



1978

WORLD ROWING CHAMPIONSHIPS  
NEW ZEALAND

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*Boundless goodwill*

The principal aims of the Organising Committee for these championships was set out very early in our preparations. We realised of course that nothing but the highest possible standard of facilities, both on and off the water, was expected, and indeed required, by the FISA.

Lake Karapiro was first visited in 1973 by Mr. Thomas Keller, President of the FISA. While it did have the rudiments of an Albano course, the best that could be said for the site was that it had wonderful potential.

The committee embarked on a plan which was designed to provide a permanent water sports centre, which would have a multi-purpose use including all other aquatic sports.

The Committee's first assignment was, of course, to arrange financing and while rowing was held in good standing by the community, there is a very strict limit to Government assistance for this type of venture. Therefore, the plan for financing the world championships fell into the following categories :

- a) Sponsorship and raffles.
- b) Government grants.
- c) Volunteer work.

We believe we had a real responsibility to ensure that the Championships were a success.

The estimates were very approximate and subsequently proved fairly accurate.

- The Water Sports Centre :  
\$280,000 (SF 492,800).

- Course equipment & finishing tower :  
\$353,000 (SF 621,280).
- Purchase of competitors' skiffs :  
\$400,000 (SF 704,000).
- Financing of N.Z. team (also came under the Organising Committee) :  
\$85,000 (SF 149,600).

The facts show that all these targets were achieved and a substantial profit will be made (the actual profit is still uncertain, but could well prove to be a six figure number). This is due entirely to the tremendous public support and the incredible amount of volunteer work done.

The volunteer work was principally on the course and shore facilities and by conservative estimates, this work saved \$150,000 cash (SF 264,060). All the early volunteer work was done by ex-oarsmen and oarsmen, and in the later stages by local people having no previous connection with the sport. The hard core of volunteers would have numbered around twenty who spent practically all their spare time for about 18 months performing a great variety of tasks.

The final number of volunteers, including all the wonderful people who helped in the restaurant, etc., and those who came forward in the last few months, would exceed 350, all giving freely of their time and talents. Much of this work involved upgrading the Lake Karapiro domain and the Water Sports Centre itself, which of course is a benefit to other lake-users and the general public.

Great care was taken to keep the public informed on developments through sports writers who were invited to Lake Karapiro from time to time for press conferences.



*Following their victorious finish, the Hansen brothers (NOR) congratulate each other.*

However, on 1st October, a month before the regatta was due to start, the committee embarked on an extensive promotional programme using press, radio and television.

A sum of \$20,000 (SF 36,400) was allocated and was administered by professionals who did not charge for their time. Moreover, as a result of the tremendous goodwill extended by the media, the overruns and repeats provided at no charge were estimated to amount to a further \$25,000 (SF 44,000) of free promotion. Results were, of course, self-evident, as the public turned out in tens of thousands. The organisation and facilities to receive and control large crowds stood the test and the financial success of the enterprise was assured.

The most significant fact about these world championships which probably set them apart is the saving of tens of thousands of dollars realised through volunteer work on the course equipment. This work covered a great many areas, starting with the wires and buoys for the Albano system, and including the building and operating of a pile driving barge, the construction of a course-laying

barge with associate winches and the completion of extensive jetty, the starting tower complex and the 2000 metre and 1000 metre starting pontoon system. The most dramatic accomplishment of all was the building of the four-storey judges tower over six weekends which in itself was a saving of some \$25,000 (SF 44,000).

Two other minor miracles were the building of the temporary boat garage to house 120 boats and the construction of the TV barge. These are a few of the highlights. Volumes could be filled with the small assignments which were performed willingly without hope of reward. No matter how mundane the task people were given, they did it willingly, realising that each link was important in the chain to success.

Finally of course there was the all-important administration office, which was manned principally by volunteers, the only paid officers being the ones responsible for accommodation and transport arrangements.

*The Organising Committee*