

Kayla Carne
New Zealand U21 Womens
2024 ICF Canoe Polo World Championships, Deqin, China

I want to start off by saying a huge thank you to PNCC and to the Jaycee Trust Travelling Fellowship Scheme for their support in my campaign.

In October this year I headed over to Deqin, China to compete at the 2024 ICF Canoe Polo World Championships, as part of the NZ U21's Women's team.

In February 2024 I was selected into the U21 Women's team along with 7 other women from all around New Zealand. Since then we had been training hard as a team and individually for the build up towards the World Champs. Throughout the year we attended many different training camps and tournaments as a team where we were able to train and play together and get to know each other better. This was crucial for us so that we could gel as a team and do our best.

We had quite a large number of players from the Manawatu who were competing in the NZ Senior Mens, Senior Womens and U21 Mens teams at the World Champs which made the training and lead up to Worlds much easier, as we are able to train with others and play high intensity games. I was training 6 days a week primarily at the Hokowhitu Lagoon before and after work, as well as at the gym.

The tournament took place over 5 days where we played a round robin against the teams in our pool. We placed top in our pool after wins against Australia (8-2), Singapore (8-2), Great Britain (4-3), Thailand (17-2), and a draw against Spain (3-3) This put us through to the next stage where we played Great Britain again (3-2 Win) and Germany (4-2 Loss) which qualified us a spot in the top 4.

On day 5 we played our semi final against France. This was a really close game and we ended up tying at full time which meant we went into Golden Goal. (Another period of 5 minutes and the first team to score wins). We unfortunately lost in Golden goal which put us in the playoffs for 3/4.

Later that day we had our final game against Germany, who we previously lost to 4-2. This was another very tight game, that also went to golden goal. This time it was our turn and we came away with the win! Putting us in 3rd place overall for the World Championships.

We were very happy with the Bronze Medal result and played our hardest in all games. It was such an amazing experience and I'm so grateful that with the help from the trust as well as the support from family and friends I got to represent New Zealand on the World Stage. Canoe Polo is a completely self funded sport so I am truly appreciative for the support received from this scheme.

My next steps are trialling for the NZ Oceania team to head to Australia in 2025 and potentially the next World Championships which are held in Germany in 2026.

This experience taught me so much and I gained a high level of personal development not just physically but emotionally as well. Being able to represent our country was such an honour and I am so grateful to the Jaycee trust for helping make it happen.

