



NANTAHALA OUTDOOR CENTER WINS AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION'S 2025 EVENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

BRYSON CITY, NC (November 6, 2025) — The Nantahala Racing Club (NRC) and Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC) are proud to announce they have been honored with the **American Canoe Association's 2025 Event of the Year Award** for hosting the **2025 Junior Olympics and Regional Teams Development Camp**.

This national recognition celebrates NOC and NRC's shared commitment to advancing youth paddlesports and nurturing the next generation of competitive canoe and kayak athletes.

Held this past summer on the Nantahala River, the event brought together more than 50 young paddlers from across the country for a week of racing, skill-building and community connection. The program featured age-group slalom and kayak cross competitions, expert coaching sessions and athlete development workshops, all designed to help participants grow as both athletes and stewards of the sport.

A defining feature of the event was its emphasis on education, inclusion and mentorship. Coaches and volunteers worked closely with athletes of all experience levels, from first-time competitors to national team hopefuls, creating an encouraging environment that reflects the heart of the paddlesports community. The collaboration between NRC and NOC delivered professional-level logistics, safe and well-run courses, and an unforgettable experience for athletes and families alike.

"This award is an incredible honor and a reflection of the passion and teamwork that define the paddling community here at NOC," said Colin McBeath, President of Nantahala Outdoor Center. "Hosting the Junior Olympics and Development Camp is about more than competition, it's about inspiring the next generation to build confidence, resilience and a lifelong love of paddling. We're grateful to the ACA for this recognition and proud to share it with everyone who made this event possible."

The American Canoe Association's Event of the Year Award recognizes events that exemplify excellence in organization, innovation and community impact. For NOC and NRC, the honor highlights decades of dedication to youth development and the continued growth of competitive paddlesports in the U.S.

The award was presented on October 18 during the ACA's 145th Anniversary Celebration and PaddleFest at the U.S. National Whitewater Center in Charlotte, North Carolina. The ceremony honored instructors, volunteers, organizations and leaders whose service continues to shape the future of paddlesports.

Accepting the award on behalf of NOC was Lee Liebfarth, father of Evy Liebfarth, Olympic bronze medalist in women's canoe single at the Paris 2024 Olympics, who trained on the Nantahala River.

For more information about the ACA Annual Awards, visit <https://americancanoe.org/2025-aca-annual-awards-honoring-leadership-service-and-legacy-in-paddlesports/>.

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About Nantahala Outdoor Center

Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC) is the nation's largest outdoor recreation company with operations spanning Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Over a million guests visit NOC annually to embark on a diverse collection of more than 120 different river and land-based itineraries, learn to kayak at NOC's world-renowned Paddling School, travel abroad with NOC's Adventure Travel program, test the latest outdoor gear and shop at its LEED-certified flagship retail stores or enjoy NOC's resort amenities such as its three restaurants and multi-tiered lodging. The New York Times has recognized NOC as the "Nation's Premiere Paddling School," "The Best Place to Learn" by Outside, and as "One of the Best Outfitters on Earth" by National Geographic Adventure.

About Nantahala Racing Club

The Nantahala Racing Club (NRC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to developing paddlesports athletes and promoting competitive canoeing and kayaking at all levels. Through coaching, mentorship, and community events, NRC fosters a love of paddling and a commitment to personal growth, teamwork, and outdoor adventure.

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