



New Zealand Canoeing 06.2

Spring Issue 2006

Great win for the Mokau River!

It's getting warmer and there is heaps of water in the rivers, time to go paddling! Welcome to another edition of NZCanoeing. So what's been happening on the river conservation front recently? Following court hearings, at which the kayaking community was strongly represented by a passionate Alan Bell, Nick Collins and many other paddlers, Waikato Regional Council declined the consent application for a Hydro Electric Power Scheme on the Mokau River. A sensible, well-received decision but one that King Country Energy have appealed. So we'll take this fight to the Environment Court, to protect this white water asset from a temporary energy scheme with a permanent impact. The NZRCA is highly appreciative of the efforts and dedication put in by the numerous people to preserve this gem.

Further in this issue, Mick Hopkinson reflects back on the vibrant life of Sam Rainey, who tragically drowned on the Sogndals Elva in Norway in early July. Sam was a well-respected member of the kayaking fraternity and integral part of the Tasman White Water Search and Rescue Team. We also have a key article by Andy England about the inherent dangers kayakers may experience on their West Coast trips.

Lastly, the Minister has accepted Fish and Game's application to amend the Buller WCO in respect of the Gowan to include fishing. The NRZCA has submitted in support of this application because protection of the Gowan for fishery values will also protect the catchment for its kayaking and recreation values. The Environment Court hearing will be in the first or second quarter next year.

Arohanui,

Guido



Rescue extraction scenarios on the West Coast. Photo Courtesy: Andy England

Contents

About NZ Canoeing	2
Executive & Officers	2
Releases	3
What's in a name..	3
Sam Rainey	4
Central Plains Water	6
Long Time..	7
Running waterfalls Pt 2	10

About New Zealand Canoeing

New Zealand Canoeing is the official newsletter of the New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association (NZRCA) Inc. *NZ Canoeing* is published quarterly and distributed free to around 1,000 members of the NZRCA throughout New Zealand/Aotearoa. The views expressed in *New Zealand Canoeing* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Executive of the New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association.

NZ Canoeing welcomes advertising from organisations associated with recreational canoeing. Please contact us for our advertising rates, and find out how to show your products and services to kayakers around NZ.

Thanks to contributors and advertisers and the myriad of e-mail correspondents for their contributions to this issue of *NZ Canoeing*. May the rivers flow for you!

All map references are to NZMS Info-map 260 Topographical series.

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Your contributions of articles, trip reports, classified advertisements, and letters for publication are gratefully received. Please send items to:
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We Care About Your Safety!

The NZRCA offers a safety subsidy to its affiliated members through the Water Safety Council. This subsidy will now **reimburse 50%** of the course costs (up to \$100) to anyone who has done a river safety or river rescue course through an approved provider.

So take control! Organise a group of people you paddle with, or from your club. Find an instructor on our website (www.rivers.org.nz, look under Safety, then Safety Courses) and organise a time to suit you.

To claim the subsidy, keep your course receipt, fill out the subsidy form on our website and send it out to us. We have the money to help you, please take it – we can't spend it on anything else.

What's in a name.. *by Simon Callaghan*

Does the brand 'NZRCA' accurately reflect our purpose?

Recently the NZRCA 'brand' has been a topic of discussion. The question as to whether New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association gives an adequate description of who we are and what we do has been asked by several members.

So who are we? As an organisation we are a collective of whitewater paddlers who seek to preserve and enjoy white water throughout New Zealand. This is reflected in our constitution, our membership and our website (www.rivers.org.nz) and the way we use it. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I feel we are possibly not sea kayaking on the lakes or in the estuaries, – and those of us that are are probably better represented by KASK. And with the evolution of kayaking over the last decades we see that endless debate of semantics, canoeing versus kayaking, invariably rear its ugly head whenever the more perverse amongst us have nothing better to amuse themselves with.

Call it a name; call it a brand. At the end of the night what we call ourselves represents us in court when we fight for the survival of rivers like the Mokau and the Kaituna. When we're cruising down the Waikato from the control gates to Reids Farm at Taupo we may be recreating – blasting off Dent Falls on the Arahura may be too. But does recreational canoeing adequately cover the whitewater/river spectrum, or is it too broad and generic?

