



Basic Guidelines to Outrigger Canoe Racing For Paddlers

This handout is intended to educate the new paddler to the sport of outrigger canoe racing. There are some basic rules of etiquette that every paddler should follow, novice as well as experienced. These guidelines will help you understand some of those rules; educate you on seat positions, vocabulary and the outrigger canoe itself. Have fun!!

There Are Six Seats In An Outrigger Canoe

Each individual seat has a specific responsibility in the canoe. Everyone must work together as a team and crew to be successful.

Seat 1. The Stroker- This is the pace setter position in the canoe. The stroker, seat # 1, must be a strong paddler with a good sense of rhythm, timing, and be able to *feel* the canoe in the water. The stroker must know when to blend with the crew by increasing the stroke rate, increase or decrease the length of the stroke as conditions change, or when to add power within the stroke. All paddlers must follow seat #1, so it's very important that the stroker blends with the entire crew.

Seat 2. The Caller- This position traditionally calls the changes in the canoe and sets up the turn during sprint races. The call should be done in a good strong voice. This is a tough sport and a weak call does little to inspire a crew. The change is called on 12-16 strokes but can be varied depending on the situation. Seat #2 must also know when, and when not to call a change during open water ocean racing situations. Knowing when to call a change at the start and finish of a race is very critical as well. Seat #2 must work closely with seat #1 by not rushing the stroker, keeping time, and by encouraging the stroker if they become fatigued. If the stroke is too quick, or out of control fast causing the canoe to feel choppy in the water, seat # 2 will help settle down the stroker to a longer more controlled stroke. Although it is tradition in our center for seat 2 to call, it is not unusual for seat 3, 1 or the steersman to call the changes.

Seats 3,4,5. Engine Room- These three seats are the power seats or engine room. These seats must be strong, have power and must keep the same rate as 1 and 2. These guys are the key to powering up out of the turn to get the canoe up and running again. All three seats protect the ama from popping. Seat #5 is very important to protect the ama in rough water situations, and helps the steersman when called upon.

Seat 6. The Steersman- This seat is usually your most experienced paddler. The steersman is the Captain, leader of the canoe. This position controls the entire crew, and only this person should be heard talking in the canoe. The steersman will call out rate change or "*timing*" to keep everyone in sync with each other. The steersman should also encourage the crew when they are fatigued or falling behind in a competition.

Motivation and Commands: *The steersman needs to communicate and motivate; mean what you say, say what you mean, watch your tone, establish lines of communication, build trust, avoid the negatives, develop a positive belief system, stay in the here and now, maintain enthusiasm, dealing with fear, controlled aggression, who does what and when.*

TOGETHER UNITY!!! These six seats must work together in harmony on timing, changes, and power to achieve the ultimate goal, “the glide or sweet spot”. This makes the canoe easy to paddle in all water conditions. **When we are in the canoe, we are one paddler, one heart and one spirit. It is rare to achieve this, but when it occurs, effort becomes effortless and one transcends the limitations of this ego. All becomes one and the true essence of paddling is experienced.**

Anatomy Of The Outrigger Canoe

The Hull- This is the main body of the canoe. It contains six seats. The canoe itself weighs about 400 lbs and is up to 45 ft in length.

The Ama- This is the floating outrigger on the left side of the canoe. This helps the canoe stay balanced in the open water.

The Iakos- (Pronounced ya-koos) these are the two wood pieces that connect the Ama to the hull of the canoe. **Seats 2 & 4 ALWAYS LEAN ON THE IAKOS** when the crew is not paddling or when the steersman is trying to line-up for a race or docking. These two positions should never lean to the right of the canoe. This will cause the canoe to “huli” or flip over.

Rigging- It takes teamwork to tie or “rig” the canoe. This is when we tie the Ama & Iakos to each other using ropes, and the Iakos to the hull of the canoe. All paddlers are expected to learn how to do this.

Some Basic Rules and Etiquette in Paddling

- ▶ **Be on time for practice and races. Let your coach know if you will be late or absent. Coach’s phone numbers are listed on the door of the shed.**
- ▶ **Never talk in the canoe while training. Everyone needs to be listening to the coach, listening for the change, or instructions from the steers.**
- ▶ **No coaching in the canoe. Everyone gets excited during a race or practice, but it’s very important all encouragement comes from the steers only.**
- ▶ **Eyes always forward. You should be watching the paddle in front of you, not looking around or checking out the passing canoe. STAY FOCUSED - CONCENTRATE**
- ▶ **Never wear shoes in the canoe.**
- ▶ **Never swear in the canoe.**

- ▶ **Never argue with another in the canoe. If you have a disagreement, take it up once you're out of the canoe. It is crucial that interpersonal conflicts are resolved, as this is a major obstacle to achieving harmony both in the canoe and in the club as a whole.**
- ▶ ***NEVER STEP OVER THE HULL OF THE CANOE!!* This is considered very bad luck as well as disrespectful to the canoe. The Hawaiians are very respectful of the outrigger canoe. Every paddler is expected to treat it with respect as well.**
- ▶ **Don't leave water bottles or towels inside the canoe when practice is finished.**
- ▶ **Never hit the sides of the canoe while paddling.**
- ▶ **Always cheer the canoe when finished paddling or racing.**
- ▶ **Always maintain good sportsmanship with your crew by shaking hands and congratulating each other after practice or a race. Never just walk away from each other.**
- ▶ **Always shake the opponents hand if in a close race to the finish line.**

Helping with the Launching of the Outrigger Canoe

Everyone needs to help launch the canoe. The canoe weighs approx. 400lbs+. It takes strength and teamwork to put the canoe into and out of the water using the dolly with tires.

