



Level 5: Coastal Kayak Advanced Surf Zone (Sample Skills Course)

Course Overview: The **Coastal Kayak Advanced Surf Zone** course is designed to teach paddlers how to read and surf waves with good boat control

Course Objectives: Participants will Learn:

- Surf zone dynamics, etiquette, and hazards
- Wave selection
- Where to catch waves
- Boat control and positioning on the wave
- Basic maneuvers, including cutbacks and bottom turns

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: ACA Coastal Kayak Surf Zone course, bracing skills and a reliable roll.



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Minimum Personal Equipment for the Course:

Whitewater or surf kayaks. Sea kayaks or sit-on-tops can be used, but the more maneuverable whitewater kayaks may be preferable. All boats should have adequate flotation. Helmets, pfd's, and paddling clothing appropriate to water temperature

Course Duration: 7-8 hours

Course Location / Venue: Conditions* should include small to moderate waves (avg. wave height less than 4 ft.), ideally with spilling surf on a gently sloping beach clear of obstacles and swimmers. Waves should have reasonable shape for surfing. Winds should not exceed 10-15 knots.

**Note: Location & conditions can be adjusted to suit the goals of the course and type of kayaks being used (e.g. point break or river mouth might substitute for a beach if conditions are safe). Sea kayaks can be substituted for surf kayaks if the immediate goal is to advance sea kayak skills in the surf.*

Class Ratio - 5 students : 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 10 : 2

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

Course Content

Introduction, Expectations, & Logistics:

- Welcome, introductions, paperwork
- Student & instructor course expectations and limitations
- 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

The Paddling Environment:

- Wind
- Waves
- Weather
- Water

Personal Preparation:

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

On Shore Orientation

- Enrollment/Registration/Liability
- Equipment fit & adjustment
- Previous experience, expectations
- Course schedule & goals
- Safety concepts (brief discussion):
 - Avoid collisions; stay out each other's way. Closest to break has the wave; others should yield. **Please emphasize and repeat this throughout the day!!**
 - If swimming, stay seaward of kayak.



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- Avoid shoulder dislocation by keeping paddle low when bracing.
- Review basics of launching, landing, side surfing (boat lean)
- Review use of stern rudder stroke for directional control

Instructor demonstration of surfing technique

- Instructor demonstrates catching a wave and riding in the “pocket.” Also demonstrate broaching, using boat lean, as a review. With two instructors, one can do the demo, while the other remains ashore to explain the maneuvers being demonstrated.

Surfing Practice

- **Soup Zone:** Instructors wade in the soup zone: Work with students in the soup zone; check out their ability to side surf and brace, then have them surfing small waves using stern rudder strokes for control in the soup.
- **Surfing:** As students improve, send them farther outside to catch the larger waves. Instructors may need to get into boats at this point (or swim out). Help the students select and catch good waves; give them feedback after each ride.

On-Shore Discussion

During (or just after) lunch review and discuss (use props):

- Any issues from the morning session
- Where to catch a wave
- How to stay in the pocket
- How to do a bottom turn
- How cut back toward the break
- Anything else that is needed

Surfing Practice

- Continue practice reading and catching waves
- Work on bottom turns, first away from the break, then toward the break (if reasonable)
- Work on turns and cutbacks while riding the wave
- Students who are having problems should practice in soup
- Watch for tired students & have them rest occasionally

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
- Demo advanced maneuver
- Life sport / Paddling options
- Local paddling groups / Clubs
- Handouts / Reference materials
- ACA Membership forms
- Course evaluation
- Participation cards



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