

Buoy2Buoy Series

Intermediate W1 Series #4

9 August 2009

Sugars BLOG

Leading up to the week of our fourth regatta it almost seemed surreal could this glorious weather we'd been having over the past 2 weeks take us through to another perfect day on the lake, producing great racing, amazing footage and a few personal firsts from some of the paddlers. But I had to be reminded, waka ama is an annual sport, we were in the midst of winter, one training in a hundred we have good training conditions, therefore as I awoke to not so promising conditions and headed over to the lake for training, I sighed just another day and life of a waka ama paddler!!

The conditions slowly deteriorated over the next 2 hours, a new course had been determined but first we needed to consult with the parents & coaches whether they were comfortable with their children paddling. After a brief discussion rather than cancel the event it was settled upon to relocate to Panama Rd in Otahuhu. What's so exciting about this event is seeing the commitment of parents dedicated to their children and this wonderful sport, and Clubs all too ready in providing support boats to ensure the children could race. With waka laden vehicles and trailers we journeyed across to South Auckland to set up camp at our new venue, the infamous 'RAMP', a place where many top NZ paddlers have emerged.

Our race course was to, start at the 'Ramp', paddle down to the first bridge, turn the pylon and back

again to the 'Ramp'. The 5 Kuki Bunnies were to follow the lead Rabbit for a further 2 minutes and turn and chase down their male rivals like a hound dog in pursuit of its prey.

As the waters were not completely calm,



starting the first race took a little more time than it normally would with the strong outgoing current pushing the children in advance of the start line, but once the race itself got under way, a cascade of drama was about to unfold. Once again the Kuki girls Tshei, Deidre, and Storme seen below stampede into the lead with Wiremu Mackey showing the girls he too was familiar with this waterway following closeby.



The conditions benefited the sleek line of Deidre Hill's 'Extreme canoe' enabling her to capitalise on every wave that was offered at the time, she is one of the most consistent paddlers over the Series excelling when conditions are adverse. Deidre's fellow team mates Lyndiana and Patiariki showed their paddling skills weaving through the competitors in hot pursuit of the Rabbit. Tshei and Storme our two resolute rudderless paddlers over the Series may be small but they have a mammoth supply of stamina and focus tracking their canoes with fortitude and dexterity!

Our usual 2 man paddler Scotland Mokoau was making his W1 debut, a little hesitant at the start but the further into the race the greater his confidence grew. Te Paerangi boys Haimona, Kayden Kingi and Daryon Strickland alongside Waitakere's Metua Ewart were interchanging positions throughout the course in an attempt to see who could make the bridge first.

From time to time instructions can be misunderstood, our dependable Rabbit took the 5 girls an extra 2 minutes past the bridge forgetting that they would have to turn and paddle another 2 minutes back to the bridge but now the current would be opposing and the girls would be battling the extra 200 metres they had paddled with a head wind and opposing current. If these girls could close the gap or even take out the race, I would be impressed.

Wiremu Mackey of Tamaki seen below turned the bridge first, he had a commendable lead over the other boys. Children are definitely more polite than adults, our 4 boys mentioned earlier, each taking a wider line to turn the bridge so as not to interfere with each other and this is where Haimona sneaked through on the inside leaving the others to travel further around the pylon.



Waiting at the bridge for the girls to catch up, The Rabbit passes me, true to form Deidre was close behind and I watched her for the next 200 metres reel in 3 boys, she could do it I thought, only 3 more to catch up.

I decided to paddle alongside the second place girl Lyndiana Rosieur whispering to her to reel in the boy ahead of her, like the true turncoat that I am I dropped back to Patiariki Mitchell and whispered to her to reel in Lyndianna. Paddling with the girls for the

next 5 minutes I was amazed how strong these young girls were, the current and wind were in our face and I was paddling at a good intensity to keep with them and during that time I even had a split second thought, that gee this girl might beat me, so I veered off to the right like the champion that I am in search of a lonely male paddler that may like some worldly advice and there was my next victim, Wetere Taka Brown.

Suddenly I witnessed one of the most unfortunate events to happen 200m from the finish, over tipped Deidre Hills coming in second place at the time, odd I thought because it was a bit more sheltered from the wind and there I saw, the kiato had come disattached from the ama. If she had of flipped she could have just righted the canoe, jumped back in and paddled to the finish and maybe even caught Wiremu but instead she was left helpless hugging her canoe waiting for the rescue boat to assist her, putting an end to her successful running streak. Chivalry has definitely gone, as the boys paddled past her pretending to be remorseful, but that's racing one persons mistakes opens up a door of opportunity to be taken. Still, our enthusiasm remained intact and the racing pressed on and Wiremu Mackey took proud honours of being first paddler home much to the delight of his mother and supporters.



