

Christmas is closing in and the festive season is upon us. And for paddlers, the hot weather entices a day of getting wet during a game of polo or simply a paddle on a river or the sea. Don't forget to protect from the sun and to keep the fluids up.

It's been a busy year with much achieved. Read on to learn of the NZ develop tour, AC taking a new image, coaching, competitions and new challenges for Duncan Cochrane.



Image: Brighton Canoes, UK

NZ youth tour

Following a NZ invitation, six of our brightest took the easy route over the Tasman to test their skills, meet NZ players and check out the sights. The Australian youth development team toured New Zealand in Sep/Oct, twelve days travelling and playing. Our youth men played club teams in Auckland, games at Napier and Palmerston North. A special treat was a three hour training session with James Mitchell, captain of the NZ men's team. But the highlight of the trip was competing in the 2015 NZ Inter-Regional Championships at Wellington. Three days of competition saw Australia placed second against five NZ teams. In a tight final Australia ultimately took bronze. A fantastic effort!



The pic above shows the worthy crew (with coach and manager). Notice the boat—Polomania prepared tailored boats for each player. And as you see, with each person's name emboldened. The team was: from Queensland Aiden Thompson, Jack Quinn and from Victoria: Kal Rawson, Ben Winter (c), James Winter, and Locky Reekie. Eagerly led by coach Donald Leigh (Qld), manager Kylie Rawson (Vic) and roadies Kim Hogue and Tahlia Rawson (Vic). Well done everyone. Let's do it again soon.

You can watch championship games at:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3Guulhd4_57z6TIufYGmMw.

Can't say too much!

Working in the background, Australian Canoeing has been looking at how best to raise the profile and participation of canoeing in Australia. After much discussion, debate and investigation they've settled a number of strategies to be rolled out in the new year. But the most exciting is a name change (no longer called Australian Canoeing) with new logos and branding. There is also a new paddling program for people entering canoeing. Keep an eye out for announcements in 2016.

Duncan Cochrane takes a break

With too many years as a player, coach, referee, administrator, committee member, and everything else that goes into keeping canoe polo on the water, Duncan Cochrane has decided it's time for a break. Work and family are to the fore with new commitments and interests. But Duncan is not stepping aside altogether. He continues to be available to support and mentor and no doubt we'll see him on the water (although he's not been in boat for a few months already!)

Some reasonably big shoes to fill, Duncan leaves the high performance manager position on the Australian canoe polo committee in April. An essential role for taking our players through to international performance. If you have an interest in high performance and would like to know more about the job, contact Duncan for a chat.

Duncan has been, and continues to be, an inspiration for many players at all levels of the sport. We wish him every opportunity and success, and look forward to catching up on the water soon.

2016 Australian Canoe Polo Championships.

Preparations are gearing up for the 2016 Australian Canoe Polo Championships to be held at the Miami Aquatic Centre, Gold Coast Queensland on the 7-10 April. There are two fifty metre outdoor pools and for those not competing, a kids' pool and a tennis court. No doubt you are in training right now and squads are becoming teams, but let's also plan a little time off to enjoy Queensland and its many opportunities to get out and about.

ICF World Championships

The 2016 ICF championships are in Syracuse, Italy. Nominations close on 24 December so if you wish to join the squads, jump on line now to register at <http://teams.canoe.org.au/>. The championship website is: http://www.canoepolosyracuse2016.com/en_GB/.

Strategic workshop

In a canoe polo first, we are planning to hold a strategic workshop to identify how best to grow and develop the sport. The idea is collect the chairpersons of canoe polo from each state in one place, most likely Victoria, to spend two days exploring ideas and developing plans to assist canoe polo around Australia. If you have any concepts, ideas or wishes for canoe polo, let your state committee know so that we can address them at the workshop.

Australian Sports Commission coach accreditation

The ASC accreditation of our coaching course has lapsed and it is now time to renew it. The timing is good. ASC requirements have changed recently and force us to take another look at the training and the overall program. A new a framework submitted to ASC for comment allows coach accreditation as foundation, development, performance or podium coach. This approach puts us in line with that taken by sprint, slalom and the other disciplines. Keep an eye out for announcement of the new training and make yourself a new years' resolution to be become an accredited coach (we need more!).

Spike's Report

The newsletter continues . . . but someone with a bit more creativity is needed to pick up the baton as editor of Spike's Report. Would you like to help? Contact Ian Beasley (polo@canoe.org.au).

Join the committee

Your committee works behind the scenes to guide development and growth of canoe polo across Australia. The committee is:

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| Chair | Ian Beasley |
| Secretary | Anthea Courtney |
| Finance manager | Rob Watson |
| High performance manager (becomes vacant April) | Duncan Cochrane |
| Development manager | Matt Moore |
| Chief referee | Carolyn Cochrane |
| Facebook | Mikey Lawrence-Taylor |
| Member | John Moore |
| Member | Donald Leigh |
| Competitions manager | Vacant |

We would be pleased to hear from you about any aspect of canoe polo, but especially if you have something to contribute. Send a note to polo@canoe.org.au marked to the attention of the person you wish to talk with.

**A Merry Christmas everyone, and year to come of opportunity and success,
*Spike***

If you would like to contribute an article for the newsletter, request something covered, or have a comment, send a note to polo@canoe.org.au with 'Newsletter' as the subject.

To unsubscribe send an email to polo@canoe.org.au with 'Unsubscribe' as the subject.