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**FAMILIES COME FIRST-PARENTING PAY-OFF FOR PADDLING** A well known member of the canoeing fraternity says, if you want to get young kids into canoeing get their parents and especially the mothers paddling too! My own background in canoeing may be traced back to this same theme. I became involved in the sport to help my childrens' participation, and now I remain active despite their own sporting pathways deviating from canoe-sport (temporarily I hope). The role of a paddling parent is vital to the future of our sport. I heard recently that a team-trip for a foreign team (across the sea) had more parents than athletes travelling. They comprised coaches, drivers, and supporters but above all helped create a warm atmosphere in which athletes weren't scrutinized for their performances but were cherished for who they are. For many years, my own club, Celbridge Paddlers and to be fair, Salmon Leap, have made the annual pilgrimage to the April regatta, in similar style. Junior athletes and undoubtedly seniors too, require a supportive atmosphere whether training or competing, and parents, especially when given specific roles play a huge hand in developing this mood. As a paddler recently recounted to me, when your parents travel with you in support to a Championship, it's like you have never left home. Recently, we have witnessed another phenomenon, paddlers of not so tender years returning to the sport and bringing their kids back with them. These paddlers are a huge asset to our sport and the legacy of their involvement cannot be overstated. They know who they are. Finally, I am delighted to be able to wish all our canoe-polo team paddlers success and enjoyment at the VIII World Championships, in Edmonton, Canada. In light of my earlier comments, this discipline more than any other brings families together, a spirit that has seen it develop over the past two decades into arguably our most popular competition discipline. Go n-éirí libh!

Eamon Devoy  
President, Irish Canoe Union

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS JULY/AUGUST**

17-20 <sup>th</sup>	Junior & U23 Flatwater Racing Champs	Szeged, Hungary,	<a href="http://www.kajakkenusport.hu/">http://www.kajakkenusport.hu/</a>
20 <sup>th</sup>	Marathon Race	Graiguenamanagh,	<a href="http://www.canoe.ie">www.canoe.ie</a>
21-27 <sup>th</sup>	European Freestyle Championships	Galicia, Spain,	<a href="http://personales.ya.com/eurogalicia2008/">http://personales.ya.com/eurogalicia2008/</a>
24-27 <sup>th</sup>	VIII Canoe Polo World Championships	Edmonton, Canada,	<a href="http://2008worlds.ca/">http://2008worlds.ca/</a>
2-3 <sup>rd</sup>	Marathon Championships	Graiguenamanagh,	<a href="http://www.canoe.ie">www.canoe.ie</a>
11-14 <sup>th</sup>	Canoe Slalom Olympics	Shuyi Olympic Park,	<a href="http://en.beijing2008.cn">http://en.beijing2008.cn</a>
18-24 <sup>th</sup>	Flatwater Racing Olympics	Shuyi Olympic Park,	<a href="http://en.beijing2008.cn">http://en.beijing2008.cn</a>

**I RISH YOUTH PROSPER IN ALPS-YOUTH ADVENTURE KAYAKING TRIP – FRENCH ALPS 2008 :**

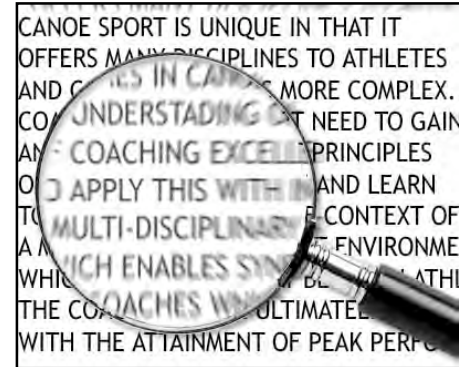
On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 2008 six young Irish kayakers; Aisling Gilchrist, Ronan Keogh, Eoghan Dunlea, Cian Lyons, Michael Shea and Nuala McAuley were packed off onto respective flights by their trusting parents for a week of intensive white water kayaking. Arriving into almost 40° heat the youths were picked up by a heavily laden bus with kayaks and gear for the week. A short drive over the majestic cols brought the group deep into the heart of the Southern Alps. The trip was based out of a small camp site in Val Louise, deep in the Gyrone Valley. With the help and collaboration of the local community the Youth Adventure Kayaking group gained extensive experience in a variety of kayaking disciplines including slalom, freestyle, river running and creek boating. The trip also included elements of river safety and rescue procedures as well as an education in the river environment and negotiating various features. The trip culminated with a trip to the remote and spectacular Veneon valley. With hot weather and good glacial melt the water levels provided a challenging environment to finish the trip on. A final night spent sleeping under the stars in a scatter of semi-inflated white water rafts proved to be one of the most comfortable and peaceful night's sleep of the trip. The Youth Adventure Kayaking Trips provide a unique opportunity for young Irish paddlers to experience Alpine kayaking in an independent and educational environment. It is hoped that the trend will continue and that we will see these youth adventures being provided by the Irish Canoe Union for years to come in a variety of locations. To book a place on a course see [www.canoe.ie](http://www.canoe.ie)



