



ACA | Canoe – Kayak – SUP – Raft - Rescue

ACA Collegiate Canoe and Kayak National Championship Rules

Revised - March 2015

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Appendix A: Scoring Overview

Article I: OBJECT

1. The object shall be to promote and regulate canoe and kayak racing for the ACA Collegiate Canoe and Kayak National Championships. Promotion and regulation shall include, but not be limited to, producing quality competitions to increase skills and awareness of paddlers and spectators, encouraging new competitors and new paddlers in general, providing safe and fair racing conditions and quality recreational experiences for all involved.

Article II: SANCTIONS

1. The ACA Collegiate Canoe and Kayak National Championships shall be sanctioned by the ACA National Office, and shall abide by the following rules.
2. Application for race sanctioning shall be made to the ACA National Office.
3. Application for event insurance coverage shall be made to the ACA National Office.

Article III: ELIGIBILITY

1. Participation in a competition of the ACA Collegiate Canoe and Kayak National Championships shall be open to full time college/university students, including full time graduate students.
2. Each United States College or University can send one team to compete in the ACA Collegiate Canoe and Kayak National Championships.
3. All collegiate competitors must be full ACA members in an appropriate membership category as published on the ACA website at the time of the event.
5. Additional race specific fees may be charged, provided they are appropriately published in advance of the competition.
6. All competitors and volunteers must read, understand and sign the correct ACA Waiver and Release of Liability form.

Article IV. SPECIFICATIONS OF CANOES, KAYAKS

A. Canoe

A canoe is a traditional open Canadian or Native American canoe, which is a boat with ends pointed and higher than the middle, symmetrical side-to-side, and propelled with single bladed paddles.

Canoes eligible for the ACA Collegiate Race Series, are those canoes sold for general recreational use. In general, ABS, polyethylene or aluminum canoes will qualify for inclusion (assuming they meet all dimension requirements) while canoes constructed from fiberglass, Kevlar, or composites thereof, and wood-strip canoes will generally not be eligible. A canoe **MUST** be or have been a commercially available, general production model to qualify. In questionable cases, the Race Director shall decide with reference to the intent of this rule.

1. Canoe width shall be a certain percentage of the overall length of the hull, at a point within one foot of the center of the hull length, measured at the 4 inch waterline, not including a keel. The minimum width is 16 percent of length.
2. Canoe depth shall not exceed 16 inches at a point within one foot of the center hull length, measured vertically from the highest point to the outside bottom, not including a keel.

3. The gunwale shall form a smooth curve or series of compound curves. Width of the gunwale and tumblehome shall not exceed 3.5 inches, measured horizontally from the extreme outside of the hull or outwale to the inside of the inwale.
4. Width of the outwale (including splash rails) shall not exceed 1.5 inches measured horizontally from the adjacent hull to the outside of the outwale. Width of the inwale shall not exceed 1.5 inches measured horizontally from the adjacent hull to the inside of the inwale except where it merges into or is under possible decks.
5. Length of deck shall not exceed 36 inches, measured parallel to the centerline, from the extreme end of the hull to the extreme end of the deck. No part or attachment of the deck may extend more than one inch above the canoe's gunwale.
6. There shall be no devices to remove water other than bailing scoops or sponges.
7. Flotation may be required and used to protect the paddler, the equipment, safety personnel and bystanders who may offer assistance. The minimum allowable flotation is at the discretion of the Chief Judge. Flotation added to the original hull is limited to a maximum of 10 feet of length along the canoe and all flotation within the front 6 feet of the canoe must be under the legal 36 inch deck. Foam outwales and normal post or pads for a bow paddler are not included in this restriction.
8. The canoe shall not be covered by any device or material other than normal seats, thwarts, decks and flotation as limited above.
9. There shall be no attachment to the exterior of the hull between the waterline and the gunwale other than safety lines, grab loops, or splash rails.
10. Safety lines of at least 1/4" in diameter and 6 feet of length shall be attached to each end of the canoe.
11. Length measured along the centerline of the hull only must not exceed 18 feet, 6 inches.
12. It is not permissible to make the boat meet the required dimensions by the addition of taped-on extensions or by similar means. The boat should be designed to and remain within, the required dimensions. To be permissible, corrections must be of a permanent nature except where applied to repair damage during an event, and must in no case constitute a potential safety hazard.

B. Kayak

A kayak is a highly maneuverable covered or partially covered decked boat. Modern kayaks are typically symmetrical in nature side to side and of varying lengths to be propelled only by a double-bladed paddle.

