



HUT!

Edition # 5

Dec 2019

All the best of the season

In this issue:

President's message—Oliver McMillian

Intro to new board, List of executives, Membership renewal form, Awards Winners, Stroke Assessment Clinic, Off Season Training, Paddle with Governor General, CKC Summit, Yukon Quest, Ausable Marathon, Farewell from MRX



2020 Executive

Marathon Canoe Racing Council (MCRC) Rep
Darryl Bohm

Canoe Kayak Ontario (CKO) Reps:
Paul Adams, Karen Bender,
Kim Snell, Don Stoneman

OMCKRA board

Race Secretary
Paula Loranger
racesec@omckra.com

Recording Secretary
Mike Hayes

Treasurer
Mike Bender
treas@omckra.com

President
Oliver J. McMillan

Vice President
Paul Adams

Past President
Don Stoneman

Member at Large
Vadim Lawrence

Member at Large
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President's Message

It's officially the off season! Many of us put away the paddles and take out the skis this time of year. It is a great time to step back and take a break from our sport specific training and try new things. A new sport or activity, it could be cross training or something totally different. It's healthy for athletes to try new exercises to keep things interesting and fun. Just like changing things up are healthy for athletes, it is also health for an organization. We have four new faces on our board this year, along with some familiar ones. It's an excellent mix of experience and new ideas.

New to the board this year is Paul Adams who agreed to come on as Vice President, Mike Bender has officially taken over the role of Treasurer, and Vadim Lawrence has come on as a Member at Large. Returning to the board are Don Stoneman (Past President) Mike Hayes (Secretary) Paula Loranger (Race Secretary) Kim Snell (Member at Large) and myself (President).

We are all excited to be a part of the board and to be working with each other over the next year. If you are interested in joining our team I encourage you to reach out. We don't have any more board positions however there are many opportunities to join a committee or to volunteer at a number of our events.

As I'm sure most of you have heard, the Muskoka River X has been canceled indefinitely. This is a big blow to the Ontario racing circuit. The race brought many new paddlers into the sport and was a goal race for many of us. I'm not sure if the race will ever be back but we would support a return if it became a reality. If you're looking for a goal race this coming year, there are many to choose from on the Ontario circuit. North Bay to Mattawa has been a staple of Ontario rac-

ing for many years and at a distance of 64km with some of the most difficult portages in Ontario racing and a very competitive field, its not one to miss. If its distance you're looking for then the longest race in Ontario is Kingston to Ottawa at 200kms. I encourage everyone to take a look at all the races on our circuit and pick one as a goal race for the 2020 season.

It is a goal of mine to elevate the ability and competitiveness of Ontario paddlers, not only within Ontario but also out of province.

This past year we gave a grant to OMCKRA paddlers who participated in any of the three Triple Crown events (General Clinton Canoe Regatta, the Ausable Canoe Marathon, and La Classique de Canot). The goal was to off set some of the costs associated with traveling to and paying the entry fee for these events. It's our hope that this will encourage paddlers to train for and race in events at the highest level of competition in marathon canoe racing.

This past October we held our second Stroke Assessment clinic at the indoor paddling pool at the Mississauga canoe club. Coach Ryan Stepka ran the event, giving every participant feedback on their strokes. Getting a professional stroke assessment is the best way to identify areas of improvement. The event saw paddlers of all levels come out and everyone left with a video of their stroke and a write up of what to work on.

We hope to run programs and events like this again for the 2020 season.—Oliver



Oliver McMillan

Report from the 2019 Annual General Meeting of members

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of members of the Ontario Marathon Canoe Kayak Racing Association (OMCKRA) took place on November 2, 2019 in the The Fellowship Room of St. Andrews (Hespeler) Presbyterian Church located at 73 Queen Street East, Ontario. A **new Board of Directors** was elected by OMCKRA membership.



New board from left : Mike Bender, Paul Adams, Oliver McMillan, Vadim Lawrence, Don Stoneman, Kim Snell, Mike Hayes and Paula Loranger.

(Mike H and Paula took the two pictures which are combined to show everyone)

A Race Organizer's meeting was held in the morning, followed by lunch. The AGM started at around 1:30 and ran to about 4pm. After the AGM a first meeting of the new board took place.

Around 20 OMCKRA members attended the AGM. Board and Committee reports and discussions coming out of the Race Organizers meeting were presented. A change to the constitution was ratified by membership to the affect that membership elect the required number of board members rather than elect to roles. The new board would assign executive roles.

Board positions are for 2 year terms. Two board members, Mike Hayes and Paula Loranger, were elected at the last AGM so there were 5 positions to fill. The new method sped the voting up considerably and resulted in a more people joining the board.

The first meeting of the board quickly determined executive roles and also, importantly, the critical committees of Race Support, Coach Support, CKO and CKC representatives.

Committee members not on the board include Issac and Nolan Adams on Race Support committee chaired by Race Secretary, Paula Loranger and Darryl Bohm who, though no longer on the board, continues as Ontario representative to the Marathon Canoe Racing Council (MCRC) of Canoe Kayak Canada (CKC).

Coach Chris Near, will chair the Coaches Committee with Vadim, Oliver and Don as committee members.

