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2012 OLYMPIC ATHLETES THRILLED TO COMPETE ON EXTREMELY CHALLENGING LONDON CANOE SLALOM COURSE

*The Lee Valley White Water Centre, Designed by Whitewater Parks International,
Delivers ‘Edge-of-Your-Seat’ Olympic Excitement*

[Denver, Colorado—July 11, 2012] –The newly completed Lee Valley White Water Centre has been proclaimed as the best and most challenging Olympic paddling venue to-date. Visiting Slalom athletes and coaches from across the globe have expressed resounding approval of the course and acknowledged it as a new world standard for purpose-built whitewater.

London’s Olympic Delivery Authority selected the Colorado-based firm Whitewater Parks International (WPI) to design this unparalleled Canoe/Kayak Slalom venue and to deliver all the attributes necessary for successful Olympic competition. WPI was asked to re-create many of the best attributes found in the course they created for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. In the process, WPI designers added several innovations which have since raised the bar on Olympic quality whitewater.

“The reaction from athletes and coaches across the board has been extremely positive and confirms that this venue will provide unprecedented ‘edge-of-your-seat’ excitement during the Games,” said Bob Campbell, managing director, WPI. “It will be a very impassioned competition, with racers pushing their limits while being tested by some pretty serious hydraulics – it’ll be quite a show.”

According to Richard Fox, vice-president of the International Canoe Federation, there is strong consensus on the venue among the international Canoe/Kayak Slalom community. “I’ve talked to the teams and athletes and it’s pretty clear they think it’s an excellent course. I think it’s the best competition course and Olympic venue we’ve ever had and it’s fit for purpose.”

From the athlete’s perspective, 2012 Olympian and World Championship bronze medalist Richard Hounslow (Great Britain) revealed the new Lee Valley White Water Centre has whetted his competitive appetite. “It’s one of the hardest courses in the world to paddle on,” said Hounslow. “You ask any of the international people who have just come over here and they say it’s a great course, great fun, but it is very hard.”

First time Olympian Caroline Queen (USA) feels fortunate to have a few weeks of practice to get to know the Olympic course better before the competition. “I love the course on the whole! It offers a great balance of consistency and challenge that drives me to be better. I’ve enjoyed every minute of training on it!”

Vavřinec Hradilek (Czech Republic) won the Men’s Kayak category during the London 2012 Pre-Olympic Test Event held last summer and was impressed with the level of challenge he faced. “This brand new course has some amazing features, as there are plenty of stoppers and when you make a mistake then it’s hard to go back on line. The course is awesome to race on!”

2008 Olympic Silver Medalist David Florence (Great Britain) estimates he will have been down the London Olympic course close to 3,000 times come Games time. “It is a good course,” said Florence, “It’s very big, difficult, fast, with lots of big drops and big waves – it is an exciting place to paddle.” Florence will be competing in both the Men’s Single and Men’s Double Canoe categories, partnering with teammate Hounslow for the doubles.

During the competition, 2012 Olympic athletes will navigate down the 1,000 foot long competition channel that features two dramatic signature drops. The channel’s shape creates a long straightaway that keeps the current rushing freely down the center of the two percent gradient course at 4,000 gallons per second. The layout will also offer an optimal Olympic spectator experience, affording views of almost the entire course from any vantage point. A unique secondary channel will be utilized by the competitors for warming up before their runs.

Venue preparations are almost complete for the 2012 Olympic events. All whitewater athletes bound for London have been selected by their national federations and they will now be busy training on the new Olympic course to become as familiar with it as they possibly can before the Games begin. Five days of Canoe Slalom competitions run from Sunday, July 29, 2012 through Thursday, August 2, 2012 in front of an expected crowd of 12,000 spectators each day. The venue has been completely sold out for all event days. Eighty-two competitors will be gunning for a total of four sets of medals – and the competition, like the whitewater, will be intense.

About Whitewater Parks International (WPI)

WPI brings together more than thirty years of specialization in whitewater sports, specifically in the design, development, and operation of state-of-the-art facilities and paddling-oriented programs. With offices in Sydney, Australia and Glenwood Springs, Colorado, the company and its international network of industry experts offers professional resources for creating financially sustainable and community enhancing projects, such as London’s 2012 Olympic Canoe/Kayak Slalom venue, the Lee Valley White Water Centre, and the Penrith Whitewater Stadium built for the Sydney 2000 Olympics. For more information, please visit www.whitewaterparks.com or call +1 970/948-7772.

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