



Season Startup

Well it's time to get ready for another season, folks. In this newsletter we'll tell you what's been happening while you've been hibernating. We'll tell you what time your 'wake up call' is set for, and how we see the season panning out.

There are some interesting developments in the sport in the south, in other regions, at the national level and in the South Pacific...

Training venues – Owles and Kerr's

Christchurch training will be on our city's river again in 2008-09. The new rules from NZDBA now allow virtually all year training, but we haven't seen too many teams on the water over the winter.

We expect that most teams will want to practice from Owles Terrace on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday evenings again. Aoraki will run a safety boat along this stretch of water during designated times, to give you that extra support (and maybe some objective advice, if you are interested).

This will start on the Tuesday after Labour weekend (27 October).

Mind you, some teams are keen to make an even earlier start so will be on the water in early October. **But** teams must call or email us on aoraki.dragons@gmail.com so we can organise access, check the safety measures and clarify restrictions (eg off the water by twilight) **before** any extra training.



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Aoraki AGM – have our say...

Your association will hold its annual meeting on Tuesday 9th September at 7:30pm. Aoraki team have certainly enjoyed getting things started again, and we'd like to tell you what is happening, and listen to your ideas on where we should take the sport.

One of the major functions is election of officers on the Exec. Most of the board will remain, including Meri Gibson, Noel Anderton, Rick Smith, Peter Mitchell, Julian Yee, Lorraine Flintoft and Scott Johnson (making 7 out of the 9 positions). Vai Papali'i resigned in late June, and Terry Coyle has indicated he is not available.

We have nominations for Janice Melville (ABOL), Rebecca Polachek (CPC), John Fox (Shirley Boys) and Pomare Connell (Screws Loose). Please make sure your team captain/manager comes along to cast your team's vote. Otherwise email aoraki.dragons@gmail.com with your proxy vote.

For details of the location, email as above or phone Noel on 358 1633.

Online survey – what you told us

In our recent emails and newsletters, we asked what you thought of last season. Some of you took time to fill in the 10 questions in our online survey. [Click here](#) if you want to add to it – it is open till the end of September.

Your feedback tells us that you were pretty happy with the new format – some parts in particular. The first thing that stands out is why you are involved in Dragon Boating. Results

show you are in it to have fun, and to network with others – colleagues or schoolmates. Less important was the desire for competition or a personal challenge.

It is also clear that you are keen to keep the entry fees at an accessible level, and that you know what's going on. And fortunately that matches what Aoraki thinks we need in this sport too.

Lake Hood as a future venue

Our survey also showed that paddlers are keen to have 'an even playing field' – especially at a venue where more teams can race side-by-side.

You may recall that we have been actively looking for better venues, especially for the 'big' events. We need to race the international-standard 500m lengths, so Lake Roto Kohatu will not accommodate us any more.

So [Lake Hood](#) Chairman/Director David West was extremely enthusiastic when Aoraki visited him earlier this year. He is very keen to set up a local team from the lakeside community, and we are sure the Ashburton High School will be keen to use the local facilities too.

At this stage we expect to hold our main regatta on [Lake Hood](#), hopefully in the Jetski area, but our backup plan is to use the main lake. So the "[South Island Regatta](#)" is scheduled for 14th and 15th March. This extends the season a little longer than last year, but allows a week till the Wellington Festival and another week to the Nationals in Rotorua.

NZ Dragon Boat Association

Aoraki are keen to see our improvements develop beyond our own region, so we made sure our voice is heard at National level. Indeed Christchurch hosted the NZDBA AGM later in June, and had two of Aoraki's board elected to NZDBA [Exec](#). ABOL/Aoraki Chair Meri Gibson is on the NZDBA board and Noel Anderton (of Airways Paddleteer) is their Treasurer.

If you have any issues you want to raise, why not email us on aoraki.dragons@gmail.com.

You may have heard that at the World Champs in Sydney NZDBA and AusDBF held talks to discuss the formation of an Oceania Dragon Boat Federation (ODBF) so that the sport can be introduced to New Caledonia, Fiji, Tonga etc.

Training and Coaching resources

Australian Dragon Boat Federation (AusDBF) are keen to have their teams match up against NZ crews. It's fair to say that we are a little off the pace at the moment, so we appreciated the gesture when AusDBF gave us copies of their coaching manuals.



The manual discusses the role of the Coach, teaching skills and communication, basic skills and paddling, racing, physical conditioning, planning and monitoring your coaching effectiveness.

If any coach would like to peruse a copy, please drop us a line.

Closer ties with Australia

A couple of key figures from AusDBF spent some time with NZDBA and Aoraki Exec in late June. And they are very keen to see teams crossing the Tasman this season.

[AusDBF](#) President Kel Watt (from Canberra) and their Technical Director Melanie Cantwell (from Sydney) joined the NZDBA for a couple of hours. Plus we took them to Lake Hood to survey the facilities. As a result we aim to set up:

- ✓ Bi-annual Trans-Tasman Trophy between Aus and NZ in non-World Cup Years, hosted alternately between the countries
- ✓ Bi-annual Trans-Tasman clubs challenge between Aus and NZ clubs, in conjunction with the national challenge
- ✓ Greater interaction between Aus and NZ, with clubs encouraged to compete in regattas in both countries commencing from 2008-09 season.

