



Sprint Club Nationals W1 Allocation

NKOA

2008

Discussion Paper

1 HISTORY

Paddling a rudderless solo outrigger canoe (W1) tests the ability to apply power with direction over any distance, sprints or marathons. Three basic components are required for this activity, namely: a paddler, a paddle and an outrigger. Whilst there is no restriction on the paddler (thankfully) and evolution of the paddle can only go so far, innovation remains with the outrigger. More importantly it is the interaction of these components with the water that determines speed and direction.

Given that the W1 must comply with national standards in regards to weight and length, the design of the hull, dynamics of the structure and materials used remain optional. The lack of specification from the World governing body regarding W1 design has reaped two polar views, it has generated innovation through design which in turn makes it hard to standardise and provide a level playing field where the test is of the paddler, not the craft.

As the sport of waka ama has grown in New Zealand so has the competition and desire to paddle W1 at the National club sprint regatta facilitated by NKOA. Prior to the National club sprint regatta 2008, each paddler could use the W1 of their choice as long it complied with the standards. As the paddler numbers grew so did the requirement to store the W1s. In 2007 the number of W1s was deemed unsafe and chaotic. For safety reasons NKOA needed to do something and were faced with the first question:

Question 1 : does NKOA allow paddlers to race in the OC1 of their choice or does NKOA provide the same specification OC1 for all paddlers ?

The answer that NKOA provided to question 1, was the former that each paddler should be able to choose. If the paddler can choose their W1, then most paddlers will want their own craft, if that is allowed then we are at the position of too many W1s and we have solved nothing. This then led to a rationalisation of the number of W1s which begs the second question:

Question 2 : How does NKOA rationalise the number of OC1s ?

The answer to question 2, was to allocate a quota of W1 to each Region. The Region must then allocate and manage the outrigger provision to best match the single paddlers representing that Region.

This discussion paper then attempts to expand the discussion by addressing the following:

- Objectives of W1 paddling, innovation and standardisation
- A review of the 2008 operational plan and identifying areas for improvements
- Suggestions for the National club sprint regatta 2009
- A response form for feedback from the paddling community of New Zealand.

2 Objectives of W1 Paddling

This discussion paper is not going to attempt to cover the history of waka ama's creation through to current day. All it will say is that in the last 10 years, single outrigger canoe (W1) design and materials have evolved. There are in New Zealand boat builders who are innovating and developing. There are 'sit-ons' fabricated outside of New Zealand and brought in by the container load. A paddler can order in a W1 from any country (at cost). In short there is diversity, innovation and choice when choosing a W1.

On the flip side, what are we measuring when we race? It's obvious; it's the fastest paddler to get from the start to the finish. What contribution is each component making? You can argue that it's not the boat, the paddler or the paddle but a combination of all three.

Is there really that much difference in paddles and boats? Isn't it about the paddler? To broaden this question, let's consider the innovation and then the standardisation of W1.

2.1 Innovation

This choice of W1 is fantastic in NZ, it has created competition and diversity in design and provided increased choice to suit a paddler's needs. Each paddler wants to own a canoe with which train, optimise and ultimately race. This is what has occurred steadily in the last four years (and beyond) at the National club sprint regattas.

Other sports have this issue, notably Formula One racing, mountain biking and skiing, to name three emerging and technical gear sports. Each have minimum specifications (like NKOA), each have different designers, philosophies, finances and popularity (like we have in NZ). It is clear that boat builders have worked with paddlers to develop designs and work with new materials to minimise the boat drag, improve lines and maximise the paddler contribution to forward momentum. This is a good thing, as it provides innovation, creates incomes for boat builders and its great for the sport to have forward moving technology application.

The only constraints are that it is expensive, \$3000 NZ is starting to get pricey for a custom built W1. Most juniors or indeed paddlers would struggle to justify this initial cost. In addition to initial purchase there are additional costs for storage, transportation and maintenance costs.

A breed of W1 is hitting the NZ shores, the Tahitian rudderless boat. This W1 is built and costed just for sprinting, no rudder system (which drives the prices up) no comfortable or paddle seating, just an W1 designed to go straight and fast. Compare this W1 to an all purpose W1 that can surf in the open sea, have a removable rudder system and be exposed to more testing conditions than that put upon a sprint W1. Who amongst our paddling community are going to purchase one W1 for sprinting and one for surfing/ocean paddling? I'm sure there are some, but in general the cost is too high.

