

**Talent Identification Program  
report marathon  
12 - 22 september 2024  
Metkovic Croatia**



## *Introduction and summary*

The TIP program at the World Marathon Championships in Metkovic (Croatia), took place from the 12th until 22nd of September 2024.

This training camp and starting at the World Championships marathon has again been a fantastic experience for the only 4 paddlers (and 1 coach). For me this was the third TIP camp and gave me the opportunity to apply the lessons I learned in the last two years.

If I look at the possible improvements from last year, we improved:

- Announcement of the TIP camp to target countries: we managed to get Bulgaria and Venezuela to participate in the camp and the World Championships for the first time. I think this worked because Ruud invited them personally and visited several South American countries. Like last year, during the past two weeks I spoke to several countries who asked me how they can apply for the TIP camp.
- There were again some really young paddlers in the camp this year (15-16 years), but that wasn't a problem because their coaches were there. I think we should demand that too when young paddlers want to apply. The presence of coaches has great added value.
- It remains tricky when we are dealing with participants who do not speak English, but it seems we cannot avoid this. We always find ways to communicate with each other.

Further improvements:

- For now, it remains difficult to support countries and athletes after the camp. I promised both coaches to stay in contact with them and support them as much as possible. But it is also up to them to contact me if they need help.
- I will talk to Ruud Heijselaar and Andy Birkett (who offered his help) later this year about organizing online sessions during the year. We need to support the countries (and the coaches who attended the TIP camps in the last few years) with training plans and videos of marathon specific subjects. Marcos Oliveira offered me his help too in providing video footage.

The following athletes and coaches attended the program

<b>FULL NAME (FIRST... FAMILY NAME)</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>AGE</b>
Diego Altamirano K1	CHI	16
Facundo Valenzuela C1	CHI	15
Daniel Roman K1	VEN	20
Martin Nanchev C1	BUL	18
<b>Coaches</b>		
Victor Benavides	CHI	
Elly Onnekes	NED	
Bert Onnekes	NED	

The people from Thailand were entered for the camp, but did not make it to the camp because of problems with their Visa for Croatia.

The paddler and coach from Moldavia and Bosnia didn't attend the camp.

### *Preparations before the camp*

For me, as the coach of the 2024 TIP, the camp started right after finish of the TIP camp in 2023. While writing the 2023 report, I came up with the idea, together with the potentially participating countries, to start preparing for the TIP camp earlier. The plan I wrote is included as an attachment to this report.

Looking at the suggestions I made last year, we may conclude:

Suggestion 1: My first suggestion is to improve the publication of the invitation to the TIP camp and make it available online (website but also Social media). We can try to make a list of countries we want to target for and send them the invitation (explaining the goal of the TIP camp) directly and ask if they received the invitation.

Status: Ruud visited several countries in Asia and South America, which certainly helped to promote the TIP camp.

Suggestion 2: create an online environment for a TIP camp like MS Teams and ask people to fill pre-defined forms (Microsoft or Google forms). Start creating a runbook for the next TIP camp (can be stored in the same Teams environment and is available for everyone who has access).

Status: this suggestion is still open and I will try to set this up in the coming winter.

Suggestion 3 : the last two years the TIP camps were in Portugal and Denmark, which made it quite easy to arrange boats for the camp. This year Nelo brought the boats for the TIP camp way before the camp to Metković.

Status: Nelo did a wonderful job, the boats were already available in Metković when I arrived.

Suggestion 4 : besides organizing these TIP camps, we need to think how we can support countries (and coaches) in training for marathon, but also to organize marathon races in the same way they are held at a the World Championships (so with shorter laps, turn points and portages). We must start thinking of organizing training camps in the target countries, in that way it is possible to help more local paddlers and coaches.

## *Days before the masters races started on Monday*

The participants from Chile were already in Croatia and could start on the Thursday. The participants of Bulgaria and Venezuela arrived later on Thursday and could start on Friday.

After the preparation the K1 and C1 of the guys from Chile (lesson 1), they could go out on the water for a first short training session.

We agreed with the organization that we would have breakfast and diner in the apartment and lunch at the venue. Especially the care of the people in the apartment, was absolutely fantastic. Thanks a lot Branko Lovric for arranging this for us.

Like the previous two years, this year I chose to train fairly heavily for the first few days. There are a number of reasons for this:

- It gives me the opportunity to see what the participants are capable of
- What level of training are they used to
- Training sessions in the morning are similar to a marathon race, long and intense
- Specific components such as portage or turning points are more difficult when you are tired

The two guys from Chile are very young, I noticed that after two days, Facunda already got tired and I choose to let him do a little less work. The two guys from Bulgaria and Venezuela are sprinters and never did a marathon race before.

All four of the participants are very motivated to learn the marathon specifics. The paddlers from Chile and Venezuela will definitely come back to race more marathon. Let's see how we can support them in the future.