Mike Bender takes on the role of Treasurer with support from outgoing Treasurer Kim Snell who remains on the board as a Member at Large. Vadim Lawrence and Paul Adams are also welcomed to the board and take the roles of Member at Large and Vice President respectively. Vadim will sit on the Race Support Committee as well as the Race Support, Paul as one of the 4 representatives to the Canoe Kayak Ontario (CKO) board.

The board is **looking for a** volunteer and will train and support anyone who can fill the role of **Membership Secretary**.

Ontario Rules at Yukon River Quest (YRQ) 2019



Ok. So Ontario paddlers didn't win overall at the YRQ in 2019 (Hard to beat that stunning 44:59 time of Mike Vincent and Ivan English in a C2, beating all Voyageur canoes and C4s.) Below is a summary of OMCKRA members and their placings. (we think!) If you were left out, let us know and we'll make up for it in the next HUT!

who	placement	time
Mike De Abreu & Tom Phillips	2 nd in C4, third overall, with Jake Paleczney and Robert Spinks	45:20:50
Jennifer Courville & Sebastian Courville	1 st in C2 Mixed, 10th overall	49:58:15
Adam Woolfrey & Scott Reynolds	4 th in men tandem, 17 th overall	52:32. 20
Sophie Coupal & Sandra Luken	1 st women canoe , 18 th overall	52:36:17
Chris Near	2 nd in men C1, 4 th in Solo (C1, HPK, HSK) and 19 th overall	52:36:45
Gaetan Plourde & Tracy Plourde	3 rd in C2 mixed	54:54:15
Paul Adams & Isaac Adams	11 th in C2 men, 40th overall	58:41:00
Leslie Davenport	3 rd in womens solo canoe, 83 rd overall	70:23:32
Bonnie Pankiw & Christoph Weber	withdrew from the race.	

Registration for 2020 opened Nov. 1 and the available spots filled up in about 9.5 hours.

YRQ doesn't need promotion; it has rock star status.

June 24-27, 2020. The race starts at noon Pacific Time.

Nine solo canoes, 15 SUPs, 12 C4s, 14 voyageurs, 37 C2s, 13 K2s, 25 K1s.

OMCKRA Stroke Assessment Clinic with Coach Ryan Stepka



Off season Marathon Paddle Racing Technique pool training, video assessment and strength training with trainer Ryan Stepka. Session intended for canoeists and kayakers. The event was sponsored and supported by Ontario Marathon Canoe Kayak Racing Association (OMCKRA). To encourage the development of paddlers skills, many of the costs were covered by OMCKRA. The program consisted of a 45 minute workout in the pool with videoing, then about 45 minutes of video analysis. As time allowed, Ryan added instruction in the weight room to help people who include weight training in their off season program or who want to start. Benefits to participants included preparing for a new paddling season with good technical skills and having a baseline video for reference for the next season. Ryan Stepka comes from background in Sprint Canoe/Kayak and is an NCCP certified Marathon Coach and Coach Facilitator. Ryan is proficient teaching and padding in many types of canoes and kayaks.

Example below of an assessment for MRX participant Collen Abrahams

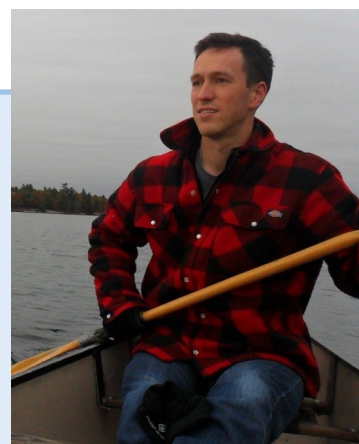
Comments/Reminders:

- There is definitely some good changes from first video to second video. Keep working on making everything look and feel under control no matter how fast you are going. One thing that will help is to keep extending the bottom arm until the catch. Right now it looks like there is a little bit of a pulling back motion before the paddle is buried. Think about the way you walk...you just keep swinging your leg forward until it plants. Imagine if you swung out your foot and then pulled it back in the air before putting it down.

- The power phase of your stroke is much longer in the second video without pulling back too far. In the first video, you will see that your stroke looks short. Something that will help you move your boat even more is to continue focusing on your body position and the engagements of the right muscles to make sure you are in control. What you want to think about is just before the paddle is buried, engage you lats and core together, then hold the engagement and feel like you are pressing your body towards your paddle. Think like not letting your hips drop in a front plank position.

- Adding to the point above about engaging your lats and core, you want to make sure that you press straight down as soon as you bury the blade (think, from a seated position, lifting yourself up from the dinner table by pressing your hand down on the table). What I see and what many people need to work on is using their top arm/top lat just as much as their bottom arm. If you can work with both arms evenly, you will have success transferring the resistance from the blade to your body instead of just using your arms.

Hope to see you again soon. Let me know if you have any questions.



ALGONGUIN CANOE COVERS

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orders@canoecovers.ca

Row Row Row your ERG, Gently in the basement

New York paddler Kevin Olson writes a blog and publishes videos on marathon canoe paddling. Source: canoeraceworld.com/about

The off season is one of the most underappreciated and underutilized times of the year that can be one of your biggest tools to improve your performance in the next race season, especially if you have neglected this important time in the past like many of our fair weather training counterparts. There are some important things to consider however when looking to structure your off season that I would like to touch on to help make your off season work for you and not against you.

