

Canoe Sprint

Canoeing is a sport featuring small narrow boats that comprises two main Olympic disciplines (sprint and slalom) and in two formats (canoe or kayak).

Canoe sprint features canoe or kayak races in a straight line over various set distances on flat, calm water.

In canoeing, the paddler uses a single-bladed paddle to propel the boat forward and does so on one side of the boat only, and while kneeling on one knee. In kayaking, the paddler sits in the boat and uses a double-bladed paddle – one blade alternatively on each side of the boat.

Qualifying – the road to Rio

There are two main ways to qualify boats for the Rio Olympics. The first was based on results at the 2015 World Championships held in Milan in August where New Zealand qualified two boats – the women's K1 and K4.

The second opportunity is via the continental qualification. For New Zealand, the continental competition is the Oceania Championships held in Adelaide, in February 2016, where New Zealand will be targeting the men's K1 and K2.

After the boats are qualified, the New Zealand paddlers to compete at Rio will be selected by Canoe Racing New Zealand and the NZOC. This selection can be undertaken progressively but needs to be completed by June 2016.

Rio 2016 Canoe Sprint

When: Competition at Rio will take place over 6 days from Monday 15 August to Saturday 20 August.

Where: Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas.

The programme consists of 12 events in total – eight men's events and four women's events.





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Olympic Sport Information



MEN'S EVENTS	WOMEN'S EVENTS
Kayak Single (K1) 200m	Kayak Single (K1) 200m
Kayak Single (K1) 1000m	Kayak Single (K1) 500m
Kayak Double (K2) 200m	Kayak Double (K2) 500m
Kayak Double (K2) 1000m	Kayak Four (K4) 500m
Kayak Four (K4) 1000m	
Canoe Single (C1) 200m	
Canoe Single (C1) 1000m	
Canoe Double (C2) 1000m	

Finals are contested by eight boats, with heats used to determine who qualifies. In larger fields, semi-finals are used as an intermediate step, bringing together the fastest from the heats to race for the eight final spots. In smaller fields, the fastest boats from the heats qualify directly to the final, with semi-finals used as a second chance for the next fastest.

"We've got a strong performer in Lisa Carrington who continues a tradition of individual success in New Zealand canoe sprint that goes back to the 1980s. She's had major success since the gold medal in London by dominating the K1 200 event and is now starting to dominate the K1 500 as well. Lisa is now recognised internationally as the top K1 paddler and the fact she's been so dominant is down to some great work by herself and her coach Gordon Walker.

"We're now investing in our team boats and the women's team boat with Coach Rene Olsen, who has done exceptionally well in a short space of time. With the boat now qualified, the challenge is to keep the rapid rate of progress going which could lead to exciting results at Rio."

– Grant Restall, Open Team Manager, Canoe Racing New Zealand

The Stars of Canoe Sprint

New Zealand's Lisa Carrington is the defending K1-200m Olympic champion and two-time World Champion. She added the K1-500m World Championship title to her collection at the 2015 World Championships in Milan and will chase double gold in Rio.

The women's K4 crew of Jaimee Lovett, Caitlin Ryan, Aimee Fisher and Kayla Imrie created their own piece of history at the 2015 World Championships, finishing third in their semi-final, which was enough to confirm a top-10 ranking and qualify a boat for Rio.

In the glamour men's sprint event, established K1-1000m campaigners like Germany's Max Hoff (who was a bronze medallist in London) and Denmark's Rene Poulsen, are among the favourites. However, they must hold off the charge from a wave of younger paddlers including 2014 K1-1000m World Champion, Josef Dostál, from the Czech Republic who will be 23 at Rio.



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Olympic Sport Information



Did you know?

- The former Soviet Union still tops the Olympic medal tables for canoeing with 29 gold medals, despite not competing since 1988.
- During a canoe sprint event, the distance between canoes must be at least 5m to avoid turbulence from one boat affecting another.
- Modern boats are usually made of carbon fibre or aramid fibre (eg, Kevlar) with epoxy resin.
- At the Olympics, the fastest two qualifiers occupy lanes four and five.
- Canoe sprint has been one of New Zealand's most productive Olympic sports, with six golds, two silvers and one bronze medal.
- New Zealand's two most successful Olympians are both kayakers. Ian Fergusson won four golds and one silver in canoe sprint events over two Olympics (1984 and 1988), while Paul MacDonald won three golds, a silver and a bronze at the same Olympiads.

Olympic Medals

GOLD

1984 Los Angeles	K4 1000	Ian Fergusson, Paul MacDonald, Alan Thompson, Grant Bramwell
1984 Los Angeles	K1 1000	Alan Thompson
1984 Los Angeles	K2 500	Ian Fergusson, Paul MacDonald
1984 Los Angeles	K1 500	Ian Fergusson
1988 Seoul	K2 500	Ian Fergusson, Paul MacDonald
2012 London	K1 200	Lisa Carrington

SILVER

1988 Seoul	K2 1000	Ian Fergusson, Paul MacDonald
2004 Athens	K1 1000	Ben Fouhy

BRONZE

1988 Seoul	K-1 500	Paul Macdonald
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Canoe Sprint terminology

- C1/K1, K2, K4, etc** Canoe events are notated by the letter C or K to indicate canoe or kayak followed by the number of paddlers per boat (eg, C1 is an individual canoe event, K4 is a four-person kayak event). Sprint event classifications are always followed with the distance (eg, K1-500m is a sprint event for single person-kayaks over 500m, K1 indicates a slalom event for single-person kayaks).
- Blade:** The wide part of a paddle which passes through the water. The canoe paddler uses a paddle that has one flat blade on one end of the paddle shaft, whereas a kayak paddle uses a paddle with a blade at each end.
- Bowman:** A paddler who kneels or sits in the forward position of a canoe or kayak
- Canoe:** A light, narrow, open boat propelled by one, two or four paddlers using single-bladed paddles, from a kneeling position in sprint events, seated in slalom.
- 5m rule:** A rule prohibiting any boat from coming within 5m of the boat positioned next to it, thereby preventing it from gaining the advantage of riding the other boat's wash (being pulled along by the rough water left behind a boat).
- Flatwater:** Lake water or a slow-moving river current with no rapids. Canoe sprint events are raced within lanes on flatwater.
- Sternsman:** A paddler who kneels or sits in the back position of a canoe or kayak.

Timeline

- Mid-1900s** Canoe sport competitions began.
- 1866** The Royal Canoe Club of London was formed and was the first organisation interested in developing the sport.
- 1871** The New York Canoe Club was founded.
- 1890s** Canoe sport was popular all over the European continent.
- 1924** Olympic Games in Paris – flatwater canoeing featured as a demonstration sport.
- 1936** Canoe sprints entered the Olympics in Berlin – its events have changed and adapted in order to improve its overall standing and follow current trends and boat technological advances.
- 1948** Olympic Games in London – women competed for the first time, in the kayak event only.
- 1972** Olympics in Munich – the first time New Zealand competed in this discipline, sending two males for the K1-1000m event.
- 2012** Olympic Games in London – the three men's flatwater 500m events were replaced by 200m events.