

This year, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of sprint canoe/kayak racing at the Olympic Games. Canoe/kayak was a demonstration sport in Paris in 1924 and was added as a full official sport in Berlin in 1936.

Canada has won 26 Olympic canoe/kayak medals (4 gold, 11 silver, 11 bronze), making sprint canoe/kayak the 4th most successful Canadian summer sport, behind only athletics, rowing, and swimming.

There will be a poster presentation in Welland, showing the history of Canada's success in sprint canoe/kayak racing at the Olympics. Some of the highlights of this history are listed below.

In 1924, the French Olympic Organizing Committee asked the Canadian Olympic Committee to demonstrate the sport at their Paris Games and races were arranged between the Canadian Canoe Association and the Washington Canoe Club from the United States. Roy Nurse, of the Balmy Beach Canoe Club, raced in three canoe races and three kayak races, finishing on the podium in each event, twice winning races (including C-1) and four times placing second.



Roy Nurse



Canoeing was an official Olympic sport for the first time at the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin. A total of nine events were held, all for men only. 158 canoeists from 19 nations took part in the races.

Canada's only gold medal in any sport at the Berlin Olympics was for Frank Amyot's victory in the 1,000 metre C-1 race. The canoes raced in Berlin were different from the boats that the Canadians raced at home, and the first time Amyot paddled in one was during the pre-race training in Germany.



Canada wins the Canadian race! Francis Amyot is cheered by comrades.

Francis (Frank) Amyot

12 years later, following World War 2, at the 1948 Summer Olympics in London, there were nine sprint canoe/kayak events, including for the first time, a women's event (K-1 500). Canada did not send a woman to compete and would not do so until 20 years later at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico.



1948 Canadian Olympic Canoe/Kayak Team

Canada continued its success in men's C-1, with Douglas Bennett winning the silver medal in C-1 1,000, and Norman Lane, winning the bronze medal in C-1 10,000.

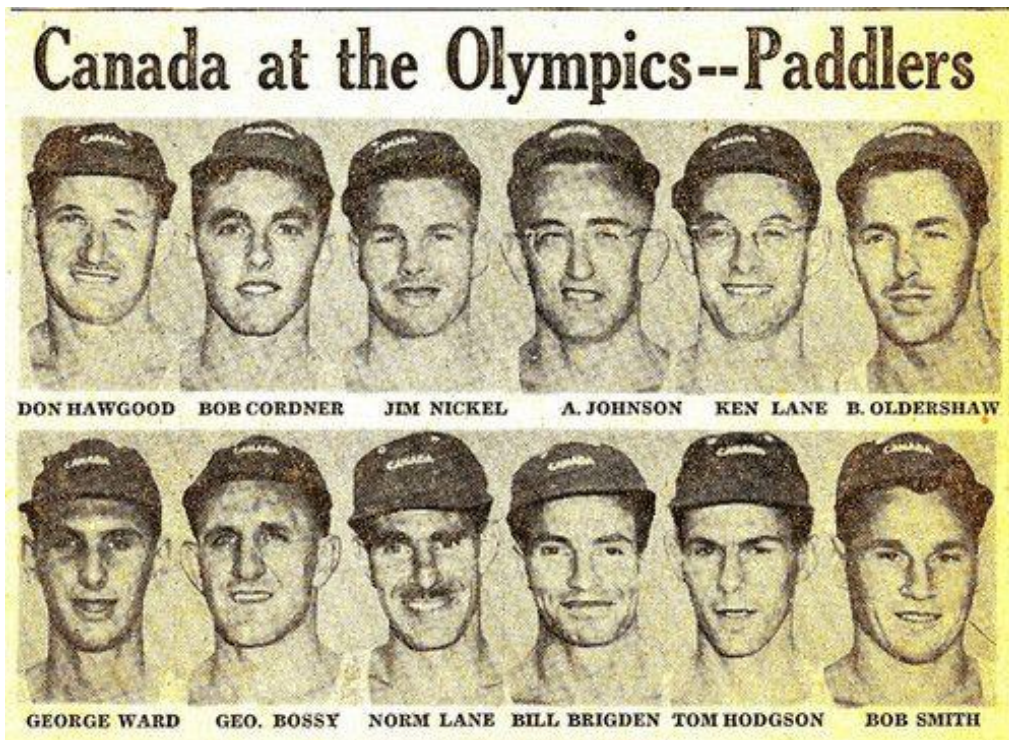
The Canadian double blade paddlers did not fare as well as the canoeists. The Canadian Canoe Association had only changed its rules to have double blade paddlers sit in the boat (previously Canadian double blade paddlers kneeled, just like the canoe paddlers) in 1948. The Canadians sat in the same canoes used for by the canoeists, while the Europeans used kayaks. This difference between Canadian and European double blade racing would continue into the 1950's, and hinder Canada's performance in international kayak races.



