



Introduction to Paracanoe and supporting material

Introduction

In 2009 the ICF, together with the International Va'a Federation (IVF) launched the Para canoeing development programme to expand the sport of canoeing to the worldwide community of persons with a disability.

In 2010 the ICF and IVF further demonstrated their support for Para canoe by incorporating a number of events into their calendar.

In December of 2010, the International Paralympics Committee accepted Para canoeing into the 2016 Paralympics Games.

Since then, para canoeing has continued to grow, showing a high level of competition. At the ICF Canoe Sprint Championship in Szeged Hungary, twenty eight Federation have sent a total of sixty seven para-canoeists to attend the Championship

About Para canoe

Paracanoe is the international competition structure for people with physical disabilities.

At the 2016 Paralympics paracanoe sprint events will be included for the first time in the programme. Races (to be confirmed) are likely to be the 200m kayak (K1) and 200m Va'a (V1). Due to paracanoe now being a Paralympics event it is expected that interest in paracanoe will increase from para athletes looking for a new sport.

***Va'a is the term used for a traditional Tahitian rudderless outrigger Canoe (Known in New Zealand as Waka Ama).**

Para-paddle Project

Canoe Racing NZ and Waka Ama NZ, both affiliated to the ICF through their membership of the NZ Canoe Federation, have developed a para-paddle programme to support the expected increase in interest in paracanoe and to give para athletes the opportunity to try paracanoe which may lead to a pathway to the Paralympics Games.

NZ Para V1 George Thomas - World Va'a Champion



The project did target:

- Young New Zealanders, who can develop a love of sport and recreation that leads to a lifelong participation.
- Disabled New Zealanders who are keen to become paracanoeists.
- Canoe Racing NZ clubs and Waka Ama NZ clubs to deliver para-paddle. community
- Talent identification of para athletes for the high performance pathway

Project expected outcomes

1. An increase of at least 25 paracanoeist`s across the two sports (K1 & V1) in the first year.
2. Empower clubs to enable them to offer para-paddling to disable persons
3. Raise awareness of para-paddling amongst disabled persons and the wider canoe community
4. Safety plans and procedures developed to ensure safe introduction of the sport at club and competition levels
5. Online resources available for disabled persons to make contact with local clubs to access the sport.

NZ Para K1 Scott Martlew 5th at World ICF Paracanoe Champs



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paddling community.

Current Situation

Canoe Racing (CRNZ) and Ama NZ have actively developing the parapaddle project within identified clubs the local

In November 2012 a "Have A Go Day" was hosted at the Hamilton Lake. This initiative attracted a good number of participants and as a result 16 new disabled paddlers have joined our clubs and are regularly taking part in training activities.

Both Waka Ama and CRNZ websites now include a parapaddle section.

Paralympics includes a link to both organisations on their site.

Both sports are committed to ensuring their regattas provide opportunities for disabled paddlers to race.

What future opportunities exist?

The project was a new initiative and we have had a very positive outcome.

Both NSO, believe there are terrific opportunities to strengthen and potentially populate the athlete pathway from clubs to HP level.

At an International level both Waka Ama and CRNZ have one paddler in the male K1 and V1 categories. We would like to identify more para athletes with potential to become part of our high performance programme and offer them a pathway to international competition.

For the future CRNZ and Waka Ama will be looking at new opportunities to:

- Support more initiatives such as Have A Go Days, around the different regions.
- Acquire new suitable equipment, boats and adaptive gear.
- Up skill the current clubs coaching force and support them in the coaching of disabled paddlers.

Club Perspective

The sport represents an opportunity to:

- **Increase Membership**

"Approximately 17% of all people living within our community have a disability. Athletes with a disability are paying members as well.

- **Develop Partnerships with local Communities:**

"Disability services, rehabilitation services, schools and persons with a disability are often on the lookout for meaningful opportunities in sports.

- **Access to Elite Competition:**

"High Performance pathways are currently being developed across various sports as well as canoeing from a grass roots level right through to a Paralympics level

- **Improve Club Facilities and Equipment Provision:**

"Clubs providing ongoing, quality programs for persons with a disability have greater access to funding opportunities to assist with club improvements for their facilities and gear.



A club, which is inclusive of people with disabilities, is one, which has:

- Planned and inclusive activities for people with disabilities.
- Adopted a positive attitude about the inclusion of people with disabilities and has taken practical steps to bring positive changes.
- Planned how people with disabilities can best participate in all aspects of the club's activities.
- Pro-actively implemented an action plan.

