



Season under way

Winter is over and teams are all back on the water for the 09-10 season. You've probably noticed there haven't been too many newsletters from Aoraki, but our 'parent' body, NZDBA has been cranking them out pretty regularly, so we thought we would lay off for a while.

We hope you've enjoyed those newsletters, they should give you an idea of what's happening around the country. Later in this issue we'll tell you about events in other towns.

One of the articles reported on the Nationals in Rotorua (remember back that far?!). We had *fantastic* representation per capita from Aoraki teams... and the successes came as well.

New faces on the block

Most teams will have at least a few new paddlers in their team, but we also have some new teams in the scene. For example, let's welcome **Hillmorton High School** (mixed team) to the sport. Veteran sweep, Terry Coyle has been behind getting a team under way, along with our Development Director, Peter Mitchell. Hillmorton had 14 paddlers out on Monday afternoon, with a few from Give It A Go filling the boat. Some other schools are looking at increasing the number of teams this season, so it's wonderful to see the enthusiasm in the Junior Grade.

Fei Long are back for another season, although they may be competing in Open division, rather than Under 23. Meanwhile we hear there is another team of school-leavers about to start, made up of Christchurch Girls High and some Christs College Boys.

And for those who have been in the sport for a couple of seasons, we hope to see "Flying Dragons" (CIAL) rise from the ashes...

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So who are you?

A while ago I asked each team to send in a blurb on themselves, how they formed, who their stars are, anything like that so we can build profiles etc.

Well the replies have been very slow, so unless I hear from you soon, I'll make up some random stories for the commentator to broadcast on the PAs, and to go into any programs we have printed. So tell me *your* side, OK?

Venue swap for early regatta

Teams seem to have shared the board's enthusiasm at the prospect of having our Ice Breaker regatta to Pegasus Lake in the start of December. In fact Aoraki board members had *just* finished a planning session on the logistics when Pegasus Town developers rang us to say that they had to pull the plug on Dragon Boaters christening their lake at the public launch.

They had decided that they had too many safety and security risks in the area to the west of the race area – the development of the jewel in the town's crown – Main Street. So it is their lake, their risk and, unfortunately, their call.

So now we go back to Plan A. The Ice Breaker will be on the same date (**Sunday 6-Dec-09**), but at our 'home ground' venue of **Kerr's Reach**.

Then come the New Year we will head out to Pegasus Lake for our "Early Bird" on Sunday 21-February-10. There are still some details to sort out, but we'll let you all know soon about start times, race formats and so on.

New Start Calls

Aoraki is moving to International standards this season, by using IDBF-standard race start procedures. Once teams 'come under starter's orders', and are called up to the line, the Starter will ask "Are You Ready?", then within about 5 seconds will call "Attention" and then within about 5 seconds will sound the hooter.

Timing is *identical* to past seasons, but the "Are You Ready?" will give Drummers the chance to call for a pause (by waving their arms) if they are genuinely not ready. For example if the boat is sideways, or they have a gear failure (such as sweep oar or drummer seat come loose).

Teams should be practicing these calls in their water training.

Wellington Festival

Organisers of the Wellington Harbourside regatta (a legendary event) emailed Aoraki. Their sponsor, the Interislander, have offered South Island teams a 40% discount on travel on the Cook Strait Ferry to get to Wellington for their Dragon Boat Festival on 27th and 28th February. These are return passes for cars and passengers.

The discount of 40% (for about 3 teams, with 8 car spaces each and 23 passenger passes) means the average cost after the discount of a car will be around \$80 to cross the Strait.

The discounts will be given to the first **three** teams that register before 1 December 2009, but if there is no interest then they will transfer the sponsorship into train passes for the Auckland teams.

One Christchurch team will also be eligible for the Aus vs NZ race off happening in the middle of the day. The race so far has an Auckland, Wellington, Wanganui and, Masterton team in it.

Travelling teams will also be given preferential accommodation rates at the centrally located IBIS Hotel.

For an information pack, contact: wendy@dragonboat.org.nz or kiwidragon@hotmail.com

Auckland Regional Champs

Meanwhile Auckland DBA have their big regatta on Lake Pupuke on 13-March-10.

Aoraki encourages Christchurch teams to make the trip up to the Auckland regatta. In fact, teams are starting to express interest but are concerned with costs.

In the interests of keeping their costs down they could look at travelling up on the day, catching the "red eye" out of Christchurch at 6.40am, arriving at Auckland airport at 8.00am. Now you might be thinking "By the time we get vehicles and head across to North Shore it will be 9 am at the earliest..."

