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# 2008 U.S. Olympic Team

Media Guide for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games

USA Canoe/Kayak

Flatwater Sprint • Whitewater Slalom • August 2008

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Scott Parsons photo by Jure Poberaj



## Fundamentals of Canoe/Kayak

### Flatwater Sprint

In Flatwater Sprint Racing, paddlers race in separate lanes on a straight course in calm water. The International Canoe Federation (ICF) recognizes three different distances: 200m, 500m and 1000m. In the Olympics, only 500m and 1000m distances are recognized.

In kayak events paddlers are seated in their boats and use a double-blade paddle. Both men and women race in kayak events; single (K1), double (K2) and four (K4).

In canoe events, paddlers kneel and use a single-blade paddle. Canoe events, only for men, can be single (C1) or double (C2).

Flatwater Sprint was added as a full medal sport in 1936 at the Berlin Olympic Games.

### Whitewater Slalom

In whitewater slalom, athletes have to navigate their canoe or kayak through gates as they work their way through 250-400m of whitewater rapids in the fastest time possible. Hitting one of the hanging gates or missing one completely results in time penalties which are added to the paddler's time at the end of his or her run. A 2 second penalty is given for a touched gate, and if the gate is missed completely there is a 50 second penalty. There are approximately 18-24 hanging gates for each course. The gates are color-coded to indicate which direction the paddler must pass through. Green gates are negotiated heading downstream while red gates require the paddler to reverse direction and pass through them heading upstream.

Male athletes compete in three classes: Kayak (K1), Single Canoe (C1) and Double Canoe (C2). Women compete in kayak (K1W). In London 2012, women will be competing in all three classes.

Whitewater Slalom made its debut during the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, Germany and did not reappear until the 1992 Games in Barcelona, Spain.

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# Team Preview

for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games

## Flatwater Sprint

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Photos by: Ric Kasnoff

On the flatwater sprint side, the best chances for the US to return to the Olympic medals podium will be in kayak singles. Carrie Johnson and Rami Zur are strong contenders to win an Olympic kayak medal for the United States. Both are experienced Olympians who have posted impressive results leading up to Beijing.

### Olympic Team

- **Carrie Johnson** (San Diego, CA) – Carrie will compete in K1W 500m, an event in which she competed in Athens, Greece.
- **Rami Zur** (Chula Vista, CA) – Rami is back for his third Olympic Games and is scheduled to compete in K1 500m and 1000m.

### Story Lines

**Johnson** – is unbelievable in the sprint kayak. She has unnatural physical ability that is setting her apart. She has grown up in San Diego, and is a current resident of the Arco Training Center in Chula Vista, CA. Carrie currently holds the record on the rope ladder in the gym in Chula Vista. In a sport that is extremely dominated by the European countries, Australia and Canada, Carrie has a chance to be the first US paddler to medal in sprint since the great Greg Barton in

1992. Once a promising junior sprint athlete, she was forced to miss the 2003 season due to injury and illness. While rehabilitating her shoulder she was diagnosed with Crohn's Disease. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2003, her condition stabilized and enabled her to train over the winter leading up to her winning the K-1W at the 2004 Olympic Team Trials. At the Games in Athens, she had the highest US finish 10<sup>th</sup> – barely missing the cut to 9 for the finals at age 20.

**Zur** – is a two-time Olympic sprint-kayaker, having competed for both Israel and the United States. Following the 2004 Games in Athens, Zur sustained a serious spinal injury after hitting his head in a swimming pool. After months of rehabilitation he was able to begin paddling again. But a disappointing 2006 season left Zur questioning his future in the sport. Faring better in 2007, he won the U.S. team trials in the K-1 500m and placed fifth and third at the Worlds and a World Cup respectively. Rami's personal history is one of challenge and unwavering dedication. Rami was born in Berkeley, CA to an American mother, but was adopted and raised by an Israeli family. Rami competed for Israel in 2000, reaching the 500m and 1000m K-2 semifinals. When the Israeli Olympic Committee cut back his training grant, Zur opted to move to California and use his dual citizenship to compete for the U.S. Rami served three years in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) – which is required of all Israeli men – as a pharmaceutical technician; also involved in the IDF elite athlete program, which allows athletes to serve in the army and train for their sports.