Once your competition season has ended it is important to take some time and relax so you can be fresh for the coming training blocks and seasons as we look forward into the next year. There is a limit to this, and it is probably not in your best interest to consider the 12oz curl to be your primary form of exercise for months at a time. If you become too inactive for too long you are only going to take longer to get back to your previous peak fitness and might struggle to surpass that level of fitness depending on how long of a hiatus you took from your fitness routine.

Another consideration you will want to take into account is that you want to be fired up to do all the paddling you can handle come spring time so the off season is a great time to curb the paddling specific activities to ensure your love for the water is as strong as ever once the ice breaks in the early spring months.

Now that we have established that we shouldn't be sedentary and it's both impractical and probably better for us to find other modes of fitness than paddling during this time what is a promising racer

to focus on in this time? I'm guessing that based on the title of this article you can probably guess what I am going to suggest but if you have had one too many brews and already forgot the title my answer would be rowing.

Why rowing you may ask? To answer this, we should first discuss a little bit on some fundamentals of fitness in general. There is one principle in fitness that will give us a good starting point for this argument and that is the principle of specificity. This principle is basic in logic and means that to get better at a given sport/activity, if you train in that sport/activity you should see improvements. Most of us know and would agree that to become a good paddler you must paddle a fair amount. That is because of this principle. This principle can also explain why some athletes although can be world class in their specific sport but would be very bad in others. An example of this might be Eliud Kipchoge, the world marathon record holder, who would probably not fare well in a CrossFit competition or powerlifting meet or even a 100m sprint for that matter. This is because his training is specific for distance running and not these other fitness events.

This principle to specificity can also be used when determining good cross training modalities. The basic premise being that something that more closely replicates your specific targeted sport/activity will have more and better carryover than other forms of fitness that do not train the specific systems required for your intended sport. This is the main reason why I believe rowing is a great cross training activity for the canoe racer as opposed to some other modalities.

The first benefit that lines up with rowing to paddling is the aerobic nature of the sport. Yes, you can do row as intensely as possible but to help us become better paddlers we will use rowing to help maintain/improve our aerobic capacity throughout the off season. You can improve aerobic capacity with any number of activities like running, biking, or swimming to name a few but the difference is that the stressed muscles in rowing more closely mimic paddling than other forms of aerobic activity. For example, running is a great way to improve aerobic capacity but is lower body dominant. Paddling is upper body dominant so the carryover will not be as great when comparing running and rowing as rowing has more upper body involvement compared to running.



Concept 2 Rowing Erg

The second benefit to rowing is the fact that it is a posterior chain dominant whole-body exercise. When you row you start the movement by engaging your lower body, transfer power through your core and finish with your upper body pulling the handle into the chest. In paddling you should be connecting from your feet through your core and upper body all the way to the paddle. Sounds a little familiar doesn't it? This is a reason why rowing will tend to have decent carryover to paddling as it more closely mimics the muscular involvement compared to other activities such as running and biking. With Rowing there is much more use of the lower body than in paddling, but you can also modify your rowing technique to reduce the effort put out in the lower body, you just will not be rowing as fast.

The last reason that I like to row in the off season is that because the neuromuscular movement patterns of rowing activity are relatively close compared to paddling but not too close to affect your actual paddling technique. What I mean by this is that because it is a distinctly different activity than paddling will not run the risk of creating bad habits that will then carry over to the water. When paddling indoors on any type of machine there is a distinct difference compared to paddling on water. No matter how much you try to keep your technique the same on a machine there will inevitably be some differences. If you are not careful these could lead to big differences to technique on water once you get back out there. This is not a reason neglect indoor paddling but a cautionary note to make sure you are aware that this could happen if you are not diligent with your technique and acknowledge that this could happen.

I wanted to write this article because of my own personal experience in trying to improve my performances over the off season and what I have learned from taking different approaches. In 2015 I had pretty good year of racing and was super motivated to get better for the next season. So, for the off season in preparation for the 2016 year I decided to do a lot of running in the off season to help build my aerobic engine. While I did work up to doing 20-mile-long runs and certainly did improve my aerobic abilities I found once I got back in the boat, I was having issues that my paddling specific fitness was lacking in comparison to my overall aerobic abilities. This meant that my paddling specific musculature could not support the activity that my heart could perform at. This took some time for my upper body to catch up and in the process, I most likely lost some of my aerobic

gains from running.

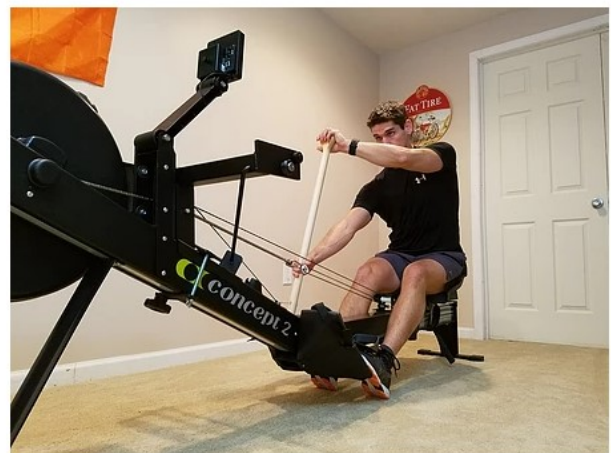
<https://www.paddlesporttraining.com/>

So, the next off season I set out to do almost the exact opposite, I decided to do most of my indoor training on my P-ERG and paddle as much as I could throughout the entirety of the off season. In the early season of 2017 I did find that my paddling specific fitness was much higher than in the previous year but I also found that I had created some poor habits from paddling on the erg so much and also had a harder time with motivation to paddle throughout the season. So, although this was an improvement from 2016, I felt that it still was not optimal, and I could do better.

