



## Level 4: Whitewater Canoeing

### Skills Assessment

**Assessment Overview:** This ACA Assessment Course is designed to evaluate a participant's ability to perform all of the skills listed along with demonstrating an appropriate level of knowledge. This assessment course provides the participant with the opportunity to receive documentation of having achieved a certain level of paddling ability.

#### **Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC):**

ACA courses are open to all individuals who acknowledge the ability to perform the following essential eligibility criteria.

1. Breathe independently (i.e., not require medical devices to sustain breathing)
2. Independently maintain sealed airway passages while under water
3. Independently hold head upright without neck / head support
4. Manage personal care independently or with assistance of a companion
5. Manage personal mobility independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance
6. Follow instructions and effectively communicate independently or with assistance of a companion
7. Independently turn from face-down to face-up and remain floating face up while wearing a properly fitted life jacket\*
8. Get on / off or in / out of a paddlecraft independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance\*
9. Independently get out and from under a capsized paddlecraft\*
10. Remount or reenter the paddlecraft following deep water capsize independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance\*
11. Maintain a safe body position while attempting skills, activities and rescues listed in the appropriate Course Outline, and have the ability to recognize and identify to others when such efforts would be unsafe given your personal situation\*

*\* To participate in adaptive programs, participants must acknowledge only the first six EEC listed above. Entry-level adaptive programs will involve teaching and practicing EEC #7-11.*

**Course Prerequisites:** Must be an ACA Member

**Course Duration:** 1 or more days

**Course Location / Venue:** Course may be conducted on sections of rivers rated up to class II-III

**Class Ratio:** **Tandem:** 6 Students : 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 12 : 2  
**Solo:** 5 Students : 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 10 : 2



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### **Succeeding courses:**

- Level 5: Advanced Whitewater Canoeing
- Canoe Rolling

The sequence of assessment should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location and time allowance.

### **Introduction, Expectations, & Logistics:**

- Welcome, introductions, paperwork
- Student & instructor course expectations and limitations
- Explain assessment procedure
- Course itinerary & site logistics
- Review waiver, assumption of risk, challenge by choice, medical disclosure
- About the ACA
- PFD policy (always wear on water)
- Appropriate personal behavior
- No alcohol / substance abuse
- Proper etiquette on & off the water
- Respect private property
- Practice Leave No Trace ethics

### **Conclusion & Wrap Up:**

- Group debrief / Individual feedback
- Course limitations
- Importance of First Aid & CPR
- Importance of additional instruction, practice, experience
- Importance of appropriate level of safety & rescue training
- Life sport / Paddling options
- Local paddling groups / Clubs
- Handouts / Reference materials
- ACA Membership forms
- Course evaluation
- Assessment cards (if applicable)



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**Participant:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ACA #** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Quiet water location and venue:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rating:** ✓ - *Passing* N - *Needs more practice.*

Participant must be able to perform all strokes, maneuvers, rescues, and skills in the appropriate venue. In addition the participant must demonstrate the appropriate level of knowledge for this skill assessment level.

STROKES	Bow	Stern	Solo	COMMENTS
Forward w/Full Torso Rotation				
Cross Forward				
Forward w/Rudder				
Forward w/Stern Pry				
Forward w/J Stroke				
Forward w/Pitch Stroke				
C Stroke				
Slice				
Back				
Cross Back				
Far Back				
Compound Back				
Reverse J				
Draw (Static/Dynamic)				
Sculling Draw				
Bow Draw (Static/Dynamic)				
Cross Bow Draw (Static/Dynamic)				
Duffek (Onside/Offside)				
Stern Draw				
Pry (Static/Dynamic)				
Righting Pry				
Jam				
Sculling Pry				
Stern Pry				
Sweeps: Forward/Reverse				
Braces: High/Low				

Demonstrate proper balance, posture, full torso rotation and boat leans during all Flat Water maneuvers

