



AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION INTRODUCTION TO CANOEING

Course Objective:

The ACA Introduction to Canoe course is designed as a short program emphasizing the entry-level paddling skills for individuals desiring an introduction to the sport of canoeing.

Participant Qualifications: Must be able to perform all skills independently without assistance.

Course Duration: 6 hours or more at Instructor's discretion

Location: Flat Water with limited wind conditions

Class Ratio: **Tandem:** 1 Instructor to 6 students, 2 to 12 with a qualified assistant
Solo: 1 Instructor to 5 students, 2 to 10 with qualified assistant.

Succeeding courses:

- Essentials of River Canoe
- Essentials of Touring Canoe
- Basic River Canoe
- Freestyle Canoe

The following is a general summary of course content for Introduction to Canoeing. The content and sequence of instruction should be arranged to best fit the student's needs, class location and time allowance.

Course Content

Introduction & Logistics:

- Welcome
- Introduction of Instructors and Participants
- Course expectations, limitations, and timeframe
- Review waiver, assumption of risk, and medical disclosure
- PFD Policy (always wear on water)
- Site specifics: regroupings, toilet facilities, etc

The Paddling Environment:

- Wind
- Waves
- Weather
- Water

Personal Preparation:

- Personal Behavior
- No alcohol/substance use
- Respect private property, litter, noise, etc.
- Proper etiquette on and off the water

- Personal Ability
- Swimming
- Fitness and warm up
- Suggested skills
- Safe paddle and boat handling
- Safety and rescue
- Personal Equipment (reviewed by instructor)

Getting Started:

- Stretching and warm up to reduce injury
- Car topping: Loading and unloading, racks, straps
- Knots: figure 8 or bowline to form loop, trucker's hitch and 2 half hitches to tie down
- Canoe carries: overhead and suitcase
- Launching and landing from land or docks
- Canoe trim
- Posture, rocking and balance
- Positions in the canoe, sitting, kneeling, etc. (students may select sitting or kneeling stance)
- Basic Terminology: onside, offside, etc.

Equipment:

- Canoe: types, parts, materials,
- Paddle: straight, bent, parts, sizing, hand position
- Life Jacket (PFD): types, materials, fit
- Care of equipment
- Optional equipment and outfitting (handout)

Safety & Rescue:

- Responsibility: Group; Individual, Rescuer; Victim
- Rescue Priorities: People, boats & gear
- Signals: Whistle, paddle and hand
- Group Management
- Cold Shock, Hypothermia: HELP/HUDDLE, clothing
- Hyperthermia: hydration, clothing
- Water confidence and comfort test
- Rescue Sequence: (RETHROG)

- How to empty a boat full of water
- Controlled capsize: All participants will be asked to demonstrate a controlled capsize and an appropriate rescue
- Swimming a boat to shore
- Deep water exits: vaulting and slide, no diving
- Demo: Canoe over Canoe rescues, re-entry, rescue sling, assisted

Strokes & Maneuvers

Strokes:

- **Tandem (Bow):** Forward (Basic); Back; Draw; Bow Draw; Push Away; Cross Bow Draw; Bow Sweeps; Pry
- **Tandem (Stern):** Forward; Back; Draw; Stern Draw; Push Away; Stern Pry; Stern Sweeps; Rudder; J Stroke; Pry
- **Solo:** Forward (Basic); Back; Draw; Push Away; Cross Bow Draw; Stern Pry; Forward Sweep; Reverse Sweep; Rudder; J Stroke; Pry; Stern Draw

Maneuvers:

- Forward: travel in reasonably straight line.
- Stopping: stop in a reasonable distance.
- Spin: pivot in place.
- Turn: turn in arc while underway
- Abeam: boat moves sideways without headway
- Apply general paddling concepts, vertical paddle, tandem; opposite sides, in cadence, etc.

What's Next?:

- Wrap up
- Course limitations (not a river course)
- Need for more instruction, practice, experience
- Demo advanced maneuver
- Trip planning - 6P's: Prior, proper planning prevents poor performance
- Life sport / Paddling options
- Local paddling groups/clubs
- ACA Membership forms
- Participation cards