

INTRODUCTION

This book picks up where my last one, TO WIN THE WORLDS, left off. It focuses in much greater detail on a few selected themes from TO WIN THE WORLDS: gate techniques, physical and psychological principles, preparing a yearly training plan, and types of workouts. Those items comprise the first part of the book. They are the basic principles of slalom at the highest levels as I see them. The second part of the book consists of case studies of 11 top slalomists in which their entire paddling careers are examined in minute detail. The reader can judge for himself the extent to which these boaters followed the principles discussed in the first part of the book. Furthermore, I believe that the case studies are a huge wealth of information about all aspects of slalom. I have not attempted to editorialize much in them, feeling that the most important job right now is simply to get a good command of the facts and let the reader make his own analysis over the next few years. One obvious thing that pops out of the case studies is that there are many ways to get to the top. The reader can copy those methods which seem to suit his circumstances the best.

I thought it important to look at whole paddling careers to see how top boaters got to where they are. I feel that people in all stages of development and of all ages can benefit from this. Young beginners can look at the early parts, knowing what has to come after that if they are to get really good. Advanced boaters can focus on the later events. All too often, however, beginners or intermediates hear only how the elite paddler is training NOW and try to emulate that -- with disappointing results because they are not yet physically and mentally prepared to do it.

A note on the technique sections. It is hard to generalize about what is the best technique for all boaters in the same situation. I've not really attempted that here, preferring instead to relate how certain World Champions in each class do the moves. It seems to me that I'm on firmer ground that way. I have found that even among the best people there is disagreement about which is the best way to do a move. It has a lot to do with boat design, body segment length, and strength. Thus, the reader should read these sections with an eye to what he can adopt, but with another eye for what is really not appropriate for him. Still, based on the results I have had in teaching people, I believe that studying these techniques is the fastest way to advance. If nothing else, taking the moves apart the way it is done here forces the boater to think deeply about what he is doing.

The theme of the book, "the ultimate run," came to me when I was trying to describe to myself the purpose of the book. Basically, I had learned more since writing TO WIN THE WORLDS and I wanted to get the information into print. What I had learned, for the most part, was a refinement of themes I had mentioned in TO WIN THE WORLDS.

What struck me most of all, however, was that now I was not merely talking about winning the Worlds. I was talking about people who had been consistently at the top over a long period of time -- the crème de la crème.

As I set out to study the ultimate run, I made a quick discovery: it doesn't exist! It is a vision, a Holy Grail, if you will, to which the greatest athletes aspire. While they may approach the ultimate run once in a while, particularly in training sessions, they never actually reach it. That is because they prepare so meticulously that it is impossible for them to perform every single detail in the race as well as they have planned it ahead of time. Thus, while winning the Worlds is a tangible thing -- you either win it or you don't -- the ultimate run is an illusive goal which eternally beckons us on.

What interest would the general reader have in all of this? Some people asked the same question about TO WIN THE WORLDS. Yet the book sold out the first printing (1000 copies), in a year and a half. I had book orders from all over the world from people who say they benefited from it and it is now being translated into Italian and German. I hope it will be the same with this book. While only a few readers may some day aspire to the ultimate run, I hope thousands can obtain a great deal of fun and satisfaction from thinking about it and pursuing it!

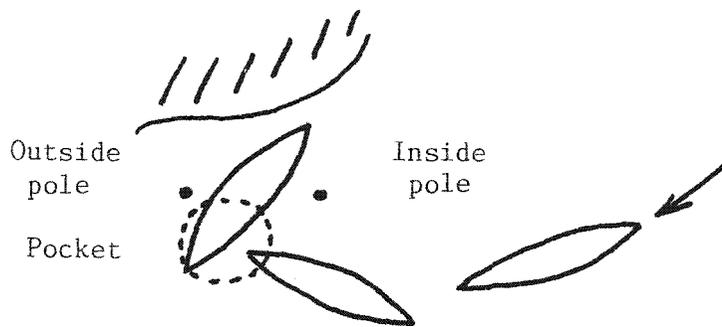
Definitions

A note on terms used in the book: To save space, I have assumed that most of my readers are familiar with my earlier book, TO WIN THE WORLDS, which goes to some lengths to define canoeing terms. Recognizing, however, that some readers may not have seen that book, I define several key terms here:

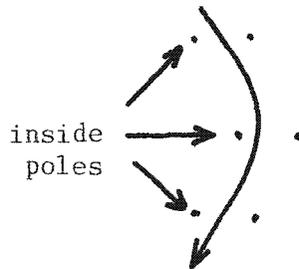
IDEAL UPSTREAM: The ideal upstream has the following characteristics:

- * The gate before the upstream permits a good approach angle, is quite far above the upstream gate and not on the same shore as the upstream.