Next year, at our annual general meeting in Murchison (28 April 2007), we will be seeking a decision to change or not, depending on our mandate. If we do choose change then we will also decide the name that will best suit us for the future. Suggestions we have already fielded include:

- **Whitewater New Zealand (or NZ)**
- **New Zealand Whitewater**
- **Rivers New Zealand**

What do you think? If you have an opinion, let us know. E-mail nzrca@rivers.org.nz, post us a letter at PO Box 284 Wellington, ring us up or even talk to someone at the take out. Remember to come to the AGM to make your vote count...

Release Schedule

Tongariro River - Access 10

Poutu Intake	Sat	27 January	09:00 - 15:00
Poutu Intake	Sat	05 May	09:00 - 15:00
Poutu Intake	Sat	29 September	09:00 - 15:00

Tongariro River - Access 13/14

Rangipo dam	Sun	28 January	08:00 - 16:00
Rangipo dam	Sun	06 May	08:00 - 16:00
Rangipo dam	Sun	30 September	08:00 - 16:00

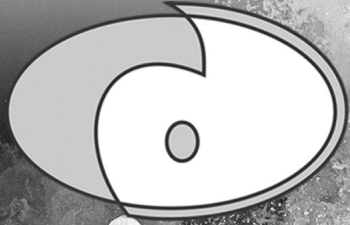

Whakapapa River

Whakapapa	Sat	01 September	09:00 - 17:00
Whakapapa	Sat	22 September	09:00 - 17:00

Wairoa River

Wairoa Release	Sun	07 January	10:00 - 16:00
Wairoa Release	Sun	14 January	10:00 - 16:00
Wairoa Release	Sun	21 January	10:00 - 16:00
Wairoa Release	Sun	28 January	10:00 - 16:00
Wairoa Release	Sun	04 February	10:00 - 16:00
Wairoa Release	Sat	10 February	10:00 - 16:00
Wairoa Release	Sun	11 February	10:00 - 16:00
Wairoa Release	Sun	18 February	10:00 - 16:00

Please refer to our website (www.rivers.org.nz/events/) for the latest release schedules, including flow information. Please note that the list above is **not conclusive**.

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Sam the Apprentice!

by Mick Hopkinson

Too soon to write a eulogy? Too early to sort out the man from the grief?

The facts are easy. Born 1978, died 2006. Lived a very full life.

He was the first Murchison Area School kid to take up kayaking with a vengeance, a pupil of Shona Niven's school kayaking programme. Up till then he had the country kid C.V. par excellence; hunting, shooting and fishing led him to be the youngest member of the local SAR team. Physically strong at an early age (something to do with pruning 24,000 pine trees ambidextrously) with ambitions to become a mountaineer - I always thought we had saved him from the risk of an early death in the New Zealand mountains!

But he was keen, capable and soon became our first apprentice and "boat slave": lawnmower, dogs-body, spray-deck fixer, then graduating to rescue kayaker and assistant instructor, to NZOIA level one, to UCCC guru, to qualified science teacher, to NZ rodeo team in Sydney, to NZOIA level 2.

Fourteen years of full on learning and teaching. Not a spare moment. Spending endless river days on the Buller, Matakaitaki and the Mangles - wearing everyone out. Two naïve young Aorakians expressing a desire to make the NZ rodeo team. They had five full on days with Sam. It was an almost painful reality check to learn that - after wearing them out every day - Sam had gone "training" in the evening. Not everyone can cartwheel a H3 and there is a reason!

He had his first big flood run down the Buller at sixteen. Went to the Perth at seventeen - courtesy of a series of TV programmes for the U.S. Outdoor channel. Sam was Personal Assistant, Grip and Gopher on the first one, but graduated to the screen in the caving and sea kayaking sections. See the video ...Sam repeating the Eskimo hunters trick of being able to hand-roll holding a stone (try it!). Taking Abel Tasman's Dobbie Double out in big surf at Punakaiki.

The apprentice caver in the caving programme...Harwoods Hole...Kieran's assistant. Ironically a circular experience as Sam was part of the Search and Rescue team that was involved in getting Kieran McKay out of Bulmer Cavern in 1999.

The young man from Murchison footing it socially with people from all over the world - police inspectors from Hong Kong, film producers from the USA, doctors from Australia, MP's from New Zealand.