And NZDBA/AusDBF will establish an "Oceanic DB Federation" as soon as possible (Cook Islands and Tonga are already interested).

Abreast of Life to early regatta

Four of the girls from Abreast of Life will cross the ditch in mid October to compete in the "Dragons Abreast Australia – Inaugural Corporate & Social Dragon Boat Regatta" on Darling Harbour, Sydney.

Cheryl Gee, Sharyn Chalmers, Jillian Broadbent and Meri Gibson will join a team predominantly from the Dragons Abreast Melbourne (DAM Busters) Club. The "DA Ratatouille" team formed at Chinese New Year earlier this year in celebration of the Chinese Year of the Rat. Ratatouille, being a dish of combined vegetables, is a fitting name for a crew made up of a variety of different members across the country who combined to compete on the day.

These Kiwi girls have earned the name "biker chicks" – over winter, they have spent most Sunday morning's keeping fit on the mountain bike tracks around McLean's Island.

Competing in the Sydney Regatta will give them a week or so head start on NZ teams, who are on the water from 28-October.

Rotating the Nationals

Recently, NZDBA initiated changes to dragon boating. Until now, the National Champs have rotated between 'Festivals' (i.e. Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch). From now on, [NZDBA](#) will run the National Dragon Boat Championships as a stand-alone event. It will no longer be an inclusive part of the Festivals.

So this season National Champs will be held at Blue Lake, Rotorua at the end of March 2009.

This will not affect the Festivals as they are currently run in the various regions. But Aoraki is already supporting the moves toward a 500m IDBF International standard race course.

NZDBA is researching locations that will accommodate the 500m racecourse necessary to meet IDBF standards for competition. In particular, Aoraki is promoting [Lake Hood](#) in Ashburton as a venue suitable to run the National Champs in alternate years.

IDBF Spec paddles

As part of the move to IDBF standards, NZDBA will now allow the use of International IDBF Spec 202a T-Bar or palm grip paddles for racing at all sanctioned events in NZ.

A number of adult and Secondary School crews have acquired these paddles, and raced with them at the National Champs at [Lake Pupuke](#), Auckland 2008.

A mix of paddles (carbon fibre, and wooden models) were used at the Nationals. These paddles will replace the current paddles used for competition.

Crews must race with 202a Spec paddles by the start of the National Dragon Boat Championships in March 2010. Teams would normally start out with wooden IDBF paddles (around \$40 each), and if they become more serious they might invest in something like the ZRE carbon fibre model – at \$6,500 for a set they are quite an investment.



The NZDBA have sourced a number of paddle suppliers - teams can purchase a variety of spec 202a paddles at competitive prices through the NZDBA.

Fund raising for your team

Team Managers should be thinking about organising their paddlers for the new season about now.

And while Aoraki has worked hard to keep fees as low as possible, teams will also be looking for funding. Some corporates have the luxury of being well supported by their employers, but clubs and schools often need to look for sponsors or charity.

Aoraki has had quite a bit of practice at applying to various charities for funding, so if anyone needs some tips or guidance, please email us on aoraki.dragons@gmail.com. For a start you will need documentation to show that your team is affiliated to a SPARC-recognised National Sports Organisation – we will be posting that out to teams.

[Canterbury Community Trust](#) have already been very generous, and we are hopeful that Southern Trust, Mainland and Bendigo Valley Trusts will grant us funds in the near future.

If all goes well, we will be able to provide paddlers with shiny new boats, a custom storage container, roadworthy trailer and maybe even our own IRB safety boat.

So if you need a new racing strip, or are interested in buying a new set of paddles, give us a call and we can get you started.

Paddler registration

NZDBA is keen to adopt the IDBF method of crew member ID tags. This will allow crew loading at regatta to verify that we have the right people in each boat. We'll let you know later how this system will work in Aoraki...



Race Dates for this season

Provisional dates for the coming season are:

First week of training: • **Tues 28-October (i.e. immediately after Labour Day)**

Aoraki Ice Breaker: • Sunday 7-December

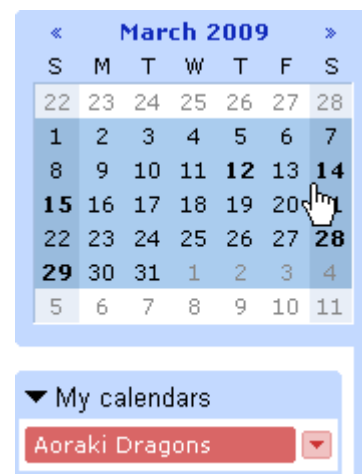
Tip day & Open Day: • 14-Feb-09

Early Bird Regatta: • 21, 22-Feb-09

South Island Champs, Lake Hood: • Sat 14 and Sunday 15-March-09

Wellington Dragon Boat Festival • Sat 21 and Sunday 22-March-09

National Champs, Blue Lake, Rotorua: • Sat 28 and Sunday 29-March-09



And internationally:

- ✓ Worlds in Prague 26th-30th August 2009
- ✓ Fourth World Corporate Community Champs in Paris, France 2010 (probably in July- August)
- ✓ Tenth Worlds Tampa Bay, Florida 2011 (probably July).