

SPORTS & LEISURE

Pacific Ocean is the latest on MacDonald's to-do list

Wheelchair-bound adventurer to compete in Hawaiian marathon outrigger race

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Staff Writer

A self-professed "rock-turner," Georgetown's Wayne MacDonald has found yet another challenge to tackle this year.

The 42-year-old adventure-seeker lost the use of his legs after a 1999 fall off a roof, but that hasn't prevented him from taking part in a number of activities since the accident, including flying, scuba diving, boating, cycling and skiing.

His latest quest is also on the water, although nothing like he's tried before.

MacDonald will compete in the largest marathon outrigger race in the world along with 140 six-person crew boats at the Queen Liliuokalani race in Hawaii at the end of August, an 18-mile paddle in the Pacific Ocean.

"This race has an amazing history behind it in the Hawaiian culture and it's intriguing to go there and be involved in this thing," MacDonald said.

"I've always loved gliding because I prefer doing solo things more than I do team sports, but the type of teamwork you need for paddling is like a

train. Everyone needs to be part of it to make it work.

"It's a systematic thing and it's very positive. You get into that rhythm and that's why I can understand why long-distance runners enjoy that sort of thing. You get into a zone and it's an amazing thing."

MacDonald was rowing with the Argonaut club in Toronto last year before he met up with canoeist Larry Cain, who won a gold medal for Canada at the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles.

Cain suggested that MacDonald consider the adaptive PaddleALL group that was starting up a program at the Wai Nui O Kanaka

Outrigger Club in downtown Oakville.

PaddleAll is a new project of CanoeKayak Canada, introduced last year to promote individuals with disabilities to participate in the sport and MacDonald was the first to sign on with the Oakville group. He entered his first race in Ottawa last summer in a two-man vessel with able-bodied teammate Rich Carson and the duo won the 100m sprint event easily.

"I got involved with sledge hockey, where everyone wanted



WAYNE MacDonald



Georgetown resident Wayne MacDonald (at rear) gets in some training in preparation for the Queen Liliuokalani race in Hawaii at the end of August. MacDonald, who is confined to a wheelchair, will take part in the 18-mile paddle in the Pacific Ocean, along with 140 other six-person crews. The event is the largest marathon outrigger race in the world.

Photo by David J. Smith

to prove themselves to each other, even though they were on the same team, and it wasn't really all that team-oriented. I like paddling because it's a group effort to create a means to an end."

He expects to train with the Wai Nui club three or four times a week this summer in preparation for the Hawaii race.

MacDonald often travels to

Michigan to see his girlfriend and her three kids and also gives guitar lessons, making a number of speaking appearances as well.

He also founded the Halton Hills chapter of the Spinal Cord Society, which raises funds for spinal cord research, and a fundraising golf tournament is held annually.

"When my accident happened, I was in the hospital and I

didn't know what my life was going to be like after a while. I had no clue. That's why I call myself a rock-turner. Most of the time you see mud but sometimes there's a gem underneath and that's served me well because everything seems to snowball into the next."

(Eamonn Maher can be reached at emaher@independentfreepress.com)

Local runners fare well in marathon

A record turnout of more than 11,000 runners participated in last weekend's Mississauga Marathon and some Halton Hills-based athletes recorded some top-10 finishes for their respective age groups.

This year's event stretched over two days and there were over 2,000 entries in the main event of the weekend, the 42.2-km Canon Marathon, which started at Square One and ended at Lakefront Promenade Park.

Georgetown's Monika Stelter finished 40th overall in a time of three

hours, eight minutes and 45 seconds, the fastest clocking for the women's 35-39 age group. Another local resident, Mark Rush, placed 174th in the field in 3:28:27, good for ninth in the men's 50-54 category.

In the half marathon, Adam Marsella of Halton Hills crossed the finish line in a time of 1:18:24, which was 13th overall and fifth for the men's 30-34 division.

Georgetown's Bruce Catoen finished fourth among the 40-45 men's field for the 10-km distance in 41:26.

Bulldogs shade Mimico 10-9

The Mimico Arena is one of the toughest places for the road team to play in the Ontario Lacrosse Association Jr. B league but the Halton Hills Bulldogs have had a successful run in that building.

Dating back to last season, the 'Dogs have now won five straight games in the Mountaineers' den after a 10-9 triumph on Wednesday evening.

Halton Hills held intermission leads of 3-2 and 8-6 and trailed 5-3 briefly in the second period before three goals in 22 seconds put the visitors back in charge. Goaltender Mike


Cregan earned the win, fending off some late Mimico attacks.

Kody Lyons, Pat Saunders and Kyle Davis had two goals apiece for the 6-1 Bulldogs, with Nic Grasby, Evan Whillans, Justin Reid and Chad Cummings adding one each.

Halton Hills, which won all three games in Mimico during last year's second-round playoff series and another tilt during the 2007 regular season, played at home Thursday night against Markham.

Next up is a trip to Oakville May 23 to take on the Buzz.

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