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# Team Preview

for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games

## Whitewater Slalom

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Photos by (L to R): Marianne Stenglein & Isaac Schmidt

The U.S. Whitewater Slalom team in Beijing is full of promise. Young, yet seasoned paddlers like Benn Fraker create a fascinating mix with veterans of past Olympic Games like Scott Parsons to give the U.S. a present and future in the sport.

While no one on the 2008 U.S. Olympic team has won an Olympic medal, there have been positive indicators that the days of medaling in this sport are not far away. Numerous top-ten finishes in recent international competitions (including test events at the Shunyi Olympic Rowing-Canoeing Park) and past performances in Athens and Sydney give this team seasoning that prepares them well for the Beijing Games.

### Olympic Team

- **Benn Fraker** (Charlotte, NC) – 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 2008 Olympic Team Trials
- **Casey Eichfeld** (Drums, PA) – with partner Powell finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 2008 Olympic Team Trials
- **Heather Corrie** (Loughborough, UK & Charlotte, NC); – 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 2008 Olympic Team Trials – British Olympian
- **Rick Powell** (Parkesburg, PA) – with partner Eichfeld finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 2008 Olympic Team Trials
- **Scott Parsons** (Bethesda, MD) – 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 2008 Olympic Team Trials – 2004 Olympian

## Story Lines

**Parsons** – Pupil of great slalom coach Silvan Poberaj. Nationally, he is number 1! Internationally, Scott is ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the world. In 2004 Scott Parsons competed in the Athens Olympic Games and came in 6th. Parsons placed 2nd in the 2008 Olympic Team Trials and 3rd in stage 3 of the 2008 ICF Slalom World Cup in Augsburg, Germany.

**Corrie** – A multi-year British team member, Heather placed 5<sup>th</sup> in the 2005 World Championship contested at the Sydney Olympics Penrith whitewater course. She was then dropped by British team. Her mom is American and her dad is British. She is a researcher at Loughborough University and trains on the Nottingham slalom course. Heather won the US Team Trials and US National Championships in 2007, but was unable to represent the US at that time. She is now eligible to make the US team in 2008. Her desire to represent the US came from her parents wish that she do this and the recent passing of her father has intensified her drive.

**Fraker** – Won Junior Pre-Worlds in 2005. This was huge for Benn and the US team as he was matched up against the best juniors in the world. Benn has a great chance to continue the US's rich legacy of success in slalom canoe. Benn is coached by Cathy Hearn (a multi-time world champion and the USACK Canoe Coach) and her brother Davey Hearn (3-time Olympian and 2-time world champion), both home-grown athletes/coaches.

**Eichfeld & Powell** – In 1995 at the Penn Cup Fiddler's Elbow Slalom Race in Hummelstown, PA., two little boys, ages six and five, would meet for the first time. On that day Ricky and Casey "tolerated" each other, and had no idea their lives, and that of their families, would intertwine over the coming years. Because they quickly grew to love slalom racing, they were soon traveling to 20-25 races each year, and were together nearly all weekends. Within a few years the boys were racing at a national level. Most people do not know that Ricky, at age eight, and Casey, at age seven, began racing C-2. They had fun and gained great experience, but after the 2000 racing season they decided to spend the next years focused, with much success, on their individual boats. Following the 2004 Olympics the top U.S. C-2 teams retired. This greatly diminished the strength of that class for the American team. In the spring of 2006 Ricky and Casey decided to support C-2, and placed an order for a boat. In 2007 their results catapulted them to the top of the U.S. C-2 class, and put them in contention for the 2008 Olympic Team.

