

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 28, 2009

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OUTRIGGER CANOEING AND KAYAK IN 2016 PARALYMPIC GAMES

Halifax, Nova Scotia- Last week athletes from around the world, with physical disabilities, were able to compete for the first time at the **2009 ICF Sprint World Championships in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada**. Coached by **Jan Whitaker** of **Rochester, NY** and **Deborah Page**, USA Canoe/Kayak fielded a team of six athletes, making history itself, by securing three medals and one, very strong, fourth place finish. Twenty-seven athletes from Team USA paddled against teams from 65 other countries.

The **USA PaddleAbility** team showed the world that paddling and Paralympics are a natural fit. Their performance in the games was a giant step toward the inclusion of paddling on the Paralympic program in 2016. The team collected three podium spots over the weekend, highlighted by a gold medal performance by **Augusto “Goose” Perez** and **Tami Hetke** in the C2 200m. **Mark Dunford** and **Rebecca Lloyd** placed 2nd in the K2 200m and **Robert Brown** won a bronze medal for his K1 200m race

This year, four PaddleAbility races were scheduled to show the world that the International Canoe Federation (ICF) is committed to bringing canoe and kayak sprint into the Paralympic Games, hopefully as soon as 2016. The ICF will need support from Federations around the world, including the United States to make this possible.

What the ICF needs in order to make the dream of inclusion in the 2016 Paralympics a reality is for PaddleAbility races to be on the schedule at every sprint world championship event held. This can only be achieved with support from each country and Federation.

For additional information head to: www.usack.org and www.adaptivecanoeing.org

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