So innovation is a good thing. It progresses the sport, the designs and brings the best of the paddler when designed with the paddler. It is however expensive to buy, costly to maintain and does not provide a level playing field for identifying the fastest paddler. The only way to do that is to normalise the components, such as; the water conditions (race at the same time) the paddle and the W1, the remaining component is the paddler. This lead to one interesting idea, what about a standard NZ sprint boat?

2.2 Standardisation

At the Worlds 2006 at Karapiro NZ, the W1 was a Surf Rigger- Mark II. The W1 was standardised for all to use. Those that attended I'm sure would have sourced an W1 of this nature and trained or practised in it. There was not much comment about the

standardisation of this boat for Worlds racing and it measured the paddlers ability and not the boats. Of course the authors exposure was limited and there is opportunity to make your views known in the questionnaire.

There are issues with providing this many W1's, where do you store them? Who pays for them? Who maintains them? etc. As discussed in 'innovation' where is the relationship with the paddler and the paddle in conjunction with the W1?

An offer was made to NKOA from the boat builders of NZ to get together and design then construct moulds for the NKOA sprint boat. Each boat builder could then make them and it would be this model that would be used at club nationals. This proposal would again deter innovation and adaption for each paddler size. As is pointed out to the author on a regular basis, we as paddlers are different shapes and sizes, how can a W1 be designed for a universal fit?

Expanding the philosophy of standardisation to a practical level, if a new and specific design is not achievable because it can not 'fit all' and one supplier is to provide a standard W1, which supplier? Which W1 design is best? Can the boat builder make that many of the same specification and quality? Who pays for them? How are they transported? So many questions!

2.3 Objectives for Nationals Club Sprints

The two over riding factors in this discussion are cost and catering for innovation.

It is not practical for a boat builder in New Zealand to build and provide 18 W1 boats for use exclusively at Nationals. High financial risk and already the paddlers have altered their techniques and familiarity to specific brands and indeed their own W1.

Clearly this document is leaning towards the status quo being retained of allowing innovation and choice, which means different but National compliant W1 designs.

The NKOA objectives to consider for the remainder of this discussion are then;

- o Allow innovation and maximise paddler contribution to going 'fast' through design
- o Allow individuals to bring their own W1 as long as they comply with standards
- o Store and manage the W1's safely

3 2008 Nationals Club Sprints Review

The W1 issue for 2008 Nationals got off to a bad communication start. NKOA wanted to review the numbers of W1s and issued a panui with a suggestion that only Surf Rigger Mark II's would be used. This resulted in a petition from paddlers that quickly spread on email in the middle of November 2007. It was clear from this email that the key issues discussed in section 2 were still to be discussed.

It was too late to start the debate of standardisation of W1 at National Sprints, the debate with which this discussion paper is attempting to clarify is occurring now in mid 2008 for the next Nationals in 2009.

The NKOA committee then clarified the position that it was a safety issue at Nationals with regard to the storage of W1's on W1 race day. One solution put forward and was subsequently trialled in 2008 was the regional quota of W1 with regional management.

Despite initial concerns over how 'workable' this was, it transpired through some clever spreadsheeting that the AROCA region with the largest demands on W1 access delivered

a rota system that 'worked'. It was by all accounts a 'headache' and had some teething issues but it delivered on the day.

There were issues for other regions, not all paddlers could bring their W1 in, and some bartering was going on with regions that didn't fill its quota (South Island). This really is the point of this discussion paper and notably the questionnaire.

The author was present for the entire W1 day and the afternoon before to review setup. Pictures of the preparation and the day itself are attached at the rear of this paper.

Of note and worthy of highlighting are the following;

- o Figures 1 and 2 : Stacking the W6 from the youth races, produces more space for W1 storage?
- o Figure 3 : Clear regional area marked with lines and poles
- o Figure 4 : Natural slope providing an excellent visibility
- o Figure 5 : W1s waiting for loading on periphery of management zone
- o Figures 6 and 7 : Keep clear area in operation
- o Figure 8 : Additional W1 storage area
- o Figure 9 : Regional storage close to the loading tent
- o Figures 10 and 11 : Fence signage and clear area behind the storage area

4 2009 National Club Sprints

For discussion and as a starting point, this paper proposes that the same regional quota methodology be applied. There exists more space around the official regional area but allowing more W1 would return the situation back to the 2007 safety issues. In addition to the 2008 W1 management plan there are some additional recommendations as we strive to evolve and improve the process.

