



Pink Lady® Atlantic First

PETE BRAY

Crew Member



Pete Bray is a 48 year old outdoor pursuits instructor and security consultant. With virtually no previous rowing experience to his name, you might be forgiven for wondering why he has been invited to join the Pink Lady® Atlantic First team. However, a quick glance at his kayaking résumé soon provides the answer.

Pete's extraordinary accomplishments in both single and double kayaks is beyond compare and he is clearly quite comfortable pushing himself to the limits of human endurance. Furthermore, he already has extensive experience of the route that the Pink Lady® Atlantic First crew will take this coming June. In the summer of 2000 he set out on the North Atlantic Kayak Challenge, paddling by himself, with no back-up or support boat. He set off from St John's, Newfoundland in a specially designed 27 foot kayak, with the intention of reaching Ireland several months later. Unfortunately, a faulty valve caused his boat to fill with water and sink, meaning that he was forced to spend 33 hours in the near-freezing Atlantic waters before being rescued.

Despite this obvious setback, Pete returned to Canada the following year and this time completed the journey across the North Atlantic without serious incident, eventually arriving in Ireland 76 days after starting out. In completing this challenge, he not only became the first person ever to kayak across the Atlantic solo and unsupported, but he also raised much-needed funds for two separate children's hospices. Then in 2003 he returned to the same area and this time circumnavigated the whole of Newfoundland, once again by himself and without support. He has also taken part in the Arctic Canoe Race, a 700 km endurance event that sees competitors race around Finland and Sweden.

Closer to home, Pete has completed the 125 mile Devizes to Westminster race in both single and double kayaks no less than 12 different times. On at least three of these occasions he has ranked inside the top 10. He has also twice taken part in the K4 Series, a competition which involves racing 4-man kayaks around Southampton, Worcester, Reading and Nottingham. On one of these occasions he and his team secured first place.

In 1996 he circumnavigated mainland Britain, along with a partially-sighted friend, in a 2-man kayak. The expedition was totally self-sufficient with no external support whatsoever. The route included all four corners of the British mainland – Cape Wrath, John O'Groats, Dover and Land's End – and took several months to complete.

When not embarking upon some improbable expedition, Pete seems happy to embrace all manner of outdoor activities. As well as being a keen kayaker and canoeist, he enjoys rock climbing, mountain biking and skiing and is also an accomplished microlight pilot. As if this is not enough of an active lifestyle, his pre-departure training schedule

also includes 2½-3 hours worth of cardiovascular exercise and weight training every day, as well as regular overnight sessions on the water with the rest of the crew.

Having spent long periods by himself on a number of previous trips, Pete is looking forward to the security of having others around him. “Last time I crossed the Atlantic I was on my own and there was a lot of sleep deprivation. I was only able to have power naps of 15 minutes or so, and then the wind would pick up or a wave would break over the bow of my kayak and I would wake up. This time we are working as a team and when you have a team around you, you sleep like a log, because you have trust in the other guys looking after the boat. So I’m looking forward to that”. And with 2100 miles of Atlantic nothingness in front of them, one can not help feeling that the team is going to need all of the rest that they can get.

Pete has a great affinity with Cornwall and many of his relatives still live in the area. Consequently, he can expect a large reception as he and the Pink Lady® crew row triumphantly into Falmouth at the beginning of August. However, his family and friends will have to make the most of their time with him, as it will not be long before he is off on yet another trip. For the Pink Lady® Atlantic First project marks just the first leg of a three-way epic for Pete. After conquering the Atlantic, he then intends to attempt a solo crossing of the Pacific, before tackling the Bering Strait.

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For further information please contact Paul McCaffrey on 020 7569 3043
(paul@yesconsultancy.com) or Tina Fotherby on 020 7569 3042
(tina@yesconsultancy.com)

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