



# CANADIAN OUTRIGGER HALL OF FAME

## James Hill



### Summary

James Hill had notable canoeing achievements in the 2000s-2020s. However, online references for James during this time are sparse, making it a challenge to compile a Hall Of Fame Profile that fully represents the accomplishments of James.

What is known is that James had established himself as a respected competitive outrigger canoe distance paddler between 2007-2014 having raced at Molokai Hoe, Pailolo Challenge, Catalina Crossing, Queen Lili'uokalani, Maui 2 Molokai OC1, as well as countless local and regional races. Beginning in 2016 when Latitude 48 was formed, the coaching staff at Latitude 48 including James would continually have Womens / Mens / Mixed / Open / Masters crews racing in their 2 distinctive green / black Puakea Malolos to top place finishes in CORA / PNWORCA distance/changes races. James had made his coaching skills available from 2016-2025 to Latitude 48 members, CORA members through Town Halls, and Team Canada paddlers as a dedicated coach.

### Early Career

The intrepid kayaker who had an OC1 lesson with James in 2007 noted that James was a letter reader and writer for the Ministry of Transport, where James likely heard about every pothole in BC. James had been a Senior Writer with the BC Government in Victoria BC. James attended the University of Victoria from 2004-2006, and this is the storyline still to be pieced together. [11] [12]

### Outrigger Canoeing Achievements

The earliest mention of James with regard to paddlesports is a 2007 Times Colonist article about how James was an OC1 instructor with Gorge Rowing and Paddling Centre and was giving a lesson on solo outrigger canoe paddling to an intrepid kayaker. [21] There is then a mention of "James Hill" as a member of the Chinook Racing Canoe Club founded in 2012 and operating out of the Fairway Gorge Paddling Club, formerly a part of the GO Rowing and Paddling Association. [22] This may be purely coincidence as "James Hill" is a common name and there is even a like-named accomplished ukelele player/singer from Victoria BC. [23] However, given that the Chinook Racing Canoe Club operated out of Gorge Rowing and Paddling Centre, where James was an OC1 instructor, this would seem to be a concurrence.

Ashley Paul James and Mike Bernemann in early-2025 provided details on how the original "*Team Cascadia*" came to be, and this outrigger canoeing history has been fully documented in the CORA publication "*Team Cascadia Origins*". The 2012 Pailolo Challenge would be the 1st time that *Team Cascadia* would officially race together. This 2012 crew was comprised of Ashley Paul James, Mike Bernemann, Calvin (Pake Nui) Chow, Vance Hashimoto, Alan Goto, with legendary Hawaiian steersman Jim Foti. This 2012 *Team Cascadia* crew would finish 1st Place Men Open Spec Iron and 10th Place Overall. The 2013 Pailolo Challenge would be the 2nd time that *Team Cascadia* would officially race together. This would be once again top paddlers from Washington / Hawaii / Canada competing against some of the best crews in the world. This 2013 crew was comprised of Ashley Paul James, Mike Bernemann, Latitude 48 co-founder James Hill, Vance Hashimoto, Jasen Kaya, and Hawaiian steersman Jim Foti once again. This 2013 *Team Cascadia* crew would finish 1st Place Men Open Spec Iron and 7th Place Overall. The 2014 Pailolo Challenge would be the 3rd time that *Team Cascadia* would officially race together. This would be once again top paddlers from Washington / Hawaii / Canada competing against some of the best crews in the world. This 2014 crew was comprised of Ashley Paul James, Latitude 48 coach James Hill, Vance Hashimoto, Fiji paddling adventurer Jasen Kaya, Seventy 48 Race 2018, 6-By-600 Leader Alan Goto, and Hawaiian steersman Jim Foti for the 3rd consecutive year. This 2014 *Team Cascadia* crew would finish 6th Place Men Open Unlimited Iron and 10th Place Overall. [31] It is worth noting that although there are no online references for James competing in OC6 or small boats races from 2017-2012, James was invited onto a crew that would finish 1st Place Men Open Spec Iron at the Pailolo Challenge in 2 consecutive years.

The original CORA publication "*Team Cascadia - Paddlers Without Borders*" was written to document a concept that has been around for many years that involved paddlers from Oregon / Washington / Canada forming crews for outrigger canoe racing events and quite often taking the podium. [32] The concept of *Team Cascadia* has gone by many names over the years and that article captured 4 memorable occurrences of this concept. However, that article was based on a reference to a July 2018 The Gorge Outrigger Race crew named *Team Cascadia*, consisting of Alan Goto, Ashley Paul James, Erik Scharffenberg, Jeremy Cole, Mike Bernemann, and James Hill, who would finish 1st place Unlimited V6 Masters Men and 3rd place overall. [33]

More than 300 paddlers participated in the August 2018 Howe Sound Iron Canadian Championship Outrigger Races held in Gibsons BC. Alan Goto from Sand Point Outrigger Canoe Club and James would team-up on Sunday to race OC2 finishing with a time of 46:58, beating the 2016 fastest time of 48:30. [35]

From 2019-2024, James amassed an impressive portfolio of wins in OC1/OC2 distance events. [41] [42] [43] [44] [45] In both 2022 & 2023 at The Gorge Outrigger Race, James would race with a V6 crew to 2nd place Unlimited Masters Men. [51] [52] [53]

James has represented Team Canada at International Va'a Federation (IVF) World Distance in 2023. At 2023 Samoa IVF World Distance, James would race with an all-Canadian crew that would place 4th in V6 Masters 50+ Men. [55] [56]

## **Coach-Builder Achievements**

After getting into paddling through dragon boating, James was coerced to start coaching with a mere 6 months of paddling experience and has been learning and loving coaching ever since. James enjoys learning about human performance and coaching theories, and putting that knowledge into effect by helping people discover their passion for paddling and reaching beyond what they assumed limits. As an athlete, James has competed in the Molokai Hoe, Pailolo Challenge, Catalina Crossing, Queen Lili'uokalani, the Maui 2 Molokai OC1 race and countless local and regional races. Having now coached everyone from novices who had never paddled before on up to Team Canada, James is proud to be working with Latitude 48 to build this new club and its athletes. [60] [61] [62] [63] [64]

The Gorge Rowing and Paddling Club (GRPC) was established in 1996 at 2940 Jutland Road under the umbrella of the GO Rowing and Paddling Association of Canada. [65] The Gorge Rowing and Paddling Centre in Victoria was established in 2001 as a high-performance sprint canoe club where elite athletes would be able to train year-round with other athletes of a comparable calibre. [65] The club worked in conjunction with the Pacific Sport National Training Centre at its outset, but then became a part of GO, focusing primarily on rowing, outrigger canoeing, and dragon boating. In November of 2013, GO decided it was time to exit from day-to-day management and operations of the GRPC. [66] The Gorge Rowing and Paddling Centre disbanded with the departure of GO, and the Chinook Racing Canoe Club was begun in 2012 with James Hill as a co-founder. [67] [68] [69]

Jim Pearson, Corey Teramura, Melanie Conard, and James Hill had started all the formal outrigger canoeing programs at what was then GRPC in the early-2010s under the management of Jude Knowles, with the intent of building something resilient enough to endure major change events. James would be a coach for 5 years with GRPC and then Fairway Gorge Paddling Club (FGPC) as outrigger canoeing / dragon boating programs transitioned from GRPC to FGPC in 2014. [70] While Jim / Corey / Melanie / James were coaches with GRPC / FGPC, outrigger canoeing teams went to Molokai, Pailolo, Queen Lili'uokalani, and Catalina (with podium at Pailolo Women 3rd Place and Catalina Spec Women 1st Place). Those outrigger canoeing programs carried on through the transition away from GO and continue to this day. When Jim / Corey / Melanie / James moved on to form Latitude 48 in 2016, they were confident that the legacy they had put in place would support future FGPC outrigger canoeing program coaches. [71] These accomplishments have led to James having an impressive coaching CV with roles as coach for GRPC and FGPC and Latitude 48 and Team Canada.

