

Julio Villarreal & Ron Zander Williams & Outrigger Canoe Club Cancun (OCCC)

Ron Zander Williams has a legacy of introducing / promoting growth of outrigger canoeing in Brazil & Argentina & Mexico. At the 2024 CORA Town Hall for the Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame, Guest Speaker Julio Villarreal of Outrigger Canoe Club Cancun (OCCC) spoke on behalf of Ron Zander Williams for his contribution to the support of outrigger canoeing in Mexico. After that 2024 CORA Town Hall, Julio Villarreal provided a writeup for the CORA Cultural Continuity perpetual page on the long journey of Mexico becoming an IVF Member Nation. [01]



"Julio Villarreal discovered a big community of paddlers in Cancun and the Riviera Maya and started paddling Mayan canoes in 2017 thanks to the event called: "Travesía Sagrada Maya" ("Sacred Mayan Journey"). This event had been hosted by Xcaret Park since 2009, and recreates the canoe crossing that the Mayans did 500 years ago to pay tribute to Ixchel Goddess. TSM crosses from Polé port now Xcaret Park in Playa del Carmen to Cuzamil Island now Cozumel Island and returns the next day. This is a 6 to 8 hours paddling each day through the Cozumel Channel, local paddlers train for 6 months every year for this journey; it is a beautiful event and thanks to this event there are likely 2000 canoe paddlers in the area and about 400 active now. [02]



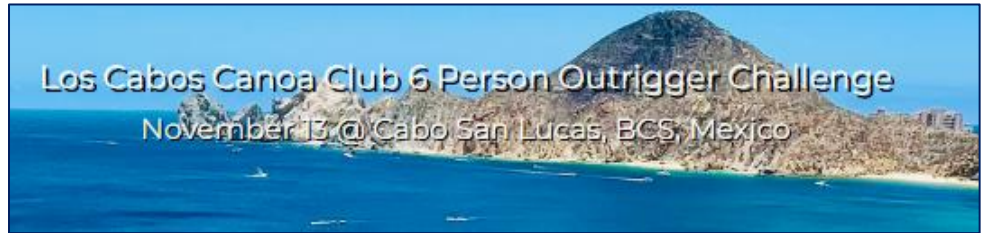
Julio fell in love with canoe paddling and did the crossing for 5 years, one of them as a steersman. This event is not a race but a Journey to recreate ancestral traditions; you can Google it and find a lot about this event.

Investigating more about canoe paddling, Julio discovered the Polynesian outrigger canoes and races and Julio realized that this type of outrigger canoe and sport is well known in many countries around the globe but not in Mexico! And from there Julio started this project to bring the outrigger canoes, traditions and races to Mexico; this is where the dream started!

In 2020, due the Pandemic, Travesía Sagrada Maya was cancelled, and people all were in home office, people had more free time, so Julio called two friends and start building from scratch an OC3 Canoe mold. During the building process, Julio posted some pictures in the Paddlers Facebook page, and Dennis Tarponolsky from Sudbury and a friend with Ron Zander Williams, messaged Julio and start talking about what OCCC needed to start a club, then Julio knew Ron! Ron Zander Williams told Julio all the things that he had to do to start the Club in Rio de Janeiro, and look now! There are likely 6,000 outrigger canoes and 340 clubs in Brazil, all that thanks to Ron Zander Williams and his Brazilian friends. [03] [04] [05]



In 2021, Alex del Toro from Dana Point, CA posted an invitation for the first outrigger canoe race in Cabo San Lucas, and Julio was like wow!!! - an OC race in his country?? Julio



had to go there! So, Julio registered on PaddleGuru for the race and flew to Cabo San Lucas. Los Cabos Canoe Club had 36 people racing and Julio was the only Mexican in the race! Can you believe that?? In that race Julio met Andrea Souther - Secretary of the Board of directors at Oceanside Outrigger Canoe Club. There at Cabo San Lucas, Julio also met Ignacio (Tio) the owner of the outrigger canoes for the race and the Los Cabos Canoe Club. Julio noticed as well that the club has no local paddlers and just paddles for some USA expats, but no regulars. Ignacio is a guy from Spain that has lived in Cabo San Lucas for many years and started building outrigger canoes. Now the club is called Cabo Canoe and has outrigger canoes in La Paz and in Cabo San Lucas, but still just for a few tourists. Julio is now in communication with Cabo Canoe Club to give them tips to grow their club and also with Puerto Aventuras Club near Cancun. [06] [07] [08] [09]

Few months later in 2022, Andrea texted Julio and asked Julio to write a letter asking for the donation or buying offer for two 1990 Bradley outrigger canoes for Julio to start a club in Mexico. Oceanside was about to buy two new unlimited outrigger canoes and needed the space for the new outrigger canoes, so Julio wrote the letter and Andrea presented it for the Board consideration. The answer was that Oceanside could not donate them, but could sell them at a very low price. Oceanside asked for \$6,000 USD both, Julio offered \$5,000 USD and Oceanside agreed. Immediately, Julio deposited \$1,000 USD for down payment and started to plan and quote the way to get the outrigger canoes from Oceanside to Cancun. At the time, Julio had no money to pick up the outrigger canoes and ship them to Cancun, and asked Andrea to keep the outrigger canoes until Julio was ready to pick them up. Andrea agreed, but only until late February, because the new outrigger canoes were going to be there by then. All this time Julio was in communication with Ron Zander Williams, Dennis Tarponolsky, and Robert from Sudbury. They gave Julio tips of how to tow the outrigger canoes, the kind of trailer that Julio needed, dollies, etc. Julio decided to drive the outrigger canoes by himself, because shipping on a container was 3 times more expensive.