Trips to the coast: - epics on the Kakapotahi in flood, a much too high trip on the Hokitika which became known as the "roll under the rock trip." Lots of Arahura days. An attempt on the Morgan Gorge. He was there to throw me a rope just as I was losing it in a big hole on the Wanganui (the real Wanganui on the South Island!).

Then a life with Sarah and a career in Hokitika.

Last year, Sam came to the states for a California paddling season. We borrowed him and Dougal as safety boaters for a family raft trip down the Dolores River in Colorado before he came up to Wyoming to visit with Sarah. Five days of good food and bad beer, Sam setting fire to the desert, entertaining the kids every night!

But only the facts. Not a picture of the man he had become...

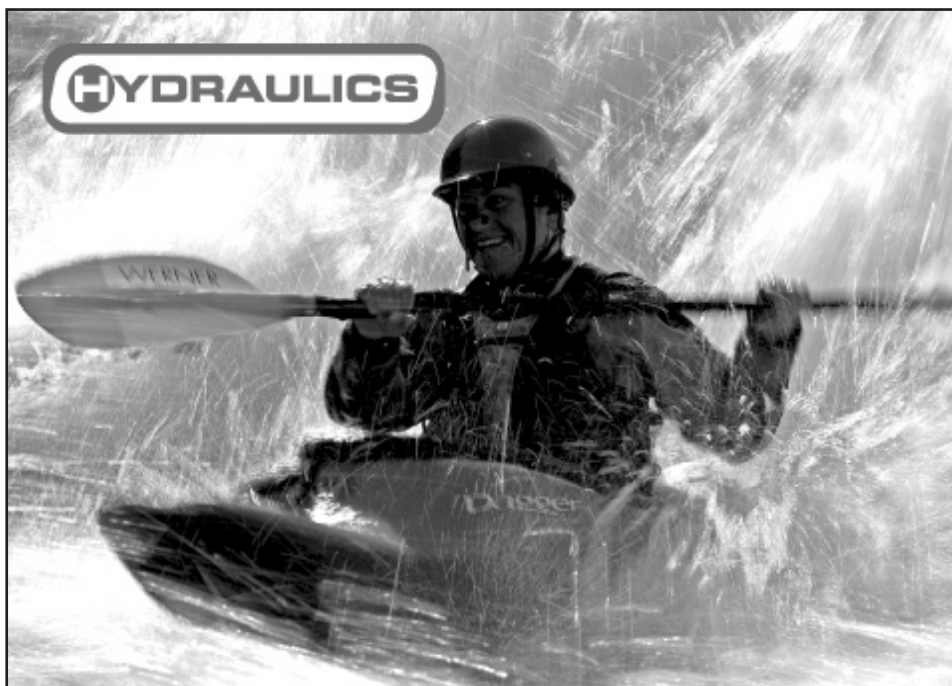
He was garrulous, sociable, enthusiastic, a touch of the Irish rebel in his family gene pool, forthright, not one to suffer bureaucracy quietly, perpetually cheerful, just arriving at an age where he was feeling a few aches and pains for his troubles (at last!). But also dogged, determined and driven to do a good job whether it was instructing or latterly teaching - an activity which led him to considerable introspection. Those of us who shared his emails from "overseas" saw the gradual development of an acute and whimsical skepticism which made for fine reading and great hopes for a future leader of whatever society he decided to get into on his return home.

But unfortunately not to be. Part of the fabric of our lives has gone forever and we only have memories left. It's a cliché "He who dies with the most friends wins" - Sam was right up there collecting good friends at an exponential rate.

My heart goes out to Sarah, his partner and constant companion through University, Hokitika days and on their OE.

Mick Hopkinson

Murchison, September 2006



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The Central Plains Water scheme *by Tony Ward-Holmes*

On June 23th, Central Plains Water Trust (CPW) applied for approximately 50 consents to construct a major irrigation scheme in central Canterbury. This scheme proposes to abstract up to 40 cumecs from each of the Rakaia and Waimakariri rivers, and to distribute it via a series of canals to virtually every property on the plain between the rivers.

Since its inception in 2001 the plan has been for a “run of the river” project, i.e. taking water at normal flows down to the legislated minimum flow for abstractions. However the project appears to have been presented as a less intrusive “water harvesting” project, i.e. only taking the peak flood flows and storing them for use in drier periods. In particular, the Ministry for the Environment granted CPW Requiring Authority Status in November 2005, on the understanding that the project was water harvesting.

