



sport, arts & culture

Department:
Sport, Arts and Culture
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Presidents Report 2020

Introduction:

Oh, what a year! History will note that our sport was off the water for three months, yes, three whole months! For the first few weeks of the National Lockdown, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, those fortunate with a pool in their garden, paddled in their pools. While those with ergo's spent many hours staring at the wall/tv's/mirrors. Finally, those not so fortunate, ran around their gardens and tackled a 1000 pull up challenge on social media.

Our paddling community once again showed how close knit we are, by raising over R100 000 through our National Fundraiser - Paddling4Covid. This helped our members that were in need of assistance with food. Two separate food drops took place at all our development projects, assisting over 200 families with basic food supplies. We give our sincere thanks to everyone involved.

Events were cancelled or postponed, with all of us longing to be able to be back on the water legally, to enjoy the freedom of the outdoors.

As frustration levels reached their maximum, the team at CSA did a mammoth job in getting canoeing announced as one of the first eight sports back in training. Paperwork was the order of the day, but the smiles of those first paddles posted on social media made the behind the scenes work so worthwhile. Let us not forget those first paddles, and the joy that was shared. None of this would have been possible without those volunteering to be Club Covid-19 Officers and accepting the responsibility for their clubs. Take a moment to thank those who put up their hands to help.

Our next breakthrough was the return of events under strict Covid-19 regulations. To those intrepid event organisers that took on the challenge, we cannot thank you enough. John Oliver led the way and then willingly shared his experience with others - thank you John. Who would have thought in the middle of April and May that we would succeed in hosting SA Championships for Surfski, Marathon and River all by early November. An incredible achievement for our sport and many envious National Federations looked on at what we were managing.

As the seriousness of the Covid-19 Pandemic unfolded, we realised as CSA, that communication was a key ingredient for us. We tried to give out weekly updates, and I can honestly look back and be proud of how we handled the Pandemic as a Federation. This would not have been possible without a great team working full time on the way forward for our sport - Janet, Colin and Walter, thank you so much for the long hours on zoom as we navigated uncharted waters over this period.

FunFactFriday was introduced this year, as we tested a different way of communicating with you, our member. Various role players took up the challenge of being on the other side of the camera, not as easy as it looks! We will continue with the weekly updates, this is working well as an addition to Copper's Corner which you receive via email.



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The Paddlers Portal is now the norm, with all event entries being processed through the platform. We have received great feedback from you, thank you for taking the time to communicate with us. We are still attending to some features, as the software remains dynamic going forward.

During Lockdown, we used the period to roll out the CSA Safeguarding policy. It is so important for us to protect everyone within our sport. There are various elements to this, including and not limited to tour managers and their responsibility, coaches and volunteers. The rollout is by no means concluded, there is much work still to be done.

During Women's month, the Annual G-Sport Awards for Women took place and we were thrilled to have the spotlight shone on us with Hayley Nixon, winning the Athlete of the Year Award, and Nosipho Mthembu winning a Ministerial Award for her outstanding achievements in 2019 which included becoming our first ever African black female to be awarded Protea Colours. Nosipho represented South Africa at the World Marathon Champs in the U18 K2 event, and then won a Gold Medal at the African Games that took place in Rabat 2019 in the K4 Team. Congratulations to both Hayley and Nosipho for their achievement.

Covid-19 also led us to offer the Level 1 Coaching Courses online. It has been incredible to see the uptake in those wanting to do the course and this augurs well for the future and we cannot wait to see all the newly qualified Level 1 Coaches getting involved. Thank you to Greg van Heerden who does an amazing job in facilitating these courses for us and well done to those that took and challenge and passed.

To our discipline committees, thank you again for your willingness to be involved. This was not an easy year for anyone, but one can look at what was achieved with a huge smile and gratitude. As you plan for 2021, we are still not sure what lies ahead, but we are forging full steam ahead.

To the Safety Officers, that oversaw the change to the new PFD specs this year, thank you. That was never going to be an easy task. We thank you, the paddler, for respecting the rules, especially with many of you having to outlay money on new PFD's.

Our clubs, the backbone of our sport. No one could have predicted what was going to happen in 2020 - yet, you are all still here! Congratulations to all the committees and volunteers that made this happen. I urge each and every one of you, to help your clubs as much as possible, even if you run one time trial a year. Everyone can play a part in keeping their club open going forward.

International Competitions:

All international competitions for 2020 were cancelled, and the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games were postponed by one year due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

No Protea Colours awarded in 2020.



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Development:

Our programmes have taken a huge knock in 2020 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. However, through this all, Janet Simpkins has been remarkable by staying in touch with all the coaches, ensuring all logistics were taken care of with regards to food drops, as well being instrumental in ensuring Covid-19 safety training rolled out to all the coaches. This allowed the projects to be back up and running smoothly and safely. Janet, once again our sincere thanks for the incredible amount of energy and passion you bring to the program. To our coaches at the grassroots level, thank you for your persistence during such tough times.

We look forward to more success stories in 2021.

Administration:

Finances:

Once again, Walter Ulrich was instrumental in ensuring we survived financially as a National Federation. Weekly operational meetings during the National Lockdown kept me updated as to where we were financially, with clear deadlines and plan B, C, D etc. in place. Not an easy year budget wise, especially not knowing what income was going to be received, and to be honest not knowing what lay ahead, but thank you Walter. We sit with our audited financials complete for the year, which are available on the website. All reporting to the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture complete and a clear vision what awaits us for next year financially.

The Board members do appreciate the detailed spreadsheets provided, with membership figures tracked per club, it certainly does aid with planning.

Secretary General:

Colin Simpkins, a year to remember. I wish we had the time to document the past eight months and what has been achieved. It is impossible for me to put into words in this report what has played out since March. What I can record, is that you have been invaluable not only to our sport of Canoeing, but to sport in South Africa.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the journey, it was not the easiest one we set out to do, but we came through smiling and the enormous role you played is greatly appreciated.

General:

I am so proud of what we have all achieved in 2020. We took on all the challenges that were thrown at us, gave it our best shot to find the solutions and I honestly believe we emerged in a better place this latter part of the year. This was due to a great team effort by everyone involved in various roles along the way.



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Quinton Rutherford rounded off the year with his incredible achievement. He earned himself a place in the Guinness Book of Records by paddling 227 km's in his Surfski. To Quinton, his support crew and family, congratulations, we are all incredibly proud of you. A wonderful way for you to say goodbye to your friend, and doubles partner, Mark Perrow. Mark will always be remembered by the paddling community and he is sorely missed.

Personally, I would like to thank Colin's family, Janet, Josh, Liam and Emily as well as my son, Callam, for their patience and tolerance over the many hours of phone calls and zoom sessions as we worked through this year's challenges.

Finally, to you the members, we thank you for your incredible support this year.

Kim Pople
President Canoeing South Africa