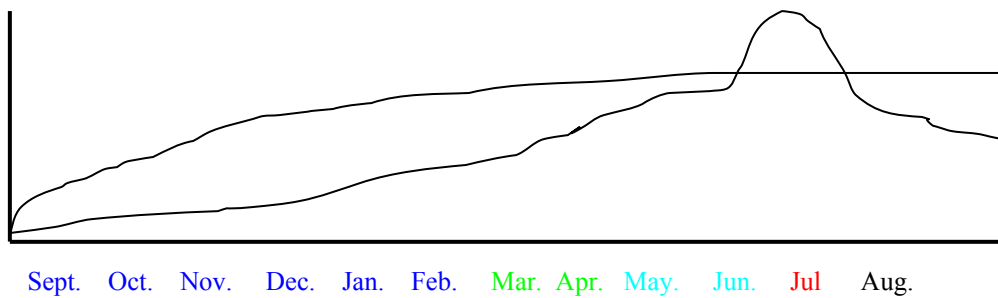


## French Tips on Down River Training



In order to peak for one event or period lasting about one month the following training is typically followed by the French. This is based on wanting to peak in June.

The first period consists of the **preparation period** and runs from September to February, during this period you work on developing technique and background fitness.

### Technique

- 1 - Try and paddle as much as possible on rough water.
- 2 - Do short efforts, up to 75 sec, with longish rests, at race pace concentrating on short (30cm stroke) powerful strokes “cha-cha” or staccato as opposed to long smooth strokes, with the maximal effort being concentrated at the catch phase, pulling the blade out early and sharply with the elbow, not the wrist.

### Endurance

- 1 – Do intervals for endurance, use sessions such as 6 x (8mins on 2mins off), or 8 x (4mins on 1 min off)-more intense than the 8 minute efforts, to improve muscular and power endurance, ensuring your technique, power and stroke rate remain good to the end. This can be done in conjunction with marathon style long steady sessions.
- 2 - Do long paddles from 90mins to 2 hours trying to keep style good, power in the stroke and importantly relaxing as much when the paddle is not actually pulling. The emphasis is not on speed here!

Long paddles should be done about 1 week in every 4 and do about 3 in a week with one other session from point 2,Technique. (Typically Tue, Thurs, Sat)

Endurance weight session would be 5 sets of 50 reps of each exercise (normally 6 exercises). This endurance session should be done on the 1 endurance week in 4 mentioned above as a weights session. The reps should be done with the max weight you can achieve the target of 50, it should be done consistently and without rests or breaks. Move from one exercise to the other when doing this session. Aim to increase the weight on the bar, not the speed of completing the exercise. It is important not to cheat on technique here. 24 hours rest between sessions.

Lots of running, gives the upper body a rest, 1-1.5 hours at a time and the long steady paddles in the boat. Swimming is ok but tires out the upper body.

### Speed

- 1 - Occasionally do some speed sessions say; 10 x 10 sec on 110 sec off. This will remind your body what it is like to paddle fast so that you don't get into a routing of slogging along.

### Power

Concentrate on power for say 3 weeks, this means sessions 1,Endurance and 2,Technique and 1,Speed. Then shift the emphasis onto endurance 2,Endurance and maybe 1,Speed. Note 1,Speed can be done during both power and endurance phases.

Power weights, 3 sessions a week. During the normal training week ie not the endurance week do 6 exercises maybe doing 10 sets with 10 reps first or just do 6 sets of 10 reps reducing to 6 sets of 6 reps as the intensity progresses. This emphasises power.

Do a max session of 8 sets of 2 reps for explosive strength, during the rest – repeat the exercise using lighter weights to aid recovery, do 6 reps very fast. Complete one exercise before starting the next exercise except when doing the endurance when different exercises can be done sequentially. i.e. do exercises in sets. At least 48 hours rest between power and strength sessions.

After 6 weeks of mostly 6 sets of 10 reps tapering to 6 sets of 6 reps do a 3 week period of 2 sessions of power weights i.e. 8 sets of 2 reps and 1 session of 6 sets of 10 reps.

Then do 4 weeks of mostly 6 sets of 10 reps then back to 3 weeks of power weights. This means to say, exercise your systems separately – do strength, then power then endurance, do not mix them up.

Stop all weights 2 months before your chosen competition and do not follow the sequence of power weights and strength weight described above if you feel they do not work for you

Technique and endurance sessions mix well.

Work on endurance/power/strength in cycles, do not expect your body to be able to handle an endurance session one day and a power session the next. For example concentrate on power for 4-6 weeks, then move onto strength for say 3 weeks and then endurance for 1 week. I shall have to check this from my notes!!!

You cannot improve endurance and power at the same time, you have to work on one at a time!!!

The second period, **transition phase**, is about 6 weeks in March and April (maybe into Feb also) and is the period to do the most amount of training possible particularly in the boat. Try to do up to 13 (8 to 9 is good) sessions a week. During this phase you try to convert your endurance, power and strength gained from weights, etc to performance in the boat.

