

ACA Updates ✂

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To:Kaycee Maas <kmaas@americancanoe.org>



Serving paddlers since 1880



Take a quick break from your day, and find some motivation for a weekend of paddling by enjoying the latest edition of the ACA's Monthly Membership Newsletter!



Summer Solstice Sticker Design Contest

The 2024 Summer Solstice Celebration is approaching, and we need help from ACA members to get as many people on the water as possible!

If you plan to host a paddling event over the ACA Summer Solstice Celebration, June 19-23, you can [submit the event to the Summer Solstice Celebration Calendar](#) and we will send you free, exclusive stickers designed by ACA member, Rafael L. A. Mesquita to hand out to your entire class. Kaycee, the ACA's Communications Manager, will follow up for your mailing address and the number of stickers you need.

This is a great opportunity to increase the visibility of your event and to join in an international celebration! All we ask from you is that you take a picture or vertically oriented video during your course and send them to us to share! We encourage you to share your personal or business Instagram handles so that we can tag you.

Contact Kaycee at kmaas@americancanoe.org with any questions. Please note, the deadline to submit courses to the calendar and receive stickers is May 15.

If you are interested in attending an event, but not hosting, find an event near you and connect with your local paddling community!



Find an Event

International Boating and Water Safety Summit (IBWSS) Communications Award

At the 2024 International Boating and Water Safety Summit, the ACA Regional Activity Council (RAC) received a communication award for the Community Impact category. This program created partnerships between nationally certified ACA instructors with state agencies, regional paddling clubs, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, and additional paddlesports stakeholders in Tennessee and North Carolina. This effort taught “Kayaking 101” classes at state parks to kick off National Safe Boating Week in 2023, resulting in hands-on training for 279 students by 179 volunteers from 46 organizations, with an estimated in-kind donation of 1,872 volunteer hours. In addition, this effort generated 36 news stories that with more than 200,000 impressions.

RAC Secretary, Bev Cosslett, received this award on behalf of the ACA. Bev looks forward to the 2024 National Safe Boating week where she and ACA South Carolina State Director, Geoff Chambers, are working to bring Kayaking 101 courses to State Parks in South Carolina! We are looking forward to expanding this initiative to approximately 45 classes being hosted in state parks across 7 states: Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Missouri and Texas!

Read More

ACA 5-Year Strategic Plan Livestream

Wednesday, May 8 at 7pm EST is your opportunity to hear directly from ACA Board Chair, Dave Lumian, ACA Executive Director, Beth Spilman and ACA Staff Members, Kaycee Maas and Kelsey Bracewell about the steps being taken to advance the ACA along the 2023-2028 5-Year Strategic Plan. This panel will be moderated by Pam Dillon, the ACA Strategic Plan Committee Chair and will dive into the where the ACA currently stands and where we are heading! This is the final panel in this series of livestreams made available on Facebook and YouTube and we really look forward to connecting! If you missed the previous four livestreams, the recordings can be found [here](#).

Join on Facebook

[Join on YouTube](#)



ACA Competition Club Feature: RIVERSPORT Youth Canoe/Kayak Team

The RIVERSPORT Youth Canoe/Kayak Team gives kids the opportunity to race in Olympic-style canoe/kayak competitions — fun, exciting, and a great way to get involved in one of America's fastest growing water sports!

The team is co-ed and open to youth ages 8+. Youth get on the water in rec kayaks to get started, then move up to racing canoes (kneeling) or kayaks (seated). Kids who are interested in whitewater slalom can also learn the basics of this sport in RIVERSPORT's whitewater center — first on calm water, then in gentle rapids as their confidence and skills grow.

Our youth paddlers compete in regional and national events in sprint and slalom and have a chance to see the sport at its highest level as RIVERSPORT hosts international race events. Speaking of... the second weekend of Canoe Slalom Olympic Team Trials take place at Riversport OKC today!

If you are local to Oklahoma City, be sure to find a program that is right for you!



[Learn More](#)

2024 U.S. Canoe Slalom Olympic Team Trials

The first weekend of Slalom Olympic Team Trials was a blast! Montgomery Whitewater was a wonderful host and did a great job of making this event feel special! Incredible

performance by all athletes and a special shout out to the athletes who podiumed!

MK1

- 🥇 Michal Smolen
- 🥈 Joshua Joseph
- 🥉 Tyler Westfall

WK1

- 🥇 Evy Leibfarth
- 🥈 Ria Sribar
- 🥉 Marcella Altman

MC1

- 🥇 Bug Lokken
- 🥈 Casey Eichfeld
- 🥉 Nathaniel Francis

WC1

- 🥇 Evy Leibfarth
- 🥈 Marcella Altman
- 🥉 Isabella Altman

The next stop for these talented athletes on the road to Paris is at RIVERSPORT in Oklahoma City for the second weekend of the Slalom Olympic Team Trials! If you can't make it to Oklahoma this April 26-27 to watch in person, follow along live on Peacock, NBC.com, or with the NBC/NBC Sports App! Streaming will be available on Friday, April 26 from 10:00am – 2:30pm EST and on Saturday, April 27 from 10:00am – 2:30pm EST & 5:30pm – 8:00pm EST!



