyors Montek, who surveyed the

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course for the attempt. They did a great job and certainly are "the on-time surveyors".



Tim McNamara: "Playing kayak chasings after dark"

Tim McNamara and I have been doubles "buddies" for years. I've always known he has a passion for things nautical, most specially paddling his own favourite H₂O (the Lane Cove River).

Usually behind Tim, either in the backseat of our vintage TK2, "Blazing Paddles", or trailing well behind his TK1 on Wednesday nights, I also know how effectively he paddles with his distinctive finesse. However, it wasn't until I got up more close and personal through this Paddler Profile and the autobiographical scribbles he provided that the true nature of the beast was revealed. Again, no surprise, since I also know Tim is a most modest man.

Let me begin at the beginning by featuring the written history and reflections Tim so generously provided with accompanying photographs.

"One of my wife's friends came across our family name, McNamara, in the local library and told her that it means 'Son of the Sea Dog' - but nothing as romantic as that occurred in my life.

"My Mum has a photo of Dad on a big plywood surf ski, steaming down a huge dumper at Bar Beach, Newcastle in the 1930s, a timber kayak paddle in his hands. He stands erect for the camera, about to be engulfed in foam, escaping the bloodied head often caused by airborne skis.

"My first contact with kayaks was at age 15, camping at Pittwater with my mate Simon in his Dad's 1930s plywood (the high-tech replacement for canvas) double kayak. It had a high, cone-shaped front deck, ideal for ploughing through rough water, as his Dad advised, at a ¾ angle.

"With our broomstick paddles, we were able to get to the most beautiful deserted beaches and to explore the

rainforest gullies behind. On one occasion we were paddling toward Palm Beach, into a stiff nor-easter, when a shark surfaced right under our blades, apparently attracted by our singing. I will never forget that staring eye - we raced to the nearest rock and clambered out laughing and screaming loudly.

"Simon got as far as the 1968 Olympic trials and did an epic paddle from Newport to Richmond in his K1. He also did a couple of early Hawkesbury classics.

"My next consistent involvement with kayaking was as I approached my 50s. In January 1988 I responded to an ad my wife had seen in the local paper for Lane Cove Valley Canoe Club and went along to the Wednesday evening paddle at Wirong (Casuarina) Flat. The group leader, Alan Jones, told me to follow the other paddlers, so I set off 'goodaying' everyone, but I soon realised the event was more like footy training, and that is how it continued, in a fun way.

"Many endorphin-charged Wednesday evenings followed, playing kayak chasings after dark with like-minded crazies - Richard Barnes, Roger Deane, Marg and Rob Cook, John Greathead, Mark Sier, Derek Simmonds, Martin Dearnley, Laurie Kenyon, the Rowstons et al. The Hawkesbury Classic was always discussed as a fun thing to do, so I upgraded from my Nymph (modern fibreglass) to my present TK1 (\$750 second hand) in 1993, and joined the evangelical church of the Hawkesbury Classic.

"I participated in the Classic experience of 1994 (did not start), 1995 (11.45), 1996 (11.15), 1997 (DNF) and retired in 1999 due to shoulder impingement caused by a lifetime of

surfboard and kayak paddling. I estimate a few million Heil Hitler salutes with each arm.

"A serious look at my paddling technique enabled me to continue paddling until the present, including several winter marathon adventures with Derek Simmonds in 'Blazing Paddles' - soon to be replaced by 'Blazing Paddles 2', a battered South African downhill K2 (a technically upward move).

"As an aging Sydney water baby, our Wednesday night paddle continues to motivate me. There is magic about the place and the people - the event somehow strikes a balance between competition and mutual support."

I have enjoyed Tim's philosophical side in many conversations but this time he also revealed his inner artist/poet. He describes how he experiences Wednesday night paddles as a "complete break in the middle of the week, a fun physical pause in the everyday business of life". He took me deeper into the meanings of these paddles for him, describing them as a dream in the dark; heading off for a journey to nowhere; competition without winners or losers; and a little bit of a thrill. He went on to liken the feeling of being among a group of paddlers on the river to "being part of a tribe of hunters and gatherers of prehistory,



Tim gets a shoulder massage from son Andrew at Wisemans in the 1997 Hawkesbury Classic

exercising their own powers but connected to others in a team".

For Tim, paddling is an emotional rejuvenating experience, inseparable from the collective joy of the Wednesday night "club feeling" on the Lane Cove River we all enjoy so much. The secret of Wednesday night paddles is the experience he so beautifully described as "chasings in the dark".

This is the first in a regular series of Paddler Profiles to be featured in Kayak Kapers



Good technique = efficient paddling = speed

Going fast is all about learning how to apply the forces from the paddle to the water in the most efficient way possible. Good technique allows us to effectively use our strength and fitness to move the boat forward. Poor technique results in energy being wasted on movements that don't result in forward propulsion of the boat.

Poor technique typically involves ineffectual movements that slow the boat down and tire us out in the process!

