

Canoeing 101: get wet and wild For the love of the game

By Kathryn Herr
Editor in Chief
kah928@psu.edu

I hear all around me the groans and complaints all the time about having to take a gym class in college. I know it is not the best use of our already over-extended days, but sometimes they can be fun. Last summer I was able to take a class that tied actual useable skills into a gym class. I took Canoeing I.

Canoe class is not just about how to paddle a boat; we learned the infamous J stroke, canoeing safety and regulations, how to watch out for others and how to save other boaters in trouble. It is a great chance to get out of the classroom, meet new people, and learn something new. "The idea of the course is to learn the skills and have fun," said Karl Martz, course instructor and coordinator of Career Services.

Martz is a canoe instructor for both the Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, who loans the canoes for the class and Wildware Backcountry, who also loans some equipment to the class. He is also a certified canoe and kayak instructor for the American Canoe Association.

The course consists of learning one day in the classroom about preparation, equipment, and canoe terminology. Three days are then spent paddling around Lake Pinchot, perfecting the skills of canoeing and engaging in water battles.

Martz integrates lectures about

trip planning, hazards of canoeing, statistics, and laws into the day's activities. The last day of class is held on the Susquehanna River. Paddling tandem, the class travels 6 miles on the river, from Fort Hunter to City Island, stopping along the way to see the sights and goof around.

One of my favorite drills was the 'boat over boat rescue.' This drill entails a lot of teamwork. A pair of boaters enters the water and rolls their canoe to simulate an accident. Then a second pair of boaters in a separate canoe paddle to the capsized canoe to offer assistance. They position the capsized canoe perpendicular to their boat and lift the canoe over the top of their boat, gunnel to gunnel, to empty the water. Then they roll the canoe in the air to its right position, slide it back into the water and help the floating boaters reenter their canoe safely.

The course is available to all those interested regardless of experience or athletic ability. "You don't have to come into the class with any ability or skill. It doesn't matter because we are going to teach that to you," said



These students paddle tandem down the Susquehanna River. Class is held on the river on the last day of class; it is the only day students paddle on moving water.

Martz. Any PSU student is able to register for this course and it is open to the public for a fee.

Martz has had couples, friends, and siblings take his course together. When I took the class my younger brother registered as well. With my brother away at school it was a time when we could spend together and earn college credit at the same time.

Canoeing class is offered here at Penn State Harrisburg. The course will be offered this coming summer semester in two different

sessions. The class takes place over two weekends, Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and one Wednesday night from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The first session begins on May 18, the second on July 13.

Registration for this course can be tricky. It is easiest to go online into the course catalogue and type in the course prefix, ESACT 064, to find the course scheduling number.

I have to say Canoe class was the most fun I had in a gym class and was also the most useful. I am never going to be a Wimbledon finalist and I can barely bench the weight of a pillow, but canoeing is a great outdoor activity that I can enjoy with friends and family.

By Herb Smith
Staff Reporter
hjs135@psu.edu

Since the beginning of time, people have been entertained by sports. The Greeks created the Olympics to match athletes in various events while the Romans flocked to the Coliseum to watch gladiators (not named Russell Crowe) compete for the joy of those in attendance. Today we are still flocking to the Coliseum only this one is in Los Angeles.

Sports in this country are a multi-billion dollar business, but sports transcend gender and racial lines and countries' borders. Sports are a worldwide phenomenon. From the soccer riots in England, to the running of the bulls in Spain, to dog sledding in Alaska, sports unite the world under a banner of competition. But why?

Why do we pay \$100 for nosebleed seats at Madison Square Garden to watch the Knicks lose? Why do we stay up late to watch Monday Night Football because it needs to be aired in prime time in California? Why do we watch college football despite the ridiculous concept of the BCS that decides who plays for the championship?

Sports are a release, an escape from everyday life. When terrorists struck America in 2001, the nation mourned, and then watched the World Series. Even Red Sox fans rooted on the Yankees in hopes that they would win the title for New York City and the country itself.

Every year, we buy the tickets, head to the stadium and take in a game. We get to see humans do superhuman feats. Those guys in the jerseys look like regular people but they make their bodies do things we mortals can only dream of. Herculean home runs, the slippery runner avoiding tacklers, gravity-defying dunks and bone crushing checks amaze us and bring us back for