Requiring Authority enables CPW to compulsorily acquire private land when agreement cannot be reached with landowners. It is only this year that some of the main stakeholders have become aware of the true nature of the scheme, e.g. the Ministry for the Environment, Ngai Tahu, Christchurch City Council. The scale of the project is immense. Costs are estimated at \$699 million including on-farm improvements, and potential impacts to the environment are major. The plan to reduce the Waimakariri’s median flow not only degrades the river for kayakers, anglers, jet boaters and family outings, but also threatens Christchurch City aquifers. The aquifers feed lowland streams such as the Avon, not to mention the city water supply. Paddling events such as the Coast to Coast, Brass Monkey, The Bloody Good Race and the Waimak Classic will all be detrimentally affected by the cumulative effects of irrigation extraction, as will athletes’ training regimes and instruction courses. The Trust’s submitted Assessment of Environmental Effects document is paltry compared to comparably sized projects such as Project Aqua. Only a single sentence covers the effects on all non-fishing forms of recreation, buried in Section 8: Effects of the Operation of the Scheme, 8.11.1: Other Impacts: *“There are concerns about the effects of the scheme on recreational activities in the rivers from which the water is drawn.”*



Busy times at the Christchurch City Council. Photo: www.photochick.co.nz

Despite the potential impact of the proposed scheme on paddle sports, consultation with the NZRCA, Arawa Canoe Club, Whitewater Canoe Club and the University of Canterbury Canoe Club has been non-existent. The scheme’s sponsors are evidently making little effort to meet the intent of the Resource Management Act.

The NZRCA has taken the decision to oppose the CPWE scheme in its entirety on the basis of reduced paddling amenity, environmental and process grounds. Actions that have been taken since include:

- 1) A letter was sent to the Minister of the Environment and Christchurch City Councillors, requesting that CPW have its Requiring Authority status withdrawn, on the grounds that it was granted under false pretences. The Ministry had been told it was a water harvesting project.
- 2) Representatives of Whitewater Canoe Club, Arawa Canoe Club, UCCC, NZRCA and others organised a protest with approximately 150 paddlers appearing outside Christchurch City Council buildings. This was broadcast on radio, newspaper and TV.
- 3) The NZRCA submitted to the consent authority (Environment Canterbury) opposing the consent applications. Local paddlers were also encouraged to submit individually. ECan received 1493 submissions on the Waimakariri water take, we estimate about 150 were from paddlers.

The consent applications are likely to be heard early 2007.



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Long Time Dead... by Andy England

You're a long time dead. So what's the hurry? This was a billboard ad by the Government, trying to stop people from speeding on their roads. But after heavy-footed drivers, it probably applies more to travelling kayakers than anyone else!

I'm in a dilemma. I want to talk about some sobering facts to save lives (i.e. preach) but don't want to sound old (proving that I already am). I'm not a person known for being stuck for words, but this article has proven to be a hard one to write down. I want to share vital observations that I and other local paddlers have made about the dangers that kayakers face in this country. What makes it so hard is that I will never forget the experience that made me sit down to write this, and it is this experience that I can't share with you.

So let me start with where I'm coming from. For me, this year marks twenty years of kayaking. I have been recovering from a dislocated shoulder and my back cracks, just about hourly, from a kayaking injury ten years ago. But I'm very much alive and will be kayaking white water for a very long time to come.

I've been living on the West Coast of the South Island for five years now. I'm lucky enough to meet lots of kayakers from all around the world, and to helicopter in to beautiful white water rivers almost daily in peak season. A lot of the people I meet are well-known paddling explorers, long in the tooth like Dave Manby or getting that way like Andy 'Corkboy'

Andy England followed his early love of kayaking from slalom in England in the mid 1980's to steep low volume slides in Scotland in the 1990's. Andy first came to New Zealand during his 'OE' travelling around the world with a kayak in 1995, and continued to explore rivers around the world and enjoy the friendship of the people he met on the way. He has now settled on the West Coast.

Phillips, but far more are wide-eyed excited paddlers on their first big trip to the West Coast.