My off-season prep for 2019 I tried to take the lessons learned from the previous 2 off seasons and come up with a strategy that would help get my season started better than ever. This off season I still ran, and I still paddled but I also incorporated more rowing and airdyne biking. This seemed to do the trick as I had a very quick jump back to previous abilities once I got back in the boat in the spring and I didn't have the motivation issue previously mentioned.

For this year I plan on improving my off season even more by refining my strategy. Therefore, I now have a built-in structure where I will strategically change my main aerobic focus becoming more specific to canoe racing the closer it gets spring thaw. Hopefully it pays off and I can add some extra progress in my results using this strategy.

If you want more details regarding how I am structuring my off season or rowing specific workouts I do leave a comment below and maybe I will write another article detailing this information.



The PERGI!

Be careful to develop only good habits on a paddling ergometer

CanoeKayak Canada (CKC)



Canada Day Flotilla / Flottille de la Fête du Canada
in Canada Day Flotilla / Flottille de la Fête du Canada

Governor General Julie Payette wants Canadians to be active and asked **Canoe Kayak Canada** to help, so as CKC members, we did.

OMCKRA members **Craig Creighton** and **Don Stoneman** joined a small, select group of representatives escorting the Governor General down the Rideau Canal to Parliament Hill on Canada Day. Julie Payette was wearing a black dress and paddling in a sea kayak. She changed her shoes when she got to Parliament Hill. We were in a pro boat. There was Mike Trauner, a national sprint team para-paddler, just about to get on a plane to fly to Brazil for Para Pan Am Games, Tom Hall, Olympic bronze medalist, canoe sprint, Spencer Pomeroy, National Team Slalom athlete, Sophia Jensen, National Team, canoe sprint Ella Hodgson-

Pageau, Jr Worlds team, canoe sprint, Max Finkelstein & Constance Downes, Canoe Kayak Canada Community members.

The short paddle was a symbolic effort to encourage people to be active. There are lots more pictures on the [CKC Facebook page](#)

Long url:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=ms.c.eJxFU8mNRTEI62gUdui~%3BsdEzP87VCsYL0QoX607PFHF~%3BUwAZ~gFzFQEvMW2LQ6AB~DygZuJl~%3BIA6WjM~KT~gJb4Rab2AG9Z28cV8QMgdqSoAYRdo~ThUklsCW6JgCQVHJoYqQeANM8lzXjw9HALzOkhYAlDQ2B0X1y3rfvijTicaly3FTvIDEhtdRRJ160ZA9pe2smBkSiORCwQ9Nlg5drsraFZe~YqdW6Z70ULt0yvDhZl4GgiRyC xpts2hCwsO~%3BvsWoY8hoN5axN5iDHCqCVNvsgPqOF9bFHfFonrb7bfFviATgH-D7afOO1IHkwJOObn1k9iROlIGqmbXx3iUFg8wp69ZKP52Vs~%3BjHBWByMcXXMcmclI0TsybcC2D9ci01K7SgV5JD~%3BhNEjz3oefgbkompOvqHrnMIJeDm~st32~%3B7bscR6aI2P-PUu~IH4GwDARBGuLW4MfWyzkIiYOG5IGgKBS3xquUj~zL5jpDA4305kYurXi2twRXvIvpgLifa~kEe6XspoH9LVKD1rSX9AOnSopP8DDsEUoA~-bps.a.2754136137995050&type=1&tn=HH-R>



Don and Craig seen in these two photos with Governor General

Canoe Kayak Canada (CKC) continued

CKC is the recognized sport organization for canoe and kayak racing in Canada. CKC is made up of the Marathon, Whitewater and Sprint disciplines of canoe and kayak racing in Canada. OMCKRA is a member of the Marathon Canoe Racing Council of CKC.

SAFE SPORT

We expect an announcement on the final policy before the end of the year. Will keep you informed.

EVENT & MEMBERSHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Canoe Kayak Canada has developed a replacement for its outmoded Padtrac registration system. The simply named Canoe Kayak Registration System it is now up and running.

Nova Scotia based company ImmediaC , the developer, described as a “membership management and online cloud-based registration.” There will be a webinar/online training for club registrars in January. Ian Mortimer, CKC’s Development Director, says the system is ready and organizations and clubs can start using it now and there is no fee. Conversion to this registration system is not mandatory for CKC member organizations.

There are a number of ways of joining OMCKRA and no decisions have been made on how it will handle registration in the coming year. In fact, the board is looking for a person to take on the **Membership Secretary** role.

Muskoka River X Final Announcement



Thank you for the past 7 years. We so much appreciate the support that the paddle community has offered us. The MRX has been a labour of love. We began this venture and continued with it because of our passion for paddling, adventure and interest in creating new opportunities and experiences for the adventure sport community. At the end of each amazing season, we found ourselves considering new options for the future of the Muskoka River X and the other River X events. We have enjoyed every minute of our journey in the marathon paddling community. We also valued the opportunity to join and support you in your experiences on the water as well.

This fall, and after much deliberation we have the difficult decision to suspend indefinitely the Muskoka River X and all other associated events such as the Big East River X, 2 Hour of River X and The OX. Our decision is not taken lightly and is not a reflection of the relationship we have with the marathon paddling community. It reflects various unresolvable barriers associated with our personal and professional lives concerning the considerable demands that we experience annually while hosting these events. Each year, we both spend hundreds of hours creating and reinventing paddling events. We are now at a point where the River X is beyond the efforts of 2 guys-with-day-jobs and families. We truly hope that the Muskoka River X and the various River X events will resurface, championed by a group or community that can sustain its vision into the future in whatever form it may take.

Once again, a genuine and heartfelt Thank You to everyone who paddled in a River X event. Thank you for supporting our vision. We hope our events provided you with unique and special memories on the water that you can reflect on for years to come.

Dig Deep, Stay Dry and Never Stop Paddling

Mike and Rob



Awards

AWARDS BASED ON POINTS

Points earned

Last Name	points category	Points	
Don Stoneman	Masters Male	28	Masters Male Winner
Dean Coulson	Masters Male	27	
Michael Walmsley	Masters Male	27	
Oliver James McMillan	Open Male	26	Open Male Winner
Vadim Lawrence	Masters Male	26	
Danielle Holdsworth	Open Female	25	Open Female Winner
Darryl Bohm	Masters Male	21	
Aurora (Rory) Bohm	Masters Female	20	Masters Female Winner
Erin Ussery	Open Female	19	
Rama Gilverson	Masters Female	19	
Stan Anusiewicz	Masters Male	19	
Stan Machacek	Masters Male	17	
Jen Nicholson	Masters Female	16	
John Liversage	Masters Male	16	
Ryan Stepka	Open Male	16	
Andrei Zoubakine	Masters Male	15	
Mike Hayes	Masters Male	15	
Craig Creighton	Masters Male	14	
Dav Nemethy-Fekete	Masters Male	13	
Gail Bailey	Masters Female	13	
John Eastmure	Masters Male	12	
Karen Simpson	Masters Female	12	
Liz Loek	Masters Female	12	
Michelle Laprade	Open Female	12	
Shawn Urban	Masters Male	11	
Jennifer Courville	Masters Female	10	
Maria Kuzman	Masters Female	10	
Alison Sandeman	Masters Female	9	
Bob Vincent	Masters Male	9	
Dana Roncea	Masters Female	9	
Gord Pfohl	Open Male	9	
Mackenzie Buis	Open Male	9	
Mike DeAbreu	Masters Male	9	
Isaac Adams	Junior Male	8	Junior Male Winner
Nolan Adams	Bantam Male	8	Bantam Male Winner
Paul Adams	Masters Male	8	
Susan Adams	Open Female	8	
Sebastien Courville	Open Male	7	
Tom Stead	Masters Male	7	
Steve Tait	Masters Male	6	
Trevor Quinton	Open Male	6	

POINTS CATEGORIES

- Open Male paddler:
- Open Female paddler:
- Masters Male Paddler :
- Masters Female Paddler :
- Junior Male Paddler:
- Junior Female Paddler:
- Bantam Male Paddler:
- Bantam Female Paddler:
- Recreational Male Paddler:
- Recreational Female Paddler:

A paddler must be a member in good standing to be eligible for an annual award.

Points earned while the paddler was not a member in good standing cannot be counted towards the annual awards even if he/she becomes a member later during the season. A paddler must attend at least three races in order to be eligible for an award.

Points towards the annual awards will only be awarded providing the class specifications of a race are the same as those recognized by the Association. Points for the annual trophies will be based on an individual basis (person with the highest points). If a class is not advertised by the Race organizer prior to the race points cannot be counted toward the annual awards.

Providing the following minimum number of boats compete in a race, points will be awarded to contestants based on:

Points:

First Place	4
Second Place	3
Third Place	2
Finishing	1

Recreational Male, Female TBD

Junior & Bantam Female not awarded

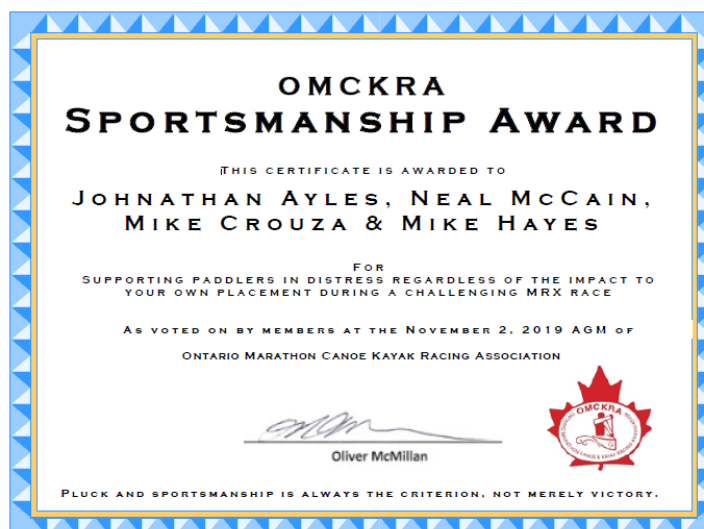
Awards

AWARDS VOTED ON at the AGM

- ⇒ Race of the Year
- ⇒ Sportsmanship Award
- ⇒ Award of Merit
- ⇒ Adult-Child Award

The president will receive nominations for the awards to be voted on (Race of the Year, Sportsmanship Award, Award of Merit and Adult-Child Award) prior to and during the AGM and the membership will vote and determine the award winners at the AGM

- Race of the Year must be a sanctioned race..
- The Adult-Child award may be given to the Adult and Child who demonstrated the most enthusiasm and participation in the sport over the season.
- The Sportsmanship Award may be given to the most deserving individual who performed a sportsman-like act during the past year.
- The Award of Merit may be presented to the person or persons who made the greatest contribution to the betterment of OMCRA.



