

# Around the Rock: Circumnavigating the Island of Newfoundland in Record Time

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*Request for Support*

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## Mission Statement

Dave Mackay and Jack Kotaska’s “Around the Rock” expedition aims to set a new speed record for the self-propelled circumnavigation of the island of Newfoundland. The current speed record is held by Floridian paddler Greg Stammer who achieved the feat solo in 45 days in 2008. We plan on beating this time by making use of our kayak guiding experience, training thoroughly with other experienced paddlers, choosing the most opportune time of year to set off (mid June), familiarizing ourselves with the terrain and ocean conditions for weeks leading up to our departure, and utilizing the safety advantages that come with paddling in pairs. Additionally, we will document this expedition using social media outreach, blog posts, and a short film depicting the challenges and triumphs of our trip.

## Expedition Outline

We will set out in the third week of June, when paddling conditions are best, from the historic port of Quidi Vidi in Dave’s hometown of St. John’s Newfoundland, on the traditional territories of the Beothuk, and Mi’kmaq. Throughout the circumnavigation, we will paddle the most efficient route around the island, from headland to headland, approximately 2,000 km, and will be exposed to the rich tapestry of landscapes and communities that define outport Newfoundland. Our primary objective is to beat the current circumnavigation record of 45 days and our secondary objective is to document the ocean, geography, people, and culture of rural Newfoundland in a short film that accurately depicts our experiences. Combined, these goals are an homage to Newfoundland and aim to highlight the character of this province, the breathtaking moments of our journey, and the support that helped make the trip happen.

## Relevant Experience

Jack is a 21-year-old English/history student at the University of Victoria on Vancouver Island where he enjoys whitewater kayaking class V rivers, kite surfing, ultramarathon running, and sea kayaking. Growing up in Yellowknife NWT, Jack took advantage of every outdoor opportunity he could. What began as short canoe trips on the lakes and rivers around town, advanced to multi-week trips with family around the Tliche region and for the past four years has been guiding multi-week wilderness canoe and kayak trips on remote bodies of water throughout the Northwest Territories for Jackpine Paddle.

Some other notable tripping experiences include:

- March 2018 240 km xc ski from Yellowknife to Blachford Lake Lodge and back
- March 2019 240 km xc ski from Lutselk’e to Yellowknife  
(<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/ski-trip-lutselke-yellowknife-1.5130862>),
- 3x single-day marathon (120 km) skis from Yellowknife to Betchoko
- May 2021 200 km kite ski Great Slave Lake
- October 2023 single-day ascent of Vancouver Island’s highest peak
- Golden Hinde (60 km, 5000 vertical meters)

Additionally, Jack has his 80-hour WFR certification and in the months leading up to the expedition, is spending lots of time in a sea kayak in Victoria, practicing self-rescues, x-rescues, re-entry and roll rescues, paddling days, surf launches/landings, and reading tide charts with fellow kayak guides.

Dave is a 23-year-old Newfoundlander, graduating this spring with a bachelor's in Aerospace Engineering from Carleton University. Dave grew up whitewater and sea kayaking across Newfoundland. He worked as a sea kayak guide on the southern shore of Newfoundland, it was during his time guiding he first had the idea for “Around the Rock”. The passion and skills he developed in Newfoundland led him on trips around Canada and the United States.

Over the last couple of years Dave has spent 26 days whitewater rafting down the Grand Canyon, and a solo bike-packing trip up the coast of California. In the summer of 2023, Dave worked as a research assistant in the Yukon where he competed as a solo kayaker in the “Yukon River Quest” a 715 km race from Whitehorse to Dawson City. At the end of his work term, he spent 9 days solo sea kayaking in southeastern Alaska.

## **Outreach Strategy**

We will try to reach as many people as we can throughout this expedition by engaging with local media, frequently updating our social media, and distributing the short film that we plan to make. With this media attention, we aim to express an appreciation of Newfoundland's charm and resilience, celebrate its landscapes, document its stories, and share its beauty with the world, all the while encouraging other journeys of discovery, challenge, and love for one's homeland.

We are actively seeking funding and support through grants and sponsorships from outfitters and companies. This support will greatly improve our chances of reaching the expedition's goals of setting a new circumnavigation record and documenting the coast of Newfoundland through the eyes of two adventurous Canadian boys.

## **Route Plan**

Many things are bound to change once en route due to weather but we have gone over trip reports from past trips around the island and referenced local knowledge to map out our route around the island. Our campsites and approximate daily totals are provided in the table below. The 34 days of paddling allow for several rest/weather days.

Day	Start	End	Distance (km)	Day	Start	End	Distance (km)
1	Quidi Vidi	Brigus South	60	18	Long Point	Bottle Cove	47
2	Brigus South	Long Beach	62	19	Bottle Cove	Rocky Harbour	65
3	Long Beach	Point Lance	80	20	Rocky Harbour	Parsons Pond	53
4	Point Lance	Placentia	61	21	Parsons Pond	Bird Cove	74
5	Placentia	Davis Island	70	22	Bird Cove	Eddies Cove	56
6	Davis Island	Shoal Cove	60	23	Eddies Cove	Lanse Aux Meadows	70
7	Shoal Cove	Fortune	72	24	Lanse Aux Meadows	Goose Cove	51
8	Fortune	McCallum	68	25	Goose Cove	Bell Island	73
9	McCallum	Francois	37	26	Bell island	La Scie	73
10	Francois `	Grey River	35	27	La Scie	Twillingate	80
11	Grey River	Burgeo	73	28	Twilingate	Fogo	37
12	Burgeo	Grand Bruit	45	29	Fogo	Musgrave Harbour	45
13	Grand Bruit	Port Aux Basque	75	30	Musgrave Harbour	Newtown	50
14	Port Aux Basque	Codroy	44	31	Newtown	Bonavista	65
15	Codroy	Port Aux Port	65	32	Bonavista	Grates cove	79
16	Port Aux Port	De Grau		33	Grate Cove	Flat rock	46
17	De Grau	long point	55	34	Flat Rock `	Quidi Vidi	26