"BILLY" WILLIAMSON
Balmy Beach Canoe Club

Dominion Champion, Double Blade Singles, Mooneys Bay, 1935, and
Canadian Olympic Representative to Germany, 1936

Canada sent 12 paddlers to the 1952 Summer Olympics in Helsinki. This was the 2nd of three Olympics for Bert Oldershaw. He earned his best finish of fifth in the C-2 10,000 m event (with Bill Stevenson) at London in 1948. He was the father of Dean Oldershaw, Reed Oldershaw and Scott Oldershaw and grandfather of Mark Oldershaw, all of whom competed for Canada in the Olympics.



1952 Canadian Olympic Canoe/Kayak Team

Canada won three medals (overall) at the Helsinki games, one of which was a silver medal for Ken Lane and Don Hawgood in 10,000 metre C-2.



Ken Lane and Don Hawgood

Ken Lane continued his involvement in Canadian paddling, racing as a master until 1991, helping to found Canoe Ontario, and managing the Canadian national team at the 1967 Pan-American Games and the 1972 Olympics. He was inducted into the Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame in 2003.

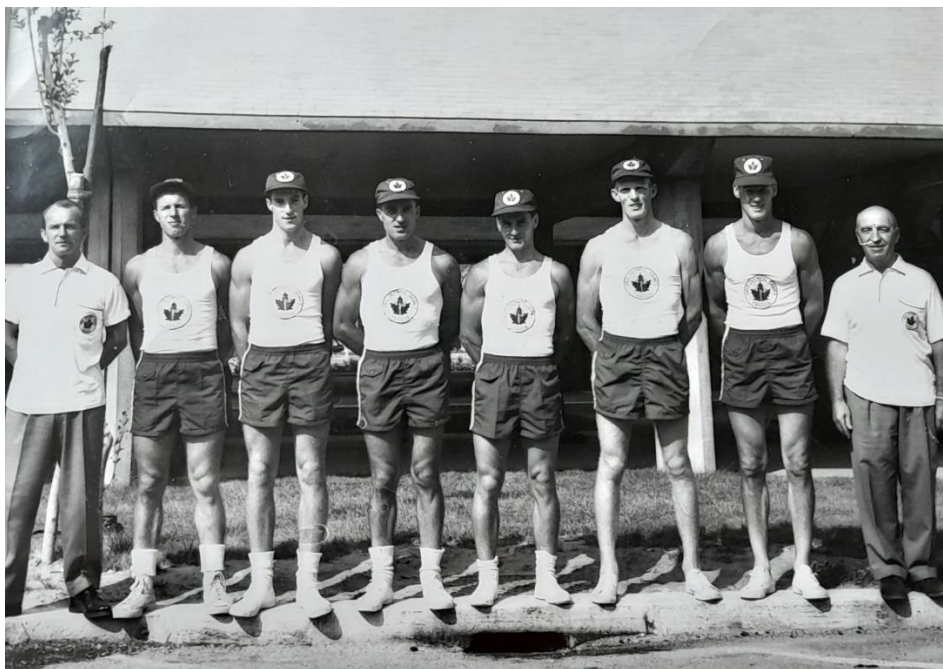
The 1956 Summer Olympics were held in Melbourne, Australia. Canada's best results were once again in canoe, with 7th place finishes for Don Stringer in the C-1 1,000, and Bert Oldershaw and Bill Collins in the C-2 1,000. Bill Collins went on to start the Oakville Racing Canoe Club, which became the Burl-Oak Canoe Club after merging with the Mohawk Canoe Club.



