



The Eurodragon Newsflash is the official newsletter of the European Dragon Boat Federation, member of the International Dragon Boat Federation, the world governing body of dragon boating.

From the editor:

After nearly a two year absence, the Eurodragon Newsflash is back! I'm sorry for the long silence, but I had to put all my dragon boating activities on hold for awhile while I studied for my Master of Arts in education. Now, with degree in hand and a new career, I'm taking up both paddle and pen and hoping to breathe life back into the Eurodragon Newsflash. Of course it's a shame that there was no-one to pick up the baton and run with it in order to keep the Newsflash going during my hiatus. Hence, my call further in this issue to get involved in your federation. It's hard work but it's worth it.

Kim Beckwith, The Netherlands, August 2005

2005 IDBF World Nations Championships and EDBF European Club Crew Championships

I've just come back from Berlin and the combined World Championships and European Club Crew Championships. The land side of the event left much to be desired, but nevertheless the IDBF-organized racing side was top-quality as always. I heard lots of paddlers praising the course and the efficiency of the boat marshalling area which got teams quickly on and off the water. From my vantage point at the 500 meter start tower on Sunday, I observed groups of incoming boats switching effortlessly with outgoing boats. It reminded me of a carefully choreographed water ballet, with boats quietly switching positions.



Boat marshaling & crowds at 2005 World Nations Championships and European Club Crew Championships.

Of course, not everything went smoothly. The weather was unpredictable to say the least, the regatta grounds were crowded, there were the usual complaints about what boat marshals would allow in the boat and the land-side organization (which was contracted to a well-meaning but apparently understaffed sporting events management firm) left much to be desired, but more about that in a later issue).



Paddlers Anon with loaned sticks.

Not limited to ECCs alone, paddlers from all over the world came along to participate in the Berlin International Races where they were slotted in alongside the ECCs. Paddlers Anon and Adventure Club, both student clubs from North America, wetted their paddles in the Grunau regatta course waters. I have to admire Toronto-based PA, who arrived at the race course sans paddles - their paddles had been delayed because of the unfortunate accident at

Toronto's International Airport - and uncomplainingly gave their best effort. I had the fortune to watch them from one of the umpire boats in the 2000m race where, in spite of their misfortune and being outclassed by the bigger European teams, they showed good technique and an unflagging spirit over the grueling 2000 meter distance.

The Russians dominated the WC, taking gold in all distances in both the premier open and mixed. Close on their tails came team Canada whose women took gold over all distances and whose mixed and open crews went home with plenty of silver and bronze. Back on the European front, GB's women also did Europe proud - now if they'd only adapt the Euro and learn how to drive on the right side of the road! The remainder of medals went to the USA, Macau China, Germany, the Philippines and another European representative, the Czech Republic.



Russia vs Australia in the World Champs.

The DB racing family continues to grow as demonstrated by the substantial number of junior and senior crews entering the WC. China and Canada dominated all the senior classes and distances in spite of a huge field of competitors (9-10 crews). With moms, dads and kids involved, it's only natural that grandma and grandpa join too. Canada, Italy and the US all entered Grand Dragons teams (50+). With the world population expected to age, there's no doubt that the GD class is a growth area. The boat marshals will have a heck of a time with oxygen tanks and incontinence pads if we don't leave the sport until we die...

It will be interesting to see how the juniors progress in the future. Teams showing promise were (predictably) Canada and Russia earning plenty of gold in the junior women and mixed, Germany dominating the junior opens and the Polish junior women making a nice showing with a bronze in the 200m and silver in the 500m. Team USA also performed respectably in the junior women and open categories.



GB Juniors at start.

For detailed results on the World Championships, see http://www.drachenboot.de/en/festivals_2005/results_berlin.shtml.

Focus on the European Club Crew Championships

Recapping the top three results in each division in the European Championships, you can see that Germany is still producing strong teams, with club teams from Czech Republic and Russia not far behind. Of course, with Germany producing so many teams and the Championships being held on home turf (or water, as the case may be), it's not surprising to see so many German teams represented in the top three. It will be interesting to see if Germany can keep up their reputation at the World Club Crew Championships in Toronto next year.

Here's a recap of the medal winners in the ECCC. Full results available, of course, at http://www.drachenboot.de/en/festivals_2005/results_berlin.shtml.



Moravian Dragon women at marshaling area.

Women's 200m

1. Uckermark Dragons (Ger), 2. Spree Sisters (Ger), 3. Moravian Dragons (Czech)

Women's 500m

1. Uckermark, 2. Spree Sisters, 3. Moravian

Open 200m

1. Nymburk (Czech), 2. Allenstein (Ger.), 3. Moravian

Open 500m

1. Nymburk, 2. Ural (Rus), 3. Allenstein

Open 2000m

1. Nymburk, 2. Ural, 3. Moravian

Mixed 200m

1. Moravian, 2. KC Dragonfly (Ger), 3. Uckermark

Mixed 500m

1. KC Dragonfly, 2. Moravian, 3. Schwerin (Ger)

Mixed 2000m

1. KC Dragonfly, 2. Uckermark, 3. Schwerin

Be a part of the solution! Volunteers needed for federation work.

I can't help but get a bit angry when people complain that the EDBF or IDBF is composed of a bunch of inaccessible, old people who aren't always in touch with the paddlers. Whose fault is it? The guilt lies with us all.

I was talking with a paddler who was complaining that some of the decisions made during the course of racing were inconsistent and that the IDBF didn't always listen to paddlers. I hope that I convinced him (and will convince you too) that the national and continental federations and IDBF are open to input and new blood but it's up to you to do something about it!

On your local level you can get involved in your national dragon boat federation. Local federations need volunteers who are active in the sport, both on and off the water. Local federations also send representatives to the EDBF (or appropriate continental) meetings so this is a good way to keep abreast of what's going on in the sport in Europe (and the rest of the world) and to contribute to the development of the sport.

Within Europe, there are also plenty of opportunities to get involved in commission work where you make a significant contribution to the sport.

There's the Marketing and Media Commission (M&M) which focuses on publicizing our wonderful sport in the public eye and communicating with paddlers. I know personally that we need help there. From advising the EDBF on marketing, merchandising, finances and sponsorship to contributing to the EDBF website, publicizing race activities, publishing the Eurodragon Newsflash and most importantly in getting our message out in face of the challenges posed to our sport by the ICF - there's plenty of opportunity to make a difference.



Race officials listening closely at post-race captains meeting.

Didn't like the competition in Berlin? Get involved in the Competition and Special Events Commission (ComSpec). They're the folks responsible for developing competitive events for the EDBF. You can serve a crucial role in making sure that the IDBF and continental

events are well-arranged and run smoothly. Without enough individuals getting involved from the local to international level, there are simply not enough hands to get the work done well (nor enough eyes to oversee what local contractors are doing to arrange basic logistics such as event transportation, production of passes and programs, publicizing the event locally, making sure there is adequate shelter for teams, etc.).

Are you interested in the physical and mental aspects of sport? Get involved in the Sports Medicine, Psychology and Science Commission (SmedCom). This commission is responsible for more than just administering anti-doping matters, but is also responsible for areas such as training athletes, athlete welfare and coaching development. These aspects of the sport need more attention in Europe because of lack of volunteers to coordinate and contribute to these areas. (Why do you think the Canadians have been kicking a lot of butt in championships the past couple of years? Because they give a lot of attention to training and technique. Hello, Russia? Can you hear me? You guys are strong in Europe. How about sharing some of your experience via the EDBF SmedCom to help improve the sport in Europe?)

One paddler remarked to me that the election of officers in the IDBF seems fore-ordained with the same old faces filling the same old positions. I have to tell you from the inside what the story is there. I think the main reason why you see so many of the same faces on the national, continental and ultimately IDBF boards is that there are so few people actively paddling who are also willing to get in the sport on the federation level. As a result the same people end up filling positions on all three levels - otherwise they'd go unfilled, the work wouldn't get done and the sport simply wouldn't advance.

I've sat in numerous EDBF meetings where the board has wrestled with the problem of getting new blood into the board and commissions. The biggest problem is not that the board is not open to new people, but lies with the nature of our sport. There are an awful lot of "30-somethings" doing this sport. That's an age range where one is busy with career, family and of course these are also prime paddling years. It's tough to balance all these things and still make time for federation work. Add to that the logistics and costs of travel to meetings and it doesn't make it any easier to be involved. It's a tough reality the federation boards struggle with in trying to broaden participation on the governing, policy-making and implementation levels of the sport. It's not that the boards don't



want to be inclusive. It's just that most of the folks who work so hard and fill positions on several dragon boat boards are often those with the time and resources to make the commitment to that level of board work (often ex-paddlers, retirees, self-employed or employed in travel & tourism-related industries).

But there are many ways individual paddlers can make a difference. You can get involved in your local federation which usually takes less of a time and financial burden than continental or international federation work. Find out who usually attends continental DBF and IDBF meetings from your country/continent and make sure they know what's on your mind and how the sport can be improved. Get involved in a commission that is based near you or volunteer to host a commission meeting near you.

On the EDBF level, the head of M&M is in Germany, the head of SmedCom is in Italy and the head of ComSpec is in Switzerland. On the international level, there are commission members involved from all over Europe (see <http://www.dragonboat.org.uk/idbf/organisation.htm>). Contact a member who is near you and find out how you can help.

Like any job, a bit of experience is helpful and involvement on your national level, on a commission, as a race official or in a supporting role helps you build up the type of experience needed to be effective for the best interests of the sport and dragon boat paddlers. From the commissions or nations, you can have input into the decisions taken on board level. This also allows you to get a taste of the kinds of issues that are addressed on board level and gives you the opportunity to decide where and how you want to be involved.

So, if you want to change something, you have to take action. I hope this has given you some ideas of how to start. For more information, contact your national rep. or the EDBF secretary general, Alan van Caubergh (ajvancaubergh@xs4all.nl).

Overheard during the 2005 WC & ECCC

Buying boats

A group of guys picking up various vendors boats to test for weight: “This Pel boat is *much* heavier than the Buk boat.” [*Not the Chinese delegation pictured below. ed.*]

I had a laugh when I heard that one. All of the IDBF officially licensed boats must be built to the same specifications, including a minimum weight of 250k (all of the vendors displaying their boats in Berlin are officially licensed to produce IDBF boats and therefore must conform to this specification).



The Chinese delegation checks out vendors' IDBF racing boat models.

I spoke to Old Man Pel himself who told me that the IDBF racing boats he sells all weigh in around 250-260 kilos, but as the boats are hand made, there may be a slight variation in weight from boat to boat, with a minimum weight of 250 kilos. The Buk site says that their boats weigh in at 250k with a deviation of +5%. In other words, the difference in weights is barely significant - only about 5 kilos - hardly able to be judged by lifting the point of a boat from the ground.

By the way, for those of you who might be concerned about the boats being used at the championships having the same weights - the boats were all weighed before the races. Ironically, the Pel boat weighed in just under 250k and had to be brought up to weight before the races. So much for “the experts” being able to guess a boat’s weight without a scale!

(Thanks Elise for bringing that one to my attention. ed.)

It's not canoeing. It's dragon boating!

Another item overheard during the 2005 ECCC: “Canoeists are welcome in our boats - as long as they leave their egos behind.” [*And check their federation at the door. ed.*]

Officials and club crew paddlers heading for the start in rain and hail during the ECCC 2005.



Mark your calendars for 2006

EDBF

The 2006 EDBF European Nations Dragon Boat Racing Championship and Open European CorpCom Championship will be held in Prague from 30 August to 3 September 2006. For more information see www.dragonboat.cz or mail Petr Klima (klimbera@dragonboat.cz).



IDBF



will take place from 9-13 August 2006. For further information see <http://www.2006ccwc.com/>.

When I wrote this there were only 361 days, 10 hours and 51 minutes until the 2006 IDBF World Club Crew Championships in Toronto, Canada! The championships

will take place from 9-13 August 2006. For further information see

Call for articles, announcements and comments

Do you have an event to announce, results from your countries championships, an article you'd like published about dragon boat racing or comments on anything published here? If so, then write to editor@beckwith.demon.nl.

I'd also like to hear from teams who have recently bought boats from the IDBF-approved boat manufacturers for an upcoming article. Which boat did you choose and why?



"Cheers!" Race officials Andries Boneschansker (NL, starter), Andy Menzies (UK, boat marshall) and Pete Newton (UK, boat marshall) after a hard day's work at the combined IDBF and EDBF championships in Berlin.

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