



Kia ora koutou

This is an update on the selection process for the 2006 Worlds.

### **Introduction**

The Worlds 2006 Programme is now well underway. The womens programme is being run by the Head Coach Corinna Gage, the Juniors by Head Coaches Kiwi Takao and Grant Bliss and the men's by a coaches committee comprising Brian Wilson, Jean Tetohu, Lance Roozendaal and Brett Annan. Separate updates for the four major divisions – Junior Men/ Junior Women, Men and Women – have been posted on the website today. You should check these updates to see where each Programme is at.

Everyone needs to be aware that there are some differences with the way each Programme is being developed, but in the end the selection process is the same. This involves the NKOA selection committees in each of the major divisions selecting paddlers who will represent Aotearoa at the Worlds. There is no other way for paddlers to compete at the Worlds (unless they are representing another country).

This has been the consistent policy now for some months. See, for instance, the panui which was posted on the website on February 10.

Unfortunately, the message does not appear to be getting through to some paddlers and teams who think that they will simply be able to go to the October trials, get a good time and automatically qualify for the Worlds.

It is true that the October trials are very important to the selection process. But two important points must be noted:-

1. First, you can only get to the trials if:-
  - you have been invited by a NKOA Head Coach, or
  - are a team which got a first 4 placing in the relevant 2005 nationals event (and have at least 4 paddlers out of the same team) or
  - have been recommended by your Region and, in (the relevant NKOA Selection panel's opinion), can have the potential to get the target times which are repeated below:-

### **Time Standards**

	<b>J16</b>	<b>J19</b>	<b>Open</b>	<b>Masters</b>	<b>Snr Mstrs</b>
<b>W1 500 Men</b>	<b>2.37</b>	<b>2.24</b>	<b>2.22</b>	<b>2.30</b>	<b>2.32</b>
<b>W1 500 Women</b>	<b>2.57</b>	<b>2.37</b>	<b>2.37</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>2.56</b>
<b>W6 500 Men</b>	<b>2.02</b>	<b>1.57</b>	<b>1.53</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>2.03</b>
<b>W6 500 Women</b>	<b>2.18</b>	<b>2.16</b>	<b>2.16</b>	<b>2.19</b>	<b>2.25</b>
<b>W6 1000/ 1500 Men</b>	<b>5.35</b>	<b>5.15</b>	<b>7.28</b>	<b>5.03</b>	<b>5.09</b>
<b>W6 1000/ 1500 Women</b>	<b>6.10</b>	<b>5.52</b>	<b>8.35</b>	<b>5.42</b>	<b>6.01</b>
<b>W12 Men</b>	<b>1.59</b>	<b>1.58</b>	<b>1.53</b>	<b>1.57</b>	<b>2.01</b>
<b>W12 Women</b>	<b>2.15</b>	<b>2.12</b>	<b>2.09</b>	<b>2.12</b>	<b>2.30</b>



It is obviously possible to qualify by more than one of these three criteria – for instance you could be in a first four crew from the nationals and also be on an NKOA Head Coaches list and be in a regional team that is capable of achieving the time standards. It doesn't really matter, so long as you satisfy at least one of the criteria. The important point is that if you don't meet one of those criteria there is no other way of getting to the trials and therefore no way of getting to the Worlds. For instance, a well-performing club team or self-selected team which didn't get a first 4 placing at the nationals won't qualify if it doesn't fully comprise of paddlers invited by a NKOA Head Coach or is not recommended by a Region.

2. Second, even if a team qualifies and gets to the October trials, that is no guarantee every individual paddler in that team will be selected for the Worlds. The selectors will be selecting paddlers, not teams. Teams will be formed after paddler selection. A paddler who has not established an individual record before the trials will not be selected, even if he/ she does well at the trials. There have been and will be plenty of opportunities in each of the Programmes to establish a personal record (see the details on the separate Programmes for further information). If paddlers haven't taken up the opportunity to get a personal record established, they can't complain later about not being selected.

The selection process is further explained in the "Questions and Answers" section at the end of this panui.

### **Funding**

At present, everyone who is involved in this process is giving their time and expertise on a voluntary basis. We are very fortunate to have top people in our sport who are prepared to do this. No-one is going to be paid to do these jobs.

We are seeking funding, but funding sources are scarce and it must be remembered we have a whole Worlds event to fund also. So any funding available will go towards assisting in the administration of the coaching programmes (coaches and administrators travel, accommodation and administration costs) so that those who have offered their time to assist you are not also out of pocket.

Beyond this, we have to expect that there will not be funding available for paddlers themselves.

Costs of training camps will be kept as low as possible. The reward is, in the least, learning to become a better paddler, and, possibly, the chance to represent your country at this major event.

### **Questions and Answers**

1. Can I or my team qualify for the Worlds without going through the NKOA selection process?

Answer: No. Only those paddlers who are part of the NKOA nomination and selection process will be able to attend the Worlds.



2. What about regionally-selected teams or top 4 teams from the 2005 nationals?

Answer: Regional teams and top 4 nationals teams may be able to qualify for attendance at the October trials. However this does not mean those teams can automatically stay together for the Worlds. It will only be individual *paddlers* who are on the NKOA list that can qualify for the Worlds. It will be the *paddlers* selected, not the *teams*.

