

# Chladek conquers her fears, splashes to top of kayak world

By Marty Budner  
staff writer

It was hard at first. And it's easy to understand why. Peering down the river, the swift current appears relentless and the thundering rapids seem to swallow all trespassing vehicles. The small river boats are like leaves amidst nature's most untamed waters.

Dana Chladek of Bloomfield Hills admits it took a while to conquer her initial queasy feelings. But that's what white water kayaking and rafting is all about. Courage.

"It's hard for women because there's a lot of fear involved (in kayaking)," said Chladek. "I didn't really start to like it until the past two or three years. It's a sport where you need to be aggressive and I wasn't at the start."

Now, you can't keep her dry. Chladek improved her position among women kayakers dramatically over the past year. The Dartmouth College junior was ranked No. 9 nationally in 1982, but she is now No. 2 and still paddling for the top.

"It's a lot of fun," she said. "I want to work on my endurance and I want to do better than I did last year (at the Europa Cup competition)."

**KAYAKS ARE** small, canoe-like shells capable of withstanding through rapids at excessive speeds. The boats, weighing as little as nine pounds, are completely enclosed except for the one or two openings on top where the paddler(s) sit.

Competitive kayaking is run on any river capable of churning up white water for at least a half mile. Chladek competes in the slalom events, where there are approximately 30 gates (distinguished by poles hanging from wires across the river) to a particular course. A decent time is anywhere between three and four minutes.

Chladek competed with the United States national team which participated at the World Championships held two months ago in Merano, Italy. Although she finished 19th overall and didn't win any medals, the U.S. took home four individual medals and two team medals.

"I didn't expect to win, but I thought I could get into the top 10," said Chladek, who qualified for the national team by winning a team trial race April 2 on the West River in Vermont.

"I was nervous and I tried to go to fast," she said. "I hit four poles and didn't paddle as well as I thought I could have. It was a good experience and next time I'll be better prepared."

A fair-haired, spry-looking 19-year-

old, Chladek has kayaked in places all over the world, not to mention most parts of the United States.

**CHLADEK COMPETED** in Yugoslavia, Italy, Austria and West Germany in 1982 with the U.S. National Team on the Europa Cup circuit. She trains mostly in the New England area, including the Mascoma River in New Hampshire, 10 miles southeast of Dartmouth.

"I didn't think I was going to make (this year's team). . . It was a bad year for me because I wasn't having a good spring," said Chladek. "Next year I'm a little more secure and I'm pretty sure I can get in the top six (number of people who make the U.S. Team for the Europa Cup competition)."

Chladek, who was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia, comes from a family of white water enthusiasts. Her parents were world-class canoeists with the Czechoslovakian National Team in the early 60s.

The family moved to the United States in 1965, when Dana (pronounced Donna) was 8 years old. Most of her childhood was spent in Bloomfield Hills where she graduated from Lahser High School in 1981.

Chladek was a member of Lahser's ski team for three years, and she spent her falls and springs practicing her paddling. Some of her early training was on the Clinton River which runs through Macomb and Oakland counties.

"My parents took me paddling and took me to races. They sent me to a kayak clinic when I was 13 years old," said Chladek. "By my junior year of high school I was really into it. I didn't go well in the sport until I got to Dartmouth."

"It's hard for people to develop an interest (in kayaking) in the United States because there are so few white water places. Europeans are into (white water) a lot more than people are here. In the Eastern Block countries it's better to do sports because they get to travel. Instead of being locked up inside their country they get to race."

"Dartmouth used to be a big kayaking center," she said. "But, it's shifted around more to the south where you can train a lot more."

**CHLADEK SKRIED** for Dartmouth the past two seasons but is giving up the winter sport to spend more time training for white water racing. Her main goal now is to keep her position with the U.S. National Team and win a medal in international competition.

"I plan to continue racing for a long time," she said. "I want to keep going for a while. . . I want to participate in at least two or three more worlds if I can make the (U.S.) team."

*'It's hard for women because there's a lot of fear involved (in kayaking). It's a sport where you need to be aggressive and I wasn't at the start.'*

—Dana Chladek  
Kayak racer



Dana Chladek of Bloomfield Hills is one of the premier women kayakers in the country.

"The only thing that's a problem in the United States is finances because parents aren't going to support you all

the time," she said. "It's hard to get funding here because kayaking is not an Olympic sport. It's hard to have a

career and paddle at the same time." The next two World Championships are in Augsburg, West Germany (1985)

and Bourg St. Maurice, France (1987). Chladek is hoping to add both those spots to her white water travel log.

# Lamb's fleece is gold

By Marty Budner  
staff writer

Kelley Lamb ventured West and found gold.

Competing in the World Schoolboy Wrestling Championships last weekend in Missoula, Mont., Lamb captured a gold medal in the unlimited heavyweight freestyle class for 15- and 16-year-olds.

The United States won 13 of 26 medals in Lamb's freestyle division and 19 of 26 medals in Greco-Roman wrestling. The meet attracted 13 foreign teams, plus the U.S.A. National Team and a host Montana U.S.A. squad. Lamb, one of only two wrestlers from Michigan who competed at the Montana meet (the other being Mike Murdoch from Montrose), indicated the team was "disappointed" with its overall showing.

"It was a fun camp, but it was kind of sad because a lot of our guys lost in the finals to wrestlers from India who were very good," he said. "We swept

the last four weight divisions, but we could have done better."

**THE 16-YEAR-OLD** Lamb won two matches via pin in picking up his gold medal.

He defeated a Montana Team wrestler with a first period pin at 36 seconds in his first-round match. In the championship match, Lamb pinned Australia's Andrew Reeney in the second period.

