



## AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION Coastal Kayak Advanced Surf

**Course Overview:** Learn to read and surf waves with good boat control.

**Course Objectives:** Participants will Learn:

- Surf zone dynamics, etiquette, and hazards
- Wave selection
- Where to catch waves
- Boat control and positioning on the wave
- Basic maneuvers, including cutbacks and bottom turns

**Course Prerequisites:** ACA Coastal Kayak Surf Zone course, bracing skills and a reliable roll.

### Minimum Personal Equipment for the Course:

Whitewater or surf kayaks. Sea kayaks or sit-on-tops can be used, but the more maneuverable whitewater kayaks may be preferable. All boats should have adequate flotation. Helmets, pfd's, and paddling clothing appropriate to water temperature

**Course Duration:** 7-8 hours

**Course Location:** Conditions\* should include small to moderate waves (avg. wave height less than 4 ft.), ideally with spilling surf on a gently sloping beach clear of obstacles and swimmers. Waves should have reasonable shape for surfing. Winds should not exceed 10-15 knots.

*\*Note: Location & conditions can be adjusted to suit the goals of the course and type of kayaks being used (e.g. point break or river mouth might substitute for a beach if conditions are safe). Sea kayaks can be substituted for surf kayaks if the immediate goal is to advance sea kayak skills in the surf.*

**Course Ratio:** 1 Instructor to every 5 students (1:5) / 2:10 with an additional instructor or qualified assistant

### Course Content:

Content should be maintained and remain consistent with this Outline. However, Instructors may use their own discretion and creativity in terms of scheduling and teaching style.

### Introduction & On Shore Orientation (90 minutes)

- Enrollment/Registration/Liability
- Equipment fit & adjustment
- Previous experience, expectations
- Course schedule & goals
- Safety concepts (brief discussion):
  - Avoid collisions; stay out each other's way. Closest to break has the wave; others should yield. ***Please emphasize and repeat this throughout the day!!***
  - If swimming, stay seaward of kayak.
  - Avoid shoulder dislocation by keeping paddle low when bracing.
- Review basics of launching, landing, side surfing (boat lean)
- Review use of stern rudder stroke for directional control

### Instructor demonstration of surfing technique (30 minutes)

- Instructor demonstrates catching a wave and riding in the "pocket." Also demonstrate broaching, using boat lean, as a review. With two instructors, one can do the demo, while the other remains ashore to explain the maneuvers being demonstrated.

### Surfing Practice (120 minutes)

- **Soup Zone:** Instructors wade in the soup zone: Work with students in the soup zone; check out their ability to side surf and brace, then have them surfing small waves using stern rudder strokes for control in the soup.
- **Surfing:** As students improve, send them farther outside to catch the larger waves. Instructors may need to get into boats at this point (or swim out). Help the students select and catch good waves; give them feedback after each ride.

#### **On-Shore Discussion** (60 minutes)

During (or just after) lunch review and discuss (use props):

- Any issues from the morning session
- Where to catch a wave
- How to stay in the pocket
- How to do a bottom turn
- How cut back toward the break
- Anything else that is needed

#### **Surfing Practice** (120 minutes)

- Continue practice reading and catching waves
- Work on bottom turns, first away from the break, then toward the break (if reasonable)
- Work on turns and cutbacks while riding the wave
- Students who are having problems should practice in soup
- Watch for tired students & have them rest occasionally

#### **Conclusion & Wrap-up** (60 minutes)

- Provide individual and group feedback
- Review surf zone techniques
- Explain need for practice and more experience in areas clear of people and obstacles.
- **Evaluation:** Students will be evaluated on their ability to:
  - Read and time wave sets
  - Select and catch waves
  - Maneuver on the wave
  - Overall boat control in the surf

#### **References:**

John Lull, 1995, Surf Kayaking Fundamentals (Video)  
 Kent Ford, Surf Kayaking (Video)  
 Nigel Foster, 1998, Nigel Foster's Surf Kayaking (The Globe Pequot Press).

Prepared by John Lull, 1/03 and reviewed by CKC in 2005.