



CANADIAN OUTRIGGER HALL OF FAME

Drew Mitchell



Summary

Drew Mitchell has been involved in sport and fitness for 40+ years as an athlete, coach, administrator, volunteer, developer and manager. Drew was a C1 / C2 national medalist between 1982-1986. Drew had been with False Creek Racing Canoe Club (FCRCC) as a co-founder since its inception in 1985. Drew made significant contributions to the FCRCC dragon boat and outrigger canoe programs as head coach for 15 years, including an initiative to deliver a womens outrigger canoe program that would be competitive at the international level. Drew continued to work extensively in the sport system as an educator and developer of programs for 20 years since moving on from FCRCC.

Early Career

Canoe Kayak BC introduced a program in 1982 to support Olympic flat-water sprint canoe kayak racing. Drew was given responsibility for organizing Olympic flat-water sprint canoe kayak racing at various Canoe Kayak BC sites including Nanaimo, Penticton, Maple Ridge, and False Creek. Some of the paddlers during this era at Burnaby Canoe & Kayak Club that would go on to medal at the Olympics, World Championships, Canada Games, and Pan Am Games included Hugh Fisher, Colin Shaw, Donald Irvine, Sheila Taylor, Peter Liljedahl, and Drew Mitchell. This core group would form the False Creek Racing Canoe Club in 1985 (formerly the False Creek Sprint Canoe Club being founded in 1981). [01] The Burnaby Canoe & Kayak Club team of Hugh Fisher, Colin Shaw, Scott Selbie, and Drew Mitchell would win the prestigious Canadian Canoe Association John W. Black Trophy for the Junior Men C-4 1000M in Montreal in 1982. [02] Drew would win Gold / Silver in 500M / 1000M C1 / C2 at the 1982 / 1983 Pan American Canoe Championships. [03] The Harry Jerome Comeback Award is presented to an individual who succeeded in their sport after suffering a significant and unique setback. [04] Drew in 1986 would be the only individual awarded the Harry Jerome Comeback Award in Canoe And Kayak. [05]

Outrigger Canoeing Achievements

A BC Mens provincial flatwater team delivered a first for Canada in 1983. A crew of paddlers from Canada's Sprint Canoe Clubs including Colin Shaw, Don Irvine, Donny Brien, Hugh Fisher, Jim Sleeth, Larry Cain, Peter Liljedahl, Preston Fisk, and Drew Mitchell would finish Koa 1st Open in the Molokai Hoe race.



Coach-Builder Achievements

The competition for the 20 seats in the men's / womens / mixed dragon boat crews in the late 1980s and early 1990s would generate a pool of male and female Canadian athletes that would provide the basis for outrigger canoe crews at several clubs. By 1989, False Creek had acquired a number of Canadian *Malia* canoes from the California *Malia* mould that had been delivered by Lotus to Ron Kaschula of Calmar Fibreglass. FCRCC had a number of paddlers with racing and coaching experience at the international level including Hugh Fisher, Don Irvine, and Drew Mitchell. Don, Hugh, and Drew were leading training for the FCRCC Womens outrigger canoe program with a goal to deliver a womens outrigger canoe program that would be competitive at the international level. FCRCC had recruited 40+ women in 1993 to fill two Molokai Na Wahine crews with a Catalina Channel Crossing race as a precursor. The 1993 womens outrigger canoe program brought in paddlers including Cheryl Scribe, Andrea Dillon, Allie Johnstone, Kamini Jain, Heather Taylor, Jacinta Sheridan, Jackie Webber, and many more. [06] The two FCRCC Womens 1993 Molokai Na Wahine crews would finish 10 minutes apart in 10th and 13th place Open Fibreglass. The 1994 womens outrigger canoe program focused on a single crew. That FCRCC Womens 1994 Molokai Na Wahine crew, with Cheryl Scribe and Andrea Dillon switching steering, would finish in 6th place Open Fibreglass, for the best

ever Molokai Na Wahine for a Canadian womens crew, until the Jericho Women would have a 6th place finish overall (4th place Open - best ever for a Canadian team in either the Womens or Mens race) in 2003.