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# 2008 Athletes & Coaches

USA Canoe/Kayak

Flatwater Sprint • Whitewater Slalom

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Carrie Johnson photo by Ric Kasnoff

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# Heather Corrie

Charlotte, NC & Loughborough, UK

Whitewater Slalom  
Kayak • K1W

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- Height: 5' 7"
- Weight: 132 lbs
- Date of Birth: July 25, 1971
- Birthplace: Great Britain (UK)
- Hometown: Manchester, UK
- School/University: Postgraduate – Loughborough University
- Coach: Geoff Parsons
- Equipment: Paddling clothing – Immersion Research; Kayak - Zig Zag
- Career Highlights – Career athletic performances to highlight/detail: 2008 – Gold Pan American International; 2007 – US National Champion; 2003 – 5<sup>th</sup> place World Championships; 2001 – Pre World Champion; 1997 – World Cup race silver medalist; 6 World Championship medals K1W Team; Junior World Championship medalist

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# Scott Parsons

Bethesda, MD

Whitewater Slalom  
Kayak • K1M

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- Height: 5' 9"
- Weight: 154 lbs
- Date of Birth: March 27, 1979
- Birthplace: Toledo, OH
- Hometown: Sylvania, OH
- Current Residence: Bethesda, MD
- School/University: St. John's Jesuit High School, Toledo, OH, 1997
- Club/Team: Bethesda Center of Excellence
- Coach: Silvan Poberaj
- Equipment: Galasport boat and paddles, Sandiline gear
- Past Games Experience: 2004 Athens Olympian
- Stats/Results/Records: 6<sup>th</sup> in '04 Olympics
- Personal/Biographical Info:
  - Family: Lauren Bixby (Partner); two cats and one dog
  - Hobbies: reading, kayaking for fun

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# Benn Fraker

Charlotte, NC

Whitewater Slalom  
Canoe • C1

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- Height: 6'
- Weight: 177 lbs
- Date of Birth: February 23, 1989
- Birthplace: Rome, GA
- Current Residence: Charlotte, NC
- Coach: Cathy Hearn
- Personal/Biographical Info:
  - Family: Tom and Marsha (parents), Davis (brother), Addie (sister)
- Hobbies: reading, writing
- Website [www.bennfraker.com](http://www.bennfraker.com)

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# Casey Eichfeld

Drums, PA

Whitewater Slalom  
Kayak • C2

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- Height: 5' 10"
- Weight: 150 lbs
- Date of Birth: November 15, 1989
- Birthplace: Harrisburg, PA.
- Current Residence: Drums, PA.
- School/University: Senior - Keystone National High School
- Club/Team: Bethesda Center of Excellence
- Coach: Rafal Smolen
- Doubles Partner: Rick Powell
- Equipment: Vajda boat, Galasport paddle
- Stats/Results/Records:

## C2

- 2006 U.S. National Slalom C2 Champions (Casey & Rick Powell)

## C1

- 2007 Youth Olympic Festival, Penrith, Australia C1 Junior Champion
- 2006 U.S. Cup #2, Chilliwack, B.C. Canada C1 Junior Champion
- 2006 Junior Olympics, Chilliwack, B.C. Canada C1 Junior Champion
- 2006 Junior World Championships, Solkan, Slovenia. – 10th in the World in C1 Junior
- 2006 Junior Team Trials, Wausau, WI C1 Junior Team, (Silver)

### **2008 Races (C2)**

- US Olympic Team Trials, Charlotte, NC (Silver)
- Dickerson, Bethesda, MD (Gold)
- Glacier Breaker, Nantahala, NC (Gold)
- US Open, Nantahala, NC (Gold)

### **2007 Races (C2)**

- World Championships, Foz, do Iguassu, BRA – Finished 21<sup>st</sup>
- US Nationals, Deep Creek, MD (Silver)
- World Cup Race 3, Augsburg, GER – Finished 24<sup>th</sup>
- World Cup Race 2, Tacen, SLO – Finished 19<sup>th</sup>
- World Cup Race 1, Prague, CZE – Finished 21<sup>st</sup>
- Junior National Team Trials, Wausau, WI (Gold)
- US Olympic Team Trials, Charlotte, NC (Gold)

### **2006 Races (C2)**

- US Nationals, Charlotte, NC (Gold)

### **Personal Records**

Casey started paddling in whitewater at age two and slalom racing at age five. At the age of eight, Casey was the youngest National Slalom Cadet Team member and the youngest solo competitor at a U.S. Whitewater Slalom Nationals. At age 14 he was competing in Europe as a National Junior Team member. In June 2000 Casey was recognized as one of the "*Paddlers of the Next Century*" by *Paddler* magazine. And, in the *Sports Illustrated for Kids* October 2000 Olympic issue, Casey was listed as a future "*Olympic Hotshot*".

