



American Canoe Association (ACA) Competition Council Meeting Minutes

Date: November 10, 2018

Location: Wild Dunes Resort

Attendance:

Voting Competition Council Board Members Present:

Sprint: Marsh Jones

Dragon Boat: Jim O'Dell

Outrigger: Mike Shandroff

Wildwater: Jeff Owen

Freestyle Kayaking: Risa Shimoda

Canoe Sailing: Tom Ubel

ACA Board of Director representative(s): Kirk Havens

At-large Director(s): Chris Norbury, Chris Hipgrave

Voting Competition Council Board Members Absent:

Slalom: Adam Van Grack

Paracanoe: Debby Page

Canoe Polo: Scott Stepenucks

Marathon: Don Anderson

Ocean Racing (surfski): Michele Eray

Collegiate Race Series: vacant

Whitewater Open Canoe Downriver: Nate Lord

Open Canoe Slalom: Michael Cook

FreeStyle Canoeing: Molly Gurien

Athlete Advisory Council representative: Emily Wright

Immediate Council Past Chair: not applicable

Athlete Advisory Council

Non-voting attendees: Scott Greifensberger (Official)

Keri Mehling (Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association), Jeanette Pascua (past outrigger race official),

Denise Shandroff (Southern California Outrigger Association),

ACA Staff: Chris Barlow, Rafal Smolen, Morgan House, Chris Stec

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 by Council Chair Marsh Jones.

A quorum was established with 9 of 20(?) voting members present.

Chair's Message:

Volunteers have been serving as staff or part time subsidy and a healthy discussion ensued about how to support the ACA and grow the sport, providing direction and priorities. Disciplines operate separately, and we need to be a paddling organization. We should acknowledge the competition between disciplines and work toward growing the pie. Emphasized that we will no longer use the term "non-Olympic", rather refer to Olympic, International and Domestic disciplines.

Secretary's Report:

The minutes of the June 19, 2018 meeting held via teleconference were presented for approval. Jim O'Dell moved to accept the meeting minutes as presented. Risa Shimoda seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Director of High Performance & Competition's Report:

Morgan House announced that he will be resigning from his position. He suggested taking time in the meeting to identify what discipline leaders need, what the next person has done well and what can be done better. Chris Stec acknowledged his contribution, having taken the lead during NGB transition.

Committee Reports:

Slalom – Rafal Smolen reported that prior to this year we have secured a medal and in 2018 we did not. We have 2-3 potential medal opportunities in 2019 and have good performance among Junior and Under 23 paddlers. Five made it to the finals in 2017, three in 2018. One K1W Jr. made it to senior finals.

The main slalom club is in Washington, DC with secondary clubs at the NOC and Northern California. Regarding the status of Charlotte and OKC: the facilities don't have coaches, so those facilities cannot support development programs.

Sprint – Sent athletes to a variety of countries. Achieved B ranking in finals in this rebuilding year and qualified 13 for the Pan Ams in 2019. We have a strong likelihood to qualify at least one boat for Tokyo and we've had a strong US representation at the Youth Games. Fundraising has grown to \$50,000 largely through parents and athletes. In partnership between the ACA, Global Paddlesports and Nelo, we brought over an ICF master coach instructor to teach 5 US Coaches how to conduct the ICF level 1 and level 2 coaching curriculum. We now have 50 ICF sprint coaches. 130 kids signed up for the ODP (Olympic Development Program) that will help them and the team coaches keep track of their activity and progress. Not happy with how funds are being used, but optimistic about being part of the ACA as the national governing body.

Paracanoe – Morgan attended a recent international congress. He feels the sport is about to explode. While the USOC supports sprint and slalom paddlers only at the elite level, it has supported paracanoe for development. A few US athletes competed successfully in the Pan Americans this year. Adaptive Paddling Chair has been exposed to the opportunity. Many adaptive paddlers are not aware of paracanoe opportunities. Chris Stec shared an example of someone identified through adaptive instruction who competed at Nationals.

The profile of our para athletes is different from those from other countries: many are veterans who have sustained major physical injuries, less frequently individuals who have been born with a disability.