"He (Reeney) was ahead in points, 15-12, when I pinned him," he said. "It was a good match."

Lamb's first qualifying meet for the U.S.A. Schoolboy squad was at the Central Regional held in late June in Oxford, Ohio. He won the heavyweight class which then qualified him for the United States Wrestling Association's Developmental Selection Camp at the University of Montana in Missoula from July 20-28.

It was at that camp that he won the heavyweight spot on the U.S.A. Schoolboy Team.

"I was happy about making the team but I felt sorry for the guys who didn't make it," said Lamb. "I learned a lot of upper body techniques and throws. It was a hard camp."

"I FELT PROUD to walk around with the (U.S.A.) warm-ups on," he said. "They even had a parade for all the wrestlers in the city of Missoula."

Lamb is a member of the Cranbrook High School wrestling team, coached by John Drake. He captured eighth place in the 185-pound weight division at the state class B meet last winter but has his sights set on a state title this season.

"I want to be a state champion. I was with mostly all state champions (at the camp) and I learned a lot," he said. "I know I can do better this year (at the state meet)."

"Freestyle wrestling is a lot quicker pace (than high school varsity wrestling). In school it's a little tougher because you wrestle some guys who are older than you. In freestyle, you wrestle guys your own age."



Kelley Lamb  
Grabbing gold

# Boyd shifts gears toward the Boston Marathon

By Chris McCosky  
staff writer

**WHEN JIMBO BOYD** is 15, he dove off the roof of his house into a swimming pool and broke his neck. He was left virtually paralyzed from his neck down.

That was in 1974. Since that time, Boyd has graduated from Farmington Harrison High School, received a bachelor of arts degree from the University of South Flor-

ida, and is recognized as one of the top wheelchair athletes in the country.

Boyd is the world's Class 1A marathon champion. He won that honor at the Orange Bowl Marathon in Miami, Florida, last January.

"THAT WAS ONE of my greatest thrills in sports," said Boyd. He beat his opponent by 25 minutes. "When I passed him I said, 'Himn, I think I smell something burning.' It was him."

Boyd is a cheerful, optimistic person. When he talks, his crystal-blue eyes

sparkle. Life has not gotten him down.

"I'm real, real active. Everytime I see a story about a quadriplegic or paraplegic, it's always depressing you know, take-pity-on-me type stories. You never read anything positive."

"Hey, life goes on. I'm inconvenienced a little, but it hasn't slowed me down. I have graduated from college. I've got a van. I get around on my own," Boyd said.

Boyd can often be seen zooming through the streets of Farmington

Hills' Springbrook subdivision, knees up, leaned forward in his custom-built racing chair, his California-blood hair blowing in the breeze. He logs between eight and 10 miles a day, five days a week.

**THE NEIGHBORS** are all real friendly, they wave and say hello. The dogs have gotten to know me too," Boyd said with a wry smile.

Boyd is a member of the Rolling Raiders, the nation's first five-man wheelchair marathon racing team. The

team competes in various five-kilometer and 10-kilometer runs across the state to keep in shape, but the team's main events are the 26-mile marathons.

Boyd races in the state, regional and national wheelchair events each year. He was number one in his class this year. On Sept. 26, he will compete in the Montreal Marathon. On Oct. 9, he will run in the Detroit Free Press Marathon, in which he finished eighth last year. Then on Jan. 7, he will attempt to defend his world title at the Orange Bowl. The Orange Bowl is considered the world series of wheelchair road racing.

Boyd's athletic endeavors do not end with road racing. He also swims.

At the 27th annual National Wheelchair Games, which took place at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu, Boyd took first place in the butterfly, second in the backstroke, third in the freestyle and second in the slalom. At those games, Boyd also competed in track and field (third in the 400 meters) and road racing (first place).

"I NEVER THOUGHT that I would be here, where I am today, in sports," Boyd said. "Being able to go 26 miles with the limited arm strength I have is quite an accomplishment for me."

Boyd ran his first marathon three years ago. It was the 10-mile Bobby Crim race.

"I didn't know what I was getting myself into," he said. "It was a challenge, but when I finished, it was like I climbed Mount Everest as far as accomplishments go."

Using an everyday wheelchair, Boyd's time was 2:37:00. He ran the Crim race two years later, with a racing chair, and finished with a time of

1:27:00. The Boston Marathon is Boyd's next goal. His best 26-mile time is 3:50:00. To qualify for competition in the Boston Marathon, Boyd will have to get his time below three hours.

"THAT'S SEVEN minutes per mile, but I think I can do it," he said.

He left the University of South Florida with a business degree in December of 1982. Recently, he has been thinking about a career in a different field.

"I've really enjoyed meeting others in my situation. I have gotten a few into athletics and a few into cars and vans. I think I've helped change a lot of their attitudes," Boyd said.

"That's why I've kind of been thinking about another career goal. I think I might go back to school for recreational therapy or occupational therapy," he said.

Boyd is also considering moving out west, perhaps to California. The hard, cold Michigan winters have a tendency to slow him down, and Boyd likes to keep on the go.

Boyd prefers talking of the accomplishments of wheelchair athletes like himself and the Rolling Raiders, but the question he is most often asked is, how he has managed to keep such a positive attitude about life in spite of his handicap.

"I got a lot of support from my family and friends. They helped me attain a positive attitude. It's hard to put my feelings into words. You take it day by day and then when you look back on how far you've come. . . it's hard to believe."

"You have to think about the highs and not the lows," Boyd said. "In my life, the highs have outweighed the lows."



Residents of Farmington Hills Springbrook subdivision are accustomed to this scene: Jimbo Boyd racing through the streets.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer