

ParaCanoe
at the
Canoe Club

Canoe Clubs as Community Centres for Paddling

- Multi-disciplinary Canoe Clubs
- Need to respond to local demand
- Offer services to the broader community
- Create strong community identity
- Create strong team identity
- Access local public and private support

“CLUBHOUSE CULTURE”

Principles

- **Build a strong foundation for ParaCanoe development at base of the pyramid**
 - In order for the program to be sustainable in the long-term it needs to have a strong foundation at canoe/kayak clubs, in regions and in nations with resourceful use of existing equipment, quality coaching leadership, awareness promotion, etc.

Principles

- **Use existing canoe/kayak equipment to promote opportunities for people with disabilities**
 - Rapid expansion of national programs will be facilitated by using existing stable boats which canoe/kayak clubs currently possess or are readily attainable and which can also be used by other types of paddlers; i.e., novices, masters, etc.
 - Canoe/Kayak is blessed with many boat types which will enable this principle.

Principles

- **Work with existing Games/
Organizations**
 - Partnerships should be developed with existing Games and the many organizations which promote sport **and physical activity** for persons with a disability.

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS AT THE CLUB LEVEL

- **Promote and communicate with other Club members**
Let the whole membership become promoters of the project
- **Recruit persons with a disability.**
Approach local social support agencies, physiotherapists and other support personnel.
- **Be Welcoming**
Ensure the Club environment is socially accessible to everyone.
- **Communicate with the participant.**
Speak directly to the participant to show them respect.
- **Review the physical accessibility of the Club environment.**
This can be an expensive proposition. Combining a new program with a request to renovate to ensure accessibility can be successful

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS AT THE CLUB LEVEL

- **Promote long term participation adapted to the desire and ability of the participants.**
 - This may be a new activity for the participant. Just participating may be significant.
- **Do not hesitate to call on local expert resources.**
 - Every community has expert resources to consult on specific disabilities
 - The coach does not need to be an expert in disabilities
- **Opportunity for the Club to “give back to the community”**
 - Every club depends upon relationships to survive. The Club’s relationship to the community needs to ‘give’ as well as ‘take’.

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS AT THE CLUB LEVEL

- Club Resources

New members will generate new supporters. Most clubs see new supporters come forward who will help the club in the new ParaCanoe program

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMPETITIONS

- **Appoint a person on the Organising Committee in order to coordinate all matters pertaining to the Paracanoe races & all accessibility issues.**
- **Parking spaces for persons with a disability should be convenient.**
- **All access routes from the parking to accommodation, from accommodation to the regatta venue be accessible. This means a smooth access route which facilitates movement in a wheel-chair or crutches.**
- **Ensure accessible washroom facilities .**
- **A special loading area (the docks) is required (loading is longer and needs more space due to wheel-chair).**

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMPETITIONS

- The height of the loading dock at between 15 and 20 cm from the surface of the water with a minimum width of 1.50 m.
- If there is a ramp to access the dock, the width should not be less than 1 m and the slope should be no more than 10 %. A guard/handrail should be provided on one side.
- Schedule the races to begin no sooner than 10 am (to give the athletes a chance to get ready)
- Provide an area to store the boats close to the dock.
- A tent, close to the loading area, to store the garments and above all, the wheel-chairs, the crutches and the prosthesis...
- May need to provide a tent and related facilities/equipment for a ParaCanoe athlete classification team

BENEFITS OF PRACTICING CANOE/KAYAK FOR PERSONS with a DISABILITY

- Physical aspects
 - Rediscovery of one's personal ability (feel one's own body under effort...)
 - Facilitate the use of muscular and functional abilities
- Keeping and improving heart and breathing capacity
 - Balance development
- Skill development

Socio-psychological aspects

- Social integration into the life of the club
- Feeling of being like all other persons on the water
- - Feeling of equality & liberty (equipment non visible or absent)
- - Outdoor activity
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- IMPROVEMENT OF AUTONOMY AND SELF ESTEEM

BENEFITS OF INCLUDING PERSONS with a DISABILITY IN A CANOE CLUB

- **Able bodied athletes are able to practice inclusion with their own club team**
- **Able bodied athletes can develop a new perspective on their own abilities and appreciate the challenges of others**
- **Able bodied athletes can share their passion and love of the sport**
- **The Club can 'give back' to the community which balances its requests for support.**