### **Personal/Biographical Info**

- Family: Kathy (mother), Steve (father), Erin (sister) & Devon (brother)
- Hobbies: biking, swimming, climbing
- Interesting facts: was a dancer, writes stories
- Favorites: spaghetti (food), Jetta wagon (car), "Garden State" (movie)
- Community service: American Red Cross paddling instruction
- Past Games Experience: No Olympic Games experience
- Website: [www.rickandcasey.com](http://www.rickandcasey.com)

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# Richard “Ricky” Powell

Parkesburg, PA

Whitewater Slalom  
Kayak • C2

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- Height: 6'
- Weight: 160 lbs
- Date of Birth: March 22, 1989
- Birthplace: West Chester, PA
- Hometown: Parkesburg, PA
- School/University: Octorara High School, 2006
- Associates Degree in Business – American Intercontinental University
- Club/Team: Bethesda Center of Excellence (BCE), Bethesda, MD
- Coach: Rafal Smolen
- Doubles Partner: Casey Eichfeld

## **Career Highlights: C2 & K1**

- Finishing 21<sup>st</sup> at the World Championships in C-2
- Making the Senior team in C-2 when I was 18 years old
- Won the C-2 National Championship in 2006
- Making US Junior team at 15 in Kayak and finishing 14<sup>th</sup> at Junior Worlds (2004)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place in Kayak in Australian Youth Olympic Festival in 2007
- Finishing 7<sup>th</sup> in K-1 at Senior trials in 2006 (when I was 17)

## Personal/Biographical Info

- Family: Sandy and Jim (parents) Jamie and Michelle (sisters)
- Hobbies: Playing guitar, downhill skiing, rock climbing, traveling, snow boarding
- Interesting facts: I started slalom racing when I was three years old in a canoe with my Mom and Dad. Started racing in Kayak when I was six years old at the Penn Cup Slalom Series in Pennsylvania. I was also a downhill ski racer from the time I was six till I was 11.
- Community service: Volunteered for a year (2005-2006) helping out a special Olympics bowling league
- Website: [www.rickandcasey.com](http://www.rickandcasey.com)

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# Silvan Poberaj

Cabin John, MD

Whitewater Slalom  
Head Coach • Slalom

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- Height: 5' 10"
- Weight: 170 lbs
- Date of Birth: October 20, 1957
- Birthplace: Postojna, Slovenia
- Hometown: Solkan, Slovenia
- School/University: Bachelors, Faculty for Sport at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Pronunciation of name: Sil- von Po- ber- rye
- Career Highlights: K-1 Slalom Worlds 1977 6<sup>th</sup> place, 1979 8<sup>th</sup> place
- Awards/Accolades: USOC Canoe Slalom Coach of the Year
- Past Games Experience: Coach in Barcelona 1992, Atlanta 1996, Sydney 2000, Athens 2004
- Family: Nevenka (wife), Nejc & Jure (sons)

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# Catherine Ann Hearn

Charlotte, NC & Durango, CO

Whitewater Slalom  
Coach • Canoe

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- Date of Birth: June 1, 1958
- Birthplace: Washington, DC
- Current Residence: Charlotte, NC
- School/University: 1982 Hampshire College, Amherst, MA
- Major: Physiology & Psychology of Athletic Performance
- Career Highlights:
  - 12 World Championship medals, including 3x World Champion in slalom and wildwater competition
  - USA Canoe/Kayak Team athlete for 27 years
  - 2x Olympian (Barcelona, Atlanta)
  - 2x member of winning crew (Offshore Canoe Club) Molokai to Oahu Outrigger Canoe Race
  - Coaching since 1975, peer/mentoring, club, regional, contract/special projects in the US and abroad
  - Technical Director, Whitewater Slalom, 2003-2004, Italy
  - Olympic Team Coach, whitewater slalom, Italy, 2004
  - 2005 to present: Coach, Canoe Slalom, USACK