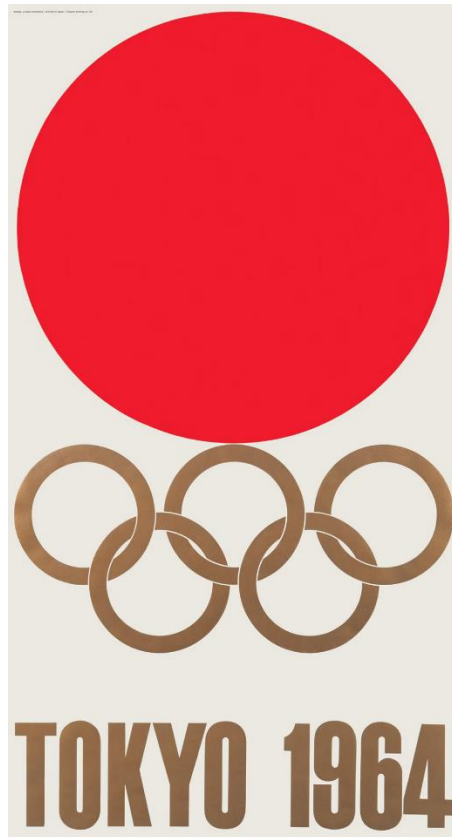
1956 Canadian Olympic Canoe/Kayak Team



At the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome, seven events in sprint canoe racing were raced. The 10,000 metre events that were raced from 1936 to 1956 were permanently dropped from the Olympic program, leaving all races at the 500 metre and 1,000 metre distances. The women's K-2 500 m event was added to the program, as was a men's K-1 4 × 500 m relay event (though only for these games). Don Stringer was the only Canadian paddler to make a final, repeating his 7th place performance in C-1 1,000 in the prior Olympics.



1960 Canadian Olympic Canoe/Kayak Team



At the 1964 Tokyo Summer Olympics there were 7 canoe/kayak events, 5 of which were for men and 2 for women. Both women's events were 500 metre kayaking events; there were three kayaking and two canoeing events for men, all of which covered 1,000 metres. The K-4 event for men was introduced to the Olympic program at these Games, replacing the 4×500 metre K-1 event that was raced in the 1960 Games.



OLYMPIC PADDLERS: These paddlers will represent Canada at the Olympic Games in Tokyo this October. They were chosen at Canadian trials in Ottawa. From left are **Fred Heese**, **Mike Brown** and **Andor Elbert** of Cartierville Boating Club, Manager **Frank Clement**,

Montreal, **Paul Stahl**, Cartierville club, coach **Jim Mossman**, Port Credit, Ont., **Jim Simonyik**, Lachine Racing Canoe Club and **Gabor Joo**, Toronto Boating and Sailing Club.

(CP Photo)

1964 Canadian Olympic Canoe/Kayak Team

Canada's best results were once again in canoe, with Paul Stahl placing 7th in C-1 1,000, and Andor Elbert and Fred Heese placing 7th in C-2 1,000.



Photo: Unknown / The Cartierville Boating Club (cropped)

Paul Stahl



At the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City, seven events in sprint canoe racing were raced (the program was unchanged from the previous Games in 1964).



1968 Canadian Olympic Canoe/Kayak Team

Marjorie Homer Dixon, Claudia Hunt, and Betty-Anne Gowans-Jolly were the first women kayakers racing for Canada in the Olympic Games. Chris Hook was the only Canadian athlete to make a final, placing 9th in C-1 1,000. John Wood and Scott Lee were disqualified in their heat of the C-2 1,000.