Sessions for this period should include

4 sets of 5mins on at max pace and 5mins off                      2 sessions per week with a bungee on the boat

4 sets of 5mins on at max pace and 5mins off                      2 sessions per week without a bungee

20min flat out session (like a time trial)                              1 session per week, again concentrate on  
5-10 min rest and 10 min flat out.                                      technique and power in stroke

10secs on 110secs off (*analactic* session)                              1 every 2 weeks

6 sets of 8min on 2min off

OR

8 sets of 4min on 1min off

1.5 to 2-hour endurance session

See description of endurance paddle.

Transition period: The hardest training period of the year. Do as much as possible in the boat. Reduce the weight training, only do endurance weights, taper from 3 to 1 session per week. As you decrease the no of weights sessions start to do bungee sessions in the boat to develop power and transfer gym prowess to boat prowess. Do 4X(5 mins on 5 mins off), max speed and slow rest. 6 sessions per week in the boat, 2 with bungee, 1 per week threshold (no lactic), 20 mins on, 5-10 mins rest, 10-20 mins on at threshold. 1 a lactic per 2 weeks, 10 secs on 110 secs off. 1 as per phase 1(6X(8on, 2off)), 1 1hr30mins endurance per week.

In the **third period**, which is from April to May/June and lasts 6 weeks you should do

- a) 4X(5 on, 5 off) OR  
5X(4 on, 3 off)
- b) lactic training, initially 1 per week but increasing to 3 per week, (2X(3X(1 min on, 5 off)15 mins rest), don't paddle during rest. Begin with 1min on, 3 off to become accustomed to this type of session.
- c) maintain endurance, 6X(8on,2off) – ensures your peak is prolonged enough.

Start the third period doing 2 a) type sessions and 1 b) type session and change this to 1 a) type session and 2 B type sessions by the end of the period

Run at least once a week during this period about 1 hour in duration and fast.

No more steady state paddling, very fast stuff only.  
5 min time trials.

In the **fourth and final peaking period**, which lasts 2 weeks, do no lactic sessions and do a couple of sessions like

3 sets of 5min on 5min off in the week prior to the race

During the first week, rest a lot. During the second week (the last one prior to the race) do some fast efforts, with no lactic to “wake yourself up” before the race. Perhaps travelling to the event should be done during the rest phase.

Generally

Time trials should be shorter than the race, not the same length. You should try to time trial for 5-6 minutes, maybe 10 minutes. If the time trial is the same length as the race you try to recreate the time trial feeling in the race, which is difficult and anyway you should race harder than you time trial.

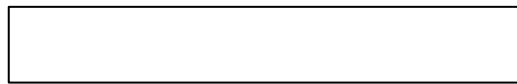
Train one system at a time, this enables your body to cope with the training. Do not try to train strength one day and power the next, your body will not be able to adapt. It takes a while to get used to the different systems involved; the key is slow transition and allowing your body to cope with the changes slowly.

Technique: **Do not**

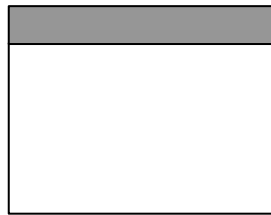
- use overlong strokes.
- lift the shoulder during the stroke
- use long blades
- rotate behind the line of your torso – Eric?
- lift the blade out at the end of the stroke with the wrist or shoulder
- raise the upper hand at the start of the stroke
- push forward with the upper hand

**Do**

sit upright, maybe lean slightly forward but stay relaxed (relax the shoulder when not pulling the paddle)  
use a short paddle say 200cms to 208cms (this way you chose the power)  
use a short stroke (as little as 30cms) to enable a high stroke rate of say 120 per min.  
drop the blade in early  
use your torso, not your arms to propel the boat  
keep your pulling shoulder low during the stroke  
pull hardest for the catch phase, pushing with your legs through the footbar and heel bar to the boat, you should see the boat surge a little with each stroke  
ease off the power a little for the latter part of the stroke  
at the end of the stroke, lift the blade out with the elbow  
“block” only with the upper hand, do not push  
“cha cha” – swift motions, pull hard, the blade slips less in the water with more powerful strokes



Long stroke



Intensity gain from pulling harder.

Short stroke

Note that there is the same area under each curve, i.e. the same work is done with each stroke but the shorter cha-cha stroke is better, the boat decelerates less, you have more control with a higher frequency and the blade slips less in the water . You move faster with the shorter stroke. J.P.Crochet believes that in 5 years all sprinters and marathon paddlers will use short strokes.

**Weights:** 6 weeks of power(6-10 reps), say 3 sessions per week

3 weeks of strength, say 2 power and 1 strength session per week or vice versa, never do 3 strength a week.

1 week of endurance, coincides with the endurance phase of boat training.

4 weeks of power.

Experiment: concentrate more on the sessions that benefit you most and that you progress with most. e.g. Fred with Strength and J.P.Crochet with Power and endurance.

Stop weights about 2 months before your objective.