

# PUT IN

NEWS FOR PADDLERS





## Training Paddlers For the Future

Young people are learning about the joy of competition through local kayak clubs.

BY PETER STEKEL

**N**ext time you're paddling in the West, don't be surprised if the boater beside you in the eddy is still in high school. In fact, don't be surprised if that paddler hasn't even entered high school. Paddling programs for youths are going strong in the region. Dan Norman, who coaches two kayak clubs in British Columbia, says that introducing young people to paddling can only be a good thing. Another advantage: "We're exposing parents to the sport, too," he said.

Norman coaches up to 50 kids at the Chilliwack Center of Excellence and the Provincial Whitewater Association of British Columbia in both slalom and whitewater skills. He admits to being "old school" about paddling: "We have to pay more attention to the risks of kayaking." Paddlers are seeing more and more accidents at higher levels, he said. "My feeling is that in some cases people are putting themselves into situations they should not be in because of ignorance."

Norman is conservative with his kids, whose ages range from 9 to 17. "We take a very slow approach and make sure kids spend a lot of time in flat water. We work on skills, and as kids' skills develop, we take them out," practicing on easy whitewater. They're not pushing kids to run waterfalls or try crazy things. "Some of them are going to do that, but when they do, they're going to have some skills to back them up," he said.

Dick Shipley, who coaches 24 members of Boy Scout Troop 1571 in Peulsbo, Washington, agrees with the safety aspect. "I'm not out to build racers or top-notch paddlers or rodeo boaters or anything. My goal is to teach them how to paddle safely and to give them a sport they are going to be doing 10 or 20 years from now."

Shipley points to his own family as an example. "With Paul and Scotty [three-time world champion in K-1 slalom, and a member of the 2000 Olympic team], I always felt the most important thing was that they enjoy the sport, learn to love it, and do it the rest of their lives. And that's what they're doing." He wants the same thing for his Boy Scouts. "All of us are getting older and want to see the sport we love so much be perpetuated. I hope some of the scouts end up being racers, and I hope a lot of them teach their own kids how to paddle someday."

Outside Seattle, in the small town of North Bend, Matthew and Marian Davidson have coached several dozen teens through their Snoqualmie River Rapids program. They emphasize that kayaking is something special and different from typical school team

sports. Marian Davidson tells kids, "You get to go to all these cool places like Junior Olympics or practice with national champions on the Chilliwack River."

Dan Norman agrees that paddling should be promoted as an



Peter Stekel

**YOUNG PADDLERS** from Canada and the United States competed at Hope Slough, near Chilliwack, B.C., as part of the Northwest Cup series.



## 2001 DEMO TOUR DATES

Carl's Paddlin'	Madison, WI	Mar. 9-11
Canoe Escape	Thonotossa, FL	Mar. 10
Jersey Paddler	Brick, NJ	Mar. 23-25
Kittery Trading Post	Kittery, ME	Mar. 30-Apr. 1
Alder Creek	Portland, OR	Apr. 7; 8
Hoigaards	St. Louis Park, MN	Apr. 21, 22
Midwest Mountaineering	Minneapolis, MN	Apr. 25-29
Piragis Northwoods Co.	Ely, MN	May 4-6
Duluth Pack Store	Duluth, MN	May 5
Canoe Rack	Missoula, MT	May 5, 6
North Cove Outfitters	Old Saybrook, CT	May 5, 6
Kansas City Paddler	Kansas City, MO	May 5, 6
Mountaineer Outdoor Supply	Inlet, NY	May 11-13
Alpine Shop	St. Louis, MO	May 12
Base Camp	Bellingham, WA	May 12
Scheels	Iowa City, IA	May 12
The Benchmark	Farmington, MI	May 13
Wind and Water Boatworks	Butler, PA	May 18
J.L. Waters	Bloomington, IN	May 19
Umiak Outfitters	Stowe, VT	May 19
Oregon River Sports	Eugene, OR	May 19
Blue Mountain Outfitters	Marysville, PA	May 20
Canoesport Outfitters	Indianola, IA	June 2
Newman Outfitters	Solon, OH	June 2
Oak Orchard	Waterport, NY	June 2, 3
Chicagoland Canoe Base	Chicago, IL	June 3
Country Canoeist	Dunbarton, NH	June 6
Adirondack Paddle Pole	Schenectady, NY	June 8
Kittery Trading Post	Kittery, ME	June 9
Canoesport Outfitters	Omaha, NE	June 9
Outdoor Sports Center	Wilton, CT	June 16
Mr. Canoe's Paddlesports	Healdsburg, CA	June 17
Potomac Outdoors	Cabin John, MD	June 23
Sesuit Creek Outfitters	East Dennis, MA	Aug. 25
Mike's Country Store	Clarendon, VT	Aug. 26
Carl's Paddlin'	Madison, WI	Sept. 29, 30
Bell Canoe Works	Minneapolis, MN	May-Sept.

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## PUTIN

alternative to team sports. "The value of kayaking is that when kids get into a boat, their destiny is in their own hands. No matter how good an instructor I am, if that kid leans too far, he or she is going to flip. And if they take hard strokes, they're going to move forward fast."

As a schoolteacher, Norman finds that some kids have trouble listening to instructions, and get lost because they can't concentrate. "When they're kayaking, they quickly realize that if they don't know how to do something, they can't get to where they want to go," he said. "They're at the mercy of the water unless they learn." The fear of flipping, or the fear of consequences, is enough to motivate kids to pay more attention. When they do this on a regular basis, he finds, it carries over into the rest of their lives.

Some youth programs are financing themselves through dues. That's how Paddling Punks in British Columbia pays for coaches. Larry Norman and Durango Center of Excellence in Colorado do the same thing. In California, Kern River Alliance raises money at races to pay for coaches and gear for their juniors program. Dick Shipley and the Davidsons volunteer their time.

Some people outside the youth programs hope they will account for future Olympic gold medalists. Marian Davidson thinks that would be nice but believes that promoters of such ideals must remain realistic. "The important thing is that kids get into it and have fun," she said. "But another Scott Shipley wouldn't be bad."

## WEATHERWATCH

### Storms and Draining Water

— David Schultz, NOAA/National Severe Storms Laboratory

A common misconception is that the water drains counterclockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere because of the Coriolis force, the force that results from the rotation of the earth. The Coriolis force is responsible for the counterclockwise motion around low-pressure systems and the clockwise motion around high-pressure systems in the Northern Hemisphere. Because the rotation rate of the water going down the drain (once every few seconds) is much larger than the rotation rate of the earth (once a day), only motions that persist for many hours or more (many weather systems, for example) can be affected noticeably by it. The shape of the sink or any initial rotation in the water has more to say about the direction in which water flows down drains than the Coriolis force.

For more about the Coriolis force and sinks, see <http://www.ems.psu.edu/~fraser/Bad/BadCoriolis.html>.



Clare Wolf