



---

## **Carleton Place Canoe Club 2021 Annual General Meeting** **Head Coach Report**

The 2021 season brought us another challenging year as we continued to work through the COVID-19 pandemic. The Carleton Place Canoe Club has been fortunate to experience several steps forward with regards to our seasonal operations and programming, as many restrictions and capacity limits began to ease throughout the late spring and into the height of our on-water season. As vaccination rates increased and public health mandates were modified to allow more outdoor activities to take place, the CPCC Board of Directors and staff stepped up to the challenge to deliver as much in-person activity as our space, equipment, and resources would safely allow. With the ability to offer more in-person programs came several steps in the right direction for our club, our sport, and our community. Some of these positive outcomes include getting back to competition, increasing our summer camps capacity, reengaging with our Paddle All and Special O participants, and beginning the process of rebuilding our sense of community at the club.

On behalf of myself and all our CPCC staff members, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to our 2021 Board of Directors, our many volunteers, our coaches and camp instructors, and of course our athletes and participants. The last two years have presented many challenges, and our strong community has worked together to head into 2022 in a very promising position.

### **Club Development**

The 2020 season was difficult to say the least, as it resulted in many of our programs requiring significant modifications and reduction in both capacity, and duration. These setbacks have had a major impact on our overall participation numbers, especially in our youth sprint programs and our introductory summer camp programs. In 2021 we were able to begin raising capacities again and were successful in doing so in our weekly summer camp programs, where we restructured our registration streams to offer two separate age groups. Registration numbers and expression of interest increased exponentially and resulted in all our available weeks being sold out, although still to a lower capacity than pre-Covid. This provides a very positive outlook moving into the 2022 season and beyond. We were also very excited to welcome back our Paddle All and Special O participants for individuals with intellectual or cognitive disabilities. This program is an important component to our club, and after not being able to offer it in 2020, our coaches, volunteers, and participants were thrilled to get back to it in 2021.

Our sprint program registrations remained stable across the board, with a total of 80 sprint program participants. The biggest step forward for these programs in 2021 was the return to competition. There were still many restrictions on how these programs operated in the daily training environment, and competitions were restricted in many ways, but our athletes certainly did appreciate the opportunity to get back out on the racecourse. Our Adult Canoe Kayak sprint program began to generate some momentum again this season with 13 registrants, and lots of excitement and positivity heading into 2022, when CANMAS will be held in Shawinigan, QC at the end of August.

Looking ahead to 2022 and beyond, our focus areas as they relate to club development will need to target increasing program capacities, both in the recreation and sprint program streams. This will include improving our use of space and increasing our equipment inventory, specifically in recreation programs and accessible equipment. The club may also begin seeking out grant funding to increase access to human resources. This can help to facilitate club growth and development, especially as the town will be experiencing a significant increase in population growth over the coming years.



---

## **Sprint Canoe Kayak Programs**

Our CPCC athletes have displayed great resilience throughout these last two years. Staying connected through a virtual setting when programs couldn't continue in person, remaining positive and working hard through a very difficult scenario speaks to their commitment and desire to persevere. Getting back into competition mode for 2021 was no easy task, but our athletes demonstrated that they are strong and hungry to compete while continuing to make progress as athletes. In 2021, the CPCC had 32 athletes compete at the Ontario Championships, 17 athletes compete at the National Championships, and 6 athletes compete at the Canadian Masters (CANMAS) Championships. As a result of strong performances from these athletes throughout the season, the CPCC placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in U14/U12 overall club points, and 5<sup>th</sup> in overall club points at the Ontario Championships. Carleton Place also saw 12 athletes nominated to the Ontario Canoe Kayak Team Program this fall.

Looking ahead to 2022, we have a dedicated group of winter athletes working toward their goals. We were fortunate to be able to purchase some much needed dry-land training equipment that will go a long way in helping our year-round athletes develop both physically and mentally going forward. We also have a keen group of younger athletes who are excited to get back out on the water in the spring to pursue growth and development in a sport they love to do.

The expectation that our National and CANMAS Championships will return to some form of normalcy with a more complete race card also provides promise and excitement as we will have several strong crews and individuals looking to qualify and compete on the national stage next summer and beyond. Some target areas for our club will be getting back into war canoes, developing more regular crew boat training practices, and building more capacity to submit crew boat entries at the highest levels.

## **Club Operations**

Over the last two years, our club has experienced many changes, some presenting new challenges, while others showing us perspective and potential opportunities. Our program related revenues have decreased through COVID, and historically have not been sufficient to cover operating costs. This is to say that the club has always relied heavily on grants, fundraising, and government support to operate, and this has been even more evident over the last two years. The CPCC has been very fortunate in financial terms of late, receiving financial support from programs such as the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, the Canada Emergency Business Account, Canada Summer Jobs, the Ontario Small Business Support Grant, and the Ontario Trillium Foundation. These supports have placed us in a strong position moving forward and the future Board of Directors and staff will work diligently to build off the momentum generated in 2022.

Some target areas for the upcoming 2021-2022 Board of Directors and staff should include:

- Increasing program capacities through a more efficient use of space
- Increasing access to recreational paddle sport equipment and programs
- Seeking out new revenue streams
- Improving community and alumni outreach, and
- Expanding and improving on our communication processes, including a more active social media presence

In closing, I would like to remind everyone that a Canoe Club survives and thrives behind a strong and dedicated volunteer base. As the oldest continually operating club in Canada, the CPCC has proven just that for the last 128 years. Our Club was built by this community and will continue to excel for many years to come with your continued support.



Carleton Place Canoe Club

Established 1893

---

With that, I would again like to emphasize my gratitude to all our volunteers and Board of Directors from this past 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