Of the last five kayaking deaths here in New Zealand, four were 'tourists' to the Coast. So what's my point? These deaths are horrific, for the people involved at the time and the family and friends afterwards. They are all terrible accidents, BUT I think there are three identifiable factors contributing to this sad and worrying trend.

Everyone gains experience at the same rate – one kayaking trip is one kayaking trip. Sometimes people learn more than others from the same thing but this is only a generic rule. Some people acquire physical skills faster than others and their actual skills accelerate beyond their experience. This can be especially true of paddlers who spend a lot of time practising freestyle.

Technically, they could paddle a piece of white water better than the old guy in his Mountain Bat, but what are the dangers they are unaware of? Dangers that the old guy will recognise from experience and will avoid at all costs.

Your rescue team is right there with you on the water!

Sieves are a common and dangerous feature of West Coast kayaking. A guidebook can give you the flavour of a run but gets outdated quickly.

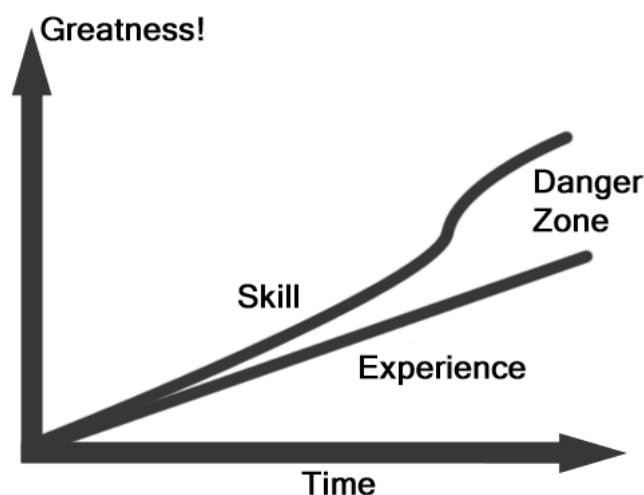
Moreover, they can never replace true river sense. Learn to identify sieves and other river hazards, and avoid them. If in doubt get out and scout, by no means should you be afraid or embarrassed to walk around rapids.

Photo Courtesy: Barry Boyd.

Lots of young paddlers are in that 'red zone' where they can do amazing things but they don't have the experience to weigh situations up properly. Most of us hurry to get there. It's a fun place to be, pushing your limits and getting away with mistakes. And our sport is usually very forgiving – until suddenly, it isn't!

In Europe and America, white water kayaking generally is a forgiving game. Millions of years have smoothed the riverbeds so that, apart from exceptional circumstances, swims just mean a bruised ego and an expensive night at the bar.

In New Zealand, especially the South Island, riverbeds change every year. Rocks often reassemble as sieves and while water passes through quite happily, swimmers don't! And whether or not you'll get out of one is really down to chance. Sieves have to be avoided and in order to do so you have to know how to recognise them. This isn't rocket science, but it takes time, river hours and absolute concentration all the time.



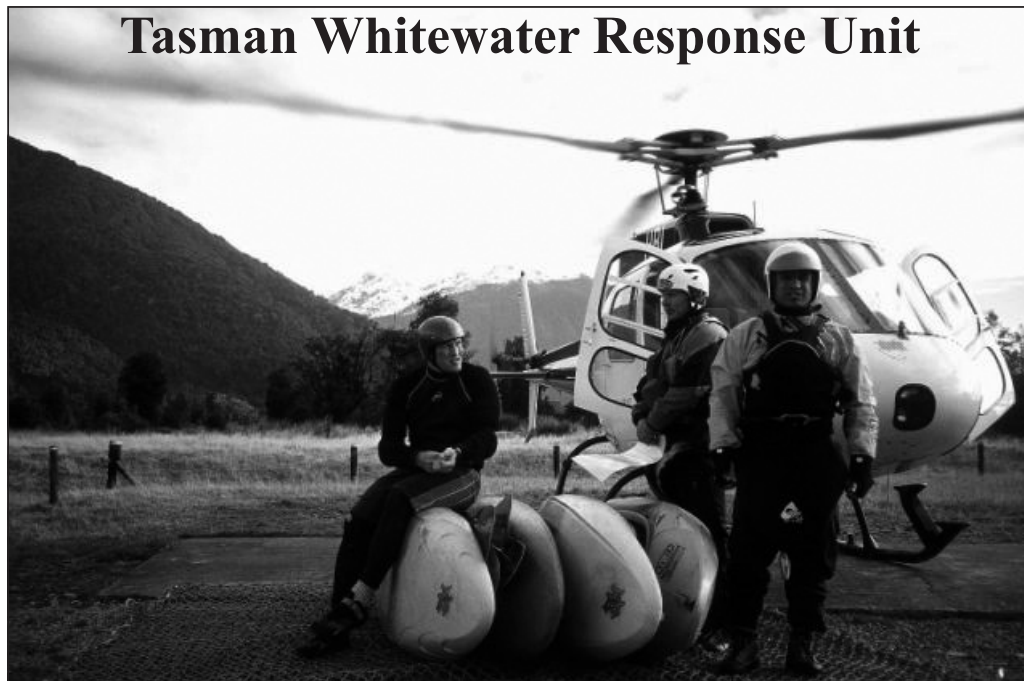
You're at most risk when your skill level is high but not matched by sufficient river experience. Don't be hasty, take your time and be very good at what you do. Make sure your progress through the grade of rivers you choose is frustratingly slow when you're away from home. Don't feel compelled to hurry it!

