

Graham Paull
South African Paraplegic Canoeist



FUND APPLICATION
AND SPONSORSHIP REQUEST PROFILE
Season 2015 /2016

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Objective

To secure funding, endorsements and sponsorship for the 2015 – 2016 paddling season, inclusive of training, international competitions such as the World cup and World Championships and (after qualifying), the 2016 Rio Olympics.

Brief history

I am 28 years old and I have been a paraplegic for two and a half years. I was educated at Pretoria Boys High School and matriculated in 2005. Post School I spent two years at the Sharks Rugby Academy in Natal and received my diploma in Aquaculture through the University of Stellenbosch in 2010. In 2011 I started my own Trout grow out farm with the plan to produce trout for the food market. I continued to play club rugby and I was selected to play for the Limpopo Bulls in the Vodacom Cup in 2013.

However at the end of January 2013 I contracted a virus in my spinal cord called Transverse Myelitis, which left me completely paralyzed from the hips down. As it is a rare virus which is different in nearly every case, doctors were not able to give me much of a prognosis except just wait and see what happens. I spent the next 4 months between different hospitals and eventually in a spinal rehabilitation centre where I learnt to deal with my new life.

In 2014 I relocated to Gauteng and I am currently employed by Bearing Man Group. In 2014 I was introduced to the world of Canoeing. After winning both Gauteng and South African Champs in my category I was selected to represent South Africa at the World Cup in May 2015 which was my first international event, where I placed 6th in the semi finals. I then went on to compete at the World Championships in August 2015, where I placed 2nd in my heat, 2nd in the semi final and 5th in the final, with a new personal best time of 53.7 seconds.

Attached please find two articles to substantiate this (and refer to my facebook page, where you will find further articles and interviews). I have been able to secure the funding to this point, though five main sponsors Longship Trading, Bulk machine handling, Bearing Man Group, Joekels tea and iconnect.



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Rio hopeful Paul has international baptism of fire in Germany

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By Mark Etheridge

Canoeing's Sprint World Cup descended on Duisberg, Germany on Thursday for the second in the series... and South Africa's Graham Paul was first in action.

Paul, who lives in the little Limpopo village of Haenertsburg and celebrates his 28th birthday on Friday, went off in the para-section and is out to qualify for next year's Rio Paralympic Games in Brazil. Formerly a promising rugby player, Paul was paralysed from the waist down after an infection called transverse myelitis.

This was Paul's first ever experience of international competition. As such he had to go through a vigorous medical classification which saw him being classified as the KL2 section in the 200m event.

Says manager and newly appointed national sprint president, Craig Mustard: 'Graham's first race was not his best effort due to race nerves, but after that race Graham was really strong in his semi-final.'

In his heat, Paul ended seventh in a time of 1min 03.075sec as Austria's Markus Woboda won in 46.006. But his semi-final certainly saw an improvement as he ended sixth in 47.705 behind Britain's Adam Simmons (51.557).

'In the semi-final Graham was in the top of the field at the 150m mark but just dropped off in the last 50m.

'This is a really a good raw result and I now believe that with a more structured and professional training program Graham has the potential to qualify at the world championships in August this year,' says Mustard.

Friday sees the able-bodied athletes joining the fray where Olympic bronze medallist Bridgitte Hartley will be hoping her shoulder shows some improvement after last week's World Cup 1 in Portugal where she ended sixth in the A final.

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– International sprint season underway for Team SA

Birthday boy Paull gets Team SA's German World Cup ball rolling

Durban -South African para-paddler Graham Paull from Haenertsburg, Limpopo will remember this week for the rest of his life as he celebrated his 28th birthday making his international sprint debut at the second leg of the ICF Canoe Sprint World Cup in Duisburg, Germany, starting down a road that he hopes will lead to the Rio Paralympic Games.

Having been classified into the men's KL2 category for his 200m clash, Paull got his Rio 2016 qualification process underway on Thursday when he took to the water for his heat both nervous and excited before making a strong charge during his semi-final contest.

"Graham's first race was not his best effort due to race nerves however with one race then under his belt, Graham was really strong in his semi-final!" explained Team SA manager Craig Mustard.

"Graham was in the top of the field at the 150m mark of his semi-final but unfortunately dropped off a little in the last 50m."

Paull's 57.705 second sixth place in his semi-final wasn't enough to see him through to the final however Friday's birthday boy will take invaluable experience away from Germany in his Olympic qualification quest.

"This was a really a good raw start for Graham and I believe that with a more structured and professional training program, he has the potential to qualify at for next year's Olympics at the World Championships in August!" added Mustard confidently.