Well Auckland organisers have agreed that if teams go up on the red-eye, and can't be there till 9 am they can be scheduled into the last race of the first round to help them have time to settle in. Teams will of course have to advise the Auckland Events committee well in advance.

Our thanks to Alisha and the Auckland DBA Events team for being so accommodating

Kaiapoi Compound

Aoraki is extending it's reach into North Canterbury with a boat now based in Kaiapoi. Rick Smith from Evacut express has been working with the council and local community group "R13 Trust" to establish a compound for a dragon boat and waka on the banks of the Kaiapoi river.



Evacut Express now train out of the Kaiapoi compound on Monday nights, and Aoraki hopes to expand the sport in the future by starting teams from the local high schools. There is also potential for a North Canterbury open team.

ABOL paddlers at Australian champs

Sunday 25-October saw several local girls compete in the Dragons Abreast Australia fundraiser Regatta on Sydney's Darling Harbour.

Aoraki chair Meri Gibson and her Abreast of Life team mates Janice Melville, Sharyn Chalmers and Jillian Broadbent paddled with the "DAM Buster" DA team from Melbourne. There were 15 Melbourne paddlers, four from NZ and one from DA Ballarat. In the heats (all against mixed open and corporate teams) the girls acquitted themselves really well, coming second in all of their heats, often beating out many combined teams filled with big 'testosterone fuelled' blokes. They posted very fast times and after their three heats they were the fastest BC team on the water and a sitter for the GOLD medal in their next race, the BC grand final. That was all on track until... the skies opened up, thunder boomed and the forked lightning forced all off the water for the rest of the day.

As a result there was no Flower Ceremony or official conclusion. Disappointing for the organisers who, for the first time, had managed to attract Television and Newspaper coverage for the event including "Flowers on Water".

The ABOL team members were really excited to have performed so well and the camaraderie that has sprung up with these Aussie and Kiwi girls has become legendary. This is the second time they have competed together. Last year they were known as "DA Ratatouille", as they are a bit of a mixed lot. Since last year's event there has been a waiting list to join the DA Ratatouille/ Dam Busters composite team – maybe because they perform so well, won the silver last year or the amount of fun they have.

The Kiwi and Aussie girls have registered to compete at the BC world participatory event to be held in Peterborough, Canada in June 2010. They are busy hatching their travel plans (while they wait for that GOLD medal to arrive from Australia) and looking for other dragon boat events to attend while traversing the world.

If anyone is interested in attending the Darling Harbour event in 2010 the regatta will be open to anyone who wants to support the fight against breast cancer.

Kaiapoi River Carnival

Aoraki is taking three boats to the Kaiapoi River Carnival on Saturday 5-December.



This will be a great opportunity for Dragon Boaters to showcase their sport to a new audience. The festival is a major event for the town with lots of activities on the river. There will be a Christmas parade through the town, bands, market stalls and kiddie rides [Ed: hope they are strong enough to take my weight!]. There are even helicopter rides leaving from the visitor centre next to the river.

We will have a demonstration race at 11:30 and a boat on display on the wharf. The parade follows at 1 pm.



We need 60 paddlers to fill the three boats. Make a day of it. Bring the family, have a paddle and stay for the fun.

Reminder – mats and washdown

The first team out must **take the mat down** (and tie it to the railing, so it doesn't float away). And the last team out must **take the mat back** to the shed and **give it a good hose down**.

More on the New Paddles

The NZDBA newsletter reminded us that they have imported a batch of Champion Paddles.



Christchurch teams have already bought sets, but NZDBA will hold onto some Champions, so that we can have paddles available at Nationals for any team that hasn't been able to buy a set.

Teams should be looking to upgrade their heavy old blades.

Email aoraki.dragons@gmail.com for a quote for Merlin Fibre glass or Carbon Fibre paddles.

ID Photos

Teams have provided individual photos last season, but we will be at trainings to update these as the season goes on.



Safety at Owles

On training nights there are lots of cars driving in by the boat ramp and along the path by the Power Boat Club (see the map below). There are lots of pedestrians and boats being moved along there, so please drive in via the Owles Terrace 'side gate' between the two buildings. You might also consider car pooling...

Also, Aoraki have 2 First Aid kits in the boat shed (on the shelves in the middle of the back wall). See the training supervisor (Scruff or Pete) if you need help, or help you self to the kit (but tell us so we can top it up). There are also about 10 thermal 'rescue blankets' on the shelf should you have a capsized on a cold night.

We will also have the meeting room open (with toilets/cold shower) and heater if you need them.