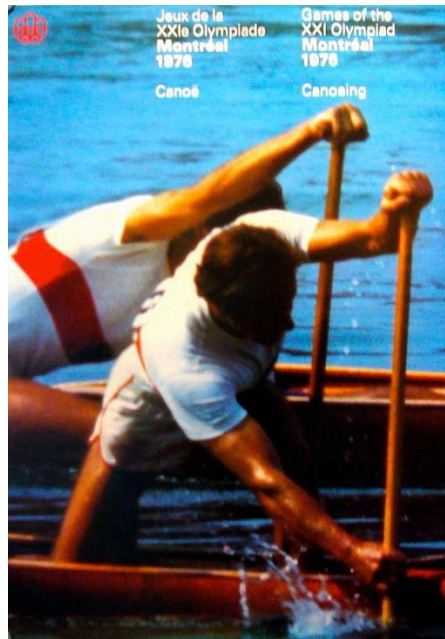


Chris Hook



The 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, Germany were overshadowed by the Munich massacre in the second week, in which eleven Israeli athletes and coaches and a West German police officer at Olympic village were killed by Palestinian Black September members. The motivation for the attack was the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

No Canadian crews made finals.



The 1976 Summer Olympics were held in Montreal. A world class rowing and paddling course was constructed on Ile Notre Dame, the site of the Expo 67 world exposition. Having won no medals in canoe/kayak since 1952, there was tremendous pressure on the Canadian team.

After having no Canadian crews make finals in 1972, five Canadian crews were in the finals in Montreal. Sue Holloway and Ann Dodge finished 8th in 500 k-2, the first time Canadian women had made an Olympic final. Steve King and Denis Barre were also 8th in the 1,000 k-2, the first time Canadian male kayakers had made a final since the introduction of canoe/kayak as a demonstration sport in 1924.

John Edwards finished 9th in 1,000 C-1, and John Wood and Gregg Smith finished 7th in 500 C-2. But the highlight of the Olympics for Canadian paddling fans was John Wood's silver medal in the 500 C-1.



John Wood Racing in 500 C-1 at the Montreal Olympics

After finishing only 4th in his heat, Wood stormed back to win the repechage, and placed 2nd in his semifinal to qualify for the final. In that final he thrilled the crowd by racing in lane 1 (closest to the

grandstand) and led the race until the final few strokes, when he was passed by Aleksandr Rogov of the USSR. Matija Lubek of Yugoslavia was 3rd. The three medallists finished were less than a third of a second apart.



John Wood on the Podium

While Canada did not win any gold medals at the Montreal Olympics, Wood's silver medal was one of five silver medals won by the Canadian team.

After Canada boycotted the 1980 summer Olympics in Moscow, the canoe/kayak team next competed at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. The women's K-4 500 m event was introduced to the Olympic program at these Games.



1984 Canadian Olympic Canoe/Kayak Team

The Canadian canoe/kayak team won 6 medals, including gold in the 500 C-1 for Larry Cain, and gold in the men's 1,000 K-2 by Hugh Fisher and Alwyn Morris.



Larry Cain with Gold Medal on Podium

Hugh and Alwyn's gold medal was the first ever by Canadian kayakers since canoeing became an official Olympic sport. On the podium, Alwyn Morris, a member of the Mohawk nation in Kahnawake, raised an eagle feather to celebrate both his victory for Canada and for Canada's First Nations. He is the only indigenous Canadian athlete to win a gold medal at the Summer Olympic Games.



Hugh Fisher and Alwyn Morris

Other Canadian canoe/kayak medalists at the Los Angeles Games were:

- Alexandra Barre and Sue Holloway, Silver, Women's K-2 500
- Larry Cain, Silver, Men's C-1 1,000
- Hugh Fisher and Alwyn Morris, Bronze, Men's K-2 500
- Lucy Guay, Barb Olmsted, Alexandra Barre, and Sue Holloway, Bronze, Women's K-4 500

At the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, there were twelve events in sprint canoe/kayak; the program was unchanged from the previous Games in 1984.