The kayaks eligible for competition in the ACA Collegiate Race Series can be ABS or polyethylene (assuming they meet all dimension requirements) while kayaks constructed from fiberglass, Kevlar, or composites thereof will generally not be eligible. A kayak MUST be or have been a commercially available, general production model to qualify for the ACA Collegiate Race Series. There will be two divisions for kayaks. All kayaks 9 feet and under in length will be in the K1 Short Boat division. All kayaks over 9 feet (aka 9'1") will be in the K1 Long Boat division and may not exceed 13 feet and 2 inches in overall length. Wildwater or wavehopper style of kayaks may not be used. In questionable cases, the Race Director shall decide with reference to the intent of this rule.

1. There shall be no devices to remove water other than drain plugs, bailing scoops, or sponges.
2. Floatation must be installed in both the bow and stern of the kayak. The floatation may be composed of closed cell foam pillars or floatation air bags installed both fore and aft of the cockpit with the only exception being sealed watertight bulkheads which would serve as floatation for that area of the kayak. The floatation must be sufficient enough to float the kayak even when completely full of water.
3. Kayak paddlers will be required to utilize a functional spray skirt when applicable. Kayaks that do not allow for a spray skirt, may be allowed with the approval of the Race Director provided the craft is appropriate for the race course and the floatation requirements are met.
4. Each kayak will be required to have grab loops installed at both ends of the craft. Grab loops must be securely fastened to the kayak. All handles must be functional and capable of lifting and carrying the kayak
5. It is not permissible to make the boat meet the required dimensions by the addition of taped-on extensions or by similar means. The boat should be designed to and remain within, the required dimensions. To be permissible, corrections must be of a permanent nature except where applied to repair damage during an event, and must in no case constitute a potential safety hazard

Article V. MEASURING

1. Conformity to the specifications is necessary for a safe and fair race. It is the responsibility of paddlers to race a canoe or kayak which conforms to specifications. Measurements will be made by the Race Director or their designee. Measurement will be made by a combination of instruments and experienced "look and feel". Canoes and kayaks must be brought for measurement race ready. Any modifications or changes after inspection could result in disqualification.
2. All canoes and kayaks competing in the ACA Collegiate Canoe and Kayak National Championships must be measured and marked prior to the start of competition during times specified by the Race Director. Spot checks may be made at any time during and after the competition at the discretion of the race officials. Canoes and kayaks of top finishers in each class may be re-inspected at the finish line.
3. Any canoe or kayak failing to comply with the official specifications shall be disqualified and not allowed to start the competition.

4. When using instruments, all measuring shall be to the closest 1/8 inch. Marginal decisions shall be determined by judgment of whether the difference gains the competitor any appreciable advantage over others. All final determinations will be made by the Race Director

Article VI: MEANS OF PROPULSION

1. ___ Open canoes shall be propelled solely by means of single bladed paddles. Kayaks shall be propelled solely by means of double-bladed paddles.
2. ___ The paddles in use may not be supported on the boats / boards in any way.
3. ___ If a competitor loses or breaks a paddle, only a spare carried on their craft from the start of the race may be used in its place, except that spare equipment can be obtained during the relay event at the designated exchange areas.

VII. CLASSES OF COMPETITION

1. ___ Awards will be presented to the top three finishers in each class at an ACA Collegiate Canoe and Kayak National Championships competition.
2. ___ A full team will consist of at least four individual members of the same gender. Schools may send both male and female teams. A full team of four individuals of the same gender will be needed to compete in the relay segment of the competition. Teams may have more than four individuals and more than one relay team competing. Each school must have a designated student team captain and a coach or faculty advisor. Schools that are unable to field a full team are encouraged to compete in the individual events.
3. The following classes are defined for all ACA Collegiate Race Series events.

Men's Categories:

- OC-1
- OC-2
- K1 Long Boat
- K1 Short Boat
- Team Relay

Women's Categories:

- OC-1
- OC-2
- K1 Long Boat
- K1 Short Boat
- Team Relay

Exhibition:

- At the discretion of the ACA National Office and Race Director
- Exhibition classes will not be included in scoring for overall team points

4. The competition will consist of two segments, individual races for each of the above mentioned classes, and a team relay race. The Team Relay consists of a four person team of the same gender. The relay race generally consists of two OC-1 paddlers and two K-1 paddlers. Each of the solo canoers and solo kayakers complete one of the four consecutive relay legs, with the canoers using the canoe as a baton and the kayakers using the kayak as a baton. The exchange between canoe and kayak leg involves contact (paddle to boat, etc.). The teams may choose to have either the two canoe legs or the two kayak legs lead off the relay. The A portage may be added if conditions allow. The Race Director may alter the Team Relay from the above format to account for local conditions, access, and resources available on site.