The crux of this is that concentration and mental preparation are hugely affected by the people we paddle with, especially when we don't have a heap of experience of our own to draw on.

Lots of people going to the West Coast do it on their own. Here's a typical scenario: You've finished university, your mates aren't able to go but you know there'll be people to paddle with when you get there. You buy an old crappy van and get your gear to the Mahinapua campground, Hokitika and go to the pub.

You meet a group hiking in to the Styx tomorrow, have a few more drinks and off you go to bed. You're in! You wake up early, excited. You don't really know the rest of the group properly, so you head to town and get a coffee, check your email. Vans are buzzing around, people talk about options. No one really knows what's happening and all of a sudden it's mid afternoon. You start to hike, but you have to readjust

Tasman Whitewater Response Unit



A team of highly experienced kayakers, who volunteer to help the New Zealand Police in Search and Rescue situations. They're based in Hokitika, and were originally set up to rescue kayakers in trouble from the scary West Coast gorges.

They paddle together, train in rescue and search techniques and are available within half an hour of an emergency phone call. But, despite this, in reality they are used mostly to assist in body retrieval.


your system a few times, and you've hardly been fit lately. You sweat out last night's beer.

Sitting in the eddy, you feel weak and unsure about all the horizon lines in front of you, but you can't tell these people, what will they think of you? They all chat, make some bizarre signals and sweep gracefully around the first corner seeming to forget all about you...What do you do now? You want to stop them and work things out, but it's too late. You chase!

Not a good picture is it, but it happens and this is the other form of hurry that worries me. Local paddlers are often getting off the river when visitors are only just arriving. Logistics take longer when you're not familiar with a place and this can often cause a last minute

rush to paddle something before the end of the day. When you hurry, especially in unfamiliar environments, you might just overlook that vital swirl in the eddy... Get my drift.

Okay, lesson time over. Except of course it isn't – the lessons are out there on the river, waiting to be learned. But I hope this article will go a small way in helping you to prepare yourself for the real deal. If you're not absolutely clear what the three key lessons are in what I've said, read this again. Wait until the next time you're on the toilet, and bring a highlighter. If all that fails, the answers you're looking for are in the info boxes contained in this article. But if you need to do that then you should probably stick to what you know, gain some more experience and get your river team ready for next year.



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Wrapped on the Nevis River. All photos by Andy England unless noted otherwise.

It isn't always possible to travel with your ideal team, but it is vital to get to know the group you plan to paddle with – In the end your lives all depend on each other.

No one likes bossing others around, but do make sure your feelings are heard. No one likes to be the scared one, but remain utterly honest to yourself and your group.

Don't push your limits with a group that is new to you – instead do an easier trip until you are familiar with each other. If you find that your new group doesn't mesh well with your approach, find others to paddle with. Always leave yourself more time than you need – do not rush it!

A brief guide on running waterfalls part 2 by Chris Joosse

It is likely that at some stage you'll encounter a drop of considerable height, either while venturing out to the West Coast or exploring new runs in your backyard. From a practical point of view it doesn't matter whether you choose to run that drop or if you're in the midst of a gorge, faced with vertical walls and only one way out – downstream. This guide will attempt to provide you with pointers on how to approach those drops. Last time we concluded talking about the 'spear method' which involved spearing the water with your paddle on impact with the plunge pool at the bottom of your drop. What happens now?

