



# CANADIAN OUTRIGGER HALL OF FAME

## Sheila Kuyper



### Summary

Sheila Kuyper is a teacher, a mentor, a pioneer, and a legend who has blazed a trail to follow in Canada and around the world. She has influenced the paddling community worldwide by championing womens access to the sport of sprint canoe. [01] Sheila has been a Physical Education Teacher at Appleby College in Burlington ON since 1991. [02] Born, raised and educated in Brantford, she swam for 15 years with the Brantford Aquatic Club, while earning her Bachelor of Physical Education degree at McMaster University. Since 1995, she has been racing, advocating, negotiating, coaching, fundraising and lobbying international powerbrokers to let women do as men do on the water. [03]

### Early Career

Sheila was introduced to womens canoe at Burloak Canoe Club (BCC) in 1994. In 1995, Canada was the first country to include women-in-canoe at its Nationals. [04] In 1995, Emily Patrick, Danica Rice, Louise Verity and Sheila Kuyper would take Gold for BCC in Womens Junior C4 500M. [05] In 1997, Louise Verity and Sheila Kuyper would take Gold for BCC in Womens Junior C2 200M. [06] From 1997-1998, Sheila would set a still-standing record of eight Canadian championship Gold medals, including her 1998 time for the Senior Women C1 1000M that remains unbroken. [01] At the 2001 Pan Am Games, Sheila would take Gold in Womens C2 500M, Gold in Womens C2 200M, and Bronze in Womens C1 500M. [07]

### Outrigger Canoeing Achievements

Sheila was involved along with Commodore Wendy Rae-Perkins in launching Oakville's Wai Nui O Kanaka Outrigger Canoe Club supported by the Burloak Canoe Club and the Ontario Trillium Foundation. [01]

As a member of Wai Nui O Kanaka Outrigger Canoe Club affiliated with East Coast Outrigger Racing Association (ECORA), Sheila has represented Team Canada at International Va'a Federation (IVF) World Sprints from 2006-2012. Sheila did not medal at 2006 New Zealand IVF World Sprints, [09] but took on the responsibility of making up crews to ensure the strongest possible teams for each event and provided opportunities for every participant to paddle. [10] At 2008 Sacramento IVF World Sprints, Sheila would advance to the finals in V1 500M Open Women, Masters Women, and Sr Masters Women. [11] Sheila would take Silver in V1 500M Sr Masters Women [12] and race with a Canadian team that would take Gold while setting a new world record in V6 1000M Master Women. [13] At 2010 New Caledonia IVF World Sprints, Sheila would compete in V1 500M Open Women, Masters Women, and Sr Masters Women. [14] Sheila would take Bronze in V1 500M Sr Masters Women [15] and again race with a Canadian team that would take Gold in V6 1000M Master Women. [16] Sheila did not compete with Team Canada at 2012 Calgary IVF World Sprints, [17] but was a member of the Sprint Council with the goal of building the strongest possible Team Canada 2012. [18]

### Coach-Builder Achievements

Since 1998, sprint canoe competition has taken a back seat for Sheila as she has focused her attention on coaching and promoting her sport. For over a dozen years, she's traveled, often at her own expense, to coach and promote womens canoeing in Russia, Europe, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico and the United States. [01]

### Pioneering Achievements

Although sprint canoe has been an official sport of the Olympics since 1924, there were no womens equivalents. [03] Sheila became an advocate for elevating the sport both at home and internationally and began to champion inclusion for women-in-

canoe at the Olympics. [04] The lobby group WomenCAN International [23] was envisioned and founded by Sheila in 1998 to lobby for womens sprint canoe and inspire young women to pursue sprint canoe and to develop international race opportunities. [24] In 1998, Sheila led the first major international push for equality in sprint canoe, as part of Canada's 2008 Olympic Bid. [24] While Toronto was narrowly beaten out by Beijing for the 2008 Games, the Olympic dream lived on, and Sheila ignited a vision for many sprint canoe women to follow. [04]