- Stats/Results/Records: one of a handful of whitewater athletes to win 3 gold medals in a single World Championships
- Personal/Biographical Info:
  - Family:
    - Heinz Roethenmund, former Swiss Slalom Team member, current coach for Durango Whitewater (husband)
    - David Hearn, World Champion, Olympian Whitewater Canoe Slalom (brother)
    - Bill Hearn, former member of USA Whitewater Canoe Team (brother)
    - Carter Hearn, lifelong canoeist (father)
  - Hobbies: outdoors sports and activities, art/crafts, photography
  - Additional professional qualifications: Practitioner of the Feldenkrais Method of Somatic education
  - Nickname: Cathy
  - Community service volunteer with Adaptive Sports, YMCA Active Seniors, extensive volunteer coaching and instruction in various sports
- Website: [www.cathyhearn.com](http://www.cathyhearn.com)

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# Carrie Johnson

San Diego, CA

Flatwater Sprint  
Kayak • K1W 500m

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- Height: 5' 6"
- Weight: 140 lbs
- Date of Birth: January 16, 1984
- Birthplace: San Diego, CA
- Hometown: San Diego, CA
- Current Residence: Chula Vista, CA
- School: University California at San Diego
- Major: Biochemistry
- Coach: Nathan Luce
- Doubles Partner: Maggie Hogan
- Equipment: Nelo boat, Braca paddle
- Past Games Experience: 2004 Olympic team member: K1 500m, K4 500m
- Stats/Results/Records: 2007 – 5<sup>th</sup>: K1 500m, 4<sup>th</sup>: K1 1000m (Worlds), 1<sup>st</sup>: K1 1000m (World Cup II), 2<sup>nd</sup> – K1 500m (Beijing Test Event)
- Personal/Biographical Info:
  - Family: Ronald & Sally (parents), Stacy & Virginia (sisters)
  - Hobbies: painting, learning to surf
  - Nickname: Care Bear
  - Personal honors: USOC athlete of the month (May '07), San Diego Hall of Champions Athlete of the Month (August '07)
  - Website: [www.carriejohnson.net](http://www.carriejohnson.net)

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# Rami Zur

Chula Vista, CA

## Flatwater Sprint

Kayak • K1M 500m (currently scheduled to also compete in K1M 1000m)

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- Height: 5' 9"
- Weight: 170 lbs
- Date of Birth: February 23, 1977
- Birthplace: Berkley, California
- Hometown: Costa Mesa, CA
- Current Residence: US Olympic Training Center, Chula Vista, CA
- Pronunciation of name: Raa-mee
- Club/Team: Newport Aquatic Center (NAC)
- Equipment: Kayak- Nelo Vanquish II, Paddle- Gut.
- Past Games Experience: 2000 Israel Olympic Team Member--K2 500m, 1000m; 2004 USA Olympic Team Member--K1 500m
- Stats/Results/Records:
  - 2004 U.S. Olympic Trials--1st in K1 500, 1000
  - 2004 Pan American Championships--1st in K2 1000
  - 2007 U.S. World Team Trials--1st in K1 500
  - 2007 World Cup--3rd in K1 500
- Personal/Biographical Info:
  - Family: David & Mira (parents), Shimrit (sister); all live in Israel
  - Hobbies: all water sports, riding motorcycles, 4X4 trips, mountain biking and travelin
  - Nickname: Coach Zur, Popeye
  - Website: [www.ramzur.com](http://www.ramzur.com)

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# Nathan Luce

Chula Vista, CA

Flatwater Sprint  
Coach • Kayak/Canoe

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- Height: 5' 11"
- Weight: 195 lbs
- Date of Birth: February 14, 1974
- Birthplace: Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada
- Hometown: Toronto, ON
- Current Residence: Chula Vista, CA
- School/University: University of Toronto, 2001
- Career Highlights:
  - Canadian National Team Member of Flatwater Sprint Team (1994-98 inclusive)
  - 2-time member of World Championship Team (1995, 1997)
  - World Cup Team Member (1997, 1998, 2001)
  - World Cup Winner 2001 (MK2 500m)
  - 15 Time Canadian National Champion
- Coaching Highlights:
  - Like many of his athletes, Head Sprint Coach Nathan Luce was originally a competitive swimmer. He started kayaking when he was 16 and by 17, Luce was coaching younger athletes. Luce was drawn to teaching others how to combine the elements of speed, style, endurance and power to race as efficiently as possible.
  - Growing up in Canada, Luce attended the University of Toronto earning the Academic All-Canadian Award while competing on the varsity swim team. He was a member of Canada's National Kayak Team from 1994 until 1998. Luce competed in two World Canoe Championships and was a member of the Canadian World Cup Teams. In addition

