

Albion College Canoe Club

Seat Rigging Instructions

These are some quick and easy ways to modify a standard 16' two-person canoe into a solo canoe. Albion College has been using these techniques for years, and has found them to be effective, inexpensive, and fast. All of these techniques are designed to place the paddler in a kneeling position directly aft of the center thwart, for balance and speed.

The “Paddle-Saddle”

In this version, we take an old paddle, (we’ve used old crutches as well!), and secure the shaft (using lashing, duct tape, etc) to the center thwart and the blade to the front seat (and run the canoe backwards) or to a convenient thwart behind the center thwart. The key is to make the paddle slant down slightly from the back to the front, and we do that by resting the blade on the back seat then securing it there (again, duct tape works well), and by putting a spacer underneath the center thwart before we secure the paddle to the thwart. Then, the area where the paddler’s butt rests is well-padded with closed-cell foam. The paddler double-kneels behind the center thwart with his/her thighs braced under it. We contact cement foam pads on the floor of the boat to protect the knees.





The Foam Block

Here we use a Styrofoam block (these are scavenged from Tractor Supply and are actually shipping blocks that are spaced between trailers and other heavy equipment during transport) which has been carved out to fit the paddler's butt and legs. It is secured by sliding the front of it under the center thwart (depending on the boat and the foam, sometimes you need to carve out a spot for the thwart, sometimes you need to cram foam or something between the block and the thwart to make it fit tightly). Again, closed cell foam is contact-cemented to the floor of the boat for the paddler to kneel upon. The foam block can be shaped with a regular carpenter's hand saw, and a rasp. Sometimes we cover the Styrofoam block with a thin layer of closed-cell foam for comfort.





The “Sliding Ejector Seat”

This is the most elaborate, but also most versatile version of our solo rigs. The seat slides so that the paddler can either sit or double-kneel with his/her butt resting against the seat and thighs braced under the center thwart. The seat also swings up out of the way so if the boat flips, the paddler can exit quickly without getting legs trapped under the seat (this is very important for any of these rigs... make sure that the paddler can get out quickly!) The seat is mounted on cross pieces of metal tubing which attach with hose clamps on one side to a metal tube which slides on a slightly smaller diameter tube (the rail) that supports that side of the rig. There is similar rail on the other side for the cross pieces of that side of the seat to rest upon (see photos).

There is no need for a slider on that side. When the paddler needs to move the seat, it can either slide back or forward, or hinge up to get out of the way.



A view of all 3 seating arrangements from the side are below.



This is by no means an all inclusive list. These are just some options to help you get started with some ideas. By all means feel free to improve on these designs and be creative with your own ideas. These are some just some designs that have worked well for us in the past.