Punching a hole in the pool - So you're coming in perfectly and hit the pool - what's so complicated? Well, nothing really - at this point, you just need to make sure that you follow through. If you are coming in from height you'll have accumulated some pretty impressive energy along the way, and if you cringe away from the impact, it'll blow you back, smack you onto your back deck, knock the wind out of you, take your paddle away, and probably take 5 bucks out of your wallet while it's at it. Remember, punch through the surface of the water like you're breaking boards.

This will minimize the 'thwack' factor and also, perhaps not coincidentally, make your entry profile into the pool smaller. It's also important to understand that you don't want to tense up so much as you want to simply drive through the surface of the water. By tensing up you're trying to remain immobile - half of your energy is going forwards, half of it is holding you back. Put all of your energy into going forward, so that you're more relaxed upon impact. If you're tense, the energy you devote to holding yourself back will be added to the oncoming impact, increasing your chances of being blown back.

Over-rotation - Some drops want to pitch you past-vertical and this can be painful on landing. Your tendency will be to sit back in the cockpit to keep the bow pointing where you want it to go - until you're on your back deck, entering the pool essentially belly-first.

This will absorb a lot of impact on your diaphragm and can knock the wind out of you. A good plan is to use the crash position described earlier, and take the brunt of the landing on your back and shoulders. Another possibility would be to simply spear the water with your paddle and follow your paddle with a straight body into that hole, as if you were cliff-

diving and just happened to have a boat around your waist and a paddle in your hands. Keep in mind that there is a risk of imploding your skirt and/or falling out of your boat on impact when using this approach.

Getting to your landing - Now that we've got some ideas on how to deal with the event of actually hitting the pool, how do we get to this point in more or less the direction we planned? Well, it's more or less all a matter of what happens in that last stroke. The problem you face is in establishing the right pitch rate in order to get you to the bottom more or less vertical, in your forward crash position. But first, let's define some terms:

Pitch - The up-down attitude of your bow

Yaw - The side-to-side attitude of your bow

Roll - Your rotation along the long axis of your boat

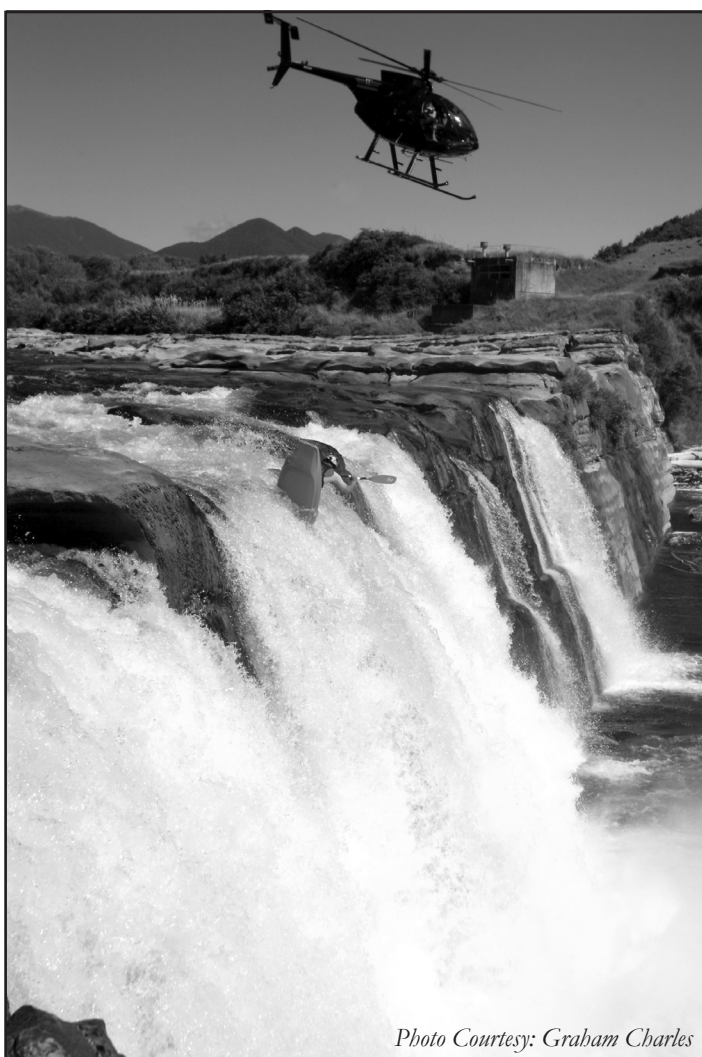


Photo Courtesy: Graham Charles

Maruia playground - Another spin to rotation.