- to canoe/kayak, Luce also competed in dragon boat racing. He is a (5) five time World Dragon Boat Champion.
- As a coach, Luce brings high-energy enthusiasm and new methodology to the USACK Sprint program. He was head of the Mississauga Canoe Club in Mississauga, Ontario from 2002 to 2004 where he led the club to two national titles. In April 2005, Luce became the Head Sprint Coach for the U.S. National Team. He has coached U.S. athletes to victories in World Championships and World Cups including five World Cup medals in 2007. His preparation for the
  - 2008 Olympic Games have already begun to show results, with two top-five results and Beijing Olympic Qualifications at the 2007 World Championships and a silver medal in the Women's K-1 500m at the 2007 Pre-Olympic Test Event.
  - Luce is fluent in French; he enjoys being outdoors, sports, reading, and is a self-described film buff. He lives in San Diego, CA with his wife and two children.
  - Awards/Accolades: USACK Coach of the Year 2005
  - Past Games Experience: none
  - Nickname: Coach Luce
  - Personal/Biographical Info:
    - Family: Lea Narciso (wife), Sebastien & Grayson (sons); Robert & Donna (parents), Matthew (brother)
    - Hobbies: reading, movies, weekends at beach with family
    - Interesting facts: father is French-Canadian, fluent in French
    - Quotes: *"This is the lesson: never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy."*

## Canoe/Kayak in Beijing, China

All Canoe/Kayak events of the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympic Games will take place at the Shunyi Olympic Rowing-Canoeing Park located in Beijing's Shunyi District.

The new Shunyi Olympic Rowing-Canoeing Park, built for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, officially opened on July 28, 2007. On August 8, the Shunyi Rowing-Canoeing Park hosted the 2007 World Rowing Junior Championships, this years very first "Good Luck Beijing" sport event in Beijing.

During the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, 32 gold medals will be awarded at the venue, which will host the Rowing, Canoe/Kayak -- Flatwater, Canoe/Kayak -- Slalom, and marathon swimming events.

Construction of venue began during the first half of 2005. With a building area of 31,850 sq m, it occupies the largest surface area of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games venues.

The venue has a seating capacity of 37,000, with 1,200 permanent seats and 25,800 temporary seats, including 10,000 standing room only seats.

The Shunyi Olympic Rowing-Canoeing Park is one of only two world class rowing-canoeing venues that contain both flatwater and slalom courses (Penrith, Australia).

The water surface area of the Shunyi Rowing-Canoeing Park occupies 6.35 million sq m, and the green surface area occupies 5.8 million sq. m., with green coverage of over 82 percent.

After the Olympic Games, the venue will be converted into an attractive, world-class resort for swimming and recreation -- the largest of its kind in the northeastern part of Beijing.

Please visit [www.en.beijing2008.cn](http://www.en.beijing2008.cn) for more information about the course's construction.

*The Shunyi Olympic Rowing-Canoeing Aquatic Park is the world's newest water sports venue for both rowing, canoe/kayak slalom and flatwater competitions. Shunyi Aquatic Park has a water surface area of 640,000 square meters, 580,000 square meters of forest, and a 2,272 meter artificial flatwater course in addition to the worlds newest artificial whitewater channel dropping 5.5 meters overs its entire length. Powered by 5 submerged pumps, the venue produces exceptionally challenging and impressive whitewater. The expansive venue will serve as a lasting legacy to the ingenuity of the Chinese people long after the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games have closed.*

## History of Canoe/Kayak: Whitewater Slalom

Whitewater slalom can be traced back to September 11, 1932 in Switzerland, where the first races were on flatwater, though the sport soon switched to natural swift streams. The Second World War began a few short years later, stalling the development of the sport until 1949 when the first World Championships were held in Switzerland.