The spotlight now shifts to Team South Africa's able-bodied paddlers who will look to build on the foundation they laid at the World Cup opening leg in Montemor-o-Velho, Portugal when they take to Duisburg's waters fr





20 August 2015

South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (Johannesburg)

South Africa: Paull Powers Into Country's Team's First Final At World Championships

PRESS RELEASE

By Mark Etheridge

Para-paddler Graham Paull set up the first medal chance for South Africa at the ICF Canoe Sprint World Championships in Milan, Italy on Wednesday.

One of three para-paddlers in the 12-strong SA squad, Paull was in action over 200 metres in the KL1 men's division.

He went off in the third of three heats and took second spot in 57.831 seconds behind Brazil's Luis C.Cardosa (56.066).

That saw him through to the semi-final later in the day where he again ended up second in a quicker time of 54.369sec as China's Xiaowei Yu won in 54.572. The Haenertsburg paddler is now through to Thursday's final with the second fastest qualifying times from the semis.

South Africa's other two para-paddlers were unable to get through to their respective finals in day one action.

Jono Wing was sixth in heat three of the KL3 men with a time of 48.611 as Russia's Leonid Krylov won in 42.274. But the Hilton College pupil was unable to build on that performance as he ended eighth in 46.875 and failed to go through to the final.

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« SA Squad fired up for crucial Sprint World Champs »

Paul leads SA Sprint team charge on day one

With the para-paddlers taking centre stage on the first day of competition at the 2015 ICF Canoe Sprint World Championships, Gauteng para-paddling star Graham Paull set a positive tone as he powered his way into the KL1 Men 200m final to take place tomorrow whilst the young Jono Wing and Stu Hogg were unable to qualify passed their semi-final's on Wednesday.

It was a consistent day from Paull who built up nicely towards his semi-final as he qualified second in his heat earlier in the day which set him up in lane four for his semi-final where he finished second again behind Xiaowei Yu of China to put him through to the final on Thursday.

The final is going to prove a different kettle of fish for the Gauteng paddler who has to contest against the winners of the three heats who have automatically qualified for the final however with the second fastest qualifying time from the semi-finalists he will have some confidence going into the final on Thursday.

It was also a day for the other two para-paddlers in the South African team to savour as the 17 year old Jono Wing took part in his second senior sprint world championships and having finished sixth in his initial heat the Hilton College school boy was unable to better that in his semi-final which meant that his competition came to an end.



It was a ground breaking day for Pietermaritzburg resident Stuart Hogg who took part in his first World Championships following a car crash nearly ten years ago. It was a tough day for Hogg who changed category recently so it was always going to be a challenge for him.

Coach and Manager Craig Mustard was immensely proud of the efforts of the three para-paddlers as he mentioned that Paull is in the hunt for South Africa's first medal at the event.

"Graham (Paull) had the best day out of the three paddlers as he recorded the second fastest time of the day in his category which means that he is medal potential tomorrow as well as potentially qualifying for the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games.

"Graham has been reclassified at this competition so now he really is racing on an even playing field!

"I am positive that we will be seeing big things from Graham in the near future!" a positive Mustard mentioned.

Paull was very happy with his efforts on the opening day of the competition however he is remaining focused on the job at hand with his sights set on a podium place.

"I was really chuffed with getting a personal best in the semifinal although I didn't have a great start!

"Having qualified for the final on Thursday means that there is a chance for a medal which would be incredible but we will just have to wait and see how it goes," a relaxed Paull added.

The Way Forward

Due to the nature of the Para-Canoe classification structure, I am currently under “review”, I will need to go through the classification process for a third time before my status becomes official. This means that although I received an Olympic qualify place at the World Championships, this will not be confirmed until my third classification. The up and coming events where I could complete this process are below.

- Indonesia Championships November 2015 (possible classification race)
- Africa Games February 2016 (possible classification race)
- Gauteng Championships March 2016
- South African Championships April 2016
- World Cup May 2016 (possible classification race)
- Para Olympics September 2016

However I can only follow this course if I secure funding that I require as unfortunately, the South African canoe association does not have the funds required to assist all of the countries paddlers.

With training, kit, equipment, supplements, travel and accommodation, I will be requiring an approximate figure of R250 000 for the 2015 – 2016 season. I am appealing to all business or fund organisations to please assist me with this. As far as exposure for your company I would be able to offer this through branding on either my boat, paddle or clothing which we could discuss at a later stage. I do not expect one company to supply the full funding for the season and any contributions will be most appreciated.

As my time is very tight between work and training, Liz McGaffin and Nicky Morgan will be assisting me with this function. Please do not hesitate to contact one of us should you require further information.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.
Graham Paull