

Pan American Games 2003

Setting sites for the Dominican Republic

It has been a long 4 years of effort maintaining our status in the Pan American Games for 2003 and are in the final stages counting down to August 13-16, 2003 when Waterskiing once again becomes a full medal sport in a multi-sport, Olympic recognized atmosphere.

From Andres Botero's discovery of a small water ski facility in Santo Domingo 4 years ago with a few small outboard boats and a cable slalom course to the present which now includes a Correct Craft Ski Nautique, a jump and certified courses.

A small but devoted group of individuals came to Santo Domingo and transformed the site into a world class venue.

The "Slew Crew" worked 12 hour days from Saturday of the Masters to Saturday of the Caribbean open - non-Stop! Lisa St. John, the Technical Director for Water Ski at the Pan Am Games 2003 organized a group of dedicated individuals who were on a mission to plant the seed of the sport of water ski in the Dominican.



Ed Brazil - Homologator - He pointed us in the right direction and we followed...

Jay Dunne - Carpenter, Worker, peon and dedicated supporter of the sport!!!

Chris (sorry forgot the last name) from show skiing who set the courses, dove the river, pounded nails, and worked for the sport to make this happen!!!

Dan Haggardy - (probably got his last name wrong too!!!) - without him we were in trouble - he did so much I cannot list them all but, because of his dedication, we made this happen

Lisa St. John - Probably one of the hardest weeks of organizing that she has ever experienced - but, got the job done!

Vern Oberg - Built the watering system..... ha ha ha. (that is another story) and max'ed out every credit/debit card he owned buying materials that could not be found in the Dominican Republic



As you can see, some of the equipment that we were dealing with was not stated of the art but, we did get the job done.



We even planted a peso into the deck of the jump signifying the first jump installed in the Caribbean!



The second Crew arrived on Friday, May 30 while we were still putting the finishing touches on the ramp. They included:

Les Todd - Waxed the jump, set up the boat and drove the event.

Joy Todd - Taught Skiing, Ran 1.5 at 12 meters in the Slalom event with some difficult backwash conditions, kept us in line and motivated at least 6 Dominicans to try the jump. Speaks spanish fluently!!!!

Matt Byrnes of USAWS also taught skiing and as well, gave the jump a good test much to the delight of the Dominican crowd

Larry Downes - Set up the video jump system with a portable computer. Put his camera on a palm tree using a ladder that was in big trouble.....

Steve Bush - Helped put on the wings of the jump but more importantly, made some arrangements so that our athletes will be able to relax in between eventos.

The test event went well and we had 17 Dominican Slalom skiers in the event and 2 Dominicans in tricks.



The Caribbean Open Slalom Champion is Morgan Davis of Barbados as shown in the photo to the left.

We had a good work crew and many will be returning in August to tune some minors issues that we did not have time to correct including the backwash problem.

I think it is important that they be recognized for the work that they accomplished in such a short period of time in a difficult situation. I returned from Santo Domingo after leaving there at 4:30 am with a cab driver that believed that red lights were optional and

not mandatory and speed limits were only a recommendation. I arrived home at 12:30 PM EDT..... Alive!!



The Santo Domingo spectators and competitors



The "Slew Crew" getting ready to install the ramp.

Hasta Luego amigos!