**U**NDER THE MICROSCOPE-FINE WINES AND CANOE-SPORT: The name *Dara Torres* may not be familiar to you, but by Friday August, 15<sup>th</sup> when the 50m free final will be held in Beijing, it should be a household name. Torres is the US record holder and at age 41 is an example of the potential of mature athletes to sustain a meteoric trajectory in modern sport. Closer to home, the favourite for the Women's slalom gold is Czech paddler, Stepanka Hilgertova (pictured below). Born in 1968, she has



twice been Olympic Champion and this season won the seasons opening World Cup race at Troja, Prague. Interestingly, her son, Lubos Hilgert Jr. (his father won silver in 1981) has medalled Internationally. Choose your discipline and it won't take long to see how athletes often keep improving with age even beyond what was traditionally perceived to be the physical peak. In flatwater racing both Ivan Lawler and Conor Holmes have shown that the late 30's are the "peak" for marathon racing. Currently in slalom, Eoin's training partner is David Ford (World Champion 1999) who regularly finals in World Cups at age 41. Similarly, Pier-Paulo Ferrazzi medalled in two consecutive Olympics, taking silver in Sydney at age 35. In Freestyle Eric Jackson, an Olympian from 1992, continues to push the boundaries and he's in his mid-forties. Closer to home Ian Pringle, Howard Watkins (Olympian in 1972), Gary Mawer all continued at a very high level till their late thirties and continue to put



pressure on our fastest on a given day. What all these examples show is that once you reach the top it is possible to stay there and continue to improve. The harder question to answer is how to get there.

**NOTICE**  
**ICU WILD-WATER RACING COMMITTEE AGM**  
FRIDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> JULY  
SPORT HQ AT 8PM  
See [www.irishwildwaterracing.com](http://www.irishwildwaterracing.com)

**WILDWATER WAVES-JUNIORS SEE THE BIG PICTURE:** Big water and major competition greeted the Irish Junior team at the European Championships in Valtellina, Italy. The river Adda has an alpine profile and huge volume with the river Inn being comparable in terms of wave trains. To put it in context the local wine is called *Inferno* and its name was most probably inspired by the mood of the river. The Irish contingent comprised coach Martin McCarthy, many parents and the athletes: MK1: Adam Sweeney, Charlie Blount, Lorcan Feely, Sean Healy & Tom Burke; WK1: Aisling Conlan, Clodagh Doyle & Olivia Manning. A further bunch of paddlers would join them to attend an International event afterwards in Switzerland, maximizing their exposure to white-water on this trip. While they found the sprint in particular tough going, all the paddlers got to compete in both Classic event, Sprint race, and team at both distances, providing excellent learning opportunities. This young team have excellent potential and with the right training they will prosper. Lessons from abroad come from the British team who had two Women in the top five with Sandra Hyslop taking gold in both sprint and classic. Good standard racing, challenging courses, and training groups raise the standard for British competitors and this is something that will be developed here with the enthusiasm of *Generation 2008*. Finally, the Editor wishes to welcome Lukas Novosad of the Czech Wild-water team to our shores where he is hoping to contribute to the development of the sport in any way he can. His racing pedigree is superb with several top five places at World Level and a bronze at European Champs in 2003. Junior European Championship race results at: <http://www.valtellinariver.it/en/european2008>



**POLO PROGRESS-CAN DO ATTITUDE FOR CANADA:** Twenty paddlers, six Women, six U21 Men and eight Senior Men's competitors will represent Ireland in the World Championships in Edmonton, Alberta. Sean Downes travels as delegation leader and coaches include Conor Walsh, Val Pierce, and Mark Cummins. Twenty-five countries are participating, that's a total of 450 World class athletes. 300 volunteers will assist in the organisation of the event which is set on a lake amidst a wilderness park. Ireland's U21 team carry our medal prospects after their outstanding performance at the Europeans last year (bronze medallists). Both the Men's and Women's Senior team are aiming for a top ten finish which would be a tremendous achievement given the standard of competition. Favourites in these classes are Germany, France and the Netherlands. Keep an eye on their performances at the ICU homepage or at <http://2008worlds.ca/>