- * The eddy in which the upstream gate is situated is well defined, large, deep and stable.
- * The upstream gate is moderately high in the eddy where the upstream current is strong, but not so close to the obstacle creating the eddy that there is an awkward exit.
- * Also, the upstream gate is fairly close to the eddy line, but not on it, so that on the exit only one stroke is required to launch the boat into the current.
- * The gate following the upstream is a considerable distance downstream and more or less in the center of the current.



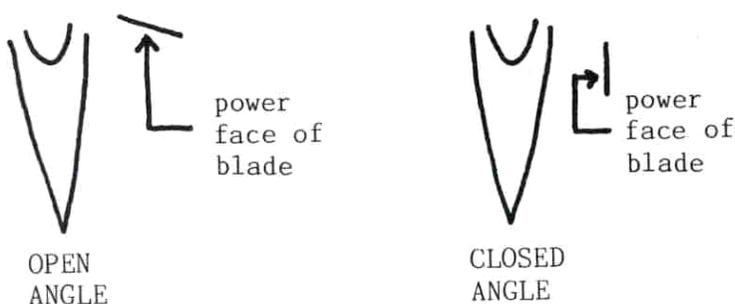
INSIDE POLE: This is the pole on the inside of the turn, usually referring to upstream gates but sometimes to offsets:



OUTSIDE POLE: The pole on the outside of turns.

POCKET: The pocket is a concept I invented a few years ago to convey the idea of paddling deeper into the eddy on certain upstream gates in order to get a good exit angle, rather than wrapping the boat around the inside pole on the entry. Richard Fox calls this "going wide" or "getting behind the gate." (See diagram above.)

OPEN ANGLE, CLOSED ANGLE: This is my way of describing the angle of duffek or draw strokes in the water:



Sources

As with my previous books, I have had a great deal of help from many sources in preparing this one. I would like to go through the book, chapter by chapter and list the sources:

C1 TECHNIQUE: Jon Lugbill (four times World Champion); Davey Hearn (twice World Champion in Team, twice Silver Medalist in Individuals, Europa Cup Champion); Bob Robison (World Champion in Team, Bronze Medalist in Individuals); and Kent Ford (Silver Medalist in Wildwater Team, twice third place finisher in the Slalom Europa Cup).

C2 TECHNIQUE: Steve and Michael Garvis (World Champions in individuals, Bronze Medalists in Team); Jef Huey and Paul Grabow (Bronze Medalists in Individuals and Team); Fritz Haller and Elizabeth Hayman (World Champions in C2M).

K1 TECHNIQUE: Richard Fox (World Champion in individual and Team (twice) and Europa Cup Champion); and his coach, Ken Langford; Norbert Sattler (World Champion, Europa Cup Champion, and Olympic Silver Medalist). Chris, Mike and Marty McCormick, Norman Bellingham and Dan Isbister of the U.S. all helped with the chapter by being "guinea pigs" in experimenting with new techniques. Ken Stone, another U.S. Slalom Coach, critiqued the section and offered several improvements.

PHYSIOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES and PERIODIZING THE YEAR: The material in these chapters is based on: SPORTS TRAINING PRINCIPLES, by Frank W. Dick; I. T., INTERVAL TRAINING FOR LIFETIME FITNESS, by Edward L. Fox; letters on interval training from Prof. Jay Kearney of the University of Kentucky; a seminar at the U.S. Olympic Training Center at Colorado Springs, Colorado, to which the U.S. Olympic Committee kindly paid my

way; tests performed by Dr. Jackie Puhl of the U.S. Olympic Training Center and Dr. Carol Stevens who assisted her during the tests; interviews with Richard Fox, Norbert Sattler, Ulrike Deppe, Liz Sharman, Sattler's coach Toni Kurcz; Jean Yves Prigent and a manual on the physiology of training which he gave me and which I translated from French to English; and my knowledge of the training of the American paddlers from Washington, D.C. who have won medals in the World Championships. Three paddlers who have studied sports training principles in college were kind enough to review the drafts and make many valuable comments. They are: Gary Barton, of the Canadian team; Craig Law, of the U.S. Team; and Paul Grabow, of the U.S. Team, who won two bronze medals at Bala in C2.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES: This chapter is based on seminars given to members of the U.S. Team from Washington, D.C. by Dennis Fox, of the American Sales Masters, and Dr. Brad Hatfield, of the University of Maryland; and the following books: PSYCHOCYBERNETICS, by Maxwell Maltz; THE INNER ATHLETE, by Robert M. Nideffer; INNER TENNIS, by W. Timothy Gallwey; COACH, ATHLETE AND THE SPORTS PSYCHOLOGIST, by Peter Klavora and Juri V. Daniel; SPORTS PSYCHING, by Thomas A. Tutko, and Umberto Tosi.

