

LIZ SHARMAN



Liz Sharman was Silver Medalist at Jonquiere, Britain's highest finish ever in the K1W class. (Will Summers Photo)

Britain's Liz Sharman was Silver Medalist in K1W at Jonquiere, a scant .5 seconds behind Cathy Hearn. She was runner-up again in the 1980 Europa Cup and in the 1981 World Championships K1W team race. In 1982, Liz won all three of the Europa Cup races as well as the Merano Pre-World Championships, often having very impressive times. Her forte is easy water courses, on which she is capable of beating the world's best Cls. She is 5 feet, 10 inches tall, weighs 132 pounds and used a 208 paddle at Jonquiere and Bala. She is now experimenting with a 206.

Liz was born August 8, 1957, in Manchester, England and lived there until she was 16. At that point her family moved to Suffolk and this is where she really took up paddling. "It's ironic" she recalls, "because Manchester is where all the paddling is." Her

mother is a midwife and her father' has retired from the insurance business.

### How She Started Paddling

When Liz was in school in Manchester, she did some general canoeing. She also competed in the high jump, but never trained for it very seriously. Her best jump was about 5 feet. It was at the Bury St. Edmunds club, however, that Liz really started paddling slalom boats. She says now, "I learned to roll before I could paddle in a straight line." She paddled for a year or two before starting competitive racing in 1975.

George Radford, later to become her husband, got Liz interested in racing. George is a director of a company which makes clothes lockers for sports centers and airports. He competed in judo seriously and later coached someone who made the British Olympic team. He is Liz's trainer now. They were married in 1980.

Liz was pretty much self-taught as a paddler until 1978 when Ken Langford invited her to come up to Stone and train there. At this time, Liz got very serious about racing. She would go up to Stone on weekends. Occasionally, she would stay there for a week or more at a time. She did this about a half dozen times in preparation for the Bala World Championships. During these periods, she would work a great deal on technique. She thought about moving permanently to Stone, but wanting to be near her father, who is ill, prevented her from doing so. She liked Ken Langford: "even though he's got a bullying sort of attitude, he's very straight and to the point and you always know where you stand with him."

About the time she started getting serious about racing, Liz took a job as a civil service clerk, a position she held for five years. She worked processing social security checks. Liz gave up the job to train full time for Bala. She has been training full time ever since.

Liz has had a number of injuries associated with paddling, which she considers ironic because her father was forever telling her to give up whitewater canoeing before she hurt herself,

Liz has injured the muscles around her clavicle, through weight lifting. But her worst injury was a disk problem in her back. This bothered her significantly during the Bala World Championships. Immediately thereafter, it threatened to terminate her paddling career permanently. She saw "the world's greatest authority" on disk problems and he told her that an operation was the only solution. She then went to a chiropractor and he fixed her up.

## Liz Sharman

1978-79

(Training time in minutes per week)

