



CANADIAN OUTRIGGER HALL OF FAME

Andrea Dillon



Summary

Andrea Dillon has 38+ years of coaching and instructing experience, contributing her extensive knowledge in marathon canoe, sprints / distance outrigger canoe, and dragon boat to the development of paddlers in the FCRC Premier Dragon Boat (FCPDB) program. A member of FCRC Womens program since its inception in 1987, Andrea has seen the continual growth and accomplishment of athletes in the program both nationally and internationally. Andrea was a paddler on the National Dragon Boat Womens and Mixed teams for 20 years in both Open and Masters categories and a member of Team Canada Outrigger Canoe Sprints crews for 4 IVF World Sprints Championships, all with multiple podium finishes. She was also National Dragon Boat Womens team coach for 5 IDBF World Championships, winning medals in each of the championships. [01]

Early Career

In 1973, Andrea would graduate with a Bachelors in Outdoor Education from University of Ottawa in Ontario. [02] Andrea relocated to Vancouver BC in the early 1980s where she established Andrea Dillon & Associates in 1983 and maintained this business for 33 years as a Sales Rep for many premier outdoor companies. [03] [04] It was during this time that Melanie Whittall and Andrea met with Melanie becoming a Sales Rep for Andrea Dillon & Associates. [05] Melanie was also building Ocean & Outdoor Sales. [06] Expo 86 when dragon boats first came to Vancouver was a pivotal moment for Andrea. A former outdoor guide and avid canoeist in her mid-30s looking for a physical challenge, Andrea was watching from the sidelines. But the following year, when FCRC officially got up and running, Dillon joined FCRC and never looked back. [09]

There are records that show the FCRC Womens Team would win the Vancouver Dragon Boat Festival from 1986-1993. They would continue onto win the Hong Kong Dragon Boat International Festival Races in 1989, 1990, 1992 and 1993. [10] The FCRC Womens Teams took Gold at the Vancouver Dragon Boat Festival a record 17 times between 1987-2007 with Andrea as paddler or coach for the team. [09]

Outrigger Canoeing Achievements

The early 1990s saw an initiative to deliver a womens outrigger canoe program that would be competitive at the international level. FCRC had recruited 40+ women in 1993 to fill 2 Molokai Na Wahine crews with a Catalina Channel Crossing race as a precursor. The 1993 FCRC Womens outrigger canoe program brought in paddlers including Cheryl Skribe, Andrea Dillon, Allie Johnstone, Kamini Jain, Heather Taylor, Jacinta Sheridan, Jackie Webber, and many more. [11] The 2 FCRC Womens 1993 Molokai Na Wahine crews (12 paddlers per team) would finish 10 minutes apart in 10th and 13th place Open Fibreglass. [12] The 1994 FCRC Womens outrigger canoe program focused on a single crew (12 paddlers per team). That FCRC Womens 1994 Molokai Na Wahine crew, with Cheryl Skribe and Andrea switching steering, would finish in 6th place Open Fibreglass, for the best ever Molokai Na Wahine showing 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. [13]

Andrea has represented Team Canada at International Va'a Federation (IVF) World Sprints from 1992-2002. At 1992 Sacramento IVF World Sprints, Team Canada Women with Andrea would take Bronze in V6 1000M Masters Women. [17] At 1996 New Caledonia IVF World Sprints, [18] Team Canada Women with Andrea would take Bronze in V6 500M Masters Women, Silver in V6 1000M Masters Women, and Silver in V12 500M Masters Women. [19] At 1998 Fiji IVF World Sprints, Team Canada Women with Daphne Brockington, Heather Taylor, Kendall (Kim) Macmillan, Lauren Boyle, Pauline Adams, Robin MacNair, and Andrea would take Bronze in V6 500M Masters Women, Bronze in V12 500M Open Women, Gold in V6 500M Sr Masters Women, and Silver in V12 500M Masters Women. [20] At 2002 Tahiti IVF World Sprints, Team Canada Women with Daphne Brockington, Diane Shephard, Joanne Vance, Kendall (Kim) Macmillan, Marina McCready, Rosemary Henry, and Andrea would take Gold in V6 500M Masters Women, and Gold in V6 500M Sr Masters Women. [21]

Diane Shepherd, Marina McCreedy, Kendall Macmillan, Judy Shandler, Joanne Aitken, Barbara Willson, Daphne Brockington, Pauline Adams, Heather Taylor, and Andrea would race as FCRCC Women to take 1st place in Womens Voyageur Canoe at the Yukon River Quest 2006 event. [23] [24] [25]

