

Duck kayakers paddle against the world

Jacob Selander and Brooke Winger will represent Oregon at the World Freestyle Kayak Championships in Austria

Jon Roetman
Freelance Sports Reporter

Hard work and a successful qualifying run last September are about to pay off for two members of the Oregon Club kayaking team.

Jacob Selander, who qualified during competition on the Ottawa River last September, and Brooke Winger, who is eligible from medaling in the world championships two years ago, will compete in the World Freestyle Kayak Championships, May 26-31 in Graz, Austria.

Selander, a senior, is making his first trip to the world championships. He will compete in the squirt boating event, which features athletes riding in nine-foot boats that resemble a "surf board that you squeeze yourself into," Selander said. Athletes then perform as many tricks as they can over a one-minute time period. "Cleans," which are tricks done without using a paddle, are given a higher score by judges than tricks that include the use of a paddle.

"It's going to be big," said Selander, the club's coordinator. "There's going to be over 30 different countries competing."

Canada, South Africa, Great Britain and Germany will be some of the strongest competition for the United States, which is recognized as the best kayaking country in the world.

Along with Selander, Winger will do her best to represent the club. Winger is a professional kayaker and has won more medals than anyone in the history of freestyle kayaking. She will compete in the women's kayak along with the squirt boat event.

"Brooke's season has gone really well," Selander said of Winger, who is in Graz awaiting competition. "She has placed in the top three or four in every event so far."

In the preliminary rounds of competition, each athlete is given three attempts, with the lowest score dropped. The top 10-15 competitors advance to the semifinals, where each athlete has two attempts,

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with the lowest score dropped. The top five advance to the finals, where a "knockout" format allows for intense competition. Each athlete gets one chance to perform for the judges and the competitor with the lowest score is eliminated. The process repeats itself until a champion is crowned.

"I'm kind of nervous," Selander said of competing in Graz. "It's going to be tough. I'm just looking forward to competing."

Winger, who has made several trips to the world championships, will have high expectations from those around her, as she was the first to ever double-medal at worlds, doing it two years ago in Sort, Spain.

Winger, originally from Buena Vista, Ca., is studying exercise and movement science after transferring from Lane Community College.

Competing in events of this magnitude is a source of pride for kayakers, but kayaking is more than just competition.

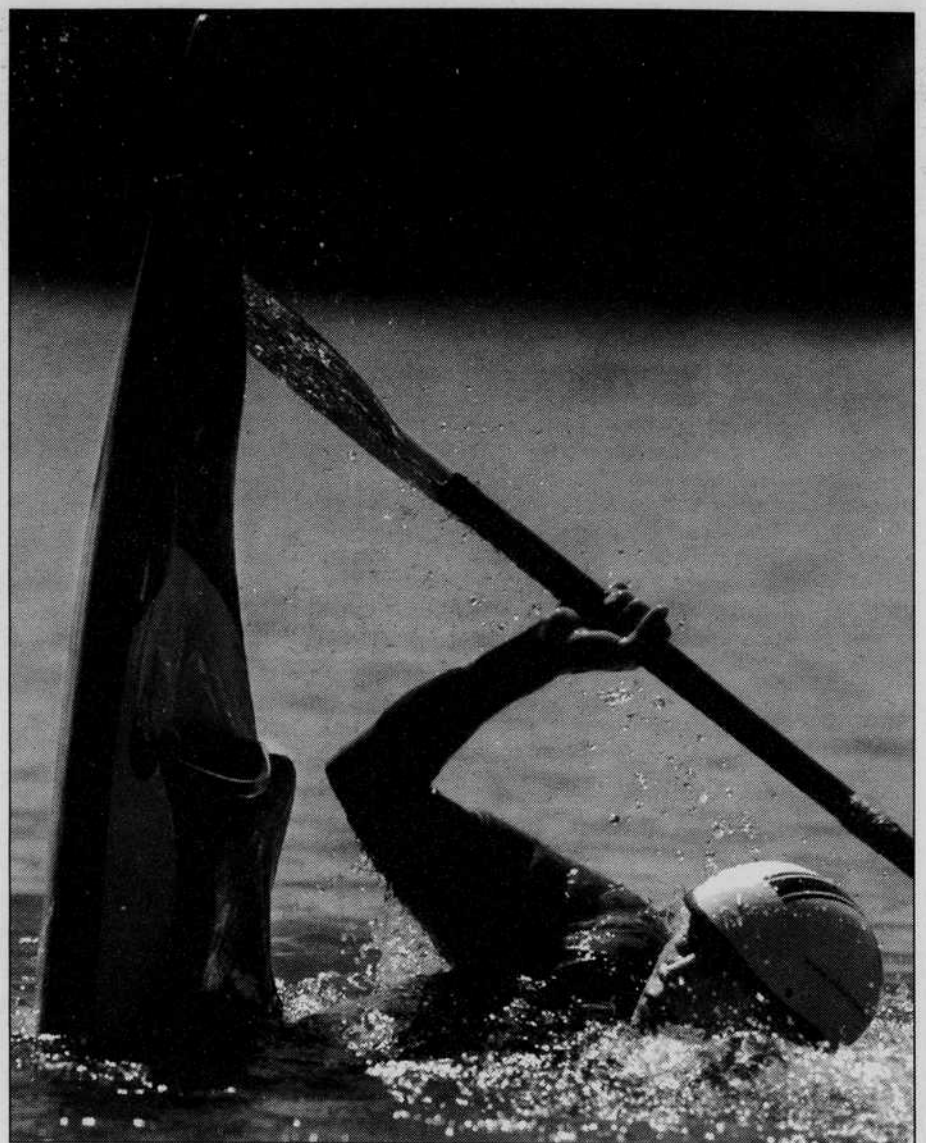
"It kind of gets under your skin," said Selander, who grew up in Lake Oswego and has been kayaking for six years. "It turns into an addiction and a lifestyle really quickly."

Selander and Winger have set the bar high for the eight other consistent members of the club, which include LCC transfer Macey Burnham, freshman Travis Winn and junior Josh Bechtel.

Selander is currently rushing to finish up his classwork for the term so he can afford to take the time necessary to travel to Graz. After completing assignments at a feverish pace, Selander will have to find time to prepare himself mentally to avoid an early return to the United States.

"I'm just going to try to clear my head and visualize what I'm going to do," Selander said of his pre-race preparation. "I have a list of what I'm going to do in my head. After I do something, I'll check it off the list."

Jon Roetman is a freelance writer for the Emerald.



Adam Amato Emerald

Jacob Selander said he's nervous about his trip to Austria for the world championships.

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ARIES (March 21-April 19) _ Today is a 6 _ Everybody has an idea of how you ought to proceed. You'll do best if you follow orders from the one who signs your paycheck.
TAURUS (April 20-May 20) _ Today is a 7 _ Make your break early and you'll get away. Otherwise, you might get stuck in traffic. Watch for an opportunity to advance, then seize it.
GEMINI (May 21-June 21) _ Today is a 5 _ Life will get easier, and your words will have greater impact. Make sure you know what you're talking about. Do the math.
CANCER (June 22-July 22) _ Today is a 7 _ Spend some time making sure your money is in a safe place. Put it somewhere you can leave it for a while. You're going into a pensive phase, and you don't want to have to worry about that.
LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) _ Today is a 6 _ Mercury is going direct today, which ought to make your life easier. A person who's blocked your every move may start listening to your reasons.
VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) _ Today is an 8 _ Make sure you speak your piece

095 PERSONALS

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