1988 Canadian Olympic Canoe/Kayak Team

Two Canadian crews made the finals, but the team had no medals. Larry Cain was 4th in C-1 1,000, and Barb Olmsted and Sheila Taylor were 8th in K-2 500. Some of Canada's future paddling world champions and multiple Olympians, such as Caroline Brunet and Renn Crichlow had their first Olympic experience at the Seoul Games.



The 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, Spain, were the first boycott-free Olympic Games since 1972. South Africa participated for the first time since 1960. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, East and West Germany competed as a single Olympic team. And the Soviet Union had broken into 15 independent republics, leading to the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania competing as independent NOCs for the first time since before World War II and the remaining republics competing together as the Unified Team, using the Olympic flag and hymn. Yugoslavia had also broken apart, leading to Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina entering separate teams.

42 of the 48 total medals were won by European countries, with only Australia and the United States breaking the European dominance in canoe/kayak. While Canada had no medals, eight Canadian crews made finals. Four of these crews were in men's canoe races: Steve Giles was 6th in C-1 500 and 9th in C-1 1,000, and Larry Cain and Dave Frost were 7th in C-2 500 and 9th in C-2 500.

Renn Crichlow was 8th in K-1 1,000. Canada's women kayakers made the finals in all their events: Caroline Brunet was 7th in K-1, Alison Herst and Klari MacAskill were 5th in K-2, and the three athletes were joined by Kevyn Stafford for a 6th place finish in K-4.

In 1996, the Olympics returned to North America for the Summer Games in Atlanta.



1996 Canadian Olympic Canoe/Kayak Team

Steve Giles again made two finals, once on his own finishing 8th in C-1 500, and with Dan Howe in C-2 1,000, finishing 9th. The men's K-4 of Mihail Apostol, Renn Crichlow, Peter Giles (former CKC President), and Liam Jewell, finished in 7th place.

Once again, Canada's women kayakers made the finals in all three events (finishing in the top five), with the highlight being Caroline Brunet's silver medal in K-1 500.



Caroline Brunet

Marie Josee Gibeau and Corrina Kennedy placed 5th in K-2, and the women's K-4 of Marie Josee Gibeau, Alison Herst, Corinna Kennedy, and Klari MacAskill were also 5th.



In 2000, the Canadian Canoe Association (now Canoe Kayak Canada) celebrated its 100th anniversary and the Summer Olympics were held in Sydney, Australia. The repechage rounds that ran from the 1960 to the 1996 Games were eliminated in the sprint events. A quota system for each event was introduced, meaning each event had a limited number of competitors that could compete. There were 12 sprint events (9 for men and 3 for women).



2000 Canadian Olympic Canoe/Kayak Team

Competing in his 3rd Olympic Games, Steve Giles won the bronze medal in C-1 1,000.

Steve's Olympic medal was not unexpected and well deserved. He spent 16 years on the national team, won a bronze medal at the 1989 Junior World Championships in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and competed in the Senior World Championships seven times. He was the C-1 1,000 world champion in 1998, and the winner of the gold medal in C-1 at the 1999 Pan-American Games.



Steve Giles



John Wood, Larry Cain, and Steve Giles, with their Olympic Medals

Caroline Brunet entered her fourth Olympic Games at Sydney 2000 as Canada's Opening Ceremony flag bearer and a gold medal threat, having won the last three world titles in the K-1 500 and going undefeated for more than two years. In 1999, Brunet was awarded the Lou Marsh Trophy as Canada's most outstanding athlete of the year.

For the third Olympic Games in a row, Canada's female kayakers made the finals in all three events. Brunet and Karen Furneaux were 5th in K-2, and the women's K-4 of Marie Josee Gibeau-Ouimet, Carrie Lightbound, Julia Rivard, and Kamini Jain, placed 9th. There were no Canadian male kayakers in finals.

On the day of Caroline Brunet's K-1 500 final, after a week of perfect weather, there were strong winds and waves on the course. One of the officials boats capsized. The start of racing was delayed

by almost six hours. While conditions were not suitable at all for sprint racing, the organizers could not postpone the racing until the next day, since the Olympic closing ceremony was scheduled for later in the day, and all events needed to be completed prior to the closing.

