



AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION Whitewater Kayak

Course Overview:

The ACA Whitewater Kayak Course is a program emphasizing safety, enjoyment and skill acquisition for entry-level through intermediate individuals in public, private and commercial settings.

Prerequisites: None

Course Duration: 16 hours (Instructors may adjust the course at their discretion.)

Location: Flatwater and up to Class II whitewater

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

Successive Courses: Advanced Whitewater

COURSE CONTENT

The **REQUIRED** information is required for all courses. All other information should be considered optional and included to best fit the students, class locations, and time allowed. This is not a syllabus! Sample syllabuses are available on the ACA website.

Course Orientation and Logistics (REQUIRED)

- Welcome
- Introduction of instructors and participants
- Overview with expectations & limitations
- Waiver/Assumption of Risk/Medical Form
- Site specific procedures, regulations, times
- WARM UP and Stretching to reduce injury

- ACA Safety Packet (AWA revised safety code)
- Hypothermia
- Alcohol/Chemical Substance abuse
- Group Responsibilities/ No peer pressure

Equipment

- Kayak: types, materials, flotation, parts (including safety features: walls, foot braces, grab loops)
- Kayak outfitting: comfort & safety; back rests, hip pads
- Paddle: types, parts, length, blade size & shape, fitting, hand position
- Spray skirts: types & material, grab loop!
- Care of equipment
- Personal Equipment: water, food, shoes, sunscreen, bug spray, sun glasses, eyeglass straps, protective clothing for heat or cold, sponge, hat, foot protection, food, bailer, whistle
- Car topping: Loading and unloading, racks, tie down

Required Equipment Topics

- Life jackets (PFDs): types, fit
- Helmet: types, fit

Water Comfort (REQUIRED)

- Launching, carries, landing
- Water confidence and comfort
- Wet exits
- How to empty a kayak
- Rescue Priorities: People, gear, & boats

The Terminology of Paddling (Frequently blended in with stroke instruction)

- Types of strokes: power, turning & bracing
- Stroke components: catch, propulsion, recovery, control and correction
- Effective Body Usage and Bio-Kinetics

- Use of larger torso muscles
- Arms as struts connecting paddle to torso
- Avoidance of positions that contribute to shoulder injury or dislocations

Strokes

Required

- Forward Sweep
- (anticipatory and reactive techniques)
- Reverse Sweep
- Stern Draw
- Side Draw
- Forward
- Back
- T (Eskimo) Rescue

Optional at instructors' discretion

- Roll
- High Brace
- Low Brace
- Bow Draw
- Stationary Draw
- Sculling Draw
- Duffek and other draw variations

Maneuvers (Practiced on Flatwater)

- Spins (onside and offside): boat pivots in place
- Forward: boat moves in reasonably straight line
- Reverse: boat moves in a reasonably straight line
- Stopping: boat stops within a reasonable distance
- Turns: boat turns in broad arc made while underway
- Veering, Carving, and paddling the "inside circle"
- Abeam: boat moves sideways without headway
- Sideslips: boat moves sideways with headway
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River Reading (* items REQUIRED)

- Fundamentals of River Currents
- Characteristics of Current *
- Downstream and Upstream V's / Chutes
- Eddies/ Eddy Lines
- Waves/ Wave Holes
- Inside and Outside Bends
- Effects of Obstacles
- Ledges/ Horizon Lines *
- Strainers & Sieves *
- Rocks/ Pillows

- Holes/ Hydraulics *
- Other Hazards
- Power of the Current / River Level
- Cold Water *
- Dams/ Flow Diversion Structures/ Pipelines *
- Undercut Rocks / Ice
- International Scale of River Difficulty (handout: American Whitewater Safety Code)

Whitewater Practice

- Ferries
- Eddy Turns
- Peelouts
- Wide (exit wide from eddy line)
- Shallow (exit close to eddy line)
- Sequences of Maneuvers
- C-turns (Peel out and eddy into same eddy)
- S-turns (Peel out one side and eddy into opposite side)
- Surfing (for Whitewater course only)

River Running

- Strategies in Running Rivers
- How to paddle in current
- Spacing/ Avoid "tunnel vision"
- Scouting
- From boat/ From shore
- How to establish the "best" route/ "Plan B"
- Portaging Hazards
- Group Organization on the River
- Group cohesiveness (lead, sweep boats, etc.)
- Universal River Signals System
- -Emergency Procedures

Rescue

- Principles of Rescue
 - Priorities - People, Boats, Gear (REQUIRED)
 - Responsibilities of Victim
 - Responsibilities of Rescuers
- Types of Rescue
 - Self-Rescue in moving current (REQUIRED)
 - body/boat positions
 - handling equipment
 - Boat-Assisted Rescue
 - Tired Swimmer
 - Towing
 - Bumping

- Shoreline Rescue - Extension Rescues
- Use of Throw Bags/Ropes
- Pinned Craft
- Introduce ACA River Rescue Course
- Need to take a First Aid and CPR course

Individual Development (REQUIRED)

- Learning Judgment
- Continue learning process from more experienced paddlers
- Responsibility to support other paddlers (no peer pressure)
- Group Equipment: extra paddle, rescue sling, drybags, maps, first aid kit and location, rescue gear
- Guidebooks / Local Knowledge
- Assessing Current Environmental Conditions (including: Water, Weather, Time of Day, and Temperature, Limited Access: Canyons, Cliffs, Remote Area)
- Assessing Personal and Group Dynamics (Skills, Equipment, Group Makeup, Mental Status, Logistics, group selection, leadership)

Wrap up (REQUIRED)

- Emphasize the need for further instruction, practice and experience
- River Reading
- Hazard Recognition and Avoidance
- Boat Control
- Managing, Reducing, Eliminating Risks
- Need for First Aid, CPR, and rescue training
- River Etiquette
- Other Paddling options
- Local paddling groups/clubs
- ACA Membership forms
- Participation cards
- Evaluation of course