Coach-Builder Achievements

Andrea made the move from paddling to coaching for the FCRCC Womens program in 1992. Andrea was a driving force in keeping FCRCC as Canada's representatives at IDBF events. She pushed FCRCC athletes to win every local competition and to multiple medals at the 1995, 1999, 2001 and 2005 IDBF World Championships and the 2006 World Club Crew Championships. In 2008, the FCRCC Program expanded to include the Open, Mixed and Womens teams within the same program, coached by Kamini Jain and Andrea. This program won the right to represent Canada at the 2009 IDBF World Championships in Premier Open and Mixed, where they won the Mixed 500M and planted the seeds in Open for the cross-nation National Team program seen today. [40] The Vancouver Dragon Boat Festival has grown considerably since the 1st races were held in 1986. Andrea as coach of the FCRCC Womens team, the 1st womens team to compete in the Vancouver Dragon Boat Festival, fought for a womens division, and fought so that womens winners would receive half tickets overseas as well. [26] Andrea provides coaching for paddlers across Canada who train with the national team out of FCRCC. [27] Individuals who have travelled to IDBF World Championships have attested to the inspiration instilled by the coaching of Andrea. [28] Kamini Jain and Andrea from Right Angle Performance have conducted paddler / coach workshops for Vancouver Island clubs such as FGPC. [29] Kamini Jain and Andrea have a long history of facilitating courses for the DBC Certification program. [30] Andrea has served on the FCRCC Executive as Commodore, [31] and has been with the FCRCC Executive in some capacity for several of the past 30 years, including when Andrea offered to lead the FCRCC 25th Anniversary Initiative in 2009. [32]

Pioneering Achievements

Hugh Fisher had returned from New Zealand early 1992 and started Pemberton Canoe Association. FCRCC and Lotus and Pemberton were the only 3 "outrigger canoe" clubs in Canada at that time. ICF had happened in 1984, 1986, 1988, and 1990. Canada had not participated in ICF World Sprints as paddlers needed to be with a "member nation". Hugh Fisher and Andrea had a discussion on a park bench outside False Creek Community Centre about the logistics of having Canada become an ICF "member nation". Garry Mancell, David Boulding, and Hugh Fisher filed the CORA Incorporation documents in April 1992.

Andrea was instrumental in founding the FCRCC Womens Dragon Boat Regatta and Breast Cancer Survivor Event, the first of its kind in North America. [33] Andrea was a driving force in the evolution of the inclusive National Team model, planting the seeds in 2009, a cycle before DBC came onboard with this approach [40]

Jackie Webber and Andrea co-founded Waters Edge, the 1st BC dragon boat service company, a driving force in the expansion of dragon boat in BC, running from 2000-2012. [34] Waters Edge promoted coach and athlete education through the DBC Coaching Community Dragon Boat Course as well as other creative courses, workshops, conferences, and camps. [40] Jackie Webber would organize and host out-of-town events such as the Waters Edge "Paddle the Desert" paddling camp for the Arizona Dragon Boat Festival in Tempe, Arizona in March 2007 with guest clinic coaches such as Kamini Jain, Lynda Roberts, and Andrea. [35] Waters Edge organized the 2008 Whistler Dragon Boat Festival. [36] Jackie Webber and Andrea of Waters Edge were working closely with supporting Alan Carlsson's Western Region Dragon Boat Coaching Certification program for recognition by Dragon Boat Canada (DBC) to move 1 step closer to integration for NCCP recognition. [37]

Exemplary Achievements

Andrea was inducted into the Dragon Boat Canada Hall Of Fame in the 2019 inaugural year along with 5 other luminaries. [38] Andrea's career began in 1987 with the very first dragon boat club in North America (FCRCC). [39] Andrea was recognized for dedicating more than 3 decades to the sport of dragon boating, having coached at 9 of the 13 IDBF World Championships, for being a driving force in the evolution of the inclusive National Team model, as well as coaching / medaling multiple times at the IDBF World Championships from 1995-2019 Pattaya. [40]

Andrea has long been an advocate for concerns that impact the local community. Andrea has participated for many years on Alder Bay Replacement Dock Design initiatives to address the multitude of issues impacting the docks for all manner of paddlesports based out of False Creek Community Centre. [41] Andrea has provided input on the state of Vancouver water quality to raise awareness of how Vancouver's marine health impacts those who frequent Vancouver waters. [42] Andrea has represented FCRCC at False Creek Community Association (FCCA) meetings to emphasize that FCRCC has strived to provide access to recreation that is affordable and achievable for all levels, and that the renovation of the Alder Bay Dock is of top priority to complete for the FCRCC. [43]

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