The training sessions they conducted until the Monday were:

12/Sep	Thu	1	<b>Prepare boats and Light endurance paddle after preparation of the boat</b>					
			Warmup individual					
			Paddle the whole course, long and short laps					
13/Sep	Fri	1	<b>Endurance paddle in groups with drinks in the boat/on the back</b>					
			Warmup all together					
			1000 m warmup paddle					
		4 *	3400 m long laps on the course			R: 300 m		
			change positions every 500m approx.					
			1000 m cool down					

**2 1st Portage training (practice get out)**

Warmup all together (don't forget legs)  
Emphasis is on stepping out of the boat at the pontoon  
After portage training 1 lap light endurance 3400m

**1st explanation of marathon rules by ITO Ely Onnekes**

**14/Sep Sat 1 Speed endurance training**

Warmup all together

This must be a hard session

		1000	m	warmup paddle		
5	*	300	m	80-90% (300m or 1min30)	R:	200 m
		800	m	rest		
5	*	200	m	80-90% (200m or 1min)	R:	200 m
		800	m	rest		
5	*	100	m	80-90% (100m or 30sec)	R:	200 m
		1000	m	cool down		

**2 2st Portage training (practice get out - run with the boat - get in)**

Warmup all together (don't forget legs)  
Review of what was practiced yesterday  
Emphasis is on stepping in the boat after running  
After portage training 1 short lap light endurance 1500m

**2nd explanation of marathon rules by ITO Ely Onnekes**

**15/Sep Sun 1 Endurance paddle 1 hour**

Warmup all together

		1000	m	warmup paddle		
4	*	1500	m	endurance changing positions paddle in groups of 3-4 boats on the short lap	R:	200 m
		1000	m	cool down		

Practice turnpoints 30 min

**2 Start training from the startsystem**

Warmup all together

		1000	m	warmup paddle		
6	*	100	m	start from start system	R:	400 m
		1000	m	cool down		



The first portage sessions were only about getting out of the boat correctly at a pontoon. It were very useful portage training sessions and like the group of last year, they learn very fast. Once you know how to get out of the boat, it's practice, practice, practice. I told them over and over, if you want to learn a good portage, you practice that at least three times a week.

**Always moving forward**



They all had a useful introduction to the marathon portages, and we will keep on practicing this throughout the week. To give additional attention here from a different perspective, I asked Andy Birkett and Andras Faludy to help first the K1 and then the C1.

**Always moving forward**



*Monday 16 and Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 September*

We took the morning to watch the masters races, since we're unable to go on the water. And after 3 days of 2 sessions, the morning rest was very welcome.

On these days we could not paddle for most of the day because of the masters races. It gives us time to relax a bit, the first few days have been very intense for these young paddlers.

The Monday afternoon was another session on the water, at this day we had a lot of wind and waves. That is a more difficult situation for the these paddlers, who mostly train on calm water and race on a race course, but this is marathon.

On the Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon, I invited first Andy Birkett, to talk to the team about preparing your boat, how to portage and about race tactics. This was very useful for the K1 paddlers and motivated them extra to do there best. Thanks, Andy, for your help and support.

The Wednesday afternoon with Andras Faludy was more interesting for the C1 paddlers, since Andras has been paddling C1 himself. Andras explained how to paddle in a efficient way when you're a left or right paddler in C1. We definitely need help from a C1 coach next year. Thanks to you too, Andras.



I learned that it is very useful to invite both a K1 as well as a C1 coach to the camp, also I still learn a lot from them.



**Always moving forward**

The rest of Wednesday was to further prepare those paddling Thursday for their first World Cup. They had a good and healthy dinner with enough carbohydrates and all went to bed early.

### *Thursday 19 September*

Today started for the TIP team with the K1 short distance heat for Daniel. Daniel's preparations were good and I see that he is really motivated to paddle a decent good race. It will be very difficult to make it to the final with the big guns like Mads Pedersen, Fernando Pimenta and Hamish Lovemore in the same heat.

Daniel (as a 500m paddler) had a great start, but doesn't have the skills yet to paddle in a big group. He made no mistakes and finished 22<sup>nd</sup> in a time of 15min53. It was a great experience and Daniel knows now that different skills are required for marathon (even for the short distance) than for sprints. But he enjoyed every minute of it.



Daniel at portage 1



Facundo



Martin after lap 1

The morning was still relaxed for the C1 paddlers, well that is as far as it's possible to be relaxed when you have to paddle your World Championships in the afternoon. Especially Facu was very nervous, which is normal when you're only 15 years old.

At 14:30 hrs it was the turn for the men C1 normal distance, with 4 big laps, 1 short lap and 3 portages.