Access to Buildings, Facilities & Equipment

- Clubs need to consider if their buildings, facilities and sports equipment are accessible to people with physical disabilities.

Coach Education & Training

- Although most coaches/volunteers have the skills to include people with disabilities in their particular sport, they often lack the knowledge or confidence to work with people with disabilities. To help overcome this knowledge/confidence gap, clubs should encourage key personnel from their club to attend appropriate Disability Awareness Workshops, via Parafed, Halberg Trust and Regional Workshops. There are plenty of opportunities out there.

Participation Options

- Make sure your Club, or NSO is taking all the necessary steps to ensure the full inclusion of people with disabilities, particularly those with higher level of impairment, at their events, e.g. pontoon available, safety boats, ramps etc.

Information and Promotion

- Club should encourage more people with disabilities to participate in their activities by consulting with local disability groups or organisations such as: Para Fed, Halberg Trust, Paralympics New Zealand and any support stuff working with disabled Athletes.

Athlete Perspective

The sport provides many benefits for people with a disability including:

Physical:

- ✓ Rediscovering one's own ability and independence.
- ✓ Potential to reduce the level of decline in muscle Deterioration, or alternatively improve muscle function and Movement.
- ✓ Increased use of functional abilities.
- ✓ Opportunity for increased skill development

Psychosocial:

- ✓ Increased social interaction and friendships with like minded individuals.
- ✓ Feeling of freedom and equality.
- ✓ Its outdoors!

SUPPORT and ASSISTANCE

Coaches and officials will be expected to provide the same level of support to people with a disability that they would to any other person.

Where assistance is required for such things as personal care, transport and behavioural support, this will at all times remain the responsibility of the participant / guardian / spouse to organise.

The canoe club is responsible for providing sports specific guidance, advice and coaching in the area of Paracanoe only.

“Disability is not something individuals have. What individuals have are impairments. They may be physical, sensory, neurological, psychiatric, intellectual or other impairments.

Disability is the process which happens when one group of people create barriers by designing a world only for their way of living, taking no account of the impairments other people have”

From: The New Zealand Disability Strategy – Minister for Disabilities Issues 2001.

Classification

(Under review by ICF)

The purpose of the classification system is to minimize the impact eligible impairment types have on the outcome of competition. The ICF system of classification aims to place athletes into classes according to how much their impairment impacts on the core determinants of success in canoeing.

Similar levels of functional ability are classed together to provide as fair as possible competition. The classes include a broad range of disabilities and as a result there may be some paddlers who are at the higher level of function who may be at less of a disadvantage in their class.

Currently, all classification for Para canoe is undertaken via a remote system and under request, until assessed in person, which it is envisaged will occur at the National Championships, if a classifier is available or at the World Championship. This process is subject to change as Para canoe develops and participant numbers increase.

Classification can be done remotely. Specific documented requirements and a video need to be available for viewing by the medical and technical classifiers.

During the classification the classifier will test:

- ✓ Muscle testing (applicable to paraplegia / tetraplegia or any conditions where grading of muscle power is applicable)
- ✓ Range of movement (for those whose primary disability is one of loss of range such as arthrogyrposis, or in the case of a mixed disability, a fused ankle with an upper limb amputation)

Paraplegic and quadraplegic:

Peripheral neurological disability

NEUROLOGICAL LEVEL

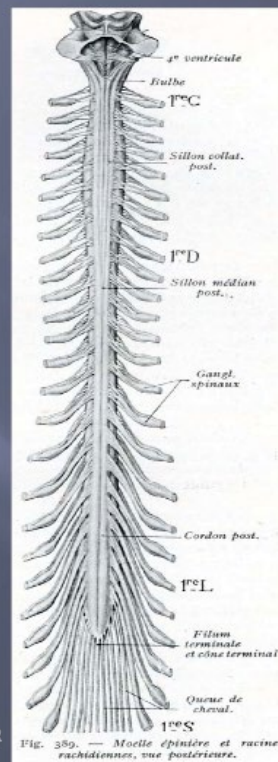
- Numbering = spinal nerves ≠ vertebrae
- C5 to T1 = quadraplegia
- Below T2 = paraplegia

GENERALLY DEPENDS ON THE VERTEBRAE

- Cervical = quadraplegic
- Dorsal = upper body paralysis
- Lumbar = lower body paralysis
- Coxics = lower body paralysis

Paraplegia: lower body paralysis depending on which vertebrae is damaged

Quadraplegia: condition affects the upper body



12/08/2009

Romain DIDIO / Cyril FOURNIER
FRANCE

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The ICF recognises three (3) classes for Para canoe, LTA, TA and A, while the IVF recognises six (6). Refinements are being worked on to bring the IVF and the ICF systems into alignment with IPC standards

LEG, TRUNK and ARMS (LTA) – (IVF 5 & 6 Point Paddler)

The LTA class is for paddlers with a disability who have functional use of their legs, trunk and arms for paddling, and who can apply force to the foot board or the seat to propel the boat.

