



### **Background**

The Saskatoon Racing Canoe Club (SRCC) is a Saskatchewan non-profit corporation that develops flatwater canoe and kayak racing (Sprint) in the Saskatoon Region.

#### **What is Sprint Canoe/Kayak?**

Flat water sprint racing is an Olympic Sport and is a contest of speed, strength and endurance in which athletes compete head-to-head on calm bodies of water. Paddlers train and compete in racing canoes or racing kayaks as singles, pairs or in fours over a variety of distances.

#### **History**

SRCC had its beginning as part of the Saskatoon Canoe Club (SCC) in 1973 with athletes training and competing in racing canoes and kayaks at the 1973 and 1977 Canada Summer Games as part of the Saskatchewan Team. Western Canada Summer Games were held in Regina in 1975 and in Saskatoon in 1977, with Saskatoon sending athletes to these events as well. In 1977, a grant was received from the WCSG organizing committee for the first purchases of Club equipment. This consisted of one K4, two K2 and two K1 racing boats.

The racing division of SCC continued to train and to grow, a part-time coach was hired, and there was an active training group of about 20 athletes. In 1981, Saskatchewan Canoe Association again sent a team to Canada Summer Games, consisting predominately of Saskatoon athletes. By 1983, the racing group had grown to approximately 40 members.

Fundraising had become an important part of the group activities in order to expand the number of boats and equipment needed to accommodate the growth in membership.

1985 was a pivotal year for Spring Canoe/Kayaking in Saskatoon, with the formation of the Saskatoon Racing Canoe Club and the hiring of a full-time coach. The independent club was formed in response to the fast growth of the sport in recent years.

In 1985 the goals of the SRCC, still at the heart of the club today, were as follows:

1. to promote and teach the safe use of flatwater canoes and kayaks;
2. to give a chance to all individuals to learn, enjoy, and practice in the sport of flatwater canoe and kayak;
3. to help athletes reach Provincial and National team standards; and
4. to provide an activity that will develop sportsmanship, cooperation, leadership and physical well-being in athletes.

In 1987, SRCC formally incorporated as **Saskatoon Racing Canoe Club Inc.**, and registered with the Government of Saskatchewan.

The Victoria Boathouse was officially opened in the fall of 1987 as part of the 1989 Jeux Canada Games infrastructure and funding and has been the home of SRCC since that time.

In 1988 SRCC hired professional coach Andre Gronowicz, a silver medalist in the 1976 Olympic Games for Poland, who went on to coach the Saskatoon and Saskatchewan Provincial team athletes for 30 years. Since then, Rob Sleeth, a National and International Coach, has led the coaching team in Saskatoon.

Since that time SRCC has consistently developed athletes who have qualified for the Canadian National Team, competing internationally at all levels. Of note, Jason Rusu competed at the 1991 Olympic Games and Corrina Kennedy at the 1996 Olympic Games. More recently Jarret Kenke was a member of the Canadian National Team, competing in the 2013 - 2017 U23 World Championships, with his senior international debut at the 2017 ICF World Championships. In 2018, we saw Jarret bring home two silver medals at the Pan American Championships and in 2019 a silver medal at the same event.

## **Our Programs**

SRCC offers year-round programs with “on water” and “off water” seasons. During the winter, our members take part in a diverse training program with swim sessions, weight training at our Victoria Boathouse training centre, and cardio training. As well, the province hosts a training camp, by invitation only, in the early spring in a warmer climate for athletes who are ready to compete at a higher level. SRCC has sent athletes to this camp every year.

Our “on water” season starts at the Victoria Boathouse as soon as the ice is off the river. SRCC offers several levels of programming to address each athlete at their skill level, and hires several coaches during the months of May to October to meet all of these needs. Most of these coaches are previous athletes who want to share their love of the sport. We have a beginner program, a developmental program and a high-performance program. Athletes are at the Boathouse daily, starting at 7 am, with many paddling twice each day. Athletes are trained technically, physically and mentally to support each person in achieving their personal best.

Additional programs offered are: School sessions for high school and elementary classes in which our coaches guide the students in Dragonboats or “learn-to” level kayaks. The months of July and August are filled with Summer Day Camps, running on a weekly basis, with 140 children taking part over the summer.

The racing season begins in May, with the SRCC team attending regattas across WesternCanada, culminating at the Canadian National Championships in August of each year.

In 2021 our membership was 190 over all programs with 42 Competitive athletes.

SRCC occupies two boat bays in the Victoria Boathouse which is stored over 100 club boats consisting of K1, C1, K2, C2, K4, C4 paddler boats for a variety of skill levels. As well there are 18 paddleboards, three coach boats with motors and trailers, paddles for all sizes of paddler and type of boat, as well as PFD’s of all sizes. The third bay occupied is heated and is home to our member fitness facility, in which a variety of bikes and canoe and kayak ergometers are available for member use, as well as a wide variety of strength training equipment.