Both had a race performance as we can expect at this moment. Martin is a very good sprinter, but needs to learn to paddle longer distances and paddle in a group. He had a very good start, was in the first group but fell out of the group after a collision. His heart is with sprint races but he had a very good experience these two weeks and we hope he can motivate other Bulgarian C-boat paddlers to paddle more marathon.

As said before Facundo is very young, but is very motivated to paddle marathon. He loved every minute of it and we saw him getting more and more motivated and open during the TIP camp. I really hope to see Facu back next year in Győr, where I'm working on help from a Hungarian C-boat coach. Facu needs to improve his technique and needs to make a lot of hours in his boat.

**Always moving forward**

There is also a lot of room for improvement in portages, with much room for improvement in stability in the boat and the way of getting in and out. We will look at how we can help young Chilean paddlers next winter.

Results:

- 11<sup>th</sup> place : Martin (Bulgaria)
- 15<sup>th</sup> place : Facundo (Chile)

### *Friday 20 September*

After one day rest, it was Daniel's turn again to paddle this afternoon, this time the long distance in the U23 class.

Since Daniel had some problems with his stability in the waves yesterday we decided to lower his seat a little bit. Even top paddlers are always working on their boat and changing little things, to see if they can get better. Daniel paddled the warmup with this new setup and was convinced it would be better.

At 16:45 hrs Daniel started his race of 7 big laps, 1 short lap and 6 portages with a total of 26,2 km. Although Daniel can do a very fast start, we decided that he would do a fairly quick start, but after that find a group at his level and try to stay in that group. This worked out pretty well and Daniel paddled a very good marathon, where we saw that his running at the portage needs to be improved. Also he needs to practice on getting out and in the boat.

Unfortunately Daniel made a mistake after the far end turn point and fell in the water. This cost him a lot of time, so unfortunately he was overtaken by the first competitor on the last big lap and therefore could not paddle the full 7 big laps.

In the end Daniel finished at a 31<sup>st</sup> place of 38 started paddlers. He was tired but happy and I expect to see Daniel back at marathon races.

Results:

- 31<sup>st</sup> place : Daniel (Venezuela)



**Always moving forward**

## *Saturday 21 September*

After a long wait, it is finally the juniors turn to paddle their race of 6 big laps, 1 small lap and 5 portages.

Today we have at the start:

- Diego of Chile

The only 16 year old Diego had a great start paddles somewhere in the middle of the field. Diego is very motivated and is always prepared for his training and races. As for the others in the TIP team, marathon racing at this level was completely new to them. For Diego (and Facu) this trip meant the first time outside there continent.

Diego is a young talented paddler, who is always in to learn, speaks a little bit of English and during the camp he asked me more and more questions.

After a great race, Diego finished 24<sup>th</sup> of 35 juniors who started the marathon. Luckily Diego was able to paddle in a group which gave him the opportunity to learn all subjects we practiced during the training camp.

Diego (and his coach) was happy with his result and I sure hope to see him back next year at the TIP camp and the World Championships in Győr.



Diego getting ready



Diego at the start

This year again we were able to use the drinking bags which you carry around you neck. The bags are filled with half a liter of drinks. We agreed with the paddlers that every two laps they have to get in the drinking lane for new drinks. At that moment the bag they had, must be empty. We practiced with them that they can only throw away the old bag, once they are near the drinking lane. If your bag falls into the water, you get a penalty of 30 seconds. Also we made agreements on the amount of drinks they should take and all of them kept to the agreements.

**Always moving forward**

This concludes again a wonderful marathon TIP camp, all went home with a bag full of experiences and new friends.

Although this year we only had 4 paddlers, this was a promising group of young and well-motivated Canoe and Kayak paddlers and some of their coaches.

Speaking of the coaches, I've noticed before that it's hard to keep the coaches really involved in the TIP camp if they're not with the team for the whole camp. We should consider of making them part of the TIP camp.

### *Thanks to all making this camp possible*

- This was the third TIP camp for me and I must say it has been a great experience again. I want to thank Ruud Heijselaar, Sebastian Cuatrin and Tim Cornish to give me this opportunity and I would love to run next year's TIP camp in Gyor. I also want to thank Branko Lovric, Andy Birkett and Andras Faludy for their help to make this camp a success.
- Many thanks to my wife Elly, for her help in setting up this camp, driving with me to Croatia and her always clear explanation of the most important marathon rules to the TIP camp participants.
- Thanks also to Nelo for having the boats for this TIP camp available and even available at the site before we arrived.
- Many thanks to Stjepan and his family for the wonderful support at the apartment, it has been great and we will try to come back for training camps.
- Last but not least, many thanks to the athletes attending this TIP camp and the effort you all put into the lessons I tried to teach you. Although you all have a long way to go in marathon paddling, you all showed the will to improve your skills. I also saw that this camp has surely brought new friendships between you paddlers, I hope you stay in touch with each other.

Bert Onnekes  
TIP coach 2024