



Level 2: Essentials of Stand Up Paddleboarding

(Sample Skills Course)

Course Overview: The **Essentials of Stand Up Paddleboarding** course is designed to develop and refine the skills needed to paddle effectively in conditions where wind, waves and current are present. This course is also designed to increase knowledge of SUP equipment.

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.*

Minimum Personal Equipment: Properly fitted PFD, SUP paddle, Stand Up Paddleboard, appropriate clothing for the weather.

Instructors: ACA Level 2: Essentials of Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) or higher

Course Prerequisites: None



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Course Duration: Approximately 4 hours (or more at instructor discretion)

Course Location / Venue: This class is taught on flat water with less than 10 knot wind, 1 foot waves or smaller, or 1-2 knot current.

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

Succeeding courses:

Level 3: Whitewater Stand Up Paddleboarding

Level 3: Surf Stand Up Paddleboarding

The following is a general summary of course content for the **Essentials of Stand Up Paddleboarding** 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 board handling
- Safety and rescue considerations
- Personal equipment (reviewed by Instructor)

On Shore Presentations

- Personal clothing, wetsuits and gear (shoes or no shoes – depends on environment)
- PFD's (required by Coast Guard law outside of surf zone)
- Safety equipment (whistle)
- History of the sport and influential people
- Develop awareness of SUP destinations (local, regional and national)
- Board and Paddle terminology

Board & Paddle Design Details



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- Board dimensions: general vs. specialized
- Board volume: displacement for size of rider and application
- Construction (outer shell materials: epoxy, polyester, polyethylene vs. inner core foam types: EPS, polyurethane)
- Nose: rocker, width, shape
- Tails: square, swallow, pin etc.
- Deck: E-Z plugs, deck bungees
- Bottom: rocker, flat, concave (single concave vs. double concave)
- Rail: soft vs. hard, volume, step rail
- Fins: single fin, three fin thruster, 2+1, quad fin, five fin
- Paddle blade length and volume variations
- Spare paddles: take apart SUP paddle, flatwater canoe paddle, two piece sea kayak paddle
- Dry bags and other waterproof containers
- First aid kit and repair kit
- Emergency signaling devices
- Towing rigs: bags, belts, PFD cow tail

SUP Safety

- Wind, Waves, Water, & Weather awareness
- Current dynamics and hazards (river and/or tidal)
- USCG regulations / safety requirements
- Proper warm up - stretching technique

Launching and Landing

- Entry/exit from the shore or dock (deep enough to protect fin, ease of getting on board)
- Board trim awareness (nose to tail, rail to rail)
- Awareness of body, board, and blade

Board & Paddle Control

- Prone position: lying down (swim position) with paddle blade under chest/belly
- Sitting: on back face of paddle blade
- Kneeling: paddling using double-overhand & over-under paddle grip

Standing & Balance

- Neutral Stance: toes forward, knees bent, between hip and shoulder width, trim nose-tail
- Board wiggle: legs act independently from upper body, head/torso remain over center of board
- Modified neutral stance one foot drops back 2-3 inches enhancing rotation while maintaining balance
- Offset (surf) Stance: offset stance with even weight distribution nose to tail
- Offset surf stance variations: narrow, wide, towards tail, drop knee on back leg, toes forward
- Nose heavy: weight shift over front foot (gas foot)
- Tail heavy: weight shift over back foot (brake foot)
- Tail to nose weight transfer using brake and gas foot weight exchanges
- Adjusting heel side rail pressure and toe side rail pressure
- Brake foot rail to rail adjustments
- Identify regular (left foot forward) stance from goofy (right foot forward) stance

Maneuvers

- Sink inside rail and paddle in a circle using on and offside strokes
- Maximum tail to nose weight transfers



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- Stationary pivot turns with submerged tail using draws and forward sweeps
- Moving pivot turns with submerged tail
- Cross stepping
- Adjustments to strokes and board trim for wind and waves
- Sideslip: use draw stroke while underway to sideslip
- Forward Paddling: 200 yards paddle in a straight line without changing on-side
- Spinning: Spin SUP using full forward and reverse sweeps and draw (on and off side)
- Turning on the Move: Sweep strokes and static draws while underway to turn board
- Signals: Whistle, Paddle, Hand
- Hypo/Hyperthermia
- Evaluate water comfort and confidence
- Proper falling techniques
- Use of board leash
- Unassisted remounting of board – from side of board or from back of board
- Remount board first, then retrieve paddle if it was released during fall
- Towing - Use leash or PFD tow tether to pull a weak or injured paddler

Strokes & Bracing

- Forward (Basic forward stroke)
- Reverse (back stroke)
- Forward Sweep
- Reverse Sweep
- Draw (dynamic / static)
- Draw to the Nose
- Cross Board Draw
- Low brace
- Stroke tempo variation
- Heel side forward stroke
- Cross forward stroke
- Gliding low brace-toe side, heel side
- Extended Forward Sweep (Cross Board Draw & forward sweep combo)
- Cross Tail – Heel Side Low Brace
- Canted Forward Stroke
- Draws to nose/tail and Cross Nose (Static and Dynamic)

Safety & Rescue:

- Responsibility of the group, individual, rescuer, victim
- Rescue Priorities: People, Boards, Paddles, other gear

Day Tripping

- Trip planning: determine route difficulty and skill requirements
- Leader qualities: representing the group's best interests and taking overall responsibility
- Loading equipment on SUPs: dry, secure, proper trim, accessible
- Route planning & navigation tools
- On water navigation
- Rules of the Road

Technical Knowledge to Build On:

- General surf zone etiquette
- Use of float plans
- Environmental hazards: on lakes, rivers and oceans

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



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- Course evaluation
- Participation cards