



# Kayak Rolling Skills Course

## Course Overview

The Kayak Rolling course is designed to introduce paddlers to the technique of rolling.

## Course Objectives

- Learning proper boat fit and adjustment for effective rolling
- Learning safe and effective wet exit technique
- Learning kayak specific rescues (e.g., boat to boat)
- Learning techniques for effectively rolling the kayak
- Learning proper body positioning and head placement for executing a roll
- Learning the mechanics of a roll

## Course Prerequisites

- Acknowledgment of personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- No prior paddling experience or training is required to participate in this course.

## Course Duration

The course duration should be adjusted to best fit the needs and goals of the participants. Half day (2 hours) or more.

## Course Location / Accessible Venues

Ideal conditions would be an indoor heated pool. If not available, a calm, warm, shallow water environment would suffice.

## Course Size

5 Participants : 1 Instructor; with an additional qualified assistant, the ratio can be 10 : 2.

For additional details, see [SEIC Policy Manual Chapter 6](#).

## Instructor

This kayak rolling skills course may be offered by:

- Level 4: Open Water Coastal Kayaking Instructor (or higher)
- Level 4: Whitewater Kayaking Instructor (or higher)
- Level 2 or Level 3 Kayak Instructor with the Kayak Rolling Endorsement

The following is a general summary of course content for the Kayak Rolling course. The content covered and sequence of instruction should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location and time allowance.

## **Introduction, Expectations, and Logistics**

- Welcome, introductions, paperwork
- Student and Instructor course expectations and limitations
- Course itinerary and 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 and off the water
  - Respect private property
  - Practice Leave No Trace ethics

## **Paddling Environment**

- Wind
- Waves
- Weather
- Water

## **Personal Preparation**

- Personal ability
- Swimming ability
- Water comfort and confidence
- Fitness, conditioning, and warm up
- Safe paddle and boat handling
- Safety and rescue considerations
- Personal equipment (reviewed by Instructor)

## **Dry Land Orientation**

- Student and Instructor expectations
  - Equipment familiarity, fit, and adjustment
  - Environment - underwater learning
  - Physical - flexibility, fatigue
  - Emotional - fears

- Cognitive - information overload
- Equipment orientation
  - Whitewater vs. sea kayaks
  - PFD and spray skirt

### **Stretching / Kayak Fit and Adjustment**

- Stretches focusing on hamstrings, forearms, wrists, neck, body rotation
- Kayak fit and adjustment
- Lower body boat control (emphasize points of contact)
- Hip snap demonstration, explanation and dry land practice

### **Wet Exit Demonstration and Practice**

- Dry land wet exit demo and practice (tuck, pound, pull, and push)
- Launching and landing: low dock, bank, or pool side to enter and exit safely
- On-water wet exit practice (one-on-one supervision)

### **Roll Demonstration: Depends on type of roll being taught**

- C to C roll or extended paddle roll
  - Breakdown into components: setup, sweep, hip snap
- Sweep roll
  - Breakdown into components: 1) setup/start position, 2) finish position, 3) synchronized rotation of body and rotation of boat as the body and paddle move to the finish position

### **Hip Snap Development through Rescue Progression**

- Demonstrate using Whole-Part-Whole method
- Break boat-to-boat rescue down into components and have students practice with a partner
- Emphasize hip snap development keeping head down
- Allow time for rest
- Provide constructive feedback

### **Roll Progression**

- Hip snap refinement
  - Instructor supports student by holding hands on the on-side
  - Student rolls to a partially submerged position on the on-side
  - Student rolls away from the Instructor (hands placed next to off-side knee)
- Set up position
  - Acquaint student with proper hand placement and indexing of paddle

- Student rolls to the on-side (Instructor supports student by life jacket just above water surface and guides paddle from the set-up to the sweep position)
- Allow student to set-up and sweep on their own with your support
- Student rolls away from the Instructor in the proper setup position (Instructor awaits for paddle to surface and then helps guide paddle into proper sweep position and provides support for hip snap)
- Putting it all together
  - Guide paddle into position by lightly supporting the sweeping blade ensuring proper blade angle and orientation
  - Minimally assist by standing at stern and twisting boat upright if needed
  - Revisit any previous step to further develop needed skills
  - Carefully observe students for fatigue and confusion
  - Encourage students to work with partners when they are awaiting their one-on-one time
  - Provide and encourage breaks

## **Conclusion and Wrap Up**

- Group debrief / individual feedback
- Course limitations
- Importance of First Aid and CPR
- Importance of additional instruction, practice, experience
- Importance of appropriate level of safety and rescue training
- Life sport / paddling options
- Local paddling groups / clubs
- Handouts / reference materials
- ACA membership forms
- Course evaluation
- Participation cards

## **Evaluation - Students will be evaluated on their ability to:**

1. Effectively roll the kayak using their hips
2. Keep their head down when surfacing
3. Sweep the paddle with proper blade orientation at the surface
4. Arch their body close to the surface during the sweep
5. Maintain a horizontal shaft during the high brace when rolling the kayak
6. Complete the roll with the proper finish position
7. Maintain proper hand and arm positioning to prevent injury

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This curriculum is managed by the ACA River Kayaking Committee. To connect with the leadership of this committee, please view the SEIC Committee rosters on [the ACA website](#).