Marathon – Father and son Andrew and Scott Surls went to Worlds in Portugal. Andrew attended Sprint trials and have stirred some interest among sprint folks. Non-ICF marathon races have attracted large numbers. Many are USCA events. Discussed animas during outreach to USCA committee.

Ocean Racing (surfski) – This offers a catch all for many disciplines. Events take place each weekend and there is a lot of momentum, allowing the discipline to be poised for growth.

Dragon Boat – Worlds were recently hosted by the US on Lake Lanier. This event grew ACA membership among those who'd not thought about joining before. We secured 8 Gold, Silver and Bronze medals. Their athletes illustrate opportunities for multiple sport competition experience, for their medal winners paddle sprint and dragon boat. They are working toward having a state championship in Georgia. There was more interest in 10 seat boats vs. 20 seaters, a 'flip' in this year's participation versus years past.

There was a low level of competitor drama: contributing to this was holding a team selection program later in the year than normal so team members had only a few months to get ready. Morgan did a great job holding dragon boat funds for dragon boat use. There is a dragon boat race every weekend in the summer.

Wildwater – This year's nationals saw crossover with OC boat Nationals. Busy planning for Junior and Under 23 Worlds and working on bringing Worlds in 2020. Working on securing boats and expressed coordinating boat shipments as a good example of a multi-discipline collaboration. There will be two ICF races in 2019. 2020 World Cups on Cheat, Worlds on the Nantahala will be approved soon.

Freestyle Kayaking – This was an in-between building year. Team trials scheduling for 2019 delayed due to the uncertainty of the nature of the competition feature at the Sort, Spain venue – blown out in flooding conditions. Trials were schedule when it became clear the feature characteristics will not be known for some time. Excited to consider the opportunity to coordinate with Wildwater and OC Whitewater.

Outrigger – International Baja is a separate federation representing 15,000 registered racers- mostly in Hawaii though growing in many places. Representatives are here to explore opportunities for mutual benefit such as sponsorship and insurance. They have local expertise supportive of their system and they do not want to create competition with the ACA. ACA has helped organize regional representation: the next steps involve national standards, coaching. It is a team sport, so the ACA needs to acknowledge team-related aspects of sport.

Collegiate Race Series – This was run by staff for a couple of years, put into the hands of a committee. The committee has since become inactive. College and university outing clubs are being discontinued: faculty need to support the recognition of other sports and speak up for paddlesports as important.

Sprint - Scholarships over \$100,000 have been offered in San Diego from Point Loma Nazarene University. Schools need to be engaged, and schools need an internal champion to initiate a program at a specific school. This committee needs to develop a platform to engage the collegiate paddlers.

Open Canoe Slalom – Nationals will take place in Canada in 2019. Highly functioning group that is working to integrate with this group. Michael Cook and Nate Lord intended to attend.

Canoe Sailing – They are in a lull after a very successful Worlds a few years ago. There is new interest in Lake Sebago and boats are being donated to indicated low growth, but growth nonetheless. They have 35 IC boats, and are looking to host an event at Sugar Island, the island owned by the ACA.

Canoe Polo – No report

Whitewater Open Canoe Downriver – No report

Freestyle Canoeing – No report

Athlete Advisory Council – No report

Topics/Items for Discussion:

There was general agreement on the importance of

- Developing a positive, high visibility for the sport and
- Collaborating across disciplines, knowing we will encounter barriers.

Several recommendations were identified by Marsh and/or discussed. Those for which actions were taken are in bold.