One of the most respected athletes in USA paddling history, Pam Boteler has achieved some incredible milestones in her career. [25] Canadian womens canoe pioneer Sheila visited Washington Canoe Club in the summer of 1998 as part of her campaign to raise awareness about women not being allowed to compete in Olympic canoeing. [26] She explained that part of Toronto's bid for the 2008 Olympics was to include womens canoe. [24] Pam Boteler was inspired to move into sprint canoe in 1999 by Sheila. [24] Pam made USA Canoe/Kayak history at the 2000 National Sprint Canoe/Kayak Championships by becoming the first woman to compete in sprint canoe - against men - winning Gold and Bronze.

Pam Boteler, Heather McNie, and Sheila Kuyper representing WomenCAN International attended the 2002 Sprint Canoe/Kayak World Championships in Seville, Spain, where they spent several days talking with International Canoe Federation (ICF) officials and officials representing Canoe Federations from around the world. [27] The ICF Congress agreed to add exhibition events for women at the 2003 ICF Sprint canoe World Championships in Gainesville, GA. [27]

Samantha Rippington of Britain launched a challenge at London's High Court against the organizing committee of the 2012 London Summer Olympics over the exclusion of womens canoe racing events. [28] Pam Boteler who was then leading WomenCAN International, along with Sheila, encouraged and provided backing for Rippington's court challenge. [29] The International Canoe Federation (ICF) agreed to organize a Womens Canoe Cup held in Boulogne, France. [29]

Following in the path created by Sheila and others, Burloak Canoe Club has seen female canoeists like Mallorie Nicholson and Laurence Vincent-Lapointe have the opportunity to compete at the international level. [29] For much of Nicholson's career, she dominated the national championships and partnered with Vincent-Lapointe to win C2 (doubles) titles at the World Championships. [29] Nicholson has helped train the new generation of women paddlers at the club. [29] Sheila continued her campaign and womens canoe was officially added in 2010 to the World Championships. Canada's Vincent-Lapointe won the first womens canoe World Championships Gold. [29] Vincent-Lapointe cites Sheila as an inspiration as she prepares to compete in womens canoe to debut at the Tokyo Olympic Games. [30]

## **Exemplary Achievements**

Sheila has made remarkable contributions to further the advancement of women in sports. One of the first steps by Sheila to achieve more equitable competition opportunities for the womens canoe racing at international events and World Championships, was an article published in October 1998 in Paddles Up titled "The Future of Women-in-canoe", highlighting a new website featuring developments promoting womens canoe racing. [31]

The Sheila Kuyper Trophy was introduced in 2012 to recognize the Senior Women C1 1000M Champion. This trophy was specifically introduced to recognize the achievements of Sheila who had set records that were unrivalled at the time and is known as Canada's most decorated female canoeist. [32] Sheila sponsored the Naomi Morris Award since 1997 for the U16 Women C1 1000M Champion, named in honour of the Canadian woman for her outstanding contribution to the sport of canoeing over 50 years who dressed as a man in order to compete at the Nationals in the 1930's. [33]

The ATHENA Award® Program was established to honor the achievements of exceptional women leaders. [34] There were 8 nominees in 2015 for the ninth annual ATHENA Oakville Awards. [35] Sheila would be one of the recipients of this award care of the nomination by her protege Mallorie Nicholson, stating "Sheila Kuyper an Appleby College teacher, is a pioneer in the sport of womens sprint canoe and has worked tirelessly and internationally to promote and organize womens canoe teams. As a result of her efforts, womens canoe events are now recognized in World Championships and world games. Kuyper has also coached local dragon boat teams and is actively involved in Relay for Life, a fundraiser for the Canadian Cancer Society." [03]

