

## Sprint Racing

### How to Race:

- **Race Plan.** The start is hugely important. Put simply the race can be broken into three sections. The Start, the middle section and the finish.

- 1) **The Start:** Your body has 10 -12 seconds of ATP energy with which you must maximize. Start as fast as possible but remain relaxed and in control. I prefer to start with a half stroke on my left (your left hand should be around mid thigh) with 2/3rds of the blade in the water. I have my kayak facing slightly to the left so that when I take my first stroke on the left I've straightened up. After your first half stroke, I then start stretching the next couple of strokes, so by the time I've done two double strokes I am reaching out 'full strokes'.

I normally count my strokes – first four single strokes are about getting the boat 'out of the hole' then I begin a wind for 12 d/s this is maximum effort and boat speed but controlled with good technique. From there I transition to focusing on running the boat efficiently breathing well and feeling the water.



Steven Ferguson Lane 8 K1 500m A Final 2007 World Championships, Germany.

- 2) **Middle Section:** I focus solely on me, and what is going on in my kayak. I do a mental check of my technique every so often, in order to remain paddling as efficiently as possible. I go through key areas of my technique, for example.
  - ✓ "Leg drive – driving through the heel and pulling back with the toes".
  - ✓ "Catch – reaching – locking on"
  - ✓ "Rotation – shoulders horizontal. Hips and shoulders working as one unit"
  - ✓ "Posture – Sitting up tall, eyes on the horizon looking at the down my lane to the finish"
  - ✓ "Hands pushing at eye level.
  - ✓ "Exit – high exit"

I will note where I am in relation to the rest of the field just before the half way mark. I then focus back in my boat and squeeze more out of myself – more weight on the catch – legs, rotate with hips and shoulders together. High exit, 'boat run'. The key is to stay right on the limit of your efficiency for the middle section.

- 3) **The Finish:** Is where you really have to hurt yourself. Still with efficient technique increase the rating and increase the work from the big muscles – the legs, your back. You should be crossing the finish line totally spent.



Owen Hughes wins the K1 500m 2004 NZ Champs, Lake Pupuke.