Drew would serve on the False Creek Executive for many years involved in coaching Junior dragon boat / kayaking / flatwater programs and was FCRCC Chairman for 1996 and possibly at least one year before / after. [07]

Drew has contributed to the expansion of outrigger canoe clubs and racing to the Interior / Okanagan through his mentorship of former False Creek paddlers. Brent Bagnall had participated in dragon boat with crews coached by Drew in the early 1990s. Brent was a stimulus in getting outrigger going in Penticton with introduction of the Duel in The Desert Iron race and the Length of the Lake Ultra-Distance (100KM) event. Brent Bagnall and Drew organized the very first Length of the Lake Ultra-Distance event sometime between 1996 to 1999. [08]

Pioneering Achievements

Prior to Vancouver's first dragon boat festival in July 1986, Canadian paddlers had been limited to K1 / K2 / K3 / K4 (International Canoe Federation Sprint / Marathon sitting boats), C1 / C2 (Olympic Class Sprint / Marathon kneeling boats), and the C-15 or WC or "War Canoe" (unique to Canada). In 1986 teams from False Creek coached by Drew Mitchell / Hugh Fisher / Don Irvine and the "Lotus Eaters" were drawn from athletes across various paddling backgrounds who were introduced through a demonstration dragon boat race during Expo '86 in Vancouver. The inaugural Vancouver Dragon Boat Festival in 1986 was won by False Creek Racing Canoe Club men's team. FCRCC men's team would represent Canada at the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival International Races in 1986, 1988, and 1990. The FCRCC Womens Team would win the Vancouver Dragon Boat Festival from 1986 to 1993. They would continue onto win the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival International Races in 1989, 1990, 1992 and 1993. [09]

Exemplary Achievements



Drew has made a commendable lifelong commitment to long-term development in sport and physical activity by engaging with nationwide education, recreation, sports and health organizations. Drew was awarded the Hugh Town Memorial Builder Award (equivalent to the CKC R. Edgar Gilbert Award) at the CORA 2020 AGM in recognition of 20+ years of contributions to flatwater, dragon boat, and outrigger canoe sports as well as another 20+ years of contributions to sports systems as a coach, administrator, volunteer, developer and manager.

Drew is the Director of Physical Literacy for the Sport for Life Society and works as a consultant focused on the development of physical literacy at the community level and promoting the Canadian Sport for Life Movement. [10] He is a graduate of Simon Fraser University with a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology. Drew has worked extensively in the sport system as an educator and developer of programs for the past 19 years. He managed Sport Technical and Performance Services for viaSport BC and was the Manager of Science & Medicine programs for SportMedBC where he worked with over fifty different sports at the local, provincial and national level. He is also a past member of the Canadian National Canoeing Team and the

former Health & Lifestyle Coordinator at the Downtown Vancouver YMCA. [11]

References

Note	Article	Link
[01]	1983 Burnaby Canoe & Kayak Club National Alumni	http://cfly.ca/canoe/Burnaby.htm
[02]	1982 Canoe Kayak Canada John W. Black Trophy	http://canoekayak.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/John-W.-Black-Trophy-Winners-and-Stories.pdf
[03]	1982 Pan American Canoe Championships	http://cfly.ca/canoe/PanAmChamps.htm
[04]	1986 Harry Jerome Comeback Award	http://jwsporta.ca/psap/harryJerome.html
[05]	1986 Harry Jerome Comeback Award Recipients	https://sportbc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/AOY-Recipients-Master-List-HARRYJEROME.pdf
[06]	1993 Vancouver Sun FCRC Molokai Womens Crew - Page 55	https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/495128358/
[07]	1996 FCRC Annual General Meeting	https://fcrc.com/wp-content/uploads/files/meeting_minutes/1996/1996%20AGM%20Minutes.pdf
[08]	2006 Length of the Lake Ultra-Distance	http://www.jerichooutrigger.com/races2006/lotl.html
[09]	1986 UBC Vancouver DB Festival	http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/pdfs/ubcreports/UBC_Reports_1986_07_10.pdf
[10]	2017 Physical Literacy for Communities (PL4C) program	https://physicalliteracy.ca/what-is-pl4c/
[11]	2020 Physical Literacy Bio	https://sportforlife.ca/dvteam/drew-mitchell/