Photo Credit: Rob Giersch / Athlete: Ria Sribar

[Watch Live](#)

2024 Americas Continental Olympic Qualifier & Panam Canoe Sprint Championships

The 2024 Americas Continental Olympic Qualifier & 2024 Panam Canoe Sprint Championships took place this April 23-26! We were thrilled to host this event on home turf in Sarasota, Florida at Nathan Benderson Park.

U.S. athletes had incredible performances, notably Jonas Ecker and Aaron Small won the Men's K2 500m race and qualified for the Olympics this summer in Paris! The whole team walked away with many medals and PR's, and we couldn't be prouder of their incredible sportsmanship. The full list of 2024 Panam Sprint Canoe Championships podiums are below!

- 🥇 Jonas Ecker and Aaron Small – MK2 500m
- 🥈 Kali Wilding – WK1 200m
- 🥉 Jonas Ecker – MK1 1000m
- 🥈 Aaron Small – MK1 500m
- 🥇 Andreea Ghizila and Azusa Murphy – WC2 500m
- 🥈 Andreea Ghizila – WC1 500m



U.S. Canoe Sprint National Team brought the heat in Sarasota!

Photo Credit: Cathy Kasperbauer

2024 Team USA Media Summit

On April 15-17, three of the top canoe/kayak athletes in the USA were invited to New York to meet with hundreds of reporters from prominent news outlets across the country! Blake Haxton (sprint), Nevin Harrison (sprint), and Evy Leibfarth (slalom) brought great energy to their interviews, photo-ops and panel discussions, charming everyone they met.

This was an incredible opportunity for canoe and kayak to have a moment under the spotlight. In addition to sharing their experiences as Paralympic and Olympic athletes, they each shared details of what makes canoe sprint and canoe slalom so fun and unique.

[Watch Team USA Media Summit 2024 – Outdoor Water Sports Panel](#)

Watch Blake Haxton and Evy Leibfarth as they join rowing and surfing Olympians and Paralympians in a panel style discussion about outdoor water sports, moderated by actor Luke Slattery of “Boys in the Boat”!

[Watch Team USA Media Summit 2024 – Mental Health Panel](#)

With a heightened focus on what it means for an athlete to truly be at their best, hear from the USOPC Psychological Services Team, and some of Team USA’s best, including Nevin Harrison, about the importance of mental health care!



Instructor of the Month: Robert Nissenbaum

This April, our Instructor of the Month comes to us from Seattle, Washington! Congratulations to Robert Nissenbaum, who not only teaches solid coastal kayaking technique but emphasizes the why behind the technique!

Though Roberts loves teaching bracing and rescues, his true passion is Greenland paddling and traditional skills instruction. More paddlers, especially beginners, are choosing Greenland paddles and helping students make that transition to improve strokes and techniques with traditional blades has become something of a mission for him.

Beyond instruction, Robert is a dealer for Turning Point Boatworks, a Gearlab Outdoors Athlete (and retailer), as well as being fully invested in the ACA as the current State Director for Washington State, and an affiliate member of the Coastal Kayak Committee.

Paddlers looking to progress their skills or connect with traditional methods of paddling in the Pacific Northwest would find an incredible instructor in Robert! We are so grateful for Robert's involvement with the ACA and commitment to paddlesports education! Check out [Robert's website](#) to learn more and find a class near you!



Instructor of the Month, Robert Nissenbaum

[Read More](#)

If you know a truly awesome ACA instructor, [nominate them as future Instructor of the Month!](#)

ACA Instructor, Drew Gregory, takes the win at 2024 Bassmaster Kayak Series Championship

With a two-day total of ten bass measuring 180.50 inches, ACA Kayak and Kayak Fishing Instructor Drew Gregory wins the 2024 Yamaha Rightwaters Bassmaster Kayak Series Championship. Gregory collected \$25,000; part of a \$56,350 total cash purse split among the Top 16 anglers in the tournament. In all, 164 competitors representing 30 states and Canada took part. Rus Snyders, the 2023 Champion and an ACA Instructor, presented the

trophy to Gregory on a stage nobody in kayak fishing would have thought possible only five years ago: the Bassmaster Classic Stage.

Drew discussed that one of his key competitive advantages in the field of kayak anglers was that he had dialed in efficient outfitting, trim and weight distribution on his kayak so that he could maximize the efficiency of his motor and combine it with powerful paddling when required.

[Read More](#)

Thank you for reading our monthly newsletter! Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for the latest stories and updates!

Have some news to share? We encourage you to submit your content for consideration using this [Content Submission Form](#).

Sincerely,

Kaycee Maas, Communications Manager

American Canoe Association

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