CASE STUDIES: The case studies were developed through extensive interviews (9-10 hours in many cases) of the subjects, and detailed examinations and summaries of their training logs where those existed. It used to be said that slalom paddlers are reluctant to divulge their training for fear that someone might copy it and beat them. In no case did I find this to be true. In all but a few cases where it was not physically possible, boaters interviewed for the book gave incredibly freely of their time and also read drafts to check for factual errors.

I shall always remember with fondness those interviews. All the foreigners except Lubos Hilgert, Ken Langford and Toni Kurcz were interviewed at my dining room table. I spoke to Lubos Hilgert and his father at Merano in 1982 and later exchanged letters with his father. Hilgert's letter, originally written in Czech, was translated for me by Emma Chladek, World Champion in C2M downriver team. I interviewed Toni Kurcz (in German), at Jonquiere in 1978, Bala in 1980 and Merano in 1982. I interviewed Ken Langford at Bala in 1980, and at his house after the Bala World Championships. I have also exchanged several letters with Ken over the last few years.

Jon Lugbill I interviewed in the car while driving from Washington, D.C. to a winter training camp in California. Davey Hearn, I'll never forget. Part of his interview was done on a winding road from Kernville to Bakersfield, California and I was struggling to keep from throwing up most of the time! Davey would make some important point, but I'd be reaching for the window and have to ask him to repeat it.

The material on the evolution of the Max C1 came directly from an article that Barb McKee was writing for WHITEWATER '83. She kindly gave me a draft copy from which to work.

Part of Cathy Hearn's interview was done at her place, a cabin on an island. You have to get there by canoe.

In the Garvis interview, which occurred largely right before and right after training sessions, I also relied on an article that Barb McKee wrote for WHITEWATER '82.

In doing the interviews, I was able to make use of a few interrogation techniques the Marine Corps taught me years ago when I was an interrogator/translator for them. Thanks, Corps! It's amazing what people remember if you can only get it out of their subconscious mind. The chronological approach works best. Ask the subject to describe everything that happened, event by event, in great detail. When he stops on one particular event, keep asking "What else do you remember about it?" until he finally explodes: "There is nothing else!" Another point: don't ask leading questions because you can't rely on the answer if you do. If you ask questions that suggest a certain answer ("Didn't you feel badly about this?"), the subject is likely to tell you what he thinks you want to hear, not necessarily what really happened.

Preparing the text was quite a story. I wanted to wait until the last possible moment to take the book to the printer, so that I would have the benefit of information learned during the 1983 spring race season. In January 1983, things looked pretty bleak, however, because I needed a word processor if I was going to be able to do it this way. Yet I had no access to one and I couldn't afford to buy or rent one. I was planning to cut the book way down and do one volume now, one later, or just forget about lots of things completely.

Then Candi Clark Wozniak (1973 World Champion in K1W Slalom Team), whose husband, Steve, invented the Apple computer, turned the situation around completely by making available to me an Apple IIe computer and printer which I set up with assistance from Don Morin and Bruce Burroughs, in my own home, and used for the book. Without Candi, I could not have finished this book, and I owe her a deep debt of gratitude which I shall never forget. She's going to get the very first copy off the printing press.

Many athletes and friends helped to edit, type and proofread the manuscript. In addition to those listed by chapter above, these people include Cathy Hearn, Yuri Kusuda, Bobby Robison, Jon Lugbill, Bruce Swomley, Rusty and Ricky Hill, Dana Chladek, Mary Alice Hearn, Merle Garvis, Patricia Garvis, Bill McKinney, Marc Loriaux, Lecky Haller and Jed Prentice.

Throughout every stage of gathering and interpreting the information, writing, distributing and proofreading the book, Gordon Bare, Assistant U.S. Slalom Team Coach, has provided invaluable assistance for which I am deeply grateful.

Last of all, I owe a great deal to my wife, Abbie, who typed most of the manuscript onto the Apple IIe and entered corrections for me. This being Abbie's third book, she's a real pro now and met harsh deadlines with cheer and efficiency from February to June. She also made many valuable editorial comments which I incorporated into the book. Without her I couldn't have done it -- again!