



CANADIAN OUTRIGGER HALL OF FAME

Melanie Durban



Summary

There is an intriguing story here that is yet to be pieced together. **Melanie Durban** grew up in the Kelowna BC area where she achieved success across a wide array of highly competitive sports including distance running, distance swimming, and distance cycling. At some point circa 2007, Melanie joined Kelowna Paddle Centre (KPC) where she very quickly excelled at surfski, solo / tandem outrigger canoe, and six-person outrigger canoeing. and that would lead to incredibly successful achievements in outrigger canoeing. This transition from distance runner to distance swimmer to distance cyclist between 1989-2012, to 2022 London IVF World Sprints singles event double World Champion and then 2023 Samoa IVF World Distance singles event World Champion and then 2024 Hilo IVF World Sprints singles event almost double World Champion is a compelling story.

Early Career

There is some information available on the early career of Melanie that led to her involvement with outrigger canoeing, and this is the storyline still to be pieced together. Melanie may very well have spent most of her life in the Kelowna area. Melanie graduated from Kelowna Secondary High School in 1979. What is known is that Melanie, like many in the Okanagan paddlesports community, has participated in the Gran Fondo series of long-distance road cycling races, as evidenced by Melanie completing the 100-mile distance at the 2012 Penticton Gran Fondo, and finishing 27th Place Overall out of 98 40-49 Female participants. Melanie, like many in the Okanagan paddlesports community, has participated in long-distance running races, as evidenced by Melanie completing the 1989 Kelowna Mid-Summer 10KM race, and finishing 10th Place Overall out of eighteen 20-29 Female participants. Melanie would later participate in the 1995 Kelowna Mid-Summer 8KM race, and finishing 8th Place Overall out of thirteen 30-34 Female participants. Melanie, like many in the Okanagan paddlesports community, has participated in long-distance swimming races, as evidenced by Melanie completing the 1989 Across The Lake Swim race, and finishing 10th Place Overall out of fifteen 20-29 Female participants. The annual Across the Lake Swim Kelowna is the largest and longest continuously running open water swim event in Canada. Swimmers complete a 2.1 KM swim near the Old Ferry Docks at the bottom of Old Ferry Wharf Rd. in Westbank (West Kelowna) to Hot Sands Beach in City Park, Kelowna. Since the inaugural event in 1980 until it was cancelled before the 2015 event, the Kelowna Ski2Sea race that spanned 95 kilometers from Big White to Hot Sands Beach at Kelowna City Park, had grown from four categories to six and includes Nordic skiing, mountain biking, running, and canoeing. Melanie Durban was part of the winning womens team (Cindy Rhodes; Laurie Charbonneau; Melanie Durban and Laurelee Nelson; Jenn Schultz; Meghan Molnar; Helen Munro) in the 2004 Kelowna Ski2Sea race. What is apparent is that Melanie was following a progressive path of multi-disciplinary sports including distance running, distance swimming, and distance cycling that would lead to incredibly successful achievements in outrigger canoeing. [101] [102] [103] [104] [105] [106] [107] [108] [109] [110]

Outrigger Canoeing Achievements

Melanie has a very long and successful career as a solo / tandem outrigger canoe and surfski competitor going back at least as far as 2007. You will find Melanie in the Top 3 in the standings in her boat / gender / age division for CORA small-boat races when you review race results on Webscorer, CORA website, and Jericho website. Melanie has raced with Kelowna (KPC) OC6 crews including the Ageless Wonders (Karen Bates; Melanie Durban; Tracey Sutton; Sharon Taylor; Sheila Strother; Christine Castrucow) for CORA events all around the Province including Vernon (Freshwater

Challenge; Length Of The Lake), Penticton (Duel In The Desert), Harrison (Echo Island Challenge), Burnaby (Lotus Iron), Vancouver (Jericho Classic), Victoria (Island Iron), and Comox (Island Iron) from 2007 to present. [121] [122] [123] [124] [125] [126]

