



Merry Christmas

This is the last newsletter of the year, so from the team at www.surfski.co.nz "Merry Christmas". We hope you all get perfect paddling conditions with lots of sun and waves.

CRNZ News

We had three CRNZ representatives in Perth for final Surfski World Cup for 2006. Mike Walker (open), Katie Pocock and Steve Sly (junior) winged their way across the Tasman and then across the whole of Australia for two fantastic days of racing on November 25 and 26. See attached commentary and results for more info.

Female Surf Ski Camp

Auckland turned on a brilliant sunny day for the first female paddle camp at Okahu Bay in September. Fifteen female ski paddlers from Auckland based surf lifesaving clubs took part, all with the aim to improve their paddling technique.

Three of New Zealand's best kayaking and surf lifesaving champions - Ian Ferguson, Mike Walker and Steve Ferguson, passed on their knowledge giving individual instruction on technique, race tactics, drills, core strength and sports psychology.

The day started with some land based exercises, designed to reveal the correct paddling technique on the beach. Then everyone hit the water for drill tuition and the first video analysis session – where each paddler was videoed from the side and then from behind.

Once everyone was dry and had something to eat the video was connected to the big screen and each paddler could see what they actually looked like! As a group, Ian, Mike and Steve gave feedback to each paddler on their technique and they had the chance to comment and ask questions.

The second video session took place after lunch. Paddlers were broken into two groups, that focused on race starts, race tactics and buoy roundings with Mike and Steve, while one paddler at a time was videoed by Ian.

At the second critiquing session, each paddler had to talk through what they thought they were doing well and what they should improve on. Ian, Mike and Steve then made additional comments – but it was noticeable how much each paddler had improved from the morning session.

We've received some great feedback from this day, which has inspired us to hold a follow-up session – more theory based. It will cover off in more detail, sports nutrition, sports psychology and core strength training –

where specialists in each field to give some practical advice – focused on women (sorry guys!!!). It will be held at the Marine Rescue Centre on either Wednesday 29 November or 6 December 2006.

If you are interested in coming along to another paddle camp or attending the theory session, please either contact Tracy Wilson or Miriam Eillis.

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Deadly Secret Training & Racing Tips

Running with the swells. Ok here is something to work on to improve your ability catching and riding swells down wind. Firstly the thing most paddlers need is practice - the more you practice the better you get simple as that.

On the technical side I want to look at the initial sprint where we catch the runner. The technique here is stroke extension.

When you first try and catch the runner you will need to increase your effort and stroke rate, ideally you should be also increasing the length of your stroke. Why you ask? Think about this, when you are paddling down wind your boat speed is about 30% faster than in flat water, and when you sprint to catch a runner it is even faster again. So what does this mean for your stroke? It means your effective stroke (the power part in the water) is actually reduced. At these sort of boat speeds you will be placing your paddle into fast moving water, when you enter your blade into the water it will need to accelerate to above the water speed before any effective effort can be achieved.

Now here is the deadly secret bit ... the majority of paddlers stroke lengths are below the optimum. I would say in the vicinity of 90%. This is because most of us do endurance type training, do not do structured sessions (intervals), and do not have a coach (Top K1 paddlers who have been coached have an advantage here in that the optimum technique is a must. On the down side K1 paddling does nothing for rough water ability).

By not having the optimum length of stroke athletes tend to 'thrash' the water. When they accelerate a lot of effort is ineffective.

So back to stroke extension. What we are trying to achieve here is to increase the length of the effective stroke. The entire stroke consists of three parts; 1) entry (put blade in and accelerate), 2) effective stroke (propulsion forward) and 3) exit. Now, to extend your stroke you basically need to put your blade in earlier i.e. the entry so you spend more time doing the effective stroke.

There are two things to work on:

- Firstly, push your arm out straight (or nearly straight) at the end of each stroke (at about shoulder height)
- Secondly, rotate at the hips as you push through your stroke (note; do not lean forward, the rotation is from the hips).

To practice this I suggest you first try in flat calm conditions. Initially you may want to paddle slowly and over-rotate to get the body used to the idea and get a feel for the changes. Once you have noticed the difference (your stroke rate should now be slower than normal) you will need to work on the changes full time. 80% efforts in calm conditions are good for working on this technique. Also you can pick two marker buoys and paddle to and from these counting your stroke, try and reduce the number of strokes each lap over 6-10 laps.

Ok Lastly, when catching runners ... when you are sprinting for that wave ... extend that stroke. And practice.

Merry Xmas

The Surfski Volunteers