2019 Ausable River Canoe Marathon



Rookie Descent down the Ausable - Team 03
Oliver James McMillan and Chris Prater
Feeders and support - Bob Vincent, Gwyn Hayman,
Erin Ussery, Mike Hayes

Intro

The Ausable River Canoe Marathon (ARCM) is the second of the three major races that make up the triple crown of canoe racing. In our short 4-5 years racing careers, Oliver has previously completed the General Clinton 3 times, and La Classique once. Myself, I have finished the General Clinton twice. This was to be our first descent down the Ausable River, which puts us in a special category - Rookies.

The ARCM starts with a 300yd run with boat in hand. To determine where each of the 90+ teams will begin on the road section, a short canoe sprint is held in the days prior to the race and based on this result, teams are placed in rows from fastest at the front to slowest at the back. Our sprint was scheduled for 3:45 on Friday, one of the last possible times. The sprint course goes upstream to a buoy which teams must go around, then back downstream.

Sprints

We arrived at the sprint location at 1:30pm to find out that we were late checking in and had to pay a fine. If you read the 8 pages of rules, all teams must check in prior to 12:00 noon on the Friday before the race or pay a \$200 fine. Rookie mistake #1, bailed out by none other than our bank roll and feeding captain Bob Vincent - us kids just don't carry that kind of money around with us. Bob pays the fine, and we head to the river for a practice run. It's now 1:45 and the course closes at 1:55, with sprints beginning at 2:00. We paddle

to the top, practice the buoy turn 4 times with about a 50% success rate, then paddle back down to the finish. Oliver and I have a good discussion about tactics for the buoy turn and felt somewhat confident that we could pull it off under pressure. We watch other teams sprint and wait for our turn.

Finally it's time to get on the water. We warm up a bit, then wait for our team 03 to be called to the sprint start line. 3-2-1-go. Tough water depth right away, but we find an eddy and the boat is moving well. Going upstream we read the water as best we can after only paddling it once in practice trying to stay out of the current as much as possible. We get to the buoy, execute the plan, and make a good turn under pressure -it sure is nice when things work out. The paddle back downstream feels great. Such shallow water allows for us to "pop the boat" (its own wave pushes it up out of the water a bit) reducing the resistance and allowing us to really motor. We finish with a time of 6:54, which puts us 34th out of 90+ teams, and in the 7th row of boats for the road start.

Race Day

The race starts at 9pm giving us a full day of waiting around with high anticipation of the excitement, chaos, and pain, but also giving us lots of time to put the final touches on the boat setup and to discuss the race and feeding plan. The plan for food and water service that Bob has laid out is simple: one on the water pit at McMaster bridge, followed by 6 pits as we portage over each of the hydroelectric dams on the course. The time in the boat to the first portage is the longest at about 5-6 hours, followed by approximately 2-3 hour paddles in between the dams.

Start

This is the biggest race of the year for us, and one that we have been training together for over the past 6 months. The start is unreal with 90 canoes running to the river and the noise of 1500+ fans cheering - it can be messy. Also there is prize money; top 40 teams get paid, and there is a special bonus for the top 3 rookie teams. I've convinced myself that I like the pressure and nervous feeling before the race starts. Until I started to embrace those emotions, I had a hard time controlling them.

Our boat is on the line, Oliver and I go for a light jog, and we prepare for the countdown. We don't say much to each other - the plan has been discussed for months. Have a clean run, get in the boat carefully, paddle hard to get out of the waves, then find some good boats to ride with. This is a plan we have had a lot of success with in

the past at other big races.

3-2-1-go, we are off. The run goes quickly and we jump into the water, get in and paddle in what feels like a giant washing machine. The wave of another boat pushes us into a bush on the right and we are momentarily stopped. We get going again and things start to calm down. We find a men's team with a big stern wave to ride and life begins to feel pretty good. There is a bit of sun left in partly cloudy sky as it starts to rain, cooling us off after the hard efforts from the chaos of the start line. An hour goes by and we find ourselves in a line of 4 to 5 boats carefully riding each others stern wash. There isn't much side wash riding because of the twists and turns, as well as debris - too risky. Before we know it, the darkness of night is all around, especially in the shadows that the overhanging trees create. Our eyes strain to keep the boat in front of us, especially when they go under the canopy and around a corner. Somehow, we hang onto the stern waves and follow carefully through the darkness.

After about 2.5 hours we reach the first bridge and the noise and lights of fans and feeding crews line the river. Many tactics are used to help teams find their feeders. Lit up signs with team numbers, crazy glowing hats, light up necklaces, music and also just plain old yelling - it's a busy and fun party.

