



Level 3: Fundamentals of Surfski

(Sample Skills Course)

Course Overview: The **Fundamentals of Surfski** course is designed to teach intermediate paddlers to safely and enjoyably paddle surfskis on lakes, calm protected ocean environments, and other protected water settings.

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: None

Course Duration: 8 hours

Course Location / Venue: Near shore, winds between 5-10 knots, waves up to 2 feet (.6 M), and current up to 2 knots



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

Succeeding courses:

Level 4: Open Water Surfski (*under development*)

L5: Surfski Advanced Open Water (*under development*)

The following is a general summary of course content for the **Fundamentals of Surfski** 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 & Swell
- Weather
- Water
- Tides & Currents

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)



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On Shore Presentations:

- Equipment orientation
- Personal clothing and gear
- PFD's, wetsuits
- Safety equipment
- Basic boat design and kayak terminology
- Boat fit and adjustment
- Foot brace adjustments
- Paddle orientation and use
- Correct hand placement
- Torso rotation and paddler's box

Launching & Landing / Wet-exit practice & Kayak Orientation

- Carrying a surfski to and from water
- Mount/dis-mount of surfski from shore or dock
- Boat stability (legs out)
- Capsize / "exit" techniques
- Allow students a few minutes to paddle around and get oriented with their kayak

Basic Strokes & Skills

- Rafting up
- Sweep stroke (forward/reverse/pivot in place)
- Forward stroke
- Reverse stroke and stopping
- Draw stroke(s)
- High and low braces
- Basic surfing principles
- Paddling and turning in swell, wind & waves

Safety & Rescue

- Exercising judgment, safety as a mind-set, etc.
- Hypothermia/ cold immersion shock: help/huddle, clothing, prevention
- Dehydration/ hyperthermia: hydration, clothing, prevention
- Hazards: wind, waves, weather, current, rocks, bridges, piers, dams, strainers, traffic
- Paddling as a group
- Signaling
- Interactions/ sharing water with non- powered and powered traffic
- Emergency procedures
- Rescue sequence: RETHROG
- Rescue priorities: people, boats, gear
- Demonstrate/participate: Deep- water re-mounts, assisted and solo
- Boat assisted rescue, assisting a tired swimmer (pushing or pulling to shore)
- Rescue with a flooded hatch if applicable to craft
- Rescuing a surfski



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Deep Water Rescues

- Demonstrate and practice side-by-side
- Demonstrate and practice “side saddle” and “straddle” self-rescue

Group Safety Discussion

- Group signals
- Staying together (i.e. group formations)
- What to do in an emergency
- Dealing with boat traffic

Conclusion & Wrap Up:

- Importance of additional instruction, practice, experience
- Group debrief / individual feedback
- Course limitations
- Importance of first aid & CPR
- Demo advanced maneuvers
- Life sport / paddling options
- Local paddling groups / clubs
- Handouts / Reference materials
- ACA membership forms
- Course evaluation
- Participation cards
- Importance of appropriate level of safety and rescue training