
Carleton Place Canoe Club Annual General Meeting 2020

Head Coach Report

The 2020 season was far from ordinary for the Carleton Place Canoe Club. As with most organizations, businesses, and individuals this year, the Canoe Club had our share of waves and cross winds to break through while navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. In the challenge to keep our boat bays open, our athletes training, and our river in use, the CPCC Executive Council, staff, athletes, and parents rose to the occasion. From constantly developing and updating policies to following and enforcing rules and restrictions, our Club community was able to make the best of an extremely difficult situation. I would like to extend a sincere thank you to all of our 2019-2020 volunteer Executive Council for their efforts this past year. As many of us know, a Canoe Club survives and thrives behind a strong and dedicated volunteer base, with the CPCC proving just that for the last 127 years. Our Club was built by this community and will continue to excel for many years to come with your continued support.

Sprint Programs

The 2020 season for our sprint program was certainly one unlike any other in recent memory. There were no formal competitions held, spring training camps were cancelled, and our spring, summer, and fall programming experienced significant restructuring due to restrictions related to COVID-19. Having said that, it was not all bad!

Spring forced us to adapt to a new way of training together with programs moving 100% online through March, April, and May. The canoe kayak community banded together to form virtual challenges, and our athletes stepped up to win two overall virtual provincial burgees in the Canoe Kayak Ontario Sprint virtual challenge series. Coaches and athletes quickly learned how to train from home, exercising self-discipline and teamwork from afar while getting creative with circuit training, running, and yoga using makeshift at-home equipment. Technology went a long way in connecting everyone and making this difficult transition just a little bit more manageable.

As June approached, many sports and clubs were working to determine if and how they would be able to safely re-open their facilities for activities. Led by the Government of Ontario's guidelines, the CPCC staff and Executive Council was able to develop policies and procedures that would allow our members to get back to the sport they loved. Programs were able to run at a very reduced capacity, and with vastly different schedules. Our youth programs were modified to reflect practice based program delivery rather than full day camps, our U16+ and adult canoe/kayak sprint racing programs were running in much smaller training groups, and our Canoe Kids camp programs were reduced by almost 80% in participant capacity.

With a plan in place and a Canada Summer Jobs grant secured by our Commodore, CPCC staff moved forward and delivered programs with a season for development approach in mind. On behalf of the coaching staff, I would like to share that our athletes, across all age groups, showed significant improvement in many key areas of athlete development. The smaller coach to athlete ratios, the absence of competition, and the increased opportunity to focus on technique were all contributing factors to strong technical growth, improved training habits, and the many personal bests set. At the end of the 2020 summer season, our CPCC athletes once again worked together toward another provincial burgee, winning the CKO Sprint Excellence Award burgee for the 2020 Ontario Virtual Championships.

Looking forward to 2021 – Although it is still too early to finalize many plans for the upcoming season, I am very optimistic that this Canoe Club will rebuild and continue to deliver top notch canoe/kayak sprint programs. With a motivated staff, a dedicated executive, and an exciting group of athletes across all age groups, the future looks bright for many years to come. Our Club will aim to increase sprint program capacities and participation as we head into a year



where the National Championships are slated to take place close to home in Ottawa. We will also strive to return to the top of the province in the U14 and under sprint category, where we ended the 2019 season. Most of all, we will continue to build a strong community that works together to overcome challenges such as those presented in the 2020 season.

Summer Camps and Recreation

It was an especially difficult year for our summer camp programs as restrictions and concerns relating to COVID-19 forced major changes to our camp and recreation streams. Our summer camps, usually for ages 6-11, were reduced in capacity by almost 80%, and were available only to seven participants per week aged 7-9. Our Paddle All program for individuals with intellectual disabilities was unable to run. Our recently launched rental program was cancelled due to equipment sharing concerns and space limitations. The potential impact these changes may have are concerning in many ways, first and foremost as they relate to the reduction in participation from within the community. As introductory programs, our camps and rentals can provide a connection to the community and often act as feeder programs to our full summer sprint stream. Our Paddle All program has been an excellent resource for our members, our community, our volunteers, and our staff for many years.

Looking forward to 2021 – As we plan for next season, the CPCC will look to increase participation numbers in summer camps and will plan to re-engage with our Paddle All members to get them back out on the water. Of course, our capacities will be largely determined by local public health and government restrictions, but the club will aim to return to providing paddling opportunities to Carleton Place and surrounding communities as it becomes safe to do so.

The Organization and Business

With the common theme of reduced capacity in 2020, the Carleton Place Canoe Club as a not-for-profit business at times experienced a difficult year as well. The Canoe Club relies, and has relied for many years, on volunteer hours, fundraising, and significant grant support to continue operating. The reduction in revenues due to the pandemic and the additional challenges associated with running any type of fundraising events provided a grim outlook heading into the 2020 spring and summer. The club was able to participate in the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy program and received a significant government employment grant through Canada Summer Jobs in 2020. The total of these funds was \$66,226, without which the operations of the Canoe Club may not have been sustainable.

Looking forward to 2021 - As we continue into the 2021 season the CPCC staff and Executive Council will continue to work toward delivering the best quality programs and services while improving the balance of our operating budget. As evidenced in our 2020 draft financial statements, and in those of years past, the club's operations are not sustainable without significant fundraising and grant support. It will continue to be a goal of our Canoe Club to seek out additional revenue streams to support operating costs and to increase the sustainability of each of our programs and services.

In closing, I would again like to emphasize my gratitude to all of our volunteers and Executive Council members from this past year, and extend a special thank you to those Council members who will be stepping down this year. Your efforts do not go unnoticed and your impact on this Club will resonate for many years to come, thank you!

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Lester
Head Coach
Carleton Place Canoe Club