FLAT WATER MANEUVERS	Bow	Stern	Solo	COMMENTS
Propel the canoe forward in a straight line 15-20 boat lengths				
Move the canoe backwards 3-4 boat lengths				
Stop the canoe within two boat lengths				
Turn the canoe from a stationary position 180° to the right and left				
Move the canoe sideways (abeam) 10 feet (3 meters) to each side				
Propel the canoe in a figure of 8 course around markers 3-4 boat lengths apart				
Turn the canoe while maintaining forward motion 90° to the right and left				
Sideslips (Shift): On/Off Side				
Switch Positions in the canoe on water				



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Carving Circle: Onside/Offside				
Launching and Landing: Low dock or bank to enter and exit safely				

Demonstrate proper balance, posture, full torso rotation and boat leans during all maneuvers in venue.  
(Solo assessment includes traditional and 2 X 4 methods)

Class II: MANEUVERS	Bow	Stern	Solo	COMMENTS
Front Ferries: To a fixed point				
Back Ferries: To a fixed point				
Eddy Turns: w/boat leans into small eddies				
Peel-Outs (Wide & Shallow)				
C-Turns				
S-Turns				
Sideslips (Shifts) Onside/Offside				
Spins (Onside/Offside)				
Bracing (Low/High/Righting Pry)				
Complex Attainments				
Front Surfing				

RESCUE/SAFETY	P & N	COMMENTS
Understand the risks and dangers of moving water and how to avoid them		
Signals: Whistle, Paddle and Hand		
Rescue Sequence: (RETHROG)		
Priorities: People, canoe, gear		
Responsibility: Individual, Group, Rescuer, Victim		
Cold Shock, Hypothermia: HELP/HUDDLE, clothing		
Hyperthermia: hydration, clothing		
Emergency Procedures		
Safety Equipment		
Deep water exits: Vault and Slide performed in quiet water		
Controlled Capsize: Performed in Moving Water/Class I		
Self Rescue: Swim 25 FT to shore in Class I-II using defensive and offensive technique		
Towing a swimmer/canoe in Class II		
Swim a canoe 25 FT to shore in Class II		
Empty a canoe full of water at shore line		
Canoe over canoe rescue (T Rescue) on flat water		
Side by side (Parallel) In deep Class II		
Re-entry: Self & Assisted; Heel Hook, Sling		
Throw Rope: Rescuer must be able to throw a throw a rope to a swimmer at 40 ft in one minute or less. Demonstrate proper rope technique as a swimming victim.		
Portaging and lining		
Basic Wading: (1, 2 and 3 person)		
Entrapment: (Prevention and use of a stabilization line)		
Boat Pins: Types of pins and use of strong arm and rope/vector methods		



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TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE	P or N	COMMENTS
Environmental Issues: Leave No Trace etc, ecology		
Paddling Environment: 4 W's		
Personal Preparation: Clothing, food and water		
Canoe: types, parts, materials		
Paddle: Types, parts, materials use		
Lifejacket: Types, materials, fit		
Outfitting: (Whitewater)		
Helmets: (Whitewater)		
River Classifications (Understanding of Class I-VI)		
Concepts of Paddling (Class II-III)		
Strategies for river running (Class II-III)		
Canoe Carries: Overhead & Suitcase		
Canoe Trim		
Understand river hydrology, features and hazards (Class II-III)		
Group Organization & Travel		
Posture, Rocking, Balance		
Trip Planning: How to prepare a day trip		
Knots: Figure 8 or bowline, truckers hitch and 2 half hitches		
Federal, State and Local Laws and Regulations		
Car Topping: Loading/Unloading (Use of straps and knots)		

FINAL ASSESSMENT		COMMENTS
PASS	NEEDS MORE WORK	
ASSESSOR		
<i>Assessor must be a currently certified ACA Instructor at or above this level.</i>		
IT or Instructor: _____		
Signature: _____		
ACA #: _____ Date: _____		
Assisting IT or Instructor: _____		
ACA #: _____		