Followed behind for second place was Haimona Kingi, Daryon Strickland and fourth home and first girl was Lyndiana Rosieur followed closely by Patiariki Mitchell.

	Paddler Name(s)	Club	Time	Adjusted Time (4min)	Rudder/less	Place in Division
1	Wiremu Mackey	Tamaki	21.37	21.37		1
2	Haimona Kingi	Te Paerangi	24.08	24.08		2
3	Lyndiana Rosieur	Cookies	25.16	21.16		1
4	Patiariki Mitchell	Cookies	25.45	21.45		2
5	Metua Ewart	Waitakere	25.49	25.49		3
6	Daryon Strickland	Te Paerangi	25.69	25.69		4
7	Tshei Karauna	Cookies	26.06	22.06	RL	1
8	Storme Pare	Cookies	26.12	22.12	RL	2
9	Kayden Kingi	Te Paerangi	26.41	26.41		5
10	Wetere Taka-Brown	Waitakere	27.59	27.59		6
11	Scotland Mokoau	Te Paerangi	28.44	28.44		7
12	Deidre Hills	Cookies	28.51	24.51		na
13	Carol & Tule Tagitule	Te Paerangi	30.45	30.45		8
14	Mason Matthews	Te Paerangi	31.45	31.45		8

Race 2

The choppy waters proved to be a little hindrance so we had a quick briefing to get parents and supporters to load the girls together to ensure no delay that would send the girls adrift in the strong current. Our W2 paddler Sally Motu was left without a waka with our change of venue and after a little gentle persuasion she cautiously agreed to paddle a W1 with the reassurance that I and her 2 man partner Summa would paddle either side of her for the entire course.

The race began quickly and the girls took flight with everyone closely bunched for the first 200 metres, and then Kendra Leilua, Rautea Mitchell and Deidre Hill put in a little burst to create a small separation from the rest of the girls with their 2 man Club mates Sam and Aaliyah locked in the middle. Yes that's right Deidre was adamant to complete the race after her mishap so she was reracing again in the girls division, her only rest time being enough to retighten her kiato and ama to ensure they don't come apart again.

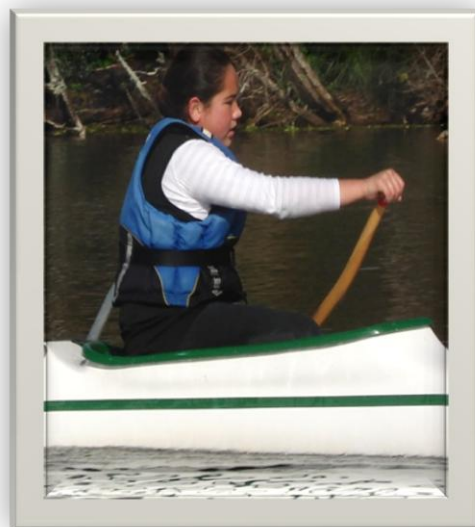
The race became a Kukis versus the rest, a somewhat repeat of the first race, however Makaira Berry of Waitakere was with the leading bunch as well as my little partner Sally Motu from Aratika. Our last event at the Lake with it's rough conditions was a bit of a traumatic experience for a 10 year old who had just started her W1 career.



All Sally needed was support and reassurance, but importantly to get back into a W1 again, race and build her confidence back, and that is definitely what I was witnessing throughout the race with every paddler competing. The faces on these children showed pain but behind that pain I saw courage, determination, strength and commitment. Success was in

completion and winning was a bonus, something we as adults forget, everyone that steps up to the startline are winners.

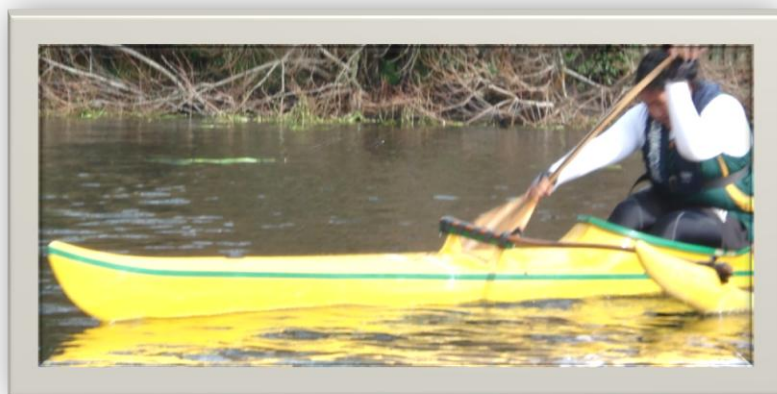
Like the first race every paddler in front I would tell them to use the paddler ahead of them to reel in, and when they did, look for the next paddler. Makaira Berry to my right I could see she was paddling with her bailer trailing behind her like a parachute, I shouted to her to put it inside her canoe but the length of the rope didn't allow it to sit inside her cockpit so it sprang back out again and dragged behind her adding unnecessary resistance, if the wind and tide wasn't enough. We all know that the 10 seconds it takes to stop & undo a rope would take off over a minute in final time.