Up until 1972, the sport witnessed quick and dramatic changes as early folding and rigid canvas craft were replaced by fiberglass reinforced plastic technology. That year, in Munich, Germany, whitewater canoeists and kayakers paddled down a churning flume, navigating their way through gates similar to those found on a slalom snow ski course. This was when Olympic Whitewater Slalom was born. Jamie McEwan, a 19 year old Yale University student, brought home the bronze in the C-1.

A second major period of development occurred from 1972 to 1992 when slalom rules were simplified and further refinements in ergonomic boat design and construction were made. In C-2 the crew was shifted to the center of the craft, while the width of the C-1 boat was reduced to 70 cm. During this time the scope of the sport was expanding to an international level. In 1979 the World Championships were held outside of Europe for the first time at Jonquière, Quebec.

The third period began with the reintroduction of Whitewater Slalom at the Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain. With it came unexpected disappointment as well as unanticipated glory. A slight gate touch eliminated four-time World Champion Jon Lugbill from the medal podium. However, the U.S. C-2 team of Joe Jacobi and Scott Strausbaugh put up back-to-back, near-perfect runs for the gold medal. A second U.S. team of Leckie Haller and Jamie McEwan placed fourth. Dana Chladek answered with a bronze in the Women's K-1, the first U.S. Slalom medal for a woman.

Four years later, during the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, a determined Dana Chladek returned only ten months after major shoulder surgery to deliver a heroic performance. In an all-out assault on the course during her second run, a rare five-second touch penalty put her into a tie for first place. Technical tie-breaking procedures resulted in Chladek receiving the silver. During this last period, the penalty system was changed, and the two-run system was introduced to place a premium on technical skill.

During the Athens Olympics in 2004, paddler Rebecca Giddens brought home the silver medal in Women's K-1 Whitewater Slalom.

A major development in the growth of the sport came in 2006, when the US National Whitewater Center (USNWC) opened in Charlotte, North Carolina. This \$38 million, 307-acre facility serves as an official U.S. Training Site for the USA Senior National Slalom Team. In April, the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team Trials for Whitewater Slalom and the Pan American Championships were held over three days at the USNWC with 135 athletes from over 10 countries participating. This award-winning venue is the world's only multi-channel recirculating whitewater river. This facility is expected to fuel the growth of the sport by bringing whitewater into a major population base, thus making training more accessible to more people.

During the past two decades the sport has exploded into world-class competition across the globe. Whitewater Slalom is today an ideal synthesis of the purity of nature and the competitiveness of the human spirit.

## History of Canoe/Kayak: Flatwater Sprint

Flatwater sprint owes its genesis to a Scotsman, John MacGregor, the first European known to have adapted the Eskimo craft to recreational purposes. Founder of the first kayak “Canoe Club” in London in 1866, MacGregor also organized the first regatta. The first American club, the New York Canoe Club, was born in 1871 and was quickly followed by other clubs on the east coast.

Let’s paddle up to 1924. It was during this year that the IRK, an early governing body for the sport, was created. It wasn’t until 1946 that this organization became what we know it as today; the ICF (International Canoe Federation). In the VIII Olympiad in Paris, canoe/kayak made its debut with an exhibition regatta in which four Americans, Harry T. Knight, Jr., Karl M. Knight, Charles W. Havens and John F. Larcombe swept the kayak competition and placed second to Canada in all four canoe events. It wasn’t until the 1936 Olympics in Berlin that paddling was added as a full medal sport, one in which 19 nations competed in eight separate events. A lone American, Ernie Riedel, reached the medal stand with a bronze in the 10,000-meter kayak single, or K-1.

Change was in the air—or water, when the games returned in 1948 after World War II. It was during this year that the first women’s event, 500-meter kayak singles, was added. America discovered new brawn in the sport during this year. Steve Lysak and Steve Macnowski garnered a gold and a silver respectively, while Frank Havens brought home the second silver. Havens was able to earn his gold medal four years later in the 10,000m.