Note: We will both be using GPS navigation devices (equipped with several charges worth of battery packs) to follow our route but also to have as proof of our progress and eventual record-breaking time around the island.

## Safety Assessment and Risk Mitigation

We have identified many possible hazards that will be present during our trip. They include: Winds (especially offshore), we will be very conservative with our route in these instances and paddle close to shore where the fetch is minimal; choppy seas, can act as an asset if moving in the right direction but can also be hindrance if they cause us to become separated in which case we will abstain from paddling; tidal currents (which can help or harm progress), we will try to paddle when the currents are favourable, be that early in the morning or later in the day; surf breaks (which can make launching and landing difficult), we will try to avoid exposed rocky points where landing or launching could become hazardous in challenging conditions and will opt instead for protected bays; dehydration, we will have upwards of 5 litres of fresh water in the boats at all time; sunburn, we will be

equipped with zinc and strong sunscreen and apply before paddling; heat exhaustion, we will check in on one another frequently and dress in versatile layers; hypothermia, whenever in open water (not directly next to land) we will be wearing dry suits (or drytops) to keep us warm in the event of a capsized; tendonitis, we will have prepared our bodies for months in advance but will also listen to our bodies as we paddle to make sure we do not over exert ourselves; bears, we will be equipped with bearspray and keep all food in our boats overnight; motorized watercraft, we will be equipped with whistles, airhorns, flares, reflective tape on gear, and lights on our boat for poor weather paddling; blisters (infection), we will be equipped with moleskin and full first aid kits containing antibiotics and dressings; trench foot (fungal infection) we will try to keep our feet and hands dry as much as possible using waterproof garments and by carrying extra socks:)

## Value Proposition

Should we be fortunate enough to receive your support for the "Around the Rock" sea kayaking expedition, our commitment is to deliver value in return. We recognize the importance of mutually beneficial partnerships and will provide advertising and promotional opportunities to our partners.

## Merchandise Branding Opportunities

Expedition Merchandise: Premium sponsors will have the unique opportunity to feature their brand on our custom-designed expedition merchandise. Local Newfoundland artist Katie Hardy has been commissioned to design custom shirts and neckwear that we will sell to help fund the expedition. This not only enhances brand visibility but also creates a lasting connection with the audience.



Note: design and colour are subject to change

## Brand Visibility and Promotion

Logo Placement and Product Reviews: Your brand will gain visibility through logo placements on our gear, which will be prominently displayed throughout the expedition. Additionally, we will feature reviews of your

products on our social media channels and blog, offering an authentic and engaging perspective to our followers.

**Documentary Credits:** As we document our journey and transform it into a short film, your brand will receive credit, aligning you with an inspiring narrative of adventure and resilience.

### **Broad-Scale Exposure**

**Local and International Attention:** The scale of our expedition, coupled with our outreach efforts, is set to capture the attention of audiences both in Canada and around the world. We are planning a widespread social media campaign and engaging content strategy that will draw eyes to our journey – and by extension, to our sponsors.

**Cultural and Adventure Appeal:** The expedition's adventurous spirit and cultural significance resonate with a wide audience, from outdoor enthusiasts to supporters of environmental and cultural preservation. Your brand will be associated with these positive and impactful themes.

We believe that this partnership will not only aid in the success of our ambitious expedition but will also provide your brand with a unique platform for exposure and engagement. Your support is more than just a sponsorship; it's an alignment with a story of exploration and human endeavor that will resonate with audiences worldwide.

### **Relevant Support**

Possible mediums for support include the supplying of equipment, a loan in which we return the gear to you following the trip, a monetary donation, or a discount. As seasoned outdoor guides, we own much of the required equipment for this expedition. However, there is gear specific to the challenges of this route that we are looking to acquire.

#### This includes:

- Touring kayaks (18ft)
- Paddles (2 piece)
- Low volume PFDs
- Drysuits & drytops
- Outfitting equipment (Pumps, throwbags, paddle floats, paddle lanyards)
- Dry Bags
- Film gear
- Food
- Various other camping equipment

## Conclusion

In conclusion, 'Around the Rock' is more than a sea kayaking expedition; it's a celebration of human endurance, a tribute to Newfoundland's rich heritage, and a testament to the transformative power of adventure. We are committed to making this expedition a success and sharing its story with the world.

We deeply appreciate your consideration of our sponsorship request and your potential contribution to this incredible journey. Together, we can turn this vision into a reality, leaving a lasting impact on our community and the spirit of exploration.

For more information or to discuss potential involvement, please contact us at [aroundtherock.info@gmail.com](mailto:aroundtherock.info@gmail.com) or by phone at 1-709-691-8368 (Dave) or 1-867-446-3664 (Jack). We look forward to partnering with you on this remarkable adventure.