4.1 Regional Coordinator Pack

Being a coordinator and in discussion with others, I propose that the coordinator has the following for 2009 W1 day either provided by the region or the co-ordinator;

- o A mobile phone to liaise with base camp and be available to others
- o Have spare bungs for singles
- o Have weights of varying sizes as those supplied went missing
- o Duck tape for fixing lane allocation numbers and holders
- o Lots of pens to monitor progress
- o A hard board for writing on (preferably with a pen attached)
- o Shade mostly likely provided by an umbrella
- o A chair or something to sit on
- o Additional lane numbers as some got lost or destroyed and lane number holders

4.2 Regional W1 allocation spreadsheet

Based on the AROCA system a template provided for regional coordinators to utilise to manage their allocation.

4.3 Regional W1 Priority

It is proposed that the highest ranked paddlers from each division by Region should automatically receive slots for their waka as they have best chance of representing their Region in the finals?

4.4 Loading Area Management

Elongate the official regional loading area facilitating the increase of area directly behind the loading tent. This would allow for the setup of 3 or 4 heats storage ensuring the smooth progression of the races.

5 Response Form

5.1 Purpose

The purpose of the response form is to allow the padding community to inject ideas and provide feedback on the 2008 operation. With feedback and constructive suggestions we can strive for a better W1 management plan for 2009.

5.2 Timeline

The timeline for the feedback questionnaire is proposed as follows:

- Response collection period from the posting of this paper to Deadline.
- Deadline for responses, Friday 22 August 2008.
- Collation and analysis of feedback – 22 to 29 August 2008.
- Report on outcomes to NKOA for AGM on 30 August 2008t, discussion welcomed.
- Proposed W1 management plan posted on NKOA website for discussion after AGM.
- Finalisation of W1 management plan through a panui in December 2008.
- W1 management plan implemented for January 2009 Nationals.

5.3 Feedback

Send your feedback in whatever form you can as follows:

Email : NZWAKAAMA@gmail.com

Fax : 03 365 0360

Post : P O Box 161
Beachlands
Auckland

W1 Management Plan Response Form

Q1. Do you own your own OC1 ? YES Go to Q2. NO Go to Q3.

Q2. If you own OC1 (s) what type(s) is/are they and where do you use them ?

| Type | Use |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| e.g. surf rigger mark II | Sea / lake / river |
| e.g. hurricane | sea only |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Go to Q3.

Q3. Did you race at Club Sprint Nationals 2008 ? YES Go to Q4 NO Go to Q7.

Q4. Did you take your own OC1 ? YES Go to Q5 NO Go to Q7.

Q5. Was it managed by the Region ? YES Go to Q6 NO Go to Q7.

Q6. Did you always get to use the OC1 you wanted ? YES Go to Q7. NO Go to Q7.

Q7. what general comments would you make about the 2008 Club Sprint Nationals 2008 OC1 Mangement

goto Q8.

Q8. Are there any suggestions you would like to make about the OC1 management plan 2009 ?

Q9. Would you be in favour of a standardised OC1 provided at Club Sprint Nationals ? YES Go to Q10. NO Go to Q11.

Q10 . Which OC1 model would it be (please specify)

goto Q11.

Q11. Please provide the following details (not complusory but would assist in analysis)

Name

Gender male female

Region

Paddler Number with NKOA

Appendix A

Photographs from W1 Area



Figure 1 – Stacking the W6 out of the way



Figure 2 – Better use of space with more W6 Stacking ?



Figure 3 – Clean stacking area, marked with spray and poles



Figure 4 – The natural slope allowing for excellent visual coverage



Figure 5 – W1's in preparation of 'official loading'



Figure 6 – Paddlers enjoying the 'keep clear' area between regional areas



Figure 7 – A closer view of the 'keep clear' corridor



Figure 8 – Extra W1 storage away from the regional areas



Figure 9 – A view of regional operation close to loading tents



Figure 10 – Fence Restriction Notice – observe space to left of fence



Figure 11 – Another view of the fenced area