Eligible LTA paddlers may typically have a minimum disability equivalent to one of the following:

- ✓ Amputee
- ✓ Neurological impairment equivalent to incomplete lesion at S1
- ✓ Cerebral Palsy Class 8 (CPISRA)

LTA paddlers must meet minimum disability requirements, which is as follows:

The minimum physical disability is a full loss of three fingers on one hand, or at least a tarsal metatarsal amputation of the foot, or the permanent loss of at least ten points on one limb or fifteen points across two limbs when assessed using the Functional Classification Test as set out in the Classification Application Form for Physical Disabilities and the ICF Classifiers Instructors Manual.

TRUNK and ARMS (TA) – (IVF 4 Point Paddler)

The TA class is for paddlers who have functional use of the trunk and arms. They are unable to apply continuous and controlled force to the footboard or seat to propel the boat due to significantly weakened function of the lower limbs.

Eligible TA paddlers may typically have a minimum disability equivalent to at least one of the following:

- Bilateral around knee amputation, or significantly impaired quadriceps
- Neurological impairment equivalent to a complete lesion at L3 level, or an incomplete lesion at L1
- Combination of the above such as one leg with around knee amputation and one leg with significant quadriceps impairment
- Classification by the international sports federation for paddlers with cerebral palsy (CPISRA) as eligible to be in CP Class 5

ARMS ONLY (A) – (IVF 1 – 3 Point Paddler)

The A class is for paddlers who have no trunk function (i.e. shoulder function only). An A class paddler is able to apply force predominantly using the arms and/or shoulders. These athletes will likely also have poor sitting balance.

Eligible paddlers may typically have a minimum disability equivalent to at least one of the following:

- Cerebral Palsy Class 4 (CP-ISRA); or
- Neurological Impairment with a complete lesion at T12 level, or an incomplete lesion at T10

Whilst it is not essential to have an in-depth understanding of the classification process or classes involved in para-canoe, it is beneficial to have a grasp of the common characteristics and / or traits associated with each class.

Equipment

A wide variety of materials and equipment can be used to support participation in Para canoe. Some examples of material that is used includes:

- Foam or high density equipment for back and trunk support
- Elastics (toe steering).
- Molded plastic (seating).
- Limbs adaptation
- Changes on the surroundings such as: boarding adjustments

The type of equipment required by the participants should be determined by the level at which they are participating and / or competing. As athletes begin

to progress through the pathway, it is important to ensure that the equipment they are using supports individual abilities to develop and progress their skills.



At an international level the standards associated with various equipment are as follows:

Boat Standards

K1 (Kayak)	
Maximum Length	520cm
Minimum Width	50cm*
Minimum Weight	12kg

K2 (Kayak)	
Maximum Length	650cm
Minimum Width	47cm*
Minimum Weight	18kg

* Measured 10cm from the bottom of the hull

V1 (Va'a or Canoe)	
Length	730cm
Minimum Weight	13kg

V2 (Va'a or Canoe)	
Length	850cm
Minimum Weight	18 kg

Additional information on boat can be found on manufacture website such as:

<http://www.mar-kayaks.pt/> Nelo Kayaks Portugal

Va'a notes (V1 / V2)

The va'a (canoe- waka ama) shall be a single hull va'a rigged with a single ama (outrigger pontoon) and double 'iako (spreaders), separated by at least one (1) seat. Additional specifications are as follows:

1. The hull, ama and 'iako must meet the specifications set forth above.
2. Para Va'a (canoe) equipment such as a support seat must be removable. The paddler may supply his / her own equipment as approved by the IVF Para Va'a Committee Chair.
3. Either sit in or sit on top va'a (canoe) may be used (however the sit in va'a is recommended).
4. The ama will be attached on the left side, but must be able to be attached on the right side to accommodate paddler needs as approved by the IVF Para Va'a Committee Chair.
5. Rudders are not permitted.
6. Modifications are permitted for stability if the boat is made slower (ie, stabilising pontoons).