We find Bob and Erin with their chest waders and funky green laser light show standing knee deep in the river with water and food. Erin pits me, Bob pits Oliver. It was smooth except for Oliver not getting a food refill. He has a high calorie drink and water, but no food, but we are confident we can make it to the first portage which is Mio dam.

We paddle back into the dark away from all the cheering, lights, and music, get back in line and ride some more wash. Hours go by and the river starts to open up into a pond with many tree stumps looking to send us for a swim, but carefully follow the boat in front of us with the confidence that if they didn't hit anything, neither would we. That plan works and the pond eventually opens up into a larger reservoir and the lights of the dam can be seen - it's almost time to get out. We follow a team from Minnesota up to the takeout where we test our legs for the first time in about 5 hours. Bob and Gwyn make the food and water switches, and Erin leads us up the dam and down the other side where we run down the hill and put the boat in. At this point we realize that we have opened up a good gap by running the portage, but not being overly confident in where we are going we wait for the more experienced Minnesota team to catch up

and paddle with them. We put about 1 min on the other teams that were riding with us before the dam. At this point, the Minnesota boat and us are following our GPS tracks from previous years and everything is going pretty well until...I look down at the GPS and no longer see the path to follow- both teams just missed a shortcut. We paddle hard down our chosen path and come back into the main river just as 3 boats that were behind us sail by. Slightly frustrated, we jump back in the mix of wash riding with the bigger pack of boats. The night is starting to feel long and I honestly don't remember much of this section except we are getting tired, my legs were restless, and I had to pee.

Bathroom use is a challenge in marathon racing. It's a long race, and we drink 6-8 liters of water. At night you don't sweat much, so you end up with a full bladder. The pee plan is to do it in the bottom of the boat, which Oliver successfully does several times before I decide to try. I'm not sure if it was stage fright, the really full bladder, or the pressure on my prostate from sitting too long, but I just couldn't do it (TMI I know). Eventually after 3 failed attempts the pain is too much and we stop in some shallow water so I can get out and stand and relieve myself. With me out of the boat, the current swings the boat around and we are now facing up-



stream.

Another canoe is coming and they yell for us to turn off the bow light. At this point I see an eerie glow moving in the water and I'm momentarily mesmerized by it - could it be the moon light focused on the river bottom? A lost flash light? Or something else? Now with an empty bladder I turn the boat around, jump in and try to catch the team that just passed us. Five minutes down stream I

look to see the GPS and there is nothing there. Its at this moment I realized what the eerie glow was on the bottom of the river - the GPS is gone. Now we paddle with urgency to catch a local team and follow so we don't miss any more shortcuts, but the first significant low energy and enthusiasm feelings are creeping into my mind and body.

It's now about 4:00am and we can see some light starting to come up on the far horizon, which we celebrate as "making it through the night." It takes a long time for the sun to actually show itself - nearly 2 more hours. Oliver and I both experience low points, then bounce back when we ride wash. The worst is when we are low and there are no boats around, which thankfully doesn't happen too often. Honestly the river, pond, portage, repeat pattern is pretty blurry in retrospect, which I attribute to a general lack of local geography; we spent the whole race not knowing how to describe where we were, or how much further it was to the next portage. This is one of the hardest parts of racing in a new river - your body is done, and your can't stop hoping that the next portage is "just around the next corner."

The last 4-5 hours are spent paddling across several large open lakes that begin in very marshy areas. In one particular pond, the grasses are tall and there are multiple paths boats could take. We often play it safe and follow more experienced teams, but again, find ourselves riding wash on the Minnesota team, with a local team (The Millers) opting for a different route. Again we were wrong. We had to paddle very hard to catch the Millers which left us feeling pretty terrible and the effort to hang onto their wash was too great to maintain. Also - I had to pee again. We pull off, I pee, Oliver swims to cool off, and we jump back in and continue on with the teams we were following far off in the distance.

Our pace is the slowest of the entire race now, and there is a team gaining on us. We decide to let them catch us and ride. The team is a local female team and are currently 3rd in their division. They are friendly and happy to have company and so are we. We ride wash for about an hour across a winding pond that seems never ending. Finally the pond opens up into one of the largest bodies of water we had seen so far in the race. The girls are starting to fatigue and they tell us that the last take out is directly across the lake. Feeling a bit more energized, Oliver and I decide to pull a bit harder and let the girls ride us up to the take out. They gratefully accept the ride. As we approach the take out, we let the girls go first, after all they pulled us most of the last hour.

The last portage is a steep one. There is a staircase available but we choose to run down the hill and the speed was almost too much for our legs, but the fear of a wipe out kept our minds and bodies sharp. We get to the bottom and sort our food and water, then back into the river for the final hour or so to the finish. We can see the female team ahead of us and follow their line as best we can but we are pretty far back after the portage and eventually we lose sight of them.

We paddle and talk about the relief we feel when we hit the finish line and the minutes seems to pass very slowly knowing that it's only about 30 min to the finish line. Finally we start to see signs of city life along the bank - cottages, and houses, even roads alongside the river. Before long we can hear the announcer at the finish line and now we know our race is almost done. Fueled by the anticipation of the relief that awaits us, we power on to the finish. Flags and tents line the bank at the finish and we pull hard through the finish line, finally letting our bodies have a break. Exhausted, we swim to cool off. We get out of the water very slowly, the pain is very real now as our brains begin to point out all the muscles we had strained but ignored for the last 16+ hours. As we exit the water, we receive cold towels, chocolate milk, and water. Our pit crew is there to greet us - they look exhausted too.