Week No	Date	Total Training	Water Training	Athletic Training	White water Gates	Sprints and Flatwater Gates	Down river Training	Strength	Loosening, Running, Squash
1	8/28 - 9/3	285	240	45		120	120	30	15
2	9/4 - 9/10	355	330	25		330			25
3	9/11 - 9/17	525	510	15	420	90			15
4	9/18 - 9/24	105	60	45		60		30	15
5	9/25 - 10/1	195	195			155	40		
6	10/2 - 10/8	85	85			85			
7	10/9 - 10/15	60	60		60				
8	10/16-10/22	205	155	50		155			50
9	10/23-10/29	120	30	90		30		60	30
10	10/30-11/5	310	160	150		160		90	60
11	11/6 - 11/12	340	100	240		100		170	70
12	11/13-11/19	580	300	280	180	120		110	170
13	11/20-11/26	55		55				55	
14	11/27-12/3	530	350	180	240		110	70	110
15	12/4 - 12/10	560	300	260		210	90	120	140
16	12/11-12/17	470*	250	220	125	125		100	120
17	12/18-12/24	470*	250	220	100	100	50	100	120
18	12/25-12/31	470*	250	220	125	125		100	120
19	1/1 - 1/7	450	205	245	75	100	30	125	120
20	1/8 - 1/14	25		25				25	
21	1/15 - 1/21	200	40	160		40		130	30
22	1/22 - 1/28	230	60	170		60		65	105
23	1/29 - 2/4	510	285	225	285			115	110
24	2/5 - 2/11	470	315	155	150	105	60	90	65
25	2/12 - 2/18	351	185	166	125	60		120	46
26	2/19 - 2/25	375	220	155	100	120		90	65
27	2/26 - 3/4	682	470	212	405	65		120	92
28	3/5 - 3/11	536	385	151	90	295		90	61
29	3/12 - 3/18	626	470	156	440	30		55	101
30	3/19 - 3/25	716	560	156	500	60		55	101
31	3/26 - 4/1	595	450	145	315	135		90	55
32	4/2 - 4/8	686	555	131	410	145		85	46
33	4/9 - 4/15	535	495	40	265	230			40
34	4/16 - 4/22	256	250	6	210	40			6
35	4/23 - 4/29	435	335	100	195	140		60	40
36	4/30 - 5/6	575	465	110	280	185		75	35
37	5/7 - 5/13	138	60	78		60			78
38	5/14 - 5/20	397	340	57		340			57
39	5/21 - 5/27	251	185	66		185		25	41
40	5/28 - 6/3	937	920	17	835	85			17
41	6/4 - 6/10	500	500		500				
42	6/11 - 6/17	337	315	22	75	240			22
43	6/18 - 6/24	505	478	27		478			27
44	6/25 - 7/1	369	284	85		284			85
45	7/2 - 7/8	955	955		955				
46	7/9 - 7/15	155	135	20	135				20
	Total	18517	13542	4975	7595	5447	500	2450	2525

\* Estimated: Records missing.

## Liz Sharman

1981-82

(Training time in minutes per week)

Week No	Date	Total Training	Water Training	Athletic Training	White water Gates	Sprints and Flatwater Gates	Down river Training	Strength	Loosening, Running, Squash
1	9/21 - 9/27	238	198	40		198			40
2	9/28 - 10/4	322	302	20		302			20
3	10/5 - 10/11	285	230	55		230			55
4	10/12-10/18	452	402	50		402			50
5	10/19-10/25	154	118	36		118			36
6	10/26-11/1	480	319	161		319		105	56
7	11/2 - 11/8	602	470	132	210	260		85	47
8	11/9 - 11/15	440	280	160		280		120	40
9	11/16-11/22	628	520	108	310	165	45	75	33
10	11/23-11/29								
11	11/30-12/6	567	475	92	345	130		75	17
12	12/7 - 12/13	374	185	189		95	90	155	34
13	12/14-12/20	107	107				107		
14	12/21-12/27	290	290		50		240		
15	12/28- 1/3								
16	1/4 - 1/10	463	225	238	45	140	40	205	33
17	1/11 - 1/17	739	439	300	132	167	140	255	45
18	1/18 - 1/24	733	407	326	130	160	117	275	51
19	1/25 - 1/31	738	503	235	288	215		215	20
20	2/1 - 2/7	797	499	298	112	322	65	280	18
21	2/8 - 2/14	324	61	263		61		125	138
22	2/15 - 2/21	452	325	127		325			127
23	2/22 - 2/28	592	450	142	185	265		65	77
24	3/1 - 3/7	661	552	109	306	246		55	54
25	3/8 - 3/14	612	477	135	250	227		60	75
26	3/15 - 3/21	589	506	83	208	298			83
27	3/22 - 3/28	729	695	34	660	35			34
28	3/29 - 4/4	870	750	120	750				120
29	4/5 - 4/11								
30	4/12 - 4/18	751	665	86	665				86
31	4/19 - 4/25	890	830	60	830				60
32	4/26 - 5/2	195	195		135		60		
33	5/3 - 5/9	645	614	31	150	464			31
34	5/10 - 5/16	787	585	202		585		169	33
35	5/17 - 5/23	909	692	217	316	376		202	15
36	5/24 - 5/30	710	538	172		538		172	
37	5/31 - 6/6	391	376	15	255	121			15
38	6/7 - 6/13	640	580	60	580				60
39	6/14 - 6/20	293	268	25		268			25
40	6/21 - 6/27	1066	1066		1013	53			
41	6/28 - 7/4	918	706	212	45	661		176	36
42	7/5 - 7/11	512	452	60		452		60	
43	7/12 - 7/18	450	390	60	390				60
44	7/19 - 7/25	470	410	60	410				60
	Total	22865	18152	4713	8770	8478	904	2929	1784
	Change from 1979	+23%	+34%	-5%	+15%	+56%	+81%	+20%	-20%

