

CanoeKayak Canada's ABORIGINAL PADDLING INITIATIVE

Goals

- To effectively connect Aboriginal Canadians to the Canadian Sport System through the sport of canoeing and kayaking.
- To promote canoeing and kayaking as an effective method for raising levels of physical activity amongst Aboriginal Canadians
- To raise levels of canoe and kayak safety amongst Aboriginal Canadians by using the CKC CanoeKids learn-to-paddle program.

Background

Aboriginal Canadians have been involved in canoeing and kayaking from time immemorial. As such, paddling is one of the acknowledged traditional sports of the Aboriginal Peoples. Parallel to this, the sport of canoekayak is acknowledged as one of Canada's most successful Summer Olympic Sports. Since Alwyn Morris' gold medal performance at the 1984 Olympic Games, no Aboriginal Canadian has been on the Canadian Olympic or World Teams. CanoeKayak Canada believes the sport of canoekayak represents a unique opportunity to use a traditional sport to positively address Aboriginal physical activity deficiencies and to give Aboriginal athletes the opportunity to access national and international level competitions.

In 2004, CKC, with the endorsement of the Aboriginal Sport Circle and the Canada Games Council, received a contribution from Sport Canada under the Sport Participation Development Program to promote the Aboriginal Paddling Initiative. The program has received support on an annual basis since 2004.

The strength of the Canadian CanoeKayak Sport System is the Club system. Clubs are volunteer run, self-sufficient community based organizations. One of the strategies is to promote local Aboriginal community-based clubs as noted above. They are key to providing consistent local ownership and leadership in the local community.

Eligible Projects

To be eligible for support, a community must first register as a member Club of CanoeKayak Canada. Funds from CKC will not be advanced to non-members. Clubs vary, one to another, at their inception. In many communities, municipal

recreation departments or reserve recreation committees initiate a Club as part of their broader recreational service mandate.

Eligible projects will not receive more than 50% funding toward any activity. Projects will typically be: coach or leadership development, competition development support, sport equipment purchase, safety equipment purchase, competition travel, competition support, etc. Supporting competitive canoeing is an important part of the program. Equally, where no tradition of competitive canoeing exists, programs which support canoe and kayak safety through sport initiation programs are an acknowledged way to reach out to build a functioning program in new communities. The program also acknowledges the potential to use paddling as an activity to address deficits in physical activity with all age groups. In addition, canoe and kayak safety is an important benefit of the CanoeKids program.

Activity History

The project has been active in BC, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia. Project highlights include:

- Selecting and training 2008 NAIG teams from BC, Manitoba and Quebec
- Aboriginal coaches trained in NCCP Sport Initiation (CanoeKids) in NS, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and BC
- Quebec coach selected as Aboriginal Apprentice Coach at 2009 Canada Games
- New clubs in Indian Brook, NS. and participation in Divisional (regional) competitions
- Two New Clubs in Quebec
- New Club in Ontario
- CKC and Onake Paddling Club run 2007 National Aboriginal Regatta in Kahnawake, QC.
- Aboriginal Dragonboating in Winnipeg
- Aboriginal athletes participate in Spring Camps
- Kayak events and workshop at 'The Pas Indian Days' in 2009
- Alberta hosts two Western Canada Aboriginal Championships in 2008 and 2009
- CKBC runs NAIG canoeing competition.
- Exhibition kayak races held at 2008 NAIG.
- CKBC hosts Aboriginal Canoeing Conference

Partnerships

CKC and its provincial affiliates are able to access funding through government support. In addition, Aboriginal communities can access partnership funding through health and wellness programming. The success of the program in local areas is dependent upon local leadership to provide consistent direction and focus for the program. Local leaders are also key to accessing local partnerships which are fundamental to success.

How to Measure Success

The following are the various ways a community club can be successful in the program:

1. Joins CKC and the Provincial CanoeKayak organizations
2. Develops & trains coaches within the NCCP framework.
3. Acquires canoe and kayak equipment
4. Runs CanoeKids course for young paddlers to promote water safety and youth physical activity
5. Trains club volunteers to lead and run the club
6. Enters paddlers in regattas, dragonboat festivals, etc.
7. Hosts competitions.
8. Trains officials
9. Hosts broader community 'physical activity' days
10. Uses traditional ceremonies as part of the canoe kayak program

For More Information

Contact: John Edwards
Domestic Development Director
CANOEKAYAK CANADA
ihedwards@canoe kayak.ca
1 613 260-1818, ext. *2201