Good technique allows us to use more our bigger muscle groups – like the back, legs and abdominals. These muscle groups are stronger and don't tire as easily as smaller muscles like the biceps. By harnessing the bigger muscle groups we are able to apply greater force with less effort. As technique improves, local muscle soreness becomes less of a limiting factor, therefore longer efforts can increase.

Good technique always begins with establishing appropriate posture in the boat. Poor posture not only leads to back problems and discomfort, it also inhibits breathing and makes it biomechanically impossible to achieve good technique.

Some important points in good posture are:

Leg length: The knees should have a comfortable bend in them so that they can't quite straighten when the torso is rotated.

Forward lean: The shoulders should be slightly in front of the hips. Forward lean originates from the pelvis (hips), enabling the back to stay nice and straight (not hunched forward). The head is in line with the back so that you can be comfortably looking at a point in the distance between the nose of the boat and the horizon.

Paddle grip: The distance between the hands on the paddle can have a huge impact on the biomechanics of the stroke. As a guide, while holding the paddle normally with the shaft resting on the top of your head, the angle created between the forearm and the bicep should be about 90 degrees. Once the hands are shuffled in or out on the shaft to create this angle, it's a good idea to wrap some electrical tape around the shaft on either side of your hands to help and locate this position while paddling.

To study the kayak stroke we can break it down into four sections. These are:

Catch – where the blade enters the water.

Pull – where the body locks on to the

water and provides the force.

Exit – blade comes out of the water at the end of the stroke.

Recovery – where the boat moves through the water as a result of the power applied.

The catch

The ultimate goal of the catch is to use the rotation of the torso to enter the blade into the water as far forward as possible.



Adam van Koeverden of Canada on his way to winning the K1 500 at the 2004 Olympics

Hips. The hips should be fully rotated so that the corresponding knee comes forward for the catch.

Top hand. The paddle should be as vertical as possible. To achieve this, the top hand will come forward for the catch before the blade enters the water. A common mistake is to push the top hand forward after the blade enters the water. When this is done the power from the body is not transferred on to the blade.

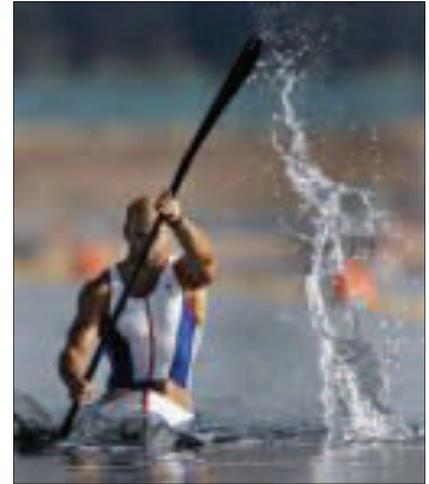
Bottom arm. The bottom arm is extended as much as possible but not locked straight.

Blade placement. From here the blade should be placed into the water as deep as possible before the hip and torso rotation is unwound. A common mistake is for the rotation to be lost before the blade is fully buried. This leaves the body square to the water, leaving only the biceps to pull the blade rather than the stronger torso and legs.

The pull

The pull phase of the stroke is where all the power in the torso and legs is used to lock on to the water and lever the boat forward. It should be thought of trying to pull the boat past the paddle rather than pulling the paddle through the water.

Top hand: The top hand is already forward from the catch so this hand is used to keep the paddle vertical in the water. There will be slight pressure on



Britain's Ian Wynne heads for victory in a semifinal of the K1 500 in Athens

this hand but not great.

Bottom hand: The bottom arm should remain relatively straight throughout the stroke. The pulling is done by keeping a locked frame between the arm and the torso, therefore as the body unwinds, the boat moves past the blade in the water.

Leg drive: From the catch position where the hip and knee are forward, pressure is placed on the footbar to create the strong body frame. The leg will straighten as the body unwinds and the opposite knee moves forward for the next catch. If this is done correctly, both the legs and abdominals will feel a "squeezing" sensation at the same time.

The exit

When done correctly the blade should slip out of the water effortlessly. It should come out of the water at such an angle that it is not lifting water.



Continued on page 8

COACHING CLINIC

Continued from page 7

Bottom arm: This movement should be relaxed. The elbow should stay lower than the hand. The hand is led by the little finger from having the palm facing the body to the palm facing away. Lifting the blade out of the water will not only tire muscles in the arms but it generally means the elbow is lifting above the shoulder which can result in shoulder problems.

Top arm: The top hand shouldn't move much during the exit. It should be at about eye height with a slight bend in the elbow. A common mistake is to let the top hand drop down while the blade is lifted out of the water. Instead the top hand must remain high while the blade is "folded" out sideways.

Legs: At this point the hip on the exit side should be back and the leg almost straight. The opposite knee and hip have gone forward for the next catch. This rotation must be held until the next catch is made.

The recovery

The recovery part of the stroke is when neither blade is in the water. The importance of this part of the stroke is often forgotten. In this position the boat moves forward as a result of the previous stroke. This is commonly called "boat run". It also gives the muscles a split second to rest.