At the recreational level there is no limitation as to the boat adaptations that can be made. At the competitive level, the continued development of paracanoe boats and the associated modifications designed to improve the comfort of the athlete and support the performance of the participants is currently being addressed.

Events

It is anticipated that future international competitions, including the 2016 Rio Para-Olympic Games, will include the following Para canoe events (events under review by ICF)

- **Men – K1:**
 - LTA, TA and A
- **Men – V1:**
 - LTA, TA and A
- **Women – K1:**
 - LTA, TA and A
- **Women – V1:**
 - LTA, TA and A

As each event is open to three (3) classes that means there is potentially 12 races available at an international level. As the sport grows, there is certainly the opportunity for more events to be considered for inclusion. At a national level we should not be exclusive to these events only, but where possible give the

opportunities to all levels of ability including intellectual disability and vision impairment to participate.

Coaching Guidelines

Inclusive Coaching Tips

Many people with disabilities will have the ability to participate fully in coaching skills and drills with little or no adaptations.

However, for some people with more limited functional ability or for those with limited experience of basic movement skills, it is important to adapt your skills sessions, drills to fully include them. Remember, if you are not sure what a person's ability level is, ask them what they can/cannot do and adapt your drills/sessions accordingly.

Generally speaking, this can be achieved by either modifying the rules used during training and/or competition or by adapting the equipment normally used in your sport.

Basic Coaching Sessions

Have a Go Days

- Come and try days. Both, Waka Ama New Zealand and Canoe Racing New Zealand are currently working together towards some Have a go Days in November 2012

Starting Off at a Local Club

- Focus on fun, fitness and skill acquisition.
- Water safety.
- Basic boat handling skills.
- Game sense.
- 1-2 sessions per week.

Introductory

- Water safety (capsize drills).
- Boat handling skills.
- Technique development.
- Basic race skills.
- Rules and code of ethics for sport.
- 3-4 sessions per week.
- Take part at other sporting activities for general fitness.

Development

- Continue to develop boat handling skills and aerobic capacity
- Technique efficiency at varying stroke rates and speeds.
- Introduction of speed and speed endurance training sessions.

- Psychological skills training for racing.
- Understand CRNZ racing rules and regulation
- 3-6 sessions per week.

Elite High Performance Level

- Refine boat-handling skills.
- Optimum technique for the individual.
- Race tactics and race plans for all racing conditions.
- Understand International Canoe Federation rules and regulations.
- 6+ sessions per week.
- Cross training sessions Basic Communication Guidelines

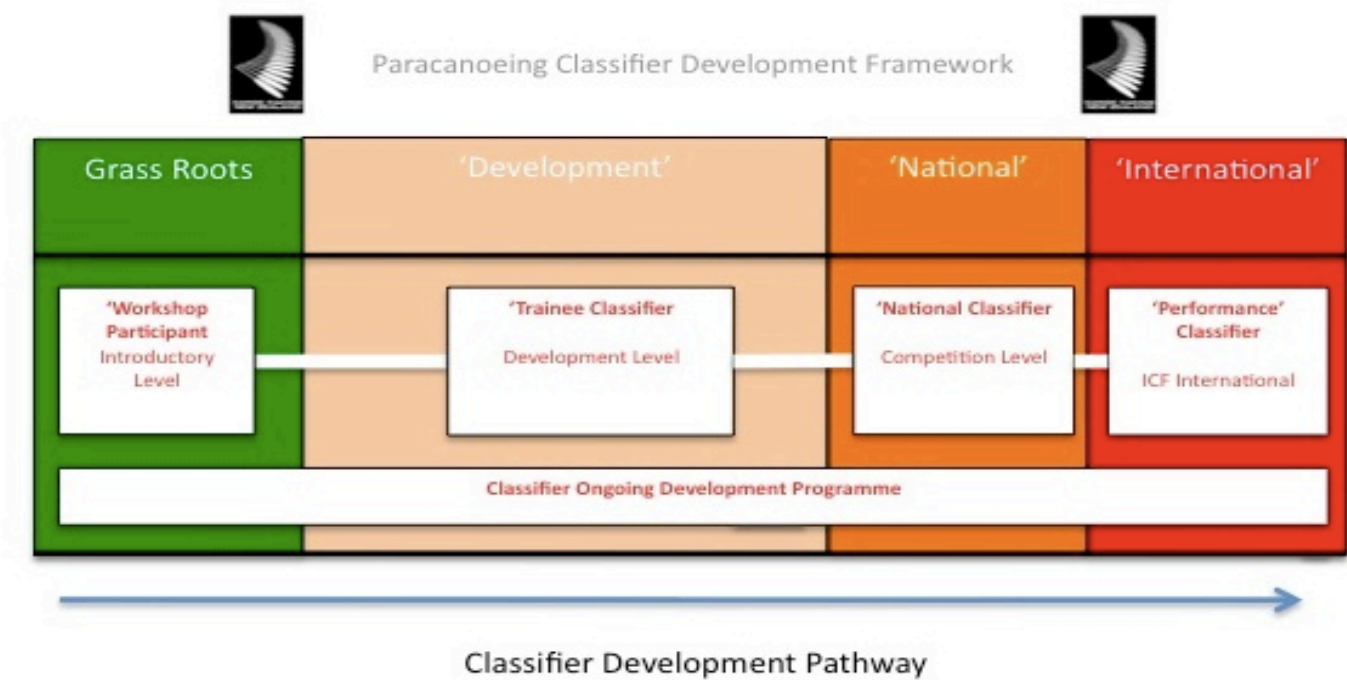
List of 'Unacceptable' Words and Phrases and Preferred Alternatives.