On the preceding pages are found Liz's training plans for 1979 and 1982. In comparing them to those of other elite paddlers and to each other, several points stand out:

- Liz's total amount of training is less than Cathy Hearn's, the other K1W compared in this book.
- Liz did, however, increase her training total by 23% between 1979 and 1982.
- Liz's percentage of whitewater gates is 39% (in 1981-82), the lowest of those compared in this book.
- Liz has by far the highest aggregate total and proportion (37% in 1981-82), of flatwater gates.

The following is Liz's own commentary about her training:

Following a back injury in June 1981, which became progressively worse, I didn't paddle during August and most of September. I competed at our end of season slaloms but had to take it very easy as the back was still giving troubles, and this influenced my training up until December.

Most of our whitewater training in the U.K. is done during the period November-April, but 1981/82 compared with 1980/81, was well down as it was hampered by very bad weather which prevented me from getting to North Wales, as the roads were too bad to travel safely.

I should also emphasize that I have lumped whitewater and moving water training together.

Weight training in 1979 was very haphazard and although in 1981/82 the overall training time was much the same as 1979/80, the last season has been very constructive; particular attention was paid to strengthening my lower back. I also do three separate types of training: strength (gross); stamina (endurance); and circuits. Obviously, these are related to various periods of the season.

## Types of Workouts

Liz Sharman keeps a very detailed training log. For 1982, the important themes from it were:

Liz worked out twice a day on most days, starting when the log commenced in January.

She did a fair amount of weight lifting and much of it was "gross strength" training. It was during this type of lifting that Liz hurt her shoulder.

Her gate sessions were done often on a flatwater pond -- no moving water.

The following are examples of particular workouts:

### I. ENDURANCE GATES: (Done from March on.)

- a. "Times 6": 6 laps totaling 240 seconds, with 120 seconds rest.
- b. "Times 3": 3 laps totaling 120 seconds with rest.
- c. "Times 1": 1 lap with 40 seconds rest.
- d. Repeat everything, but in reverse order.

### II. SPEED GATES: These workouts were done on deep pond. The gates slide on wires and can be repositioned very easily,

- a. 20 second courses: Go down one side of the course with George timing. The rest period equals the time it takes to paddle back to the start. The entire workout takes 30-40 minutes. There would be three runs on each course. However, Liz wasn't sure how many courses she did: "You know when you've had enough."

b. Sprints through gates:

6 X 7 seconds; rest equals paddle back to start.

4 X 15 sec.

2 X 30 sec.

1 X 60 sec.

OUTSIDE THE BOAT:

- I. RUNNING OR BICYCLING: Liz would run about 20-25 minutes. Other times she would just bicycle somewhere at a high intensity.
- II. WEIGHTS:
  - a. Winter: During the winter, Liz did 8 sessions total: 2 a week of gross weight training; then take a rest. After that, switch to endurance circuits, three times a week for 4-6 weeks. This forms a cycle. Liz tried to do 2-3 cycles a winter.
  - b. Liz also does a weight circuit with very light weights, lasting about the time it takes to run a slalom course. She likes to do this shortly before a race and feels it helps her perform well. Before Bala, however, she didn't get to do this because of her back problem.



Liz Sharman was Europa Cup and Pre-World Champion in 1982. (Photo Courtesy of Liz Sharman)