Tamaki's Renee Mitchell and Sally were tussling out for 500ms of the race which in these conditions would have seemed like an eternity; it was great seeing the fighting spirit of these tiny girls. Next girl in front was Lauryn Steed from Kuki's paddling right in the middle of the channel, like David and Goliath if you can't beat em you out smart them. I usher Sally to move over to the right side of the bank knowing she'd be out of the channel and the strong outgoing current. For the next 200ms the two girls fought stroke for stroke, a true battle of 'brain versus brawn' and only fatigue prevailed over wit.

After the excitement between Sally and Lauryn 200 metres from the end I hear a little shriek and over goes little Renee Mitchell right near the spot where Deidres waka came apart in the first race. It must have a hoodoo on that little area of water, rescue boat assists Renee, she bails and finishes the race in true style.

First four girls home were from Kukis, powerhouse Kendra Leilua winning followed by Sam and Aaliyah (W2), Rautea and coming in fourth was 'brave heart' Deidre Hills with 24 seconds separating 2,3 & 4th place getters.



A special mention to our Te Paerangi girls sisters Lavendar & Paris Mokoau, Siale Tagitule and Quin Akui, small in stature but tall in character.

Overall Place	Paddler Name(s)	Club	Time	Place in Division
1	Kendra Leilua	Cookies	22.57	3
2	Sam Leilua & Aaliyah Steed	Cookies	23.21	1
3	Rautea Mitchell	Cookies	23.54	4
4	Deidre Hill	Cookies	23.58	5
5	Makaira Berry	Waitakere	25.2	6
6	Sally Motu	Aratika	25.34	7
7	Lauryn Steed	Cookies	26.46	8
8	Siale Tagitule	Te Paerangi	28.02	9
9	Lavendar Mokoau	Te Paerangi	29.45	10
10	Paris Mokoau	Te Paerangi	31.46	11
11	Quin Akui	Te Paerangi	31.52	12
12	Renee Mitchell	Tamaki	32.45	13

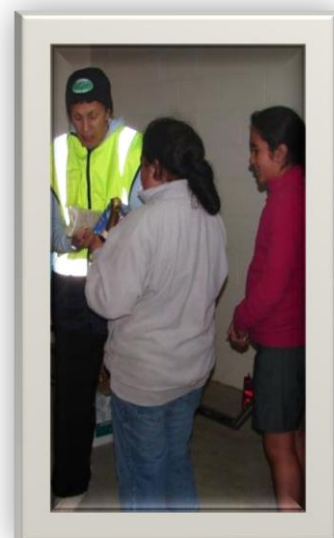
Like true Southern hospitality we were able to utilise the Auckland Rowing Club's underneath basement to have our prizegiving ceremony providing shelter and warmth to an otherwise cold day, allowing a BBQ to be shared with everyone. Our usual ceremony of exchanging of gifts and Auntie Lou's bottle of bubbly always goes well with the children. No need to be alarmed, every day I hoped a heavenly miracle would take place and the grape juice would turn into wine, needless to say the children got their bubbly.

The Buoy2Buoy Series has allowed these Intermediate paddlers paddle for 5 months over the winter. An event organised by volunteers with a zero cost outlay by making do with the resources you have at hand. Turning motorised transport into active transport, making entry fee a gift to be exchanged amongst entrants and lastly but importantly everyone celebrating the day with a shared meal a true expression of manaakitanga, a concept that looks for a mutual foundation upon which a sense of sharing, caring and respect can grow.

With our final regatta and prizegiving on 6 Sept 09, we are looking at making this day special, something that these children can look back upon and say, 'I was in the first Buoy2Buoy Series, and this is where I started my W1 racing'.

A big thank you to all the people that bought tickets for our Prizegiving Hamper raffle, and CONGRATULATIONS to our winners;

Liz Tane (#70) and Ray Kulatea (#51).





In closing if your workplace can provide free or discounted give aways for our 'Tama-Freakies' prizegiving, anything would be warmly appreciated contact me, sugart@xtra.co.nz your sideline reporter signing off.