

USCA Adaptive Paddling Teams at 2004 World Outrigger Sprints



In the true spirit of Aloha, the Hilo World Sprints organizing committee has implemented a recent amendment to the 2004 IVF World Sprints Rules by including one 500 meter exhibition race for paddlers with physical disabilities in the V12 division in 2004 IVF Hilo World Sprints. The intent of the exhibition race is twofold, (1) to provide an opportunity for paddlers with disabilities, who feel the same passion for outrigger canoeing and

desire for competition as able-bodied paddlers, to demonstrate their ability to perform in the sport (2) to inspire, educate and motivate countries and regions around the world to begin/continue recreational, fitness and competitive outrigger canoe programs for paddlers with disabilities and promote the vision of outrigger canoeing as a potential new Paralympic sport..

Outrigger canoeing is a uniquely wonderful sport that is enjoyed by both men and women with many types of physical disabilities, including, but not limited to spinal cord injury, brain injury, cerebral palsy, amputations, multiple sclerosis, and visual impairment. This is largely due to the spirit of Aloha and the spirit of Ohana that welcomes new people into our global family of paddlers and the nature of the outrigger canoe that accommodates simple adaptations that meet the individual needs of paddlers with disabilities.

Mixed gender inclusive teams, composed of three men with disabilities, three women with disabilities, three able-bodied men, and three able-bodied women will compete in the V12 exhibition race. An Italian team lead by Captain Sandra Truccolo, a mainland United States team, organized by US Canoe Association's Adaptive Paddling Chairman, Jan Whitaker and Team Hawaii sponsored by Project Pure Light have confirmed their rosters for this inaugural race. Three other countries continue their efforts to form teams and obtain funding for team participation.

To paraphrase Robert Picardo, announcer for the exhibition outrigger canoe races for paddlers with disabilities held during USA Canoe/Kayak's 2004 Olympic Canoe and Kayak Trials, the greatest challenge for athletes with disabilities, is not getting to the finish line; the challenge is getting to the starting line. The inaugural exhibition race at 2004 IVF Hilo World Sprints has addressed that challenge; it will create an enduring legacy that will promote the growth and the love of the sport of outrigger canoe racing by paddlers of all abilities around the world.

Submitted by Jan Whitaker, Adaptive Paddling Chairman
United States Canoe Association