With each successive Olympiad, the sport draws more competitors and more alterations as longer distances are eliminated and four-man events are added. In Tokyo in 1964, the U.S. women captured their first Olympic medal. The team of Francine Fox and Glorine Perrier won the silver in the K-2 W 500m, while teammate Marcia Jones took the bronze in the K-1 W 500m. By 1976 in Montreal, four events were added to flatwater sprint, bringing the total number to eleven. A twelfth was added in Los Angeles in 1984, a year which also saw an American come-back. Greg Barton grabbed the silver in the K-1 1000m, while eight other U.S. athletes placed in the top five in several events. The stage was set for Seoul.

1988 witnessed the greatest American Olympic showing in the sport since the exhibition year of 1924. Barton stormed to a microsecond (.005 sec.) victory in the K-1 1000m. Then, incredibly, he returned to the Han River course 90 minutes later to team with Norman Bellingham as the

duo captured the K-2 1000m gold. It was the first time an American paddler won two gold medals during a single Olympics.

In Sydney in 2000, the U.S. team failed to take a medal in either sprint or slalom for the first time since 1972. But there were glimmers on the water. The men's four of Angel Perez, John Mooney, Stein Jorgensen and Peter Newton placed sixth in the K-4 1000m. Athens was another disappointing time for the U.S. team, but they returned home to news that a world-class facility was in the plans to boost their spirits.

On January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006 the \$3.5 million Chesapeake Boathouse opened on the newly revitalized Oklahoma River in Oklahoma City. This state-of-the-art facility is not only an architectural gem, it served as the site for the 2008 Olympic Team Trials for Flatwater Sprint. This three-day event was the first time that a major national canoe/kayak event was held in Oklahoma. Around 100 athletes from across the United States competed for spots on the U.S. National Team.

## Boat Specifications

### Flatwater Sprint

*ICF Flatwater Racing Competition Rules* can be found at [www.canoeicf.com](http://www.canoeicf.com).

K1: Max length: 520cm  
Min weight: 12kg

K2: Max length: 650cm  
Min Weight: 18kg

K4: Max Length: 1100cm  
Min Weight: 30kg

C1: Max Length: 520cm  
Min Weight: 16kg

C2: Max Length: 650cm  
Min Weight: 20kg

### **Hull**

Section and longitudinal lines of the hull of the kayak and canoe shall not be concave (Only horizontally and vertically).

### **Deck**

The deck construction may not be higher on any horizontal point than the highest point of the front edge of the first cockpit.

No foreign substance may be added to the boats, which give competitor unfair advantage. No part of the boat (including the seat and the footrest) may have moving parts which can be used to help propel the boat in a way which would give competitors an unfair advantage (existing moving seat systems already in use are accepted).

It is forbidden for the boat or the competitor to be equipped with any device which would give the competitor any information or any advantage in anyway during competition, for example:

- pumps
- speed measuring devices
- strain gauges
- heart monitors

## **Kayaks**

Boats may have one rudder. The rudder has to be placed under the hull of the boat.

The boat is designed to be a sit-in (Kayak-type) not a sit-on-top. (Surf Ski type)

## **Canoes**

The canoe must be built symmetrically upon the axis of its length.

Steering rudders or any guiding apparatus directing the course of the canoe is banned.

The C1 and C2 may be entirely open. The minimum length of the opening shall be 280 cm and the edge of the side of the craft (gunwale) can extend maximum 5 cm into the craft along the whole defined opening. The boat can have maximum three strengthening bars with a width of maximum 7 cm each.

## **Whitewater Slalom**

*ICF Slalom Racing Competition Rules* can be found at [www.canoeicf.com](http://www.canoeicf.com).

K1: Minimum Length: 3.5m  
Minimum Width: .6m  
Weight: 9kg

C1: Minimum Length: 3.5m  
Minimum Width: .65m  
Weight: 10kg

C2: Minimum Length: 4.10m  
Minimum Width: .75 m  
Weight: 15kg

- All boats must have a minimum radius at each end of 2cm horizontally and 1 cm vertically
- Rudders are prohibited on all boats
- Boats must be designed to and remain within the required dimensions
- Kayaks are decked boats, which must be propelled by double bladed paddles and inside which the competitors sit. Canadian canoes are decked boats that must be propelled by single-bladed paddles and inside which the competitors kneel.