Always rinse the canoe with water and bail the remaining water out of the hull before putting away.

Some More Vocabulary

The Call- After 12-14 strokes for women, or 15-20 strokes for men, seat #2 will call out loud and strong, HUT, HOE, at the top of the stroke, and everyone will make a change (switch sides of paddling) together at the exact same time.

The Change- The change is called after 12-14 strokes on one side for women or 15-20 strokes on one side for men. The crew will change sides of paddling and enter the water at the exact same time. The change will either win a race for you or lose one for you. **Timing during the change is crucial. DO NOT CUT YOUR STROKE SHORT.** Be sure the first three strokes are hard power strokes after each and every change.

Timing- Timing is the most important component to the sport of outrigger canoe racing. Timing means to enter and exit the water at the exact same time as the paddler in front of you. You will always hear the steersman yell out "*timing*" if the canoe is not gliding, or the crew is out of sync. Think of it as dancing with five partners in rhythm.

“Ma Kau Kau” -The steersman will call out “Ma Kau Kau” meaning “are you ready”? All the crew will answer “Ai” yes.

“Huki”- The steersman will call out “Huki”. (Huki means to pull). After “ huki” is called out, everyone starts to paddle.

Huli- This is when the canoe flips up side down and over. Every seat has a responsibility to get the canoe right side up. The lightest person will get in the canoe first and start to bail water out with the bucket. Seats #2 and #4 are responsible for righting the canoe by grabbing the hull and flipping it over. Seats # 3, #5 pushes the ama over at the exact same time. Seat #1 collects paddles, Seat # 6 counts heads and assists where needed.

Power Tens- Power tens are power strokes, ten on a side, then a change to another set of power tens. This stroke is a bit shorter than the regular stroke because it’s faster and more power is added to the stroke. This gets the canoe up and running in the water. This stroke is used at race starts, coming out of a race turn, and during long distance racing to pass. In long distance, 5-42 miles races, the power ten set will help lift the canoe up out of dead water to pick up speed and glide.

“Hit It” / The Uni- During the approach into a turn, the steersman will call out “hit it”. Seat # 1 will then poke the paddle on the right of the canoe, and hold it at a 45-degree angle for a count of two seconds. The canoe will start to turn left. Seat # 1 will then come over to the left side and help seat #2 until the steersman calls out “straight”. Seat # 1 and seat # 2 will paddle straight and rest of crew will dig into Power Tens out of the turn.

“Hit It” / The Kahi - Means “cut” in Hawaiian. A bow post stroke, or Kahi, is a stroke technique that is executed by seat # 2 on the ama side during sprint racing when turning around the flag. This stroke helps to turn the bow / nose of the canoe quickly around in a sprint. The Kahi is done at the exact same time as the Uni by seat # 1.

REMEMBER- *We are all here to have fun!!! Train hard, but have fun!! Outrigger Canoe Paddling is a wonderful experience when you finally get your stroke technique down, and understand what is expected out of you in a crew. When you get the canoe to glide effortlessly, and you win a few gold medals with your crew, you will be hooked on this sport.*

REGATTA SEASON RACES

Consists of 4 Sprint Race Regattas and 1 Championship Regatta

Open 500 Meters (1 Turn)
Open 1000 Meters (3 Turns)
Open 2000 Meters (7 Turns)

Long Distance racing may vary from 5-42 miles of open ocean water, or lakes, Lake Tahoe. Long distance races may include water changers or be iron all the way.

Iron man race: a race in which the same 6 paddlers who begin the race, finish the race.

Water changes race: a race that includes a 9 person crew with 3 seats changing out in 20-30 minute intervals.

Coach/ Paddler Responsibilities:

Individual - To yourself... Participate fully as your life situation/desires allow. Come to practice committed to being the best coach/ paddler/team member you can possibly be, acknowledge you have room to grow and execute those things that help you realize your paddling goals.

Crew - To your crewmates... Be responsible and committed to them. Hold them accountable for their actions and be open to their constructive criticism.

Division - To your Peers... Teach when learning is needed, Learn when an area for improvement is identified, Communicate openly with no reservations or malicious intent, Follow when its time to execute and Lead when its your time to do so.

Center - To your place in the center, the paddling association & culture... work hard to gain respect and give it freely when earned. Be the example that others internal and external to the center choose to follow and imitate. Always remember you are part of a tradition that honors those who came before us and those who wish to follow in our footsteps.

Establishing your "Base": The key here is to do an exercise without stopping for a minimum of an hour. Starting in February, your workouts should be done at a MINIMUM of 50% effort/Intensity. Start out slowly if you have not maintained your fitness level over the winter/off-season.

Humanity: Let every stroke be an act of gratitude and let every Mahalo to the canoe be an embrace of all mankind. Take the spirit of aloha out of the canoe and bring it with you into the world, allowing you to treat everyone you meet with compassion, humility and joy.