

In early October 2014, Asian Games rowing gold and silver medalists, Lok Kwan Hoi and Lee Ka Man joined other national team members, community clubs and university alumni teams in canoeing, dragon-boating and rowing at Kai Tak in the inaugural use of the typhoon shelter and the water alongside the old airport runway.

With the cooperation of many government departments, nearly 200 athletes, organized by the Hong Kong Water Sports Council, staged a successful water sport demonstration day in the Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter and Kai Tak Approach Channel, confirming the suitability of this area for water sports.

HKWSC Vice Chairmen, Raymond Ma and Mike Tanner were excited at the prospects. "This is a unique resource for the city in terms of being a sheltered water environment right in the harbour, providing a ready-made venue for water sports," said Tanner. "It is an opportunity that must not be lost in terms of providing sports facilities for the community and at the same time creating

an international standard water sports venue", he added.

Athletes from each of the three sports rowed and paddled in the typhoon shelter and approach channel where remediation work is underway to improve water quality. The response from participants was universally enthusiastic, with a post-event survey showing almost unanimous support for establishing a water sports centre there.



Making good use of Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter (note the jumping fish, right)

With the government building the Kai Tak Multi-Purpose Stadium, a strong case exists to expand the sports hub with a

water sports centre for community and international sport.

Water quality appeared to be acceptable and no obstacle to development of a water sports centre. Participants commented on the spectacular number of fish (see accompanying picture taken by Fleur Iannazzo).

Following this success, the council will press ahead with plans to develop a temporary water sports centre next to the old Kai Tak Fire Station. With government policy support, venue and operational plans are being prepared and, subject to finalizing funding arrangements, the council hopes to begin activities in 2015.

The temporary centre will help meet the growing demand for participation in sport and allow an early start to water sports at Kai Tak, pending the construction of the permanent Kai Tak Water Sports Centre being considered by the government.