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## **S** LALOM SCEAL-RHEINISCH NEARLY REIGNS IN SPAIN:

Following in Ian Wiley's wake, Eoin has had his best results on the same slalom course as the double Olympian. Like Ian, he had his first World Cup win on this course, and with the Pre-World Championships being the last chance for a podium until Beijing he was keen to get a result. Awesome paddling this season but a lack of consistency had been his Achilles heel. A steady progression through the World Cups saw him just outside the final in Augsburg, in 13<sup>th</sup> place. He came to Parc Olympic del Segre determined to get a result. Qualification was easy for Eoin with sixth position. Then the first run of the real race-the results are decided by a combination of the semi-final and the final run. He posted the fourth quickest time but a brush touch put him in 10<sup>th</sup> position. Olympic favourite Fabien Lefevre was well clear but Eoin's clear aim was to be consistent, something tangible he could take with him in the long haul to Beijing. A solid second run improved him to seventh place, not spectacular given his win here four years ago, but a performance that showed mental toughness and that will decide the podium places at the Olympic games. His aim there is to finish in single figures (inside top 10) and he is closer to achieving that now than he has been all season. See [www.eoinrheinish.com](http://www.eoinrheinish.com) for updates and [www.123result.com](http://www.123result.com) for final standings.



Ireland have produced a series and accompanying book entitled Ireland's Olympians: Beijing & Beyond. This month, Eoin features in two programmes, AN ISLAND NATION and NO PAIN NO GAIN. In the latter show he discusses his near death experience on the river Otz, Austria. He dislocated his shoulder on a Class V section of white-water and broke his paddle leaving him in a precarious position underwater and unable to exit his kayak. In his own words, "I felt my shoulder snap under the pressure of the water. I got swept away, couldn't reach the bank, and I couldn't swim with the dislocated shoulder. Watch next Tuesday for more. See <http://www.rte.ie/sport/irelandsolympians/>

RTE in conjunction with the Olympic Council of



Eoin Rheinish being tested by Toni & Alan (NCTC)

**PADDLER PROFILE-CIARAN HEURTEAU:** The only Irish athlete who celebrates St. Patricks day and the Bastille day with the same enthusiasm, Ciaran Heurteau is currently our highest ranked athlete in slalom. At 11<sup>th</sup> place in the rankings, he is one place ahead of Beijing bound Eoin Rheinisch. Ciaran competed in the selection events in Scotland, coming a consistent second to Neil Caffrey, and at the US



team trials, part of the Irish Olympic selection, he was first Irish in race one, throwing the selection process wide open going into the final race. A top ten position in the International on the river Passer in Merano gave hints of his potential. A stunning performance at Tacen World Cup, he placed sixth and was the only paddler in the final to go faster on second runs, conveyed how he could convert talent into performances. Born in Paris, with a 18 year old sister, his mother Aveen from Armagh and his father Pascal from France are thinking ahead and re-furbishing a house in Bourg (on the banks of the Isere). Pascal took up kayaking after Ciaran took to the water to be able to look after him. He modestly claims now that it is Ciaran who

would look after him on the water. Ciaran has trained at Bry sur Marne and Cergy (on a superb artificial site). This Autumn he will move to Nottingham to study and follow in the footsteps of Wiley, Rheinisch and Caffrey in emigrating to the centre of excellence on the Trent. His supportive parents show the Franco-Irish nature of his World, his mother cheers him down the course at the U23 Championships in French-Allez! Allez! Ciarans voicemail is currently bilingual-English and French...Only time will tell if he adds a greeting as Gaeilge. See [www.ciaranheurteau.com](http://www.ciaranheurteau.com)

**SPRINT STORY-U23 CHAMPIONSHIPS** Under the watchful eye of national coach Gabor Kulsar, a team of 7 athletes is competing in the last major event in the sprint calendar outside the Olympic Games. With no sprinters having qualified for Beijing, we can look towards generation 2012. In this regard a squad with Barry Watkins, Sean Marchetti, Luke Fitzgerald, David Boyle, Joe Murphy, Jenny Egan and Jonbor Kulscar, is competing at Szedged,Hungary this weekend. They have spent a month in a highly focused training environment in Hungary, the home nation of the coach Gabor, and this is designed to be a learning experience for these young athletes. Follow their progress at: <http://www.kajakkenusport.hu/>

