



CANOE-KAYAK (SPRINT)

BY NICK FARIS, NATIONAL POST

Venue

Welland Pan Am Flatwater Centre, Welland, Ont.

Venue acronym

WFC

Landmark status

Medium

The centre sits at the foot of the Welland Canal, which flows south through the Niagara Region from Lake Ontario.

Other events at venue

None

Transit options

From Union Station, take Lake-

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shore West GO train to Burlington, then No. 12 GO bus to St. Catharines Fairview Mall. From there, St. Catharines Transit is running a shuttle (No. 301) to the venue. It's a gauntlet, but it's doable.

For exact directions, try:

Triplinx.ca

Schedule

July 11 Preliminary heats and semi-finals; women's K-4 500m final

July 12 Preliminary heats and semi-finals; men's K-4 1000m final

July 13 Preliminary heats and semi-finals; men's K-1 1000m final, men's C-1 1000m final, men's K-2 1000m final, men's C-2

1000m final, women's K-1 500m final

July 14 women's K-2 500m final, men's K-1 200m final, men's C-1 200m final, women's C-1 200m final, women's K-1 200m final, men's K-2 200m final

See the full competition schedule at the Pan Am website

How it works

As in slalom, races are split into canoe and kayak — but in sprint, there are no obstacles, and the point is to tear straight across the water as fast as possible. Medals will be up for grabs at several different distances 200m, 500m and 1000m. Events are further split based on boat size single, double and, in the case of kayak, four-

person. Teams are clocked simultaneously, racing side-by-side in separate lanes.

Nations competing

Canada is the only country to qualify a boat for all 13 sprint events. A total of 16 countries are expected to compete.

Canada's team

Men's kayak

Mark de Jonge, Halifax; Adam van Koeverden, Oakville, Ont.; Brady Reardon, Burlington, Ont.; Andrew Jessop, Halifax; Philippe Duchesneau, Sherbrooke, Que.; Pierre-Luc Poulin, Lac Beauport, Que.

Women's kayak

Michelle Russell, Fall River, N.S.; Émilie Fourne, Montréal;

Hannah Vaughan, Dartmouth, N.S.; K.C. Fraser, Oakville, Ont. *Men's canoe*

Mark Oldershaw, Burlington, Ont.; Ben Russell, Dartmouth, N.S.; Gabriel Beauchesne-Sévigny, Trois-Rivières, Que.; Jason McCoombs, Dartmouth, N.S.

Women's canoe Laurence Vincent-Lapointe, Trois-Rivières, Que.

Tournament format

Men and women compete separately, as do kayakers and canoers. Both events feature single and double (pair) races, while there is also a four-person kayak competition. Racers compete in preliminary heats before the fastest advance to their respective finals.

Results from 2011 Pan Ams

Cuba finished atop the sprint medal table with nine, including four gold. Canada pulled the second-most medals seven (four gold). American kayaker Carrie Johnson, meanwhile, won double gold in her singles events.

Why it's worth watching

It's faster than rowing and more strenuous than track and swimming, while sharing the same objective as those popular sprint sports. It's also something Canada typically does well, at both the Pan Am and Olympic levels.

Competition outlook

Legendary Canadian kayaker van Koeverden, a four-time Olympic medallist, will race individually

at his first Pan Ams. Flag bearer Oldershaw is the most notable Canadian canoeist, with a strong track record at 1000m. Will name recognition be enough to thrust Canada to the top of the standings? The absence of Johnson, the double American medallist from 2011, will certainly help on the women's side. Fournel will be a popular selection in the K-1 500m after taking silver four years ago.