

Michigan Tech Concrete Canoe 2010-2011

This past season of concrete canoe proved to be an exciting and educational one. Michigan Technological University (Michigan Tech) was proud to defend its title at the regional level and represent the North Central Conference at the national competition. Although the team could not live up to the previous year's success of a top five finish, Michigan Tech was thrilled to have another strong showing to prove the team's unending determination.

The combination of the university's location and the team's forward-thinking attitude coincided with the state of Alaska's official slogan, "North to the Future." Michigan Tech's Concrete Canoe team took this motto, which resembles the University's slogan, "Create the Future," as a battle cry of its own. Furthermore, as tribute to the team's advisor – who spent 33 years in Alaska – the team chose an Alaskan theme for this year's canoe, *FRONTIER*.

The team was fascinated by the native Tlingit art which is featured prominently on the exterior of *FRONTIER*. The vast forests inspired a cabin-like display area with many hours devoted to chopping and debarking timber before construction could begin. The team also learned from a local craftsman how to craft a totem pole and found a competitively-used dogsled to use as a display prop. The awe-inspiring natural beauty of Alaska was incorporated into every aspect of the team's design.

2010-2011 Michigan Tech Concrete Canoe At-a-Glance	
Name	Frontier
Weight	160 lbs
Width	31 3/16 inches
Length	20 feet
Depth	16 inches
Main Color	White
Complimentary Colors	Red, Light Blue, Light Green

Regional Competition

The 2010-2011 North Central Regional Competition was hosted by the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Michigan Tech spent a lot of time on research and development and arrived at the regional competition excited to share what we'd learned. Despite allowing less time for aesthetics this year due to extensive testing and designing in the fall semester, the dedication of a number of team members in the spring semester resulted in another aesthetically-appealing canoe and display for Michigan Tech. *FRONTIER* was not one to be overlooked at this year's regional competition.

Again, Michigan Tech found that we were not the only team to have raised the bar for the 2010-2011 competition. All of the teams had made impressive strides in improving their own canoes, as well as bringing forth innovative ideas for concrete canoeing as a whole. However, Michigan Tech's hard work paid off. For the second year in a row, the team fell one category short of a clean sweep of the competition. This year it was the final product category that Michigan Tech fell short in due to a slight oversight in the rules.

Regional Competition Break Down	
Races	1 st
Presentation	1 st
Final Product	3 rd
Technical Paper	1 st
Final Results	1 st

In the words of T.S. Elliot, "Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go." This quote proved very fitting for Michigan Tech this year. For the first time in concrete canoe history, Michigan Tech attempted to engineer a reinforcement scheme. Unfortunately, despite the hours of testing and analysis behind its design, *FRONTIER* was unable to hold up against the rigors of race day and developed a crack near the stern paddler position. Though this might cause other teams to return to older, proven methods, Michigan Tech will instead continue to innovate and improve its design, even at the risk of failure.

National Competition

In mid-June, Michigan Tech hauled *FRONTIER* down to the University of Evansville in Evansville, IN for the 2011 National Competition. Once again, Michigan Tech was impressed with the caliber of competition present. The team found that it was not the only team this year to have invested a large amount of time in research and development. Though Michigan Tech couldn't fix the crack in *FRONTIER* for the National Competition, it was found that by adjusting the position of the stern paddler, *FRONTIER* was able to survive the races. Still, competition was fierce and Michigan Tech fell just shy of once again making the top five, finishing 6th out of the top 23 teams in the nation.

National Competition Break Down	
Presentation	8 th
Final Product	5 th
Technical Paper	5 th
Races Overall	5 th
Women's Endurance	9 th
Men's Endurance	4 th
Women's Sprint	7 th
Men's Sprint	3 rd
Coed Sprint	3 rd
Final Results	6th

2011-2012

Though proud of the accomplishments and improvements made last year, Michigan Tech was not happy to fall from the top five in the nation. After the 2010 competition, the team's goal was to be the top team in the nation. While it may seem as though no forward progress has been made, the team believes that it continues to move in the right direction. Michigan Tech learned a lot from both its successes and failures from last year. Through this knowledge and

continued dedication, the team expects to not only reclaim a place in the top five at the 2012 National Competition, but also to be a strong competitor for the number one spot.

Team Leadership

Returning for a second year as co-captain on the team is senior materials science engineering student John Laureto. John has been a part of Michigan Tech's concrete canoe team since his freshman year. He previously served as the sustainability chair and has always been involved in all aspects of the team. He continues to be a vital member of the team and a strong leader.

Stepping into a leadership position is junior Brad Johnson, selected this year to serve as the team's other co-captain. Brad is a mechanical engineering student and has also been on the team since his freshman year. He served as safety chair for the 2010-2011 season and has proven himself a dynamic team member and a natural leader.

Regional Competition

This year, the North Central Regional Competition will be hosted by Ohio Northern University. Michigan Tech looks forward to the trip to Ada, OH and the opportunity to once again compete with other teams from the area.

National Competition

The University of Nevada, Reno will be the host of this year's National Competition. Michigan Tech is dedicated to once again represent the North Central Conference and intends to be among the top finishers at this year's competition and in the years to come.