As your boat goes off the edge following your launch point, there is generally a moment where one end of the boat is supported by water and the other isn't.

Depending upon the abruptness of this transition and how fast you are going relative to the flow of water at the lip, you will naturally have some degree of pitch initiated by the transition itself. Sometimes this is perfect and you don't need to do anything but sometimes the drop will want to pitch you past vertical, sometimes it will introduce some roll to your launch, and sometimes you'll need to introduce some yaw in order to land where and how you want.

As a general rule, you should be going at least as fast as the water until you separate from it. If you are going slower, you risk engaging

your stern in the down flow at your launch point and be pitched backwards, which has, more than once, resulted in an unplanned flat landing.

During the moment of launch, as the launch transition pitches you over, a good forward stroke can be used to slow or even stop your rate of pitch. Ideally, you arrive upon a pitch rate that will make you land vertically at the bottom. If you overdo the forward stroke, you risk under-rotation.

Consider, as you scope out your drop, where your last moment of input (i.e. that last stroke) is likely to be. That point is generally your moment of commitment: the moment by which your pitch, yaw, and roll rates must be finalized.

Sometimes it'll be possible to get extra control strokes in by sweeping against the water that's falling around you, but these can be dodgy. It's preferable to be where you want to be by the time you're fully committed to it.

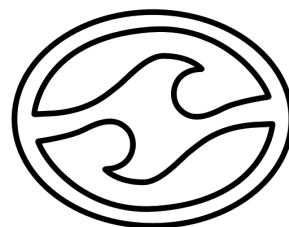
Also consider that, as the height of your drop increases, your precision must equally increase. Not only do the penalties for missing a good vertical entry go up, the time you spend pitching/yawing/rolling beyond your moment of commitment also increases.

Finally, as the height of the drop increases, so does the intimidation factor. It might seem to be a natural response to lean back and away from that big precipice, but that's not what you really want to do - stick with your plan.

Sometimes it can be desirable to under-rotate slightly in order to porpoise to the surface rapidly, upright, and with directional control. Be aware that although this gives you excellent control over your exit, it can be hard on you physically. Be sure to use good defensive judgment and default to that crash position!

Use your head - Running waterfalls is as much a head game as it is a physical activity. It's arguable that the physical part is the easiest. This is a game where mental mistakes, fear, and incomplete planning can lead to less-than-desirable results, so it pays to visualize and rehearse in your head just what you want to do. It's a good habit to get into.

So there you have it - a beginning point from which to think about how to approach those waterfalls you've been looking at for so long. Again, this article is just a guide towards helping you think clearly about how to plan running those big drops. In order to get the skills, you'll need to practice, preferably on smaller drops at first, with good safety, good friends, and good judgment. Be safe, and above all, have fun!



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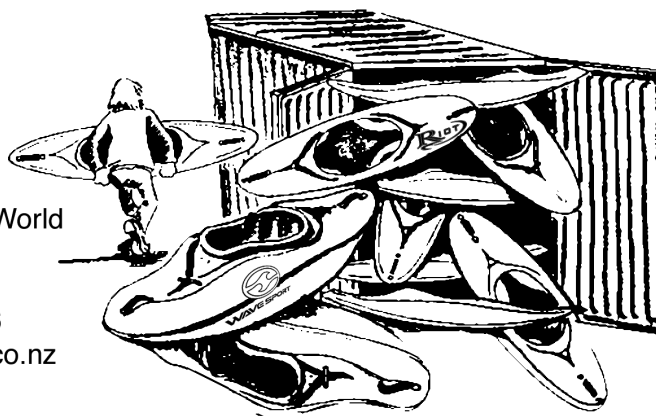
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Our purpose is to preserve New Zealand's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.

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