Unacceptable	Preferred Alternative
Handicapped/invalid/ Special needs	Person with a disability or disabled person
Wheelchair bound/confined to a wheelchair	Wheelchair user
Mentally Handicapped	Person with a learning disability
Deaf & Dumb/Deaf Mute	Deaf Person
Epileptic/Diabetic	Person with epilepsy/diabetes
Dwarf	Person with restricted growth
Mental	Person with mental health difficulties
Spastic	Person with Cerebral Palsy

Para Athlete Pathway

Para Athletes- PATWAYS	FOCUS	OPPORTUNITIES	EVENTS	CLASSIFICATION	COMMITMENT
GRASS ROOTS-ENTRY LEVEL	Social	Introduction	Open Days Have a go Days	NONE	Interested in paracanoeing
DEVELOPMENT	Social Development Local Competition	Awareness Basic Skills	Club Inter-club	PROVISIONAL	Talent Transfer from other sports Club Member Regular training session at Club Level Develop Skills
COMPETITION	Competitive	Training Skill progression Commitment to the programme	Club Nationals Regattas BL1 BL2 – Waka Ama National and Regattas National Champs	NATIONAL	Club Member Commitment to the Sport Support Staff in place
HIGH PERFORMANCE	Competitive –High Performance Level	Elite Advance knowledge of sport.	Club National Regattas and Champ International Pinnacle Events	INTERNATIONAL	Club Member Identified into “podium pathway” HP Plan including IPP, assigned coach.

Classifier Development Pathway



Definition of Classifier

An International Canoe Federation (ICF) Classifier is a person who has been approved as such by ICF. There are two types of ICF classifiers:

ICF Medical Classifier: usually a medical doctor, osteopaths, physiotherapist

ICF Technical Classifier: a person with extensive practical knowledge of paddling, a coach, a sport scientist, a former paddler, or anyone with similar qualification and understanding of the biomechanics involved in paddling.

Classifier Development Pathway

- Workshop Participant: a person who does not meet the pre-requisites to be a classifier and attends a workshop to further develop their personal knowledge of paracanoeing.
- Trainee Classifier: a person, who has attended and International classification workshop, but need supervision by a National or International Classifier to assess and classify paddlers correctly. A trainee Classifier may serve on a National Classification Panel under supervision of a National/International Classifier and determine the sport class and status of a paddler wishing to compete in a National Event.
- A National Classifier: a person who has participated in an International Classification workshop in conjunction with a pinnacle event such as World Champ or World Cups. The candidate has demonstrated a working competency of the classification process. Subject to the rules of the National Federation, the classifier may serve on a National Classification Panel.
- An International Classifier: is a National Classifier who has participated in an ICF international workshop, shown competence in performing all classification tasks and has classified paddlers at international level alongside an International Classifier. An ICF Classifier may be appointed to serve on ICF Classification Panel and Classification Protest Panel and is qualified to determine the sport class and status of a paddler wishing to compete in a National or International Event.

Further Information

Ranges of resources are available from other organisations and websites including:

International Canoe Federation

<http://canoeicf.com/icf/Aboutoursport/Paracanoe.html>

- International Va'a Federation – www.ivfiv.org
- Waka Ama New Zealand www.wakaama.co.nz
- Para Olympics New Zealand www.paralympics.org.nz/
- Canoe Racing New Zealand www.canoeracing.org.nz

**“Remember Be Open Minded –A Positive
Attitude is the Key To Change”**