3. I really want my team to be a Worlds team and not be broken up, but NKOA is saying it will select paddlers only – why can't my team stay together?

Answer: Our goal is quite simple - getting the best possible combinations together to give Aotearoa the best chance of Gold. If you are in a top team that the NKOA Selectors believe will be made better through changing paddlers, then this is what the Selectors will choose to do. We want our best paddlers to be in the best teams.

4. What about the fact that a champion team will always beat a team of champions?

Answer: We do want champion teams. Ideally, the best paddlers will be in those teams. But the selectors do recognize that there are a number of factors to consider – including the ability of paddlers to gel together as part of a team, the opportunities that team will get to train together, etc. It may not therefore be the ideal that we can achieve. All of these things will be taken into account when teams are eventually put together.

5. If a team does well at the October trials and its paddlers haven't got an individual record does that really mean none of that team's paddlers will be selected – is that fair and realistic?

Answer: It's certainly fair. NKOA selectors will be asking the question as to whether that team and its paddlers have a commitment to what they've been asked to do. If paddlers aren't prepared to go along with the process now, why should they be selected at all? In the very least, if a team comes out of nowhere and wins at the trials, the paddlers in that team who may be selected will be trialled individually after October and will be cut if other better paddlers are available. The message must be clear – you cannot rely on your team to get to the Worlds.

6. What if the rest of the team pulls out if one of their paddlers is cut.

Answer: Their choice.

7. What is going to be the quota of teams?

Answer: Provisionally, up to six in the W6 for each age division. But whether it will be six will depend on the performance of the teams. NKOA has decided that a team will need to be up to a good standard to qualify for attendance at The Worlds. That will mean the definite ability to get the sprint times in the table above.

8. I have heard that NKOA coaches will only be selecting two teams – what about other paddlers or teams that can get the times and are good enough to go to the Worlds?



Answer: All paddlers attending the Worlds will be selected by the NKOA Selection Committees and all teams attending the Worlds will be national teams. As answered in question 7, that may be up to six teams. But, even if those six teams all have the chance of doing well, they will not all be capable of getting gold medals. We have to be realistic about our limited national coaching resources, and it is likely that the NKOA coaches will be concentrating on one or two teams only as far as the dedicated training camps are concerned – if not in the lead up to the October trials, then probably after that in the lead-up to the Worlds event itself.

However, all other selected paddlers and teams will still be supported as much as is possible – because they will still be nationally selected, and still be national representatives. That may mean assistance with training programmes, contact by phone, etc, and hopefully we will also be able to arrange assistance of other coaches, such as regional coaches.

9. How will the October trials be organised?

Answer: These will be run to a trial format rather than races. The trials will be run to a format carefully designed for the selectors to see not only who the best paddlers are, but also the best team combinations. Times will be more important than results. Existing teams who have qualified for the trials, and any regional combinations, will be able to trial as that team. However all paddlers will compete in two trials over each race distance (eg 2 X 500, 2 X 1500 etc). There is a high possibility that an existing-team paddler will paddle in only one of those trials as part of that existing team. NKOA coaches/selectors will be forming other team combinations of paddlers to trial in the second trial over each race distance. As far as possible, these team combinations will be worked out before the trials. It should be clear to all paddlers that they need to individually put in the best performances they can in every trial they compete in, no matter what the team combination. That is because (and this should be sounding like a cracked record by now) it is paddlers who will be selected, not teams.

10. What's happening with the W1s?

Answer: Up to 16 W1 paddlers in each age division will be invited in early October to attend the October trials (most will be coming anyway as part of the team trials). The 16 invited paddlers will be selected on the basis of previous performances at national and international level, and also on recent results, eg from W1 time trials up to September this year. The W1 paddlers for the Worlds will come from that invitation list. The actual quota in each division is still being worked out and will be advised when final quotas come through. Again, all W1 paddlers selected will be national representatives.

11. I am confused about the regional programmes – how do they relate to the Worlds?

Answer: NKOA is right behind the regional programmes, which, if they are supported, will result in raising the bar in the quality of our paddling. However, while these programmes definitely assist in identifying our quality paddlers, they are separate to the Worlds selection process. The closest relationship is in the men's selection process, where the lead-up to the October trials is mainly time trials conducted at a regional level. But in the end that Programme is a national selection process, the same as for the Women and Juniors (see separate panui on the Men's Programme).



12. Can the selected paddlers form teams that can compete at the 2006 Nationals?

Answer: NKOA has decided that the nationals will remain a club teams-only event. Arrangements are being made to have separate (non-medal) races for Worlds teams, if the race programme allows for that to happen. So paddlers will be able to compete in their Worlds teams as well as compete (for medals) in their club teams.

13. Who are the NKOA selectors?

Answer:

For the Junior Programmes (Men and Women) the selectors are Kiwi Takao, Grant Bliss, Matahi Brightwell and Dave King

For the Women's Programme the selectors are Corrina Gage, Hotu Kerr and Richard Schuster

For the Men's Programme the selectors are Brett Annan, Jean Tetohu, Lance Roozendaal and Brian Wilson

In addition, Peter Reaburn (as Selection Convenor) is a member of all selection panels.

14. What if I have any other questions?

Answer: We have already given coaches contacts, and they are repeated again in each Programme's update being posted on the website at the same time as this panui. Please contact these people or Peter rather than expecting your club or regional officials to know all the answers.

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