## References

Note	Article	Link
[01]	2006 Sheila Kuyper Summary	<a href="https://www.insidehalton.com/news-story/2913629-paddling-upstream/">https://www.insidehalton.com/news-story/2913629-paddling-upstream/</a>
[02]	Appleby College Teacher / Trip Lead	<a href="https://yak.wheretherebedragons.com/2018/02/appleby-college-teacher-lead-co-lead/">https://yak.wheretherebedragons.com/2018/02/appleby-college-teacher-lead-co-lead/</a>
[03]	2005 ATHENA Award Recipients	<a href="https://www.insidehalton.com/news-story/2889285-athena-winner-champions-female-athletes/">https://www.insidehalton.com/news-story/2889285-athena-winner-champions-female-athletes/</a>
[04]	1994/1995 Sprint Canoe	<a href="https://paddlesup.canoe kayak.ca/in-1995-canada-was-the-first-country-to-include-women-in-canoe-at-its-nationals/">https://paddlesup.canoe kayak.ca/in-1995-canada-was-the-first-country-to-include-women-in-canoe-at-its-nationals/</a>
[05]	CKC Single Blade Fours Champions	<a href="http://cfly.ca/canoe/BOC/BOCJrWC4500.htm">http://cfly.ca/canoe/BOC/BOCJrWC4500.htm</a>
[06]	CKC Single Blade Tandem Champions	<a href="http://cfly.ca/timeless/canoe/BOC/BOCJrWC2200.htm">http://cfly.ca/timeless/canoe/BOC/BOCJrWC2200.htm</a>
[07]	Burloak Canoe Club Champions	<a href="http://cfly.ca/canoe/Burloak.htm">http://cfly.ca/canoe/Burloak.htm</a>
[08]	2002 Tahiti IVF World Sprints CORA	<a href="https://canadianoutrigger.ca/canadas-sprint-legacy/">https://canadianoutrigger.ca/canadas-sprint-legacy/</a>
[09]	2006 New Zealand IVF World Sprints Results	<a href="http://www.ivfiv.org/2006-new-zealand.html">http://www.ivfiv.org/2006-new-zealand.html</a>
[10]	2006 New Zealand IVF World Sprints CORA	<a href="https://canadianoutrigger.ca/2006-new-zealand/">https://canadianoutrigger.ca/2006-new-zealand/</a>
[11]	2008 Sacramento IVF World Sprints Results	<a href="http://www.ivfiv.org/uploads/2/5/3/8/25381158/race_results_2008.pdf">http://www.ivfiv.org/uploads/2/5/3/8/25381158/race_results_2008.pdf</a>
[12]	2008 Sacramento IVF World Sprints Blog	<a href="http://teamcanadasacramento.blogspot.com/2008/08/day-5-finals.html">http://teamcanadasacramento.blogspot.com/2008/08/day-5-finals.html</a>
[13]	2008 Sacramento IVF World Sprints CORA	<a href="https://canadianoutrigger.ca/2008-california/">https://canadianoutrigger.ca/2008-california/</a>
[14]	2010 New Caledonia IVF World Sprints Results	<a href="http://www.ivfiv.org/2010-new-caledonia.html">http://www.ivfiv.org/2010-new-caledonia.html</a>
[15]	2010 New Caledonia IVF World Sprints Blog	<a href="http://teamcanadanewcaledonia.blogspot.com/2010/">http://teamcanadanewcaledonia.blogspot.com/2010/</a>
[16]	2010 New Caledonia IVF World Sprints CORA	<a href="https://canadianoutrigger.ca/2010-new-caledonia/">https://canadianoutrigger.ca/2010-new-caledonia/</a>
[17]	2012 Calgary IVF World Sprints Results	<a href="http://www.ivfiv.org/2012-canada.html">http://www.ivfiv.org/2012-canada.html</a>
[18]	2012 Calgary IVF World Sprints Council	<a href="https://canadianoutrigger.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/JrIVFQUALIFICATIONPROCESSFinal.pdf">https://canadianoutrigger.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/JrIVFQUALIFICATIONPROCESSFinal.pdf</a>
