

GB CANOEING PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday 29th April 2009

Olympians gear up for team selection ahead of European Championships in Nottingham

Britain's slalom canoeists will be competing this weekend, for a place in the GB canoe slalom team. The qualifying athletes will represent Great Britain at the; European Championships in Nottingham at the end of May, the World Cup events and the World Championships later in the year.

The selection event will take place over the 2nd and 3rd May, at Holme Pierrepont in Nottingham. It will be the first canoe slalom selection event to take place at the white water course since it reopened in March, after major redevelopment work.

Three athletes will be selected per class, based on their performance times over the two days. The classes are; Men's K1 (Kayak single), Women's K1 (Kayak Single), Men's C1 (Canoe Single) and Men's C2 (Canoe Double) class.

Beijing's Olympic silver medallist David Florence will be competing in both the Men's C1 **and** C2 classes (with Richard Hounslow) for the first time. If 26 year old Florence qualifies for selection in both classes he will be the first slalom canoeist to reach the European Championships and compete in both classes.

In Men's K1, the current European Champion and Olympic silver medallist, Campbell Walsh, will be making sure he qualifies, so that he can defend his European title ahead of the championships in Nottingham at the end of May.



Olympic athletes: David Florence (left) and Campbell Walsh (right)

In the Women's K1, fellow Olympian 26 year old Fiona Pennie will also be looking to make the team.

The 2009 European Championships, which will be televised on BBC 1 and BBC 2, take place in Nottingham between 28 – 31 May and are one of the major canoeing events to take place on home ground before London 2012. As Europe produces the best canoeists in the world, the event promises to showcase some fantastic talent!

Media Opportunity

Interview Olympians Campbell Walsh and David Florence after the racing.

Forthcoming Slalom Events

European Championships, Nottingham on 28th – 31st May
World Cup1, Pau on 27 – 28th June
World Cup2, Bratislava on 4 – 5th July
World Cup3, Augsburg on 11 – 12th July
World Championships, La Seu d'Urgell on 8th – 13th September

Selection schedule

The first runs will begin at around 10am on Saturday and finish at around 4.30pm; with a break between 12.30 and 2pm. Sunday's schedule is proposed to start at 10am, although a full start list will be available from Saturday evening, after Saturday's results have been confirmed.

Athlete websites

www.campbellwalsh.com

www.davidflorence.com

www.fionapennie.com

Ends

For further information please contact:

Chloe Nelson on 0845 3709511 / 07794 051287 / chloe.nelson@bcu.org.uk

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Notes to the editors:

GB Canoeing is the World Class Performance division of the British Canoe Union (BCU). It currently supports 20 UK athletes in their training and competition with the aim to win medals in significant international competitions now and within the next 4 years, particularly at the London 2012 Olympics. In the Athens Olympics, Canoeing was one of Team GB's most successful sports with medals for Ian Wynne (Bronze), Helen Reeves (Bronze) and Campbell Walsh (Silver). In the Beijing Olympics British Canoeing became a Gold medal winning sport, with Tim Brabants (www.timbrabants.com) winning Gold and Bronze medals in flat water racing. In slalom David Florence won a Silver medal.

The aim for London 2012 is to win two Gold medals. For more information on GB Canoeing visit www.worldclass-canoeing.org.uk

The umbrella organisation, BCU, was set up in 1936 to send a team to the Berlin Olympics and is the lead body for canoeing and kayaking in the UK. In 2000 the BCU federalised to become the umbrella organisation for the Home Nation Associations in Scotland (SCA), Wales (WCA) and Northern Ireland (CANI). In England, Canoe England was set up, on a par with the other National Associations, as a division of the BCU, to support the development of canoeing in England.

The BCU is responsible for leading and setting the overall framework for the National Associations; including representing canoeing interests through coaching, competition and campaigning for increased access to Britain's waterways for paddlers. Today the BCU has a membership of over 60,000, including over 450 affiliated clubs and 145 approved centres. According to the RYA Watersports Survey there are an estimated 1.1 million people who take to the water in a canoe each year. The vast majority do so under a watchful eye of one of the 11,000 BCU Qualified coaches or as part of an affiliated organisation. For more information visit: www.bcu.org.uk.