The women's K-1 final was the first race, and the wild water tossed the start gates, resulting in false starts and delays. Brunet led for the first half of the race, but was passed by Josefa Idem of Italy, and ultimately placed second.



Caroline Brunet

Caroline Brunet was not the only Canadian paddler to face adverse conditions. Maxime Boilard finished 4th in the men's C-1 500, with a time that was 37 seconds slower than his winning semi-final time. Atilla and Tamas Buday placed 7th in C-2 1,000.

The next Summer Olympic games were held in Athens, Greece. This marked the first time Athens hosted the Games since their first modern incarnation in 1896 as well as the return of the Olympic games to its birthplace.



2004 Canadian Olympic Canoe/Kayak Team

Caroline Brunet arrived at Athens 2004 as the K-1 500m runner-up at the last two Olympic Games and World Championships. She won her opening heat to advance directly to the K-1 500m final where she won a bronze medal in what would be her last Olympic performance. She also finished seventh in the K-2 500m with Mylanie Barré. Overall, Brunet won 10 World Championship gold medals and 11 silver and bronze medals in six boats (K-1 200m, K-1 500m, K-1 1000m, K-2 500m, K-2 1000m, K-4 200m). Brunet won more world championship and Olympic medals than all the Canadian canoe/kayak athletes who preceded her combined. She was inducted to Canada's Sports Hall of Fame in 2009 and the Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame in 2010.

The women's K-4 500 crew of Karen Furneaux, Carrie Lightbound, Kamini Jain, and Jillian D'Alessio finished 8th. The men's K-4 crew of Steve Jorens, Richard Dober, Ryan Cuthbert, and Andrew Willows, finished 9th.

The Canadian men canoeists made all their finals. Stephen Giles was fifth in the C-1 500 (in his 4th and final Olympic Games), and Richard Dalton was 6th in C-1 500. Dalton then teamed up with Mike Scarola to finish 6th in C-2 1,000, while Atilla and Tamas Buday were 8th in C-2 500.

While 2004 marked the end of Steve Giles' and Caroline Brunet's Olympic careers, it was an explosive beginning for Adam van Koeverden. A bronze medallist at the 1999 World Junior Championships, van Koeverden went to Athens 2004 as the world silver medallist in the K-1 1000m.

He won bronze in that event and a day later the 22-year-old captured gold in the K-1 500m for Canada's first Olympic victory in canoe/kayak in 20 years.



Adam van Koeverden

Canada's only double medallist in Athens, van Koeverden went on to be the Canadian flag bearer at the closing ceremonies and was named Canada's Athlete of the Year.



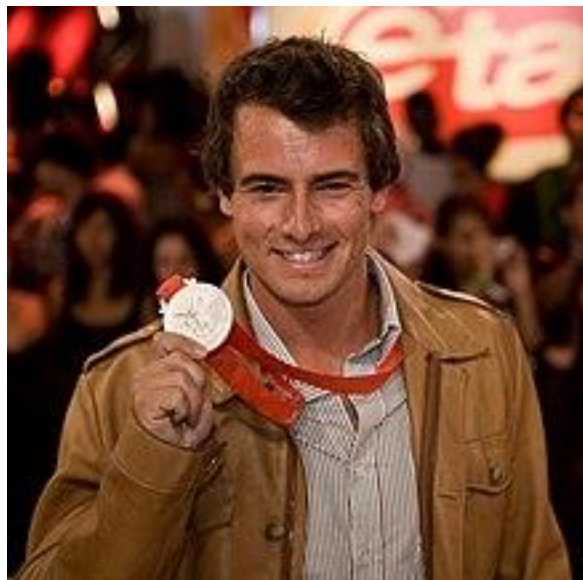
Adam van Koeverden

The 2008 Summer Olympics were held in Beijing, China, marking the return of the Summer Olympic Games to Asia after the 1988 Olympics in South Korea.



