

BC Whitewater Championships held on Rutherford Whitewater Park

On July 20th the BC Championships for Canoe/Kayak Slalom took place at Rutherford Whitewater Park, Canada's first and only purpose built artificial whitewater park. This inaugural event was hosted by CanoeKayak BC, Chilliwack Centre of Excellence, and INNERGEX Renewable Energy Inc.

The Park was constructed in 2003 as part of the mitigation settlement for the micro-hydro generating station built on Rutherford Creek, near Pemberton, BC. It uses the outflow from the station tailrace; so the same water that produces electricity also provides whitewater for kayakers. Currently the course suits intermediate to advanced kayakers. It is designed to accommodate slalom racing and freestyle/play kayaking, and also has a flatwater pool that can be used for canoe polo or for teaching.

Five years in the making... play boaters and slalom racers alike spent the weekend being awed by this new course. Jon Allen of the Senior National Development team said "It is a great site that rivals or beats those of Europe. I'm excited it's in our backyard and look forward to doing lots of paddling there."

Although this was a relatively small event, the skill level displayed was impressive. David Ford, heading to Beijing soon for his 5th Olympic Games, retained his title of BC Champion in the K1M class. 2nd place went to Toby Roessingh and 3rd place to Kurt Braunlich. Jon Allen was 4th and Derek Beer was 6th. Anna Williams (K1W) and Craig Allen (C1M) each won their respective classes. Full results at www.canoekayakbc.ca. Montage video of the event at <http://youtube.com/watch?v=0Fo242trjSQ> courtesy of Olympic ski racer Kelly VanderBeek.