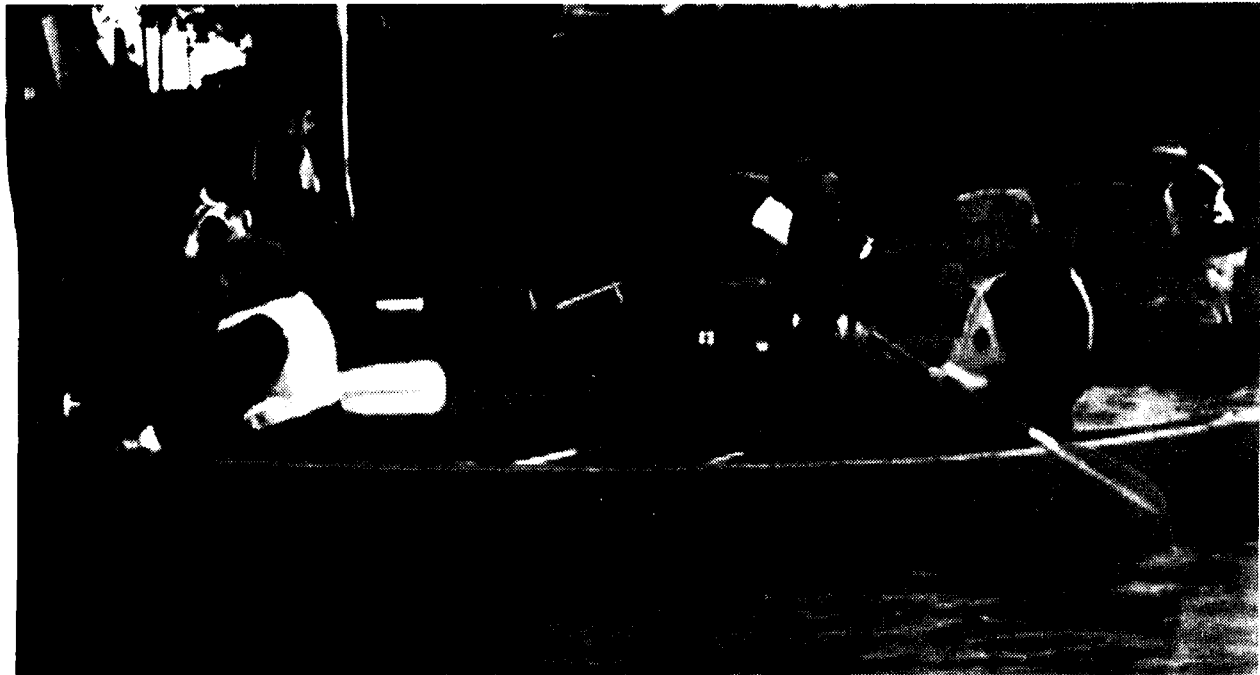
that chance to get a glimpse of greatness. To see people who have pushed their bodies to perform these acts is an honor and a privilege and gets us through the regular season.

Postseason is where the real fun begins. At any moment the tide can and does change sending one team home and the other team on to fight another day. Seasons ultimately end but when the new season begins months later, even those fans of the basement dwelling teams can hold out hope that maybe this is the year. Sports create laughter and have brought grown men to tears.

Sports have legends and heroes of days gone by. Go to a baseball park anywhere in the country and you will undoubtedly see an elderly man talk about days of DiMaggio, Williams, Mantle and Mays. You'll hear the story of the first time he saw Willie Mays make a diving catch in center field or the homerun he saw Mickey Mantle hit that may have yet to land even now. Sports bring back the best of times for all of us. It is the patchwork of our childhood, when we got our first autograph, or went to a professional game for the first time. We circle our life around those moments.

Sports keep us on the edge of our seats and can bring us to heavenly highs or crushing lows in a single moment. It's that chance at the high that gets us through the low and brings us back season after season. No two seasons are alike, just as no two players are alike. Once a player is retired, you will never see a person play the way he did.

Professional careers end quickly, so in a flash he will be gone and a new gun will be the star. The names on the roster change, sometimes even the teams leave town, but the sport is always there. And as long as the sport is there, the fans will be in the seats to watch.



Photos courtesy of Jessica Pouchan

Several students arrive at their destination along the City Island boat ramp after a long day of paddling. The trip takes place on the 6 mile stretch of the Susquehanna River between Fort Hunter and City Island.

Kerr opens defense of hard-won title

By Ken Peters
AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) - Having survived a bit of an ordeal, Cristie Kerr seems to have emerged a stronger player.

Kerr blew a big lead late in the Takefuji Classic a year ago, but tenaciously dueled Seol-An Jeon during a marathon playoff, finally winning with a routine par putt on the seventh playoff hole.

That victory was only the second on the LPGA Tour for Kerr, who added two more titles before the year ended.

"I showed myself a lot. I can be courageous, I can hit the shots under pressure, I can be there and I think found a new level in my game that week," said Kerr, back to defend her title in the 54-hole tournament beginning Thursday.

Her good year has carried over. Although she hasn't won this season, she has three top-three finishes and ranks second on the money list behind Annika Sorenstam.

Sorenstam, who has won five tournaments in a row, is taking the week off. That puts Kerr in the favorite's role at The Las Vegas

Country club.

"I'm really happy with my game. I'm improving my swing, my short game, my putting, mental aspect, being able to work it right-to-left and left-to-right and trouble shots," Kerr said.

"I'm trying to step up my fitness a little bit this year when I'm on the road. That way in my off weeks, I can hit it hard and do more lifting session per week on top of all the cardio I do so that this next offseason I can really try to get stronger."

The long playoff victory a year ago certainly would seem a character-builder for Kerr, who called it "a matter of survival."

She bogeyed four of the last six holes of regulation, including missing a short par putt on No. 18. Undaunted, she finally ended it with a 3-foot par putt after Jeon hit into trouble on the seventh extra hole.

By then, darkness was falling and chilly winds were swirling about the course.

"It was unbelievably draining," Kerr said. "Seven holes is long enough without a 40-mph wind and it being really cold. I took a really positive attitude into it

(the playoff) saying 'Hey, what's the difference whether you lose a couple of shots to get into a playoff or birdie the last five in a row to get into a playoff?'

"I took a very optimistic approach to that and really believed in myself."

Her dinner companions went ahead and ordered without her.

"People were eating dinner and wondering 'Are they still out there?' I heard that from numerous people," Kerr recalled. "I was so tired that night going to dinner that I couldn't appreciate it."

Kerr's Las Vegas win last year came after she finished the 2003 tournament tied for second with Annika Sorenstam and Sooyun Kang behind winner Candie Kung.

Among those who will try to deny Kerr consecutive victories in the tournament is Natalie Gulbis, who has a bit of a home advantage.

"I live about 30 minutes from the golf course," Gulbis said. "It is always nice to sleep in your own bed and it is nice that when I get off the golf course I can go over and see my instructor, Butch Harmon, who is in town."

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