

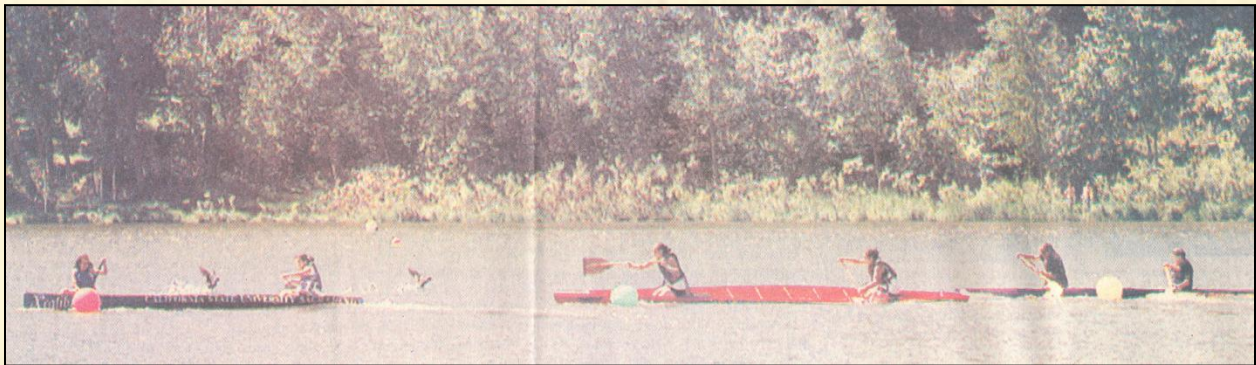
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Alabama cruises to canoe title; Tech 7th



In one of the tightest races of the day (top photo), the women's sprint teams, from left: California State University-Sacramento, University of Alabama at Huntsville and the University of Wisconsin-Madison all paddle madly around the turning buoys at the same instant in the racing portion of the National Concrete Canoe Competition at Canyon Lake. Huntsville won the heat when Sacramento was disqualified for a rule infraction. Huntsville also won the entire competition. In photo at left, The Peacemaker, center, the concrete canoe of South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, leaps ahead at the start of the men's preliminary sprint race Saturday. The team won the heat with the sixth fastest time to qualify for the finals later in the day. The Tech team finished seventh overall.

Concrete can float, and engineering students from the University of Alabama at Huntsville proved they make it float the best.

Rapid City

The teams of students took first place in the 1998 American Society of Engineers/Master Builders National Concrete Canoe Competition. The competition ended Saturday with sprint and distance races in Canyon Lake.

The host team, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, finished seventh, and South Dakota State University finished 13th in the 21-team competition.

The teams had to design and build the concrete canoes they used in the competition. The vessels ranged from 17 feet to 23 feet long and weighed between 49 and 160 pounds.

The canoes are constructed with concrete and reinforcing materials such as graphite and carbon fiber. And instead of using sand or gravel in the concrete mix, students used lightweight materials such as glass beads or microballoons.

Sixty percent of the teams' scores were based on written and oral presentations that detailed each canoe's design, construction and materials. The canoes also had to pass a "swamp" test by popping up to the top of the lake after being submerged. The races also figured in the scoring.

The teams represented student chapters of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). To qualify for the national canoe competition, the teams had to win regional contests in April and May. This was the 11th annual national competition.

The final results: First place, University of Alabama at Huntsville (earning \$5,000 in scholarships from Master Builders of Cleveland); 2, California State University at Sacramento (\$2,500); 3, Clemson University (\$1,500); 4, Florida Institute of Technology; 5, University of Washington; 6, Oklahoma State University; 7, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology; 8, University of Rhode Island; 9, California Polytechnic State University; 10, Rochester Institute of Technology; 11, Drexel University; 12, University of Wisconsin at Madison; 13, South Dakota State University; 14, Louisiana Tech; 15, University of Akron; 16, Western Kentucky University; tied for 17th, Catholic University, Michigan Technological University, University of New Mexico, University of Texas at San Antonio, Virginia Tech.

ASCE represents more than 120,000 civil engineers worldwide and is America's oldest national engineering society, headquartered in Reston, Va.