After a few hours rest, Oliver and I attend the paddlers banquet which is a true feast. During the awards ceremony we receive our first Ausable river canoe marathon coins as well as the prize for the top rookie team and prize cheque for finishing 32nd. When the accounting is finished we basically break even, but are enriched forever by the shared experience and accomplishment.

A huge thanks to our Pit crew Gwyn, Mike, Erin, and crew chief Bob. Your efforts along the banks were second to none and will be appreciated forever.



OMCKRA Membership Application/Renewal Form (coverage to March 31)

Membership may be paid by

- ◇ **e.transfer** from your bank to omckra@gmail.com
- ◇ **cheque** made out to OMCKRA mailed to: Membership c/o 87 Queen Street East, Cambridge ON N3C 2A9
- ◇ **credit card** at: <https://raceroster.com/memberships/4009/omckra-2020>

Fill out this form below and include with payment if using cheque or cash. Please don't mail cash .

Name :			
Address:			
Phone:		E-Mail Address:	

Fee schedule for members of OMCKRA	Enter Fee [C\$]	Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)	What do you race? C, K, Rec., OC, etc.
Individual/Race Organizer (per race)	(\$50)		
Full Time Student or <18 yr. as of Jan. 1	(\$40)		
Child <20 yr. as of Jan 1 with parent (maximum 4 adults) Parent apply & provide family info	(\$70)		
List Family Paddler Names & ages			

RELEASE FROM LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISKS - OMCKRA

1. I acknowledge that the activities involve risk, dangers and hazards inherent in canoeing, kayaking and associated outdoor water sports (the Inherent Risk). And further acknowledge that in addition to the inherent risk the Activities involve certain additional risks, dangers, and hazards, some of which may include (but are not limited to): physical exertion for which I may not be prepared; weather extremes, including sudden and unexpected changes, dangerous water conditions, including cold water and movement, waves, currents, rapids and white water, collision with natural and man-made objects, including rocks and other boats, and equipment malfunction or failure (collectively the Additional Risks).

2. I acknowledge that the enjoyment and excitement of my participation in the activities is derived, in part from the Inherent Risk and the Additional Risks and I agree to freely accept and fully assume all risk of personal injury, death, property damage or less, resulting from any cause whatsoever, including but not limited to the Inherent Risk and the Additional Risks and active or passive negligence, imprudence, lack of skill, error of judgment, breach of contract or breach of statutory duty of care on the part of the Organizer or the Ontario Marathon Canoe and Kayak Racing Association (OMCKRA). For greater certainty and without limiting the foregoing, I acknowledge that I use the equipment and facilities of the Organizer and OMCKRA with understanding of the nature, condition and state thereof and entirely at my own risk and acknowledge that I am solely responsible for the safety of my person and property and that the Organizer and OMCKRA assume no responsibility whatsoever for the safety of my person or property in connection with the Activities.

3. I waive any and all claims I may now and in the future have against and release and forever discharge from liability and agree not to sue the Organizer and/or OMCKRA for any personal injury, death, property damage or less sustained by me as a result of my participation in the Activities due to any cause whatsoever, including but not limited active or passive negligence, imprudence, lack of skill, error of judgment, breach of contract, or breach of statutory duty of care on the part of the Organizer or OMCKRA.

4. I agree to save harmless and indemnify the Organizer and OMCKRA from and against any and all liability for any personal injury, death, property damage or less to any third party, resulting from my participation in the Activities or in the operation of the Organizer.

5. I agree that I am responsible for all costs of rescue or medical attention rendered to me or for my benefit, arising from the Activities and I agree to indemnify the Organizer and OMCKRA from any and all liability in respect of any and all such costs.

6. I acknowledge that in signing this waiver and release I am not relying on any oral, written or visual representations or statements made by the Organizer or OMCKRA.

7. I agree that this Waiver and Release shall in all respects be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the province of Ontario.

Fair play agreement and waiver must be agreed to by members.: As a Member of OMCKRA, I agree to follow the OMCKRA code of conduct, to behave in a sporting way, with a sense of fair play and to follow the rules and directions of the Organizers of OMCKRA Sanctioned or Recognized Events. I hereby waive and release any and all claims against Ontario Marathon Canoe Kayak Racing Association (OMCKRA) and its directors, volunteers and staff, for any and all damages or injuries arising out of participation in any events or activities by me and/or my dependents and/or my guests. I hereby grant for the minors listed above, as their parent or legal guardian, permission to participate in OMCKRA sanctioned events and activities.

Rowan's Law (concussion policy): I confirm that I have reviewed the Concussion Awareness Resources document at the Ontario government site: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/rowans-law-concussion-awareness-resources>

Signature: _____

Members receive annual meeting notices and newsletters via e-mail, are eligible to vote, are covered for insurance in OMCKRA sanctioned events and may apply to participate in provincial and national awards competitions. Personal information collected by OMCKRA is used to provide services to our members. These services require administrative responsibilities such as documentation of insured events and instructor registration. A limited information membership list (names and city) is provided to race organizers for insurance purposes. Private information is never given to anyone by OMCKRA for other reasons. People registering for OMCKRA coaching or who have taken part in an insured event may receive membership information from OMCKRA in the next calendar year.