Melanie has represented Team Canada at International Va'a Federation (IVF) World Sprints / Distance from 2022-2024. At 2022 London IVF World Sprints, Melanie would take Gold in V1 500M Masters 60 Women AND take Gold in V1 500M Masters 50 Women. This was unprecedented. Canadian paddlers had won Gold and Silver or Bronze medals in single events in V1 in the past. Canadian paddlers had won multiple Gold medals in team events (V6 / V12) in the past. This was the first time that a Canadian paddler would be a double World Champion winning two Gold medals in single events in the V1. While this was the first IVF World Sprints for Melanie, her extensive paddling background had set her up as a clear favourite. At 2022 London IVF World Sprints, Melanie would race with Team Canada crews that would take Bronze in V6 500M Elite Women, and place 4th in V6 1500M Elite Women. At 2023 Samoa IVF World Distance, Melanie would take Gold in V1 Masters 60 Women. At 2023 Samoa IVF World Distance, Melanie would race with a Team Canada crew including (Carole Fullerton; Cheryl Skribe; Julie Kippen; Kamini Jain; Melanie Durban; Tara Hastings) that would take Bronze in V6 Masters 50 Women. At 2024 Hilo IVF World Sprints, Melanie would take Gold in V1 500M Masters 60 Women, and advance to Semifinals in V1 500M Masters 50 Women where she was Disqualified. It is worth noting that there were an incredible 258 Disqualifications at 2024 Hilo IVF World Sprints, and had Melanie avoided being Disqualified, she may have very well repeated as a double World Champion. [141] [142] [143] [144] [145] [146] [147] [148] [149] [150] [151] [152]

Exemplary Achievements

Joey Hertz in 2014 as President of Kelowna Outrigger Racing Canoe Club Association, spearheaded an initiative that would have a substantial impact on the future not only of the Kelowna Paddle Centre, but also the Pandosy Waterfront Park. The City of Kelowna Regular Council Meeting Minutes from 2013-July-30 were a pivotal moment in the evolution of Kelowna (KPC). There was an Agenda item with regards to Temporary Use Permit Application No. TUP13-0004 3050 Abbott Street, City of Kelowna. The details documented with regards to this Agenda item highlight the individuals who played a part in this pivotal moment for Kelowna (KPC). Joey Hertz of the Kelowna Outrigger Racing Canoe Association, as the Applicant, had put forward a compelling case for this Temporary Use Permit. There were a number of other Kelowna Outrigger Racing Canoe Association members who communicated their support for this Temporary Use Permit including Sandra Mowat, Eric Prehoffer, Leanne Stanley, Melanie Durban, and Jeff Fink. What was impressive was the extensive list of Letters of Support from Don Mulhall (Penticton Racing Canoe Club), Lynda Roberts (Calgary Canoe Club), Steve Frisch (Go Rowing and Paddling), Mary Jane Abbott (Canoe Kayak BC), John Edwards (Canoe Kayak Canada), Cindy Wright (Canadian Outrigger), and Peter Schultz (Rotary Club of Kelowna). [191]

Melanie Durban was one of thirteen members of a Kelowna Paddle Centre (KPC) team (Tamlyn Bohm; Christine Castrucow; Melanie Durban; Jeff Fink; Kale McMahon; Tom Maxwell; Aly Marson; Sally Wallick; Alex Quintans; Sheila Strother; Kathy Montgomery; Sharon Taylor; Greg Redman) that paddled relay-style continuously on Okanagan Lake for 24 hours in 2018-April to raise more than \$9,000 for people with cancer. [192]

References

#	Note	Link
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[107]	About Kelowna Ski2Sea Race	https://www.castanet.net/news/Kelowna/90409/Ski-2-Sea-race-runs-through-Kelowna
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[125]	2023 Keats Chop	https://www.jerichoutrigger.com/races2023/keatschop.html
[126]	2024 Duel In The Desert Choose Your Weapon	https://www.jerichoutrigger.com/races2024/weapon.html
[141]	2022 Kelowna Paddlers Nab Podiums At World Championships	https://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/Local_Sports/Kelowna_paddlers_nab_podiums_at_World_Championships/
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[144]	2022 London IVF World Sprints Championships Results Kelowna Paddle Centre (KPC) Members	https://kelownapaddlecentre.ca/2022-vaa/
[145]	2022 Podium Positions For Kelowna Paddlers Athletes At World Championships	https://www.castanet.net/news/Sports/381562/Podium-positions-for-Kelowna-paddlers-athletes-at-World-Championships
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