

Basic Detail Report

00039663

Title

Double sided paddle used by Jack O'Brien

Date

1953

Medium

Wood

Dimensions

2440 x 180 mm

Name

Paddle

History

John 'Jack' O'Brien, former Queenscliff lifesaver and professional boxer, was a pioneer of endurance solo paddling using single and double surf skis. Over the course of ten trips from 1940 to 1962 he attempted or set non-stop paddling records on ocean trips between Wollongong, Sydney and Newcastle. His training regime included cycling 48 km a day, following a strict vegetarian diet and 24 hour endurance paddling sessions. Being tied to his craft in rough seas, navigating by day and night and avoiding hazards such as reefs, rocks and sharks were all part of the challenge. In 1952 he claimed a world record for the greatest distance for non-stop ocean paddling in a 24 hour period, paddling 128km in 22 hours between Watson's Bay and Newcastle. Although his claims were contested in the media and subsequently bettered by others, he is remembered for pushing the boundaries of ocean paddling on surf skis.