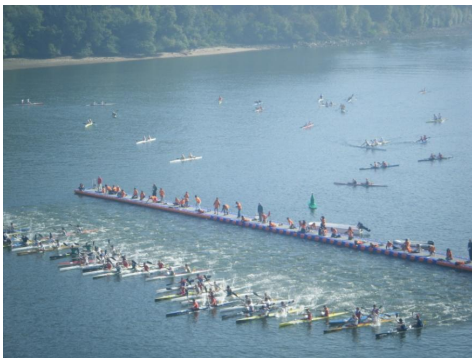
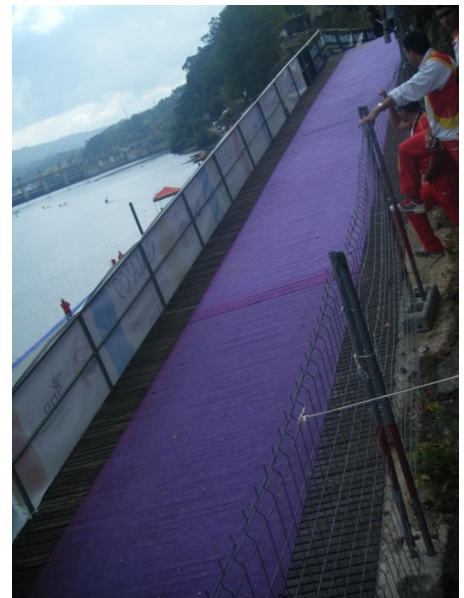


2009 MARATHON WORLDS by Kristin Bauder



We arrived in Lisbon, Portugal after a long day and a half of travelling. Surprisingly, the weather was just like home! We temporarily got settled into our hotel and then decided to do some sightseeing. We took a tour around Lisbon, or Lisboa as the Portuguese call it, and learned about some of the amazing historic monuments and buildings around town. On Monday morning we met up with some of the other paddlers and began our three hour drive to Porto. The scenery was really interesting because of numerous ruins of ancient buildings along the way. As we approached Porto I was so happy I wasn't the one driving! Every exit from a highway led to another highway, and the signs were nearly impossible to figure out. After a few misinterpretations of signs and a few wrong turns, we managed to make it to the hotel.

The next morning we drove to Crestuma, a town with a population of only 3,000 people, to see the course. The setting was quite spectacular at the river with a significant dam at the end of the course. We had to get all our boats set up for racing so we put handles on the boats to be able to carry them during the portage, and fit foot pumps in to be able to empty them while racing. The course was a 4-km lap with a 150 metre portage, with the first bit of the portage being uphill.



The first two days of racing were Masters' K1 and K2's, which was really inspiring to watch, especially when some of the age categories were 70+. I hope that I'm in similar shape when I am that age! Our Canadian Masters Team won a total of 3 medals in their races. The following days were Junior, U23,

and Senior races, each category racing different distances. As my race was approaching, I was slowly starting to get more nervous, but excited at the same time. I watched my teammate Kiran, race directly before me and that helped to prepare me a bit more for what to expect right off the start and during the portages. After all last-minute final preparations, I was on the water warming up to race. I lined up with twenty other girls on the starting dock, and with a "READYGO" at 11:45am we were off! Although I wasn't completely ready when the start was called, I managed to get off the line successfully. One of my biggest worries of the race – the start – was over. My next focus was on the portage and making sure I could get out of my boat and get back in





smoothly, which I was able to do. The next four laps of the race I did on my own as I was out of touch from a wash-riding group. Mentally it was tough to keep going at a good pace, but I managed to fight through it. Surprisingly, I quite enjoyed all the portages in the race. They gave me an extra boost to keep working through the race and they all went much smoother than I expected! Although I crossed the finish line completely exhausted, marathon racing is definitely something I plan to continue doing in the future to learn how much further I can push myself.

The next day was the day I was most looking forward to, the Senior events with our fellow B.C. paddler, Ian MacKenzie racing Senior Men's K1. Many of us had heard how amazingly fast his portages were and he certainly didn't disappoint! It was amazing to watch him demonstrate his expertise, skill and speed throughout the race.

Overall, the entire experience in Portugal having the opportunity to race at the Marathon World Championships was unforgettable and I look forward to more exciting marathon racing in the future!

2009 MARATHON WORLDS by Kiran Basra

We flew into Lisbon, Portugal on Sunday morning and did a bit of sightseeing there before driving to Porto on Monday afternoon. The city is fairly old with cobblestone roads and beautiful monuments everywhere.

For the first few days there, until we raced, we got our boats organized and fitted with pumps. We got out on the water a couple of times and tried a few portages to get rid of the kinks before race day. The race course was on the river, Douro, that past through a small village in Crestuma and was surrounded by beautiful green hills. It almost felt like home with all the greenery...asides from the slight language barrier!



On Wednesday and Thursday we were able to watch the master's race in both K1 and K2 which was a good way to get a feel for just how intense this competition is! We were able to watch some of the do's and don'ts of exiting your boat and then re-entry off the beach! Watching the masters race made me hope that I can be as fit as they are and still compete when I get older.

Friday morning finally rolled in and my race was set to start at 9:33am just after the Junior Men's K1. I could definitely feel the nerves starting to kick in! I went out for warm up and started seeing some of the girls in my race...they were big! Well, big in comparison to me which isn't hard to do. We lined up against the dock and had people holding our boats in place off the start. I was told before I got on the water that the start was VERY quick! The start isn't close to the same as sprint kayaking. You don't get any warning that's for sure! The starter simply calls boat numbers to move up or back and suddenly says, "READYGO!!" Literally one word. I had a bit of a slow start because I wasn't as prepared for that first stroke as I could've been. I ended up finishing 19th out of 23 girls which I was happy with. I had a fairly smooth race asides from one entry on the beach where I tipped and had to empty my boat. It was my first time at Marathon Worlds so I wasn't sure what to expect. I'm looking forward to training and working on my portages and endurance for Marathon Worlds next year.



After my race was finished, I was able to kick back and enjoy the rest of the races. My favourite race had to be Senior Men's K1. In the past, I've heard how well Ian Mackenzie has done in marathon kayaking. However, just hearing that, you can't fully understand just how amazing and quick he is! I was excited to be able to see him race finally and cheer him on! Some of the top finishers in the senior men's race, which consists of racers age 24+, were 40+ years old and they were beating the young guns!



It inspired me to start preparing for next year's Worlds in Spain. Overall it was an amazing trip and I look forward to more marathon competitions in the future.