- Providing current information and updates, such as results is important. ACA developed an app via a USCG grant that is in place. Funds to develop it came from the Coast Guard in support of safety-focused programs, and it is set up to be able to identify to add competition information. ACA plans to apply for an NIH grant focused on addressing childhood obesity by which we could enhance the functionality to include competition information. Chris Norbury offered his assistance in pursuing this.
- Social media: improve outbound communications
- Outreach at events: Have a presence at events like Canoecopia (Chair comment: Presence is not sufficient. Thanks to MTI, we will have a prime presentation slot at Canoecopia plus other programming yet to be determined. This is a key marketing opportunity.
- Consistently conduct open and transparent processes such as those related to registration and communication, for the benefit of both athletes and parents who are spending many dollars to support their kids' participation.
- Competition quality: provide opportunities at high levels, critical to challenge and increase skills
- Coaching and officials: ICF has been brought in. Scott has been working on the system for coordinating them.
- Improve ACA communication with the ICF
- Website should provide
 - Provide all disciplines' current rules.
 - Paddle America Clubs which host competitions
 - Organizations or events whose activities include competitions hosted by non-member organizations, possibly at least insured by the ACA or connected by the participation of an ACA member.
- Registration – We need a system that accommodates our various discipline needs. The ICF system will not be flexible enough. **Volunteers stepped forward to explore options for a solution: Jim O'Dell, Mike Shandroff, and Morgan.**
- Calendar – ACA has tried to accommodate event needs. 'ACA Events' are intended to showcase national conferences and other non-competitive events. Suggested was to offer national and international events attended by a US team, vs. those sanctioned and insured. The ACA insures 1500

events per year. **Committee to advise the calendaring: Chris Hipgrave, Chris Norbury, Risa Shimoda**

- Membership restructuring will be discussed by the board, both individual and for competitors - those competing for Nationals, Team Trials, or with a team competing internationally. The additional fee will be similar to the instructor fee. Under consideration are financial incentives to join and further joining as a competition member.
- Once the membership simplification change is approved, the ACA site will go down for ~10 days.
- Discussion took place around establishing value for a membership. **Risa offered to contribute to periodic newsletters with articles to illustrate overhead expenses that directly affect competitors.**
- Sponsorship: Seems we could leverage our collective numbers to secure an alliance with a rental car firm whose vehicles with hitches so we can haul trailers. Subaru sponsorship has changed so the annual incentive to purchase is no more.
- Whitewater event presence - Events are not run through clubs, but participant numbers are high (e.g., Cheat Race, Green Race). We should list all whitewater races insured by the ACA and determine numbers to highlight their having been insured and a platform for taking to sponsors. **Did we tag someone with this task?**

Final Comments

- Rafal Smolen - Attended a recent coaches conference. Coaching expertise can work for us across disciplines up to the high skill level athletes who need discipline-specific, nuanced training.
- Jim O'Dell – Sprint Nationals at Lake Lanier in 2019 will provide an opportunity.
- Risa Shimoda – Pleased to be discussing whitewater combo events.
- Chris Norbury – Youth recruitment and retention is key.
- Jeff Owen – It is good to be working together.
- Jeannette Pacua– We understand what's needed to run our organizations and need to delegate.
- Mike Shandroff – Multi-disciplinary opportunities are promising.
- Denise Shandroff – We need to come together as paddlers.
- Scott Reifensberger – We must prioritize our competitiveness and standing in the world.
- Chris Barlow – Lots of opportunities based on successes. Thanked Morgan and the ACA for bringing us together.

Discussion & Vote on Motions:

No votes were conducted.

Upcoming Council Meetings:

- Cross disciplinary coaching trainings:
- Instructor Trainer/Coach Conference - October 8-13 – Freeport, ME. This not an ideal location at this time of year for a coaching / training workshop. This Council can ask the ACA to host such an event, knowing committee representatives will need to share the workload. Risa suggested developing a plan for 2020 and confirming the plan at the Fall 2019 meeting. Scott suggested this sounded like we were putting it off.
- Periodic meetings are necessary to begin tackling our chores. Suggested was monthly 90 minute calls. This was questioned as a large time commitment, with an alternative suggested to start delegating work to committees which can then take time in group calls only to report on accomplishment toward goals.

Next Steps:

- Establish a monthly call through a poll for a standing date (e.g., second Tuesday).
- An objective for the first call will be to confirm or establish committees.

Adjournment:

A motion and second to adjourn the meeting were not offered. The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Submitted by,

Risa Shimoda
Secretary
ACA Competition Council