

September 28, 2007

Hi everyone,

I just wanted to give a little recap of my experience in Brazil at the World Championships.

I was asked to apply for the position two weeks before the departure date. I did so with reluctance, knowing that I was going to miss Alberta Provincials, where I wanted to see how our athletes had improved during the summer and to meet new athletes that the clubs had worked with over the summer. After some serious last minute running around for passports etc I made it to the plane.

I have been to four World Championships as an athlete but the experience as a coach is quite different. As athletes we are quite selfish, needing to put ourselves first in order to perform to our best. As a coach I have to put others, and the Team first and make sure I'm doing what is necessary for the Team and the individual athletes to succeed.

The first week in Brazil was extremely frustrating. Michal Stanizewski (the Head Coach), the Purcell brothers and myself had to wait in Sao Paulo for six days waiting for the boats to clear customs. It was especially frustrating because I was sitting in a hotel all weekend while Provincials were going on, and I wasn't getting anything done. Everyday they said the boats would be ready soon and it kept getting postponed. Brazilian Bureaucracy is second to none. We managed some workouts in the hotel gym and even paddled, from shore in the round pool. Eventually we got the seven boats at midnight Wednesday and flew down to Foz do Iguazu where the race was being held.

The delay meant the athletes only had four sessions on the course before the race. We made the most of them. The race week was extremely long. Demo Runs Tuesday, Qualification K1 and C1 Wednesday, Qual C2 and K1W Thursday, Team runs Friday, Semifinal final K1 C1 Saturday, and Semifinal Final C2 K1W Sunday.

On the K1 and C1 days Kurt and I were in charge of a computer and a stopwatch in the video tent and downloaded and did splits for the athletes. This was a bit mind numbing but I got very proficient using Dart Fish, a great video analysis program that we will get eventually, and we got to hide from the 31degree weather with 100percent humidity.

My duties at the World Championships were to take care of the C2's and Women. On the days they raced I was the floating coach and made sure they had walked the course, had a good warm up, and finally stand in sheer nervousness while they got counted down and ultimately paddled down the course.

We had mixed results. The Cutts brothers finished the best of my athletes making the semi-finals and finishing 24<sup>th</sup>. I felt that the lack of time on the course really hurt all the boats, especially the Purcells because they didn't even get to watch people training in the

days leading up. We ended up with a full team doing demo runs before the Semi finals. (The first two people not to qualify get to do Demo's and Foreruns for the Semi finals)

Watching the best in the World as a coach was a great experience. It reinforced much of the techniques that we have been working on in the HP program and gave me a better understanding of how, logistically, things should be done. Obviously we are a long way off where the French are with their 22 staff, to our 3, but we will look for ways to reduce that impact.

I felt empowered going to the Worlds and haven't quite had time to sift through all the lessons I've learned there. Suffice to say, it was the right decision for myself and for the Alberta HP program in the long run, to go and help out the National program. In future I think we should continue to work with the other provinces and the CKC to strengthen Slalom in Alberta and across the Nation. I am pleased that Junior Team Trials will be at the Kananaskis. Let's put on a great race and then show the rest of the country what's up!

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