

Olympics

Britannia rules the waves – the saying is certainly true of the last couple of Olympics. Britain's sailors, rowers and canoeists have gripped the public's imagination as they won medals at the Sydney and Athens games. In fact, the canoe slalom competition at Athens was the most watched Olympics sport on television in Britain.

News that London is hosting the 2012 Olympics is only good news for canoeists in Great Britain. The proposed new whitewater facility to be built in Broxbourne, Hertfordshire, just a few miles from the main Olympic Park in East London will benefit not just slalom paddlers, but all whitewater paddlers. Flat water racing will take place at the Eton College Rowing Centre at Dorney lake, near Windsor.

After GB Canoeing's most successful Olympic Games in Athens, all eyes are now focused on the 20 athletes being supported for Beijing in 2008 and beyond. The aim is to go one better and get Britain's first ever canoeing gold medal.

Canoeing in the Olympics goes back to 1924 when the International Canoe Federation (ICF) was founded and when flatwater racing first became a display sport at the Olympic Games. Men's canoe/kayak flatwater racing disciplines were included in the Olympic Games competition schedule for the first time in 1936 in Berlin. The women's disciplines were first included in 1948 in London.

Slalom made its first Olympic appearance in the 1972 Munich Games but did not reappear until Barcelona in 1992. From then on, canoe slalom has become an established Olympic event, with interest growing outside of Europe and USA.

Britain's Canoeing Olympic Medallists

2004	Athens	K1M Slalom	Silver	Campbell Walsh
		K1W Slalom	Bronze	Helen Reeves
		K1M Sprint	Bronze	Ian Wynne
2000	Sydney	K1M Slalom	Silver	Paul Ratcliffe
		K1M Sprint	Bronze	Tim Brabants
1992	Barcelona	C1 Slalom	Silver	Gareth Marriott