[19]	2015 OMCKRA Provincials Results	<a href="https://omckra.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2015_04_HUT.pdf">https://omckra.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2015_04_HUT.pdf</a>
[20]	2015 Blackburn Challenge Results	<a href="https://groups.google.com/g/eastcoastoutrigger/c/8NOa5AN92g4?pli=1">https://groups.google.com/g/eastcoastoutrigger/c/8NOa5AN92g4?pli=1</a>
[21]	2018 Queen Liliuokalani Results	<a href="https://www.qlcanoerace.com/publicdocs/Sun-All-2018.pdf">https://www.qlcanoerace.com/publicdocs/Sun-All-2018.pdf</a>
[22]	Tokyo Olympics Pamela Boteler	<a href="https://www.dream10x.com/blog/pam-boteler-canoeist/">https://www.dream10x.com/blog/pam-boteler-canoeist/</a>
[23]	WomenCAN International About	<a href="https://womencanintl.com/about/">https://womencanintl.com/about/</a>
[24]	Pamela Boteler & Sheila Kuyper	<a href="https://rowsource.com/2017/04/pamboteler-erghalfmarathon/">https://rowsource.com/2017/04/pamboteler-erghalfmarathon/</a>
[25]	World Paddle Awards Academy & Sheila Kuyper	<a href="http://www.worldpaddleawards.com/organisation/pam-boteler-american">http://www.worldpaddleawards.com/organisation/pam-boteler-american</a>
[26]	Washington Canoe Club & Sheila Kuyper	<a href="https://www.thetrueathleteproject.org/pam-boteler.html">https://www.thetrueathleteproject.org/pam-boteler.html</a>
[27]	Seville Spain ICF Congress & Sheila Kuyper	<a href="https://womencanintl.com/success-womens-canoe-events-2003-icf-canoe-sprint-world-championships/">https://womencanintl.com/success-womens-canoe-events-2003-icf-canoe-sprint-world-championships/</a>
[28]	London Olympics Samantha Rippington & Sheila Kuyper	<a href="https://www.theglobeandmail.com/sports/olympics/female-canoe-racer-takes-olympic-inequality-to-court/article4426727/">https://www.theglobeandmail.com/sports/olympics/female-canoe-racer-takes-olympic-inequality-to-court/article4426727/</a>
[29]	Burloak Canoe Club Female Canoeists	<a href="https://www.toronto.com/community-story/2902914-paddling-upstream-the-ongoing-fight-to-include-women-s-canoe-as-olympic-sport/">https://www.toronto.com/community-story/2902914-paddling-upstream-the-ongoing-fight-to-include-women-s-canoe-as-olympic-sport/</a>
[30]	Tokyo Olympics: Laurence Vincent-Lapointe	<a href="https://www.cbc.ca/playersvoice/entry/a-fish-out-of-water-hardly">https://www.cbc.ca/playersvoice/entry/a-fish-out-of-water-hardly</a>
[31]	1998: The Future of Women in Canoe	<a href="https://paddlesup.canoe kayak.ca/october-1998-the-future-of-women-in-canoe/">https://paddlesup.canoe kayak.ca/october-1998-the-future-of-women-in-canoe/</a>
[32]	CKC CCA Sheila Kuyper Trophy	<a href="http://cfly.ca/canoe/Trophies.htm">http://cfly.ca/canoe/Trophies.htm</a>
[33]	CKC CCA Naomi Morris Award	<a href="https://canoekayak.ca/trophies/">https://canoekayak.ca/trophies/</a>
[34]	ATHENA International Awards	<a href="https://greaterrochesterchamber.com/programs-events/the-athena-award/">https://greaterrochesterchamber.com/programs-events/the-athena-award/</a>
[35]	2005 ATHENA Award Nominations	<a href="https://www.insidehalton.com/news-story/2916329-athena-award-gala-next-wednesday/">https://www.insidehalton.com/news-story/2916329-athena-award-gala-next-wednesday/</a>