Paddle shaft: The paddle shaft should be parallel with the water.

Hand height: Hands should be between shoulder and eye height.

Elbows: Elbows should be relaxed and hands where comfortable.

Hips: The most difficult but most important part of the recovery is to the rotation in the hips. The knee and hip must remain forward until after the catch is made.

Olympic and World Championships representative Chantal Meek is available for coaching and can be contacted on 0413-117-734.

Kayak Kapers is printed by Grahame Horne of Kwik Kopy, 17 Hilly St, Mortlake 2137; 8765-1605. Email print@homebush.kwikkopy.com.au. Good to see Grahame back paddling on Wednesday nights near the back markers. If you have any printing, he's your man.

Crossing the Tasman

Get the latest news on the boys trying to paddle from Oz to New Zealand: Andrew McAuley on www.andrewmcauley.com; James Castrission and Justin Jones on www.crossingtheditch.com.au.

Timekeeping roster

Feb 21 Derek Simmonds/Ian Wilson
Feb 28 Tony Hystek/Tim Sindle
Mar 7 Dave Kavanagh/Alan Whiteman
Mar 14 Kelvin Melville/Chris Kent (BBQ)
Mar 21 Martin Dearnley/Matt Swan
Mar 28 Frank and Marg McDonald
If you can't make it, phone Rob Vallis 0428-526-018 ASAP or arrange a swap with someone else. If you are rostered you can still come prepared to paddle, as sometimes other members not intending to paddle are available for timekeeping.

LCRK Committee

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President: Timothy Hookins

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Classic & Marathon

Coordinator: Graeme Jeffries

Clothing Coordinator:

Don Rowston

Kayak Kapers Editor:

Justin Paine Phone 9858-3323

PADDLERS' DIARY

Feb 24	WMS Race 1, Nelligen	0410-697-783
Feb 24/25	SCMS Race 6, Albury Wodonga	6021-5563, 6021-3929
Mar 7-11	Aust Flatwater Canoe Champs	www.canoe.org.au
Mar 11	Bridge-to-Beach Harbour race	dean@oceanpaddler.com
Mar 17	WMS Race 2, Canberra	6254-7162, 0418-861-613
Mar 18	NMS Race 1, Woodburn	6624-4103, 6624-6998
Mar 24/25	State Marathon Championships Woronora River	6554-1612, 8116-9730
Apr 21	WMS Race 3, Narrabeen	0409-404-366, 0408-876-324
Apr 22	Sutherland Gala Day	9528-7141
Apr 29	NMS Race 2, Bonville Ck	0418-656-770, 6652-6626
May 5	Viking Venture, Sutherland	9528-7141
May 19	WMS Race 4, Berry	4285-2595, 4262-5343
May 20	Kidsafe Mini Marathon, Morpeth	4242-4488, 0409-044-142
May 20	Molokai World Championships	www.kanakaikaika.com
Jun 9-11	SA Murray 200	08-8443-7881, www.mcc.canoe.org.au
Jun 17	WMS Race 5, NMS Race 3 Failford (Forster)	6554-8287, 0412-652-756
Jun 27	Yukon River Quest	www.yukonriverquest.com
Jun 30	Hawkesbury Familiarisation Brooklyn-Spencer-Brooklyn	9626-3741, 0403-932-348
Jul 14	MWS Race 6, Windsor	4579-9202, 0410-775-360
Jul 22	NMS Race 4, Lismore	6624-6998, 6621-8553
Jul 28	Hawkesbury Familiarisation Wisemans-Spencer	9626-3741, 0403-932-348
Aug 5	Twin Rivers Classic, Sutherland	9528-7141, 9544-6341
Aug 19	WMS Race 7, Wyong	4353-1556, 4329-2882
Aug 19	NMS Race 5, Brunswick Heads	6685-3035
Aug 25	Hawkesbury Familiarisation Sackville-Wisemans	9626-3741, 0403-932-348
Sep 8	Myall River Classic Tea Gardens	0417-533-559, 6554-1612
Sep 15	WMS Race 8, Port Hacking	9531-5460
Sep 15	NMS Race 6, Currumbin	5570-2735, 5533-9957
Sep 22	Hawkesbury Familiarisation Windsor-Sackville	9626-3741, 0403-932-348
Sep 28-29	Fish River Marathon, South Africa	www.fishmarathon.org.za
Oct 20	Hawkesbury Familiarisation Sackville-Windsor	9626-3741, 0403-932-34
Oct 27/28	Hawkesbury Canoe Classic	1300-853-5451
Nov 10	200m Sprints, Narrabeen	9971-8389, 0408-876-324
Nov 11	WMS Race 10, Wagga Wagga	6971-1168, 0427-102-707
Nov 24-25	24-Hr Relay Challenge	0418-861-613, www.bgcc.org.au
Dec 27-31	Murray Marathon	www.redcross.org.au/vic