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PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BADGER MEN'S HOCKEY COACHES TRADE STICKS FOR PADDLES

Mike Eaves to Participate in this weekend's Paddle & Portage

Madison, WI (July 16, 2008) – Mike Eaves has no trouble maneuvering a puck with his hockey stick. This weekend he will put his stick back in his locker and trade it for a paddle as he and Mark Osiecki, both of the UW Men's Hockey coaching staff take to the *unfrozen* lakes in an attempt to maneuver themselves through the 29th Annual Paddle & Portage.

The duo is participating in the celebrity race and will join Carl Agnelly of WKOW-27. The celebrity race was added this year to demonstrate that you don't have to be a competitive paddler to participate in this race. While it takes a certain degree of coordination and strength to carry a canoe one mile across the isthmus, this event is open to recreational paddlers as well as competitive.

The race began in 1980 with 86 canoes filled with athletes who wanted to celebrate the recreational access of the lakes from downtown. Each year both recreational paddlers, some who only paddle once a year, and competitive paddlers, some marathon canoe racers, launch from James Madison beach in pursuit of the coveted *finisher t-shirt* only awarded to those who cross the finish line at Olin-Turville Park.

Some participants don't even own a canoe. Local paddle shop owner and sponsor of the event, Darren Bush of Rutabaga said, "We've been sold out of canoe rentals forever."

The event is only half over after receiving the shirt. A post-race celebration including live entertainment by singer Matt Wahl, free beer and brats for participants, and award ceremony follow. It wraps up just in time to enjoy Maxwell Street Days.

While the unique geography of Madison makes possible this wacky event, it is the participants who give the event its character. Costumed paddlers make appearances each year and the perfect view of this spectacle is at the farmer's market along Pinckney Street.

Online registration closed Wednesday July 16th. This year's race is capped at 400 boats. There are currently around 50 spots remaining for race day registration.. The web site will be updated with information regarding remaining spots. Spots are filled on a first come, first served basis. However, every effort will be made to accommodate the onsite registrations

To volunteer for the event show up at either James Madison or Olin-Turville Park from 8am until 2pm on Saturday, July 19th.

WHO: Some quirky, some athletic (some both) people with canoes running around the square and paddling in the lakes.

WHAT: Canoe race on both downtown lakes; requiring participants to carry their canoes from one lake to the other. Finish line festival with food, beverages, live music and awards ceremony immediately follows the race (11:45 am).

WHERE: Start - James Madison Park with paddle on Lake Mendota, run up Hamilton Street, past the Capitol on Pinckney Street, down King Street to Lake Monona, paddle across to finish at Olin-Turville Park.

WHEN: Saturday, July 19, 2008. Onsite registration 8:00 am – 9:30 am; race start 10:00 am.

For more information, visit www.paddleandportage.org or call 608.226.4780.

The Paddle and Portage is presented by American Family Insurance, Isthmus and Rutabaga with support from 93.1 The Lake, Alpha Graphics, Budget Rentals, Bud Light, Group Health Cooperative, Kleenmark, The Madison Concourse Hotel, Magic 98, Northway Communications, Ozee Cars, Park Bank, Sprint and Two Men and a Truck.

Wisconsin Sports Development Corporation is a nonprofit sports management organization that helps develop sports tourism in Wisconsin and aims to foster participation, competition and memorable experiences through our events and programs that promote health, active lifestyles and a sense of community.

WSDC properties include the American Family Insurance Badger State Games, the Wisconsin Athletic Hall of Fame, Paddle & Portage, Badger State Duck 'N Dodge, Shape Up Wisconsin Kids, Lighten Up Wisconsin and the Fit Kids Challenge. WSDC is also the local host of Ironman Wisconsin.

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