So, in January 2023 Julio applied for a loan and got the money to build a special trailer near his home town Monterrey, NL, and drove 2,260 Km from Cancun to pick up a friend in Monterrey (Adrian Fraga) and the trailer. Adrian joined Julio for another 2,375 Km to cross the border in Laredo, TX and drive all the way to Oceanside, CA.



Julio and Adrian arrived at Oceanside and met Andrea there, loaded the outrigger canoes and hit the road back to Cancun, for another 5,000 Km driving. The road trip was wonderful, Julio and Adrian got to see all kinds of landscapes across the US border and Mexico! But! (there is always a but). Julio and Adrian had to leave the outrigger canoes at broker yard in Laredo, TX because Mexican Customs would not let Julio and Adrian cross with the outrigger canoes until OCCC had the import permit. Julio did not know that that an import permit was needed to cross used outrigger canoes for recreational purpose. Julio had to get back to Cancun for work and with no outrigger canoes! Julio drove another 3000 Km now with his friend Pedro Vargas (Peter) from Cancun. Pedro took a flight to meet Julio in Monterrey and joined Julio for the rest of the trip. Julio picked up Peter in Monterrey with no outrigger canoes, and so disappointed with the Mexican customs authorities, and drove back home. Any way, Julio paid the broker for the import and shipping the Canoes to Monterrey, and the next month Peter and Julio took off and drove again 5,000 Km to get the outrigger canoes to Cancún. Finally on April 9th 2023 the outrigger canoes Rell and Nehe (Julio kept their original names) arrived to their new home in Cancun!!



On April 22th 2023, OCCC registered the two outrigger canoes for their first race at the Regatta Tajamar 2023. Ron Zander Williams visited OCCC before the race to teach OCCC how to rig the outrigger canoes and



how to paddle! OCCC both steered the outrigger canoes and won 1st and 2nd place! Then Ron Zander Williams visited for a second time and brought Rumo Paddles (Brazilian) and Tahitian paddles for OCCC. [10] [11]

At first, OCCC found a place for the canoes at the Nitchupté lagoon, but the spot was too far away from the ocean and with lots of crocodiles! lol! Julio started looking for a better place for the canoes at the beach, and found the kite and wind foil school at Puerto Cancun's Beach Club. Julio negotiated a rent fee there and there is the Club Spot now! This took a lot of negotiating and changes but finally OCCC did it! [12] [13]



Early in 2024, Julio applied for the IVF membership for Mexico and after months of emails back and forward, on July 12th 2024 the club got the approval to represent Va'a sport endorsed by the IVF, and now OCCC is creating the Polynesian Canoe Mexican Association (AMCP).



Also, last month Julio was invited to be part of the Committee for the State of Quintana Roo Canoe Association, (Asociación de Canotaje de Quintana Roo) endorsed by the Mexican Canoe Federation. (Federación Mexicana de Canotaje (FMC)) [14]

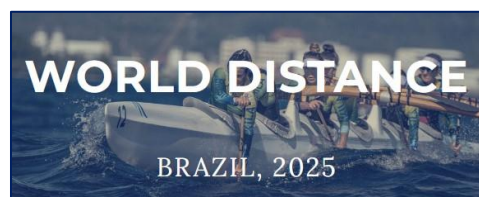


The OCCC first championship event as a Mexican Va'a team was the Panamerican Va'a Championship November 2024, in Niteroi, Brazil. Julio extended an invitation to paddlers from Puerto Aventuras Dragon Boat Club. This club is



located one hour driving from Cancun - they are mostly Dragon Boaters but they also have 1 OC6 and 4 OC1's, and have been learning outrigger with OCCC. [15] [16]

Now, OCCC and the AMCP are getting ready for the IVF World Distance Championship in 2025, and also the next Panamarican at Rapa Nui." [17]



References

#	Reference	Link
[01]	Outrigger Canoe Club Cancun	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100092253515926&sk=about
[02]	Sacred Mayan Journey	https://www.travesiasagrada.com/en/sacred-journey-objectives/
[03]	Dennis Tarponolsky	https://www.facebook.com/dennis.tarnopolsky/
[04]	Ron Zander Williams	https://www.canadianoutrigger.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/HOF-CORA-Ron-Zander-Williams.pdf
[05]	Rio Outrigger Clube	https://riovaa.com/
[06]	The Cabo Classic Outrigger Canoe Race	https://www.facebook.com/groups/1252455698634847/
[07]	Oceanside Outrigger Canoe Club	https://oceansideoutrigger.org/
[08]	Los Cabos Canoa Club	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100070972910435
[09]	Los Cabos Canoa Club 6 Person Outrigger Challenge	https://paddleguru.com/races/LosCabosCanoaClub6PersonOutriggerChallenge
[10]	Regatta Tajamar	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rg2Tu2qZrc
[11]	Rumo Paddles (Brazilian)	https://www.rumobrasil.com.br/
[12]	Nitcupté lagoon	https://www.puertomayacancun.com/nichupte-lagoon-cancun/
[13]	Puerto Cancun's Beach Club	https://www.puertocancun.com/en/beach-club/
[14]	Federación Mexicana de Canotaje (FMC)	https://www.facebook.com/FederacionMexicanaDeCanotaje/
[15]	Panamerican Va'a Championship 2024	https://www.instagram.com/panvaa.brasil/?locale=zh-hans&hl=af
[16]	Puerto Aventuras Dragon Boat Club	https://www.dragonboatmexico.com/en
[17]	2025 Brazil IVF World Distance Championships	http://www.ivfiv.org/world-distance-brazil-2025.html