

Canoe Slalom - Great Britain Selection 2008

Teams to represent Great Britain have been chosen following selection races in recent weeks. Stafford and Stone were well represented in all races and the successes have been many but, as always, there were a fair number of disappointments as well.

Race Details

For all teams, 3 selection races were held, with the best two results to count.

The 1st selection race for under-23's and juniors was held on the Ski Slope – Mrs. Davies bridge section of the Tryweryn on 15th March with the 2nd race taking place at Grandtully in Scotland on 29th March.

The Senior and Olympic selection races 1 and 2 were held on the Dutch Water Dreams (DWD) course at Zoetermeer in Holland on 12th and 13th April. This course closely resembles the Olympic course in Beijing where water conditions are extremely fast, powerful and very technical to paddle.

The final selection race for all teams was held at Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham on 19th April.

Senior Selection

The club's main hope for Olympic selection was Laura Blakeman in K1W. Laura, who competed at the Sydney Olympics in 2000, faced her main rival Fiona Pennie from CRCats, World Championship silver medallist in 2006. Laura's dream of a 2nd Olympic place did not materialise as Fiona powered to victory in both races

held in Holland on courses that were perhaps not as tight as some may have anticipated. Nevertheless, the technical water conditions at DWD made small errors very costly with significant time losses for all paddlers. Two 2nd places did guarantee a place on the Senior Team for Laura but she obviously regarded this as small consolation having missed out on her main goal.

Stafford and Stone's other main challenge came from younger paddlers Mark Proctor and Greg Pitt both in C1, Rob Neave in K1M and Hannah Bailey in K1W. A superb selection series for Mark Proctor with a 2nd place and two 3rd places earned him a place in the Senior team. Rob Neave took a strong 2nd place at Holme Pierrepont and two 5th places in Holland to finish 4th and be named as reserve for the team. Hannah Bailey and Greg Pitt each finished 5th overall and gained valuable experience competing in the senior races.

The Senior team have a busy early summer with the European Championship at Krakow in May and World Cup Races at Prague and Tacen in June followed by the Pre-World Championship at Seu in July.

Under-23 Selection

Stafford and Stone's 2007 National Champion Lizzie Neave was advised not to compete on the challenging DWD course having undergone surgery in December to repair a severe shoulder injury sustained at a training camp at the same venue in November. Nevertheless her recovery has been excellent and, although not fully race fit, her coach and physiotherapist both considered it safe to race at the less physically demanding events at Grandtully and Holme Pierrepont. Her technical



ability saw her comfortably race to victory in both races. Hannah Bailey took victory at the Tryweryn race and a 3rd place at Holme Pierrepont to secure 2nd overall and a place in the team as well.

Rob Neave dominated in K1M securing victory in all 3 events, a feat matched by Mark Proctor in C1. Greg Pitt, having placed poorly in the 1st race with a 50 second penalty, came back strongly in races 2 and 3 to place 2nd behind Mark and also takes his place in the team.

Selection to Great Britain teams requires all paddlers to reach a performance standard and with only 6 boats meeting this standard at under-23 level it is an outstanding achievement that 5 of these paddlers are from Stafford and Stone. All will be aiming for future places in the Senior Great Britain team and all will have their eyes set on possible London 2012 Olympic places.

The under-23 team will be racing at World Cup race 3 in Augsburg and then at the under-23 European Championship at Solkan, both races in July.

Junior Selection

Stafford and Stone's strength in depth was also strongly displayed by the club's juniors who also claimed 5 places in the Junior Great Britain team.

1st place in K1W was secured by Claire Kimberley with a 1st and 2nd place ahead of Emily Woodcock with two 2nd places. In K1M Tom Brady took 2nd overall with a 1st and 2nd, and C1 paddlers Adam Burgess (1st and 2nd places – 2nd overall) and George Tatchell (2nd and 3rd places – 3rd overall) complete the Stafford and Stone quintet heading for the Junior European Championship at Solkan and Junior World Championship at Roudnice in July.

All of these juniors will be young enough to compete again at this level in 2009 and also in 2010 for Emily, Adam and George. Gaining selection this year has been an excellent achievement for these young paddlers.

The club's non selected paddlers put in many creditable performances over the series of races and gained valuable experience for the future. Two club members, Natalie Wilson and Joe Clarke, missed out on the opportunity to race through injury and illness respectively. Both have massive potential and two more years as juniors after 2008. Hopefully both will be fully back in action soon and I'm sure will be challenging strongly for places in 2009.

Great Britain Canoe Slalom Teams 2008 - Stafford and Stone Club Members are coloured red.

Senior K1M

Campbell Walsh
Richard Hounslow
Andy Hadfield

Senior K1W

Fiona Pennie
Louise Donington
Laura Blakeman

Senior C1

David Florence
Stuart McIntosh
Mark Proctor



Senior C2

Baillie & Stott
Smith & Goddard

U23 K1M

Rob Neave

U23 K1W

Lizzie Neave
Hannah Bailey
Alice Spencer

U23 C1

Mark Proctor
Greg Pitt

Junior K1M

Toby Jones
Tom Brady
Zach Franklin

Junior K1W

Claire Kimberley
Emily Woodcock
Bethan Latham

Junior C1

Tom Quinn
Adam Burgess
George Tatchell

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