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5 4 3 2 1 Paris: Luuka Jones In our countdown to Paris, LockerRoom shares the Olympic experiences and expectations of our top Kiwi athletes – beginning with five-time Olympian, Luuka Jones.

Theme:
Leadership

 5 4 3 2 1 Paris: Luuka Jones

Co-authored by Suzanne McFadden

In 2008, a naïve but intrepid 19-year-old from Tauranga named Luuka Jones became the first Kiwi woman to race in canoe slalom at an Olympics. Eight years later, she became New Zealand’s first canoe slalom medallist, winning silver in Rio. Paris will be the 35-year-old’s fifth Olympic Games – up there with Dame Valerie Adams, Barbara Kendall, Ali Riley and Emma Twigg.

Third Olympics

First Olympics: Beijing 2008

Luuka Jones began her Olympic journey at the 2008 Beijing Olympics as the first New Zealand woman to compete in canoe slalom. At 19, she finished 21st in the K1 event, marking the start of a notable international career. Competing at this level presented significant challenges and set the stage for her future achievements.

Second Olympics: London 2012

In the London 2012 Olympics, Jones showed marked improvement, finishing 14th in the K1 event. Her relentless dedication and hard work during this period were critical in enhancing her competitive edge. These years of experience and refinement were essential in preparing her for the pinnacle of her career.

Third Olympics: Rio 2016

Jones's standout moment came at the Rio 2016 Olympics, where she secured a silver medal in the K1 event. This historic achievement made her the first New Zealander to win an Olympic medal in canoe slalom. Her silver medal performance, marked by strategic brilliance and technical skill, elevated her to an inspirational figure in New Zealand sports.

Fourth Olympics: Tokyo 2020 (in 2021)

In the lead-up to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, Jones faced significant challenges, including a battle with long Covid. Despite these obstacles, she demonstrated remarkable resilience, finishing 6th in the K1 event in Tokyo. Her ability to compete at a high level despite health setbacks showcased her mental toughness and commitment to the sport.

Fifth Olympics: Paris 2024

Looking ahead to Paris 2024, Jones is preparing to compete in the new kayak cross event. This addition to the Olympic program presents a fresh challenge and an exciting opportunity for her to further her legacy. Her training regime is focused on adapting to the demands of this new discipline, blending her extensive experience with innovative techniques.

Jones's journey is marked by a relentless pursuit of excellence and an ability to overcome adversity. From her early days in Beijing to her silver medal in Rio and her ongoing preparations for Paris, she has remained a figure of inspiration. Her story is not just about athletic achievement but also about resilience, adaptability, and the enduring spirit of competition.

Jones's success has had a significant impact on canoe slalom in New Zealand. Her achievements have raised the profile of the sport, inspiring young athletes and increasing participation levels. She has also contributed to the development of the sport through mentoring and advocacy, ensuring that her legacy extends beyond her own competitive career.

As Jones prepares for Paris 2024, her focus is on embracing the new challenges and continuing to push the boundaries of her sport. Her goal is not only to compete but to excel in the kayak cross event, aiming to add another milestone to her illustrious career. Her journey towards Paris is driven by a blend of experience, innovation, and an unyielding competitive spirit.

Luuka Jones's Olympic journey is a remarkable tale of perseverance, success, and inspiration. From her debut in Beijing to her silver medal in Rio, and now her preparations for Paris, she has consistently demonstrated excellence and resilience. Her impact on New Zealand sport is profound, and her story continues to inspire athletes and fans alike. As she gears up for Paris 2024, the world will be watching, eager to witness the next chapter in her extraordinary career.

For more on Luuka Jones's journey and preparations for Paris, read the full article.

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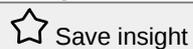
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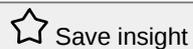


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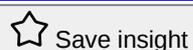


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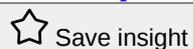
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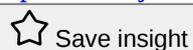
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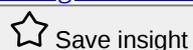
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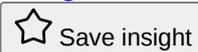
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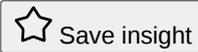


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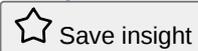


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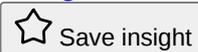
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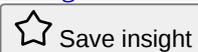
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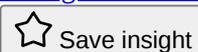
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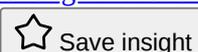
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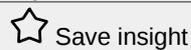
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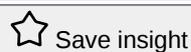
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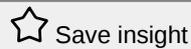


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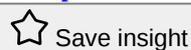


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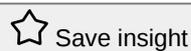


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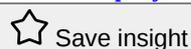


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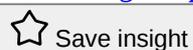
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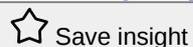


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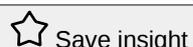


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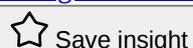


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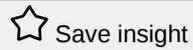


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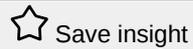


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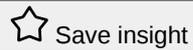


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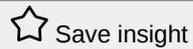


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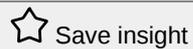
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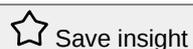
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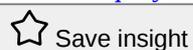
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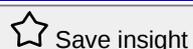
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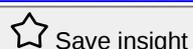
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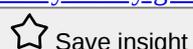
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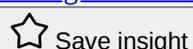
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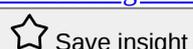
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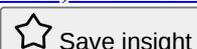
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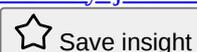
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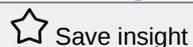
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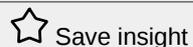
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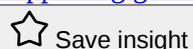
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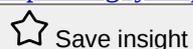
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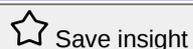
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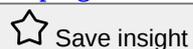
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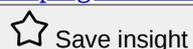
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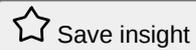
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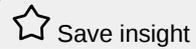
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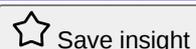
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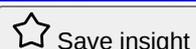
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