The CORA Town Hall Committee has been fortunate that so many individuals have been willing to step forward as Guest Speakers and showcase their public-speaking skills. James generously volunteered his time to speak at the CORA Town Hall (11 November 2023 4PM Pacific): *Stellar Seven*, as a Guest Speaker on behalf of Norman MacDonell. His personal account of their life-time friendship shared insights on the character of Norman MacDonell that had contributed to his induction into the Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame. [77]

James has volunteered his time to provide coaching guidance in various forums. In 2018, James did a presentation as part of a podcast with Kristyn Anthony on "*life in an outrigger canoe*." [78] In 2021, James did a CORA Town Hall presentation as part of the CORA Coach Panel on Solo Boat Stroke Technique. [79] In 2025, James did CORA Town Hall presentations as part of the CORA Cup Series Invitation to Regional Coaching Roundtables. [80] James has served with the CORA IVF Committee as a member of the IVF Selection / Coaching Committee. [81]

## **Pioneering Achievements**

Latitude 48 Paddling Club was formed in 2016 by coaches / leaders in the Victoria outrigger canoe and dragon boat paddling community of British Columbia, including co-founders Melanie Conard and James. There is very limited water access in the Victoria Gorge Waterway (the narrow tidal inlet connecting Victoria Harbour to Portage Inlet), known simply as "The Gorge" to Victoria locals. Latitude 48 Paddling Club and Ocean River Paddling Club (ORPC) shared dock space at Village Marina behind Value Village on Store Street until the amalgamation of Latitude 48 and ORPC in May 2021. This amalgamation of Latitude 48 and ORPC provided many benefits to Latitude 48 and ORPC club members specifically, as well as the paddling community in general. ORPC contributed 4 traditional Spec OC6s (2 Clipper Advantages; 2 Outrigger Connection Mirages), while Latitude 48 contributed 3 Unlimited OC6s (2 Puakea Malolos; 1 Kamanu Nanahope). This expanded OC6 fleet allowed Latitude 48 with Melanie Conard and James to provide training in a diverse set of OC6s to a growing club membership. ORPC and Rosemary Henry had founded the mid-distance Bridges Race in 1996, the Bridges Inny / Outty Small Boats in 1997, and the Island Iron in 1999. By virtue of Latitude 48 bringing a larger club membership and commitment to continue these 3 legacy CORA races, Latitude 48 with Melanie Conard and James brought **continuity** to the outrigger canoeing community that these events would remain on the race schedule. [82]

## References

Note	Article	Link
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[12]	James Hill Strategic Planning Analyst	<a href="https://dir.gov.bc.ca/gtds.cgi?esearch=&amp;updateRequest=&amp;view=detailed&amp;sortBy=name&amp;for=people&amp;attribute=display+name&amp;matchMethod=is&amp;searchString=James+Hill&amp;objectId=148242">https://dir.gov.bc.ca/gtds.cgi?esearch=&amp;updateRequest=&amp;view=detailed&amp;sortBy=name&amp;for=people&amp;attribute=display+name&amp;matchMethod=is&amp;searchString=James+Hill&amp;objectId=148242</a>
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[52]	2023 The Gorge OC6	<a href="https://events.pacificmultisports.com/Events/1121/Participants">https://events.pacificmultisports.com/Events/1121/Participants</a>
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[66]	2001 Gorge Rowing And Paddling Centre (Sprint Canoe) At Gorge Rowing And Paddling Club Established	<a href="https://cfly.ca/canoe/Gorge.htm">https://cfly.ca/canoe/Gorge.htm</a>
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[71]	2016 Latitude 48 Started When Former GRPC / FGPC Coaches Exited	<a href="https://www.latitude48paddling.ca/">https://www.latitude48paddling.ca/</a>
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