

## **Irish Freestyle AGM, Wildwater Canoe Club 24<sup>th</sup> April 2004**

### **Competitions Officers Report**

- **Freestyle events 2002-2003 season**

A calendar of events was established at the start of the season, following discussions with event organisers, including the following: Galway, Cork, Ballina, Inny, Sluice. The Inny was cancelled due to inadequate water levels, and sluice was cancelled due to an ongoing insurance issue. Three domestic events proceeded and are listed as below. Two international events took place, also listed below.

*Domestic (ranking):*

Galway: 42 competitors: 15K1M, 11K1J, 8K1W, 8K1general.

Cork: 56 competitors: 25K1M, 15K1J, 7K1W, 9K1general.

Ballina: 53 competitors: 27K1M, 12K1J, 7K1W, 7K1general.

*International:*

World Championships: Graz Austria, 2003.

Team of 15. Highest ranked competitor was Moe Kelleher, ranked a highly creditable 44<sup>th</sup>.

Pre Europeans Sort, Spain, 2003. Open invitation to anyone whom wished to go.

Neil Gibson was the sole Irish competitor at this event.

- **Freestyle events 2003-2004 season**

A calendar of six freestyle events was established in September/October 2003, following discussions with all event organizers, in line with the previous years season. This seasons events were expanded to include a full ranking event at Curragower, following a successful test run in 2002. There were 7 cancellations due to inadequate water levels. See appendix for some detail on rainfall over that period.

*Domestic (ranking):*

Galway, October 2003: cancelled 14<sup>th</sup> October, due to inadequate water levels.

Cork, October 2003: cancelled 28<sup>th</sup> October, cancelled 27<sup>th</sup> November, cancelled 21<sup>st</sup> February - all due to inadequate water levels.

Ballina, November 2003: cancelled due to inadequate water levels. Rescheduled for 1<sup>st</sup> weekend in March, but negotiations with the fisheries board were unsuccessful, which is a worrying development considering two successful events have been held there over the last two seasons.

Limerick-Curragower, December 2003:

51 competitors: 29K1M, 8K1J, 8K1W, 6K1general.

Inny, January 2004: cancelled 15<sup>th</sup> January, due to inadequate water levels. Rescheduled for last weekend in January, also cancelled due to inadequate water levels.

Sluice, February 2004: unable to run due to work commitments.

*International:*

Pre-World Championships, Australia: open invitation to anyone whom wished to go. Only Brian Cahill, availed of that opportunity.

First Official European Championships, Sort Spain 2004: Team selected in March 2004, further details on page 3.

*“Boatercross” Events:*

Two events were carried out with help of the Freestyle Committee that were not specific ‘rodeo’ events. Both events received rave reviews and are only mentioned below, further details are not reported. Information on the events is detailed at [www.irishfreestyle.com](http://www.irishfreestyle.com).

Kerry: credit to Jon Hynes for this event;

Wicklow: credit to Shane Cronin and helpers for this event.

- **Score System/Judging.**

Irish Freestyle scoring system was amended to take account of the change in the International Scoring System, following a widespread frank discussion using the freestyle discussion forums. The Irish system is basically the same as the International rules, but allows lower ranked moves to be accounted for in a competitors run.

International Judge and current UK freestyle team manager ‘hippy’ Dave was invited by chairperson Shane Cronin to examine and provide feedback to our scoring/judging system. Dave provided many tips and ideas to the judges and organisers. His conclusions were both encouraging and constructive. Two main recommendations arising are:

- 1) A chief judge appointed for each event;
- 2) the finals should be run off as per ‘super’ finals; and,
- 3) two variety judges should be employed at each ranking event.

- **World Championships 2005**

It was proposed that the closing date on the season from which to choose the team was May 31<sup>st</sup> 2004. However, only one ranking event has been run successfully during the season. I would suggest that the new committee removes that deadline. Following proposals from the Curragower organisers a ranking event could be run in May 2004. One more event is needed to give three; it is possible that Sluice could be run, again the new committee should approach the organisers and possibly establish new organisers for this event.

- **Future events**

There is variability in where it is ‘wet’ in the country and there perhaps needs to be more flexibility built into the calendar. For example, if it is wet in the Inny catchment whilst dry in the Cork area and the weekend event is planned for Cork there should be the flexibility to change venues.

The question really is how much notice is reasonable to *proceed* with an event at a certain venue, i.e., if we learn that Ballina is working and is likely to run over the next few days, is it reasonable for an event to take place with very little forewarning.

- **Venues**

The current committee brought in additional events into the calendar two and half years ago, namely, the Inny, Curragower and Ballina rodeo events. Ballina has been run successfully two out of three years and Curragower was run successfully twice two years running, although only the later was declared a ranking event.

A trial rodeo was run at Clifden several years ago and it was decided by committee at the time that it was not a viable venue. Similarly, the wave at Meelick was explored as a possible venue but also considered not to be a viable venue for a ranking event. Joe Ryan has examined the possibility of a rodeo at the hole in Tuam, but has indicated that the land owners are unwilling to give permission to host an event.

However, in light of the success at Curragower, the Clifden venue could be reexamined, especially as it is highly unlikely that a rodeo may take place on the Spiddal in the future. In addition, the Limerick Deel was a venue for a small competition in 1997, and again this venue needs to be explored further.

- **Process for European Team Selection 2004**

February 12<sup>th</sup> 2004 committee decided that to select the team based on the previous seasons rankings as enough events had not taken place in time. Wildcards were advertised at the same time. There were no complaints to the committee on the decision. Wildcards were accepted up to the March 13<sup>th</sup> 2004. Six wildcard applications were received. Each applicant was requested to outline why they should be given a place. This means that each application can be dealt with objectively. A vote was taken by the committee. The two key criteria for deciding wild cards are as follows: ranking, previous domestic and international performance and experience. On this basis, Ross Redmond and Stephen Hynes were awarded wildcards. A reserve place was awarded to Thomas Dunphy. Following a withdrawal by Peter Barron from the team, Thomas Dunphy took his place on the team. The team was subsequently announced on the March 30<sup>th</sup> 2004. A late application was accepted from Leonard Kelleher to join the junior team on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2004.

### **Appendix**

The following excerpts from Met Éireanns monthly bulletins are included to offer some explanation as to the inadequate water levels that are mentioned several times above.

*“December was a drier, warmer and sunnier month than normal almost everywhere, rainfall amounts were below normal.....There were spells...when little or no rainfall was measured”* Met Éireann: monthly weather bulletin, no 212, December 2003.

*Birr recorded the driest year on record since 1874.* Met Éireann: monthly weather bulletin, no 212, December 2003.

*“Rainfall amounts were below normal.....driest October on record in places”.* Met Éireann: monthly weather bulletin, no 210, October 2003.

I would like to thank the committee for the support over the last two and half years, in particular Shane.

This concludes the report:  
Coran Kelly 23/4/04