2008 Canadian Olympic Canoe/Kayak Team

After his double medal performance four years previously, Adam van Koeverden was again seen as a double medal threat in Athens. He had a disappointing K-1 1,000 race, finishing in eighth position, but stormed back the next day to win the silver medal in the K-1 500 race.



Adam van Koeverden

Tom Hall's first major international victory was the 1999 Junior World Championships in Zagreb, Croatia, where he placed first in the C-1 1000 m event. In August 2003, he came in first in the C-1 1000 m event and third in the C-1 500 m event at the Pan American Games that were held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. In 1988, Tom had first-place finishes in events at the Continental Olympic Qualifier and the ICF World Cups in Duisburg and Poznań, Poland.



Tom Hall

In the C-1 1,000 race in Beijing, Vadim Menkov of Uzbekistan led for the early part of the race but was passed at the 750-meter mark by defending Olympic champion David Cal of Spain, defending world champion Attila Vajda of Hungary, and Tom Hall. The Hungarian pulled away in the final 150 meters to win his gold medal which he dedicated to his fallen teammate György Kolonics, who had died a month earlier training for the 2008 Summer Olympics. David Cal was second, and Tom Hall won the bronze medal.



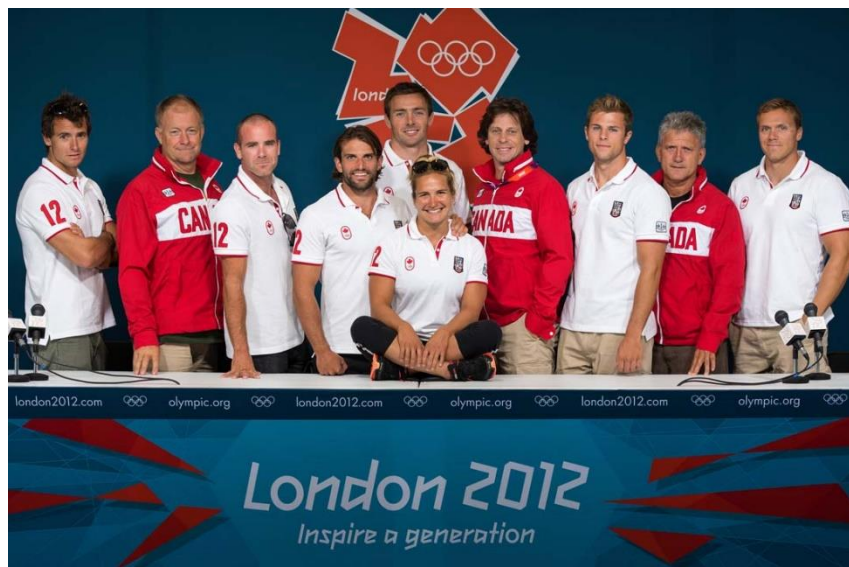
Tom Hall

Tom is a member of the Canoe Kayak Canada governing board and is the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) Director, Communications and Media Relations.

Andrew Russell and Gabriel Beauchesne-Sevigny placed 5th in the C-2 500 and 6th in the C-2 1,000. Karen Furneaux was 7th in K-1 500. The men's K-2 500 crew of Richard Dober Jr. and Andrew Willows were 6th in K-2 500, and the K-4 1,000 crew of Brady Reardon, Angus Mortimer, Chris Pellini, and Rhys Hill were 9th.



In 2012, London became the first city to host the modern Summer Olympics three times, having previously hosted the Summer Games in 1908 and 1948. On 13 August 2009, the International Canoe Federation announced that the men's 500 m events would be replaced by 200 m events, one of them being K-1 200 m for the women. The other events for men at 200 m were C-1, C-2, and K-1.



2012 Canadian Olympic Canoe/Kayak Team

Not having qualified for either the men's or women's K-4 events, Canada sent a relatively small team to the London Games. Emilie Fournel (whose father raced in the 1976 Olympics in Montreal) was the only female paddler. Emilie's brother, Hugues raced in the men's K-2 200 and 1,000 in London.

Adam van Koeverden won his 4th Olympic medal with his 2nd place finish in the K-1 1,000. Ryan Cochrane and Hugues Fournel placed 7th in the K-2 200.

The introduction of the 200 metre races convinced Mark de Jonge to return to the sport after a short retirement and won the bronze medal in K-1 200 in his Olympic debut.



Mark de Jonge

64 years after his grandfather, Bert, raced for Canada in the Olympics in London, Mark Oldershaw won a bronze medal in the C-1 1,000. Mark was the 5th member of the Oldershaw family to compete in canoe/kayak at the Olympics, and he became the 7th Canadian to win an Olympic medal in C-1.



Mark Oldershaw

The photo of an apparently surprised and shocked Mark Oldershaw appeared on the front page of newspapers across Canada.

The 2016 Summer Olympic Games were held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Canoe/kayak was included in the 2016 Paralympics for the first time.



2016 Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Teams

The three Canadian medalists from the 2012 London Olympics raced in Rio but were unable to repeat their prior success. Mark de Jonge placed 6th in K-200. Mark Oldershaw was 4th in the C-1 1,000 B final. Adam van Koeverden won the K-1 1,000 B final, with a time that was the 2nd fastest of all competitors in K-1 1,000 over the course of the event.

Ryan Cochrane and Hugues Fournel also returned for their second Olympic Games and were 8th in the K-2 200.

The women's K-4 crew of Andreeanne Langlois, Emilie Fournel, Genevieve Orton, and Kathleen Fraser placed 8th.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Summer Olympic Games were held in 2021 in Tokyo, Japan. The programme saw event changes, all replacements, from 2016. The men's C-1 200 metres and men's K-2 200 metres were replaced with women's C-1 200 metres and women's C-2 500 metres. These three changes were part of the Olympics' move towards gender equality. In addition, the men's K-4 1000 metres was replaced with a shorter race, the men's K-4 500 metres.



2020 Canadian Olympic Canoe/Kayak Team

The introduction of women's canoe races to the Olympic program was the successful culmination of a long push by Canada to promote equal participation of females in canoe racing. Laurence Vincent-Lapointe was Canada's most successful female canoeist, having won eleven gold medals at the ICF Canoe Sprint World Championships, starting with the 2010 Poznań Championships, and her three gold medals at the 2018 Montemor-o-Velho Championships. She also won a gold medal at the 2015 Pan American Games.

In 2019, Vincent Lapointe won C-1 200m gold at both World Cups she entered, while also taking a gold and a silver in the C-2 500m with Katie Vincent (with both athletes paddling on the same side, a significant disadvantage in C-2).

She was unable to compete at the 2019 World Championships after a positive drug test came back just days before the start of the event. She was cleared of all wrongdoing in January 2020 when it was determined that the trace amounts found in her sample were the result of third-party contamination and that she did not knowingly ingest a banned substance. The uncertainty of her status and Canada's ability to have her race in Tokyo (given she had missed the 2019 World Championships qualifying event) greatly disrupted her preparations for the Games.

Tokyo was the first Olympics where countries could have multiple entries in a singles event. Both Laurence and Katie were entered in the C-1 200 race. Laurence and Katie both won their heats, but then both finished 3rd in their semi-final races.

In the final, Laurence placed 2nd, winning Canada's first Olympic women's canoe medal. Katie was 8th. The two teamed up for the C-2 race, winning the bronze medal.



Laurence Vincent-Lapointe and Katie Vincent

Laurence retired from paddling in 2022, but Katie has since won the women's C-1 world championship and will be competing in the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics.



Katie Vincent and Laurence Vincent-Lapointe

Other finalists in Tokyo were Michelle Russell, 7th in K-1 500, Andreeanne Langlois, 9th in K-1 200, and Roland Varga and Connor Fitzpatric, 6th in C-2 1,000.



Connor Fitzpatrick and Roland Varga

The 2024 Summer Olympic Games will be held in Paris, France. By the time of the Canadian Sprint Nationals, the results will be known.