These competitions (individual and team relay) will be scored separately and the combined total will be used to determine the final ranking and the overall team winners of the race. A school may enter an unlimited number of competitors in an individual class and multiple teams in the team relay.

VIII. COURSE AND SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS

The course should be of sufficient duration and difficulty to test the paddling skills of the collegiate paddlers.

1. ___ An ACA Collegiate Canoe and Kayak National Championships downriver course should be between 2 and 5 miles with moving water (up to class II rapids).
2. ___ A one-day format is recommended for the ACA Collegiate Canoe and Kayak National Championships. If possible, a day of practice on the course should be provided prior to the competition.

Sample Schedule:

- Morning: Individual classes for both Men and Women
 - OC-1 OC-2, K1 Long, K1 Short,
- Afternoon: Team Relay event

Article IX: ORGANIZATION OF COMPETITION

All ACA Collegiate Canoe and Kayak National Championship shall be under the jurisdiction of a Race Director, and a Race Committee when applicable. The Race Director will be approved by the ACA National Office. It shall be their responsibility to supervise the competition for which they are appointed, by enforcing the paddling rules and performing the following duties:

1. Publish at least five weeks in advance of the date set for such race, suitable notices announcing the title, site, date, programs of events including eligibility of entrants, address where entries and fees will be received, distance of each event, entry fee, closing time for receipt of entries, name of sponsor and name of sanctioning body.
2. All ACA Collegiate Canoe and Kayak National Championship events shall be sanctioned by the ACA National Office. Race Directors must submit the appropriate Insurance Request

Forms to the ACA National Office prior to the start of the event as described in the current ACA insurance procedures.

3. Appoint the officials as prescribed in Article X.
4. Provide all physical equipment necessary for the race.
5. Supervise the laying out and marking of the race course, and certify to the sanctioning body the accuracy of the courses.
6. Have the authority to investigate the eligibility of any contestant, irrespective of the entering of any protest, and if the circumstances so justify, the Race Director, and Race Committee when applicable, is empowered to refuse entry.
7. Establish a race headquarters at some convenient location to post information about the events, such as time schedules, maps, lists of competitors, and race times and places. Headquarters should be staffed as resources allow during the days of competition.
8. Protests - See Article XIX.
9. The Race Director shall see that proper provisions are made for the presentation of the awards to the competitors.
10. Within 30 days after the conclusion of the race, render to the ACA National Office a complete report, covering the finances for the event, the insurance report form and the name and position of each paddler. Such report shall contain a statement of any protest lodged with the Race Director and the decision rendered.
11. Bids to host ACA Collegiate Race Series events should be submitted at least 6 months before the actual event so that they may be evaluated by the ACA National Office. A bid consists of a formal letter from the organizing College, University or other organization with an appendage containing as much of the specific race details and logistics as is known at the time.
12. If, in case of extreme conditions, the race cannot be properly held at the published site, the Race Director or the ACA National Office may move the race to any appropriate course. If such action is taken, the decision must be made at least one week before the first scheduled event with all necessary new information available online and at the ACA National Office.
13. In extreme circumstances at the race site, race rules may be temporarily altered by a decision supported by a majority vote of the Race Director, and Race Committee when applicable, and the faculty advisors/coaches present (1 vote per school in attendance).

Article X: DUTIES OF OFFICIALS

1. ___ The ACA Collegiate Committee shall appoint officials. Depending on the availability of personnel, an individual may have more than one official capacity.
2. ___ The Race Director, who is also the Chairperson of the Race Committee, appoints the Jury and other officials (with the exception of the Chief Judge) as needed to assure the smooth execution of the race. The Race Director shall arrange for the pre-race meeting(s) to advise racers regarding safety and scheduling of the races.
2. ___ The ACA Collegiate Committee appoints the Chief Judge. He/she is responsible for the correct running of the race in accordance with these rules. He/she interprets these rules, and has the right to disqualify or grant a rerun. He/she is the chairman of the Jury.
3. ___ -The Race Director shall supervise the race and be responsible for seeing that it takes place according to the program and without unnecessary delay. With the assistance of the Measurer, they must ensure that all regulations concerning measurements are observed by all boats taking part in the contest.
4. ___ The Race Secretary shall be responsible for recording the results and preparing the list of all contestants. He/she shall keep the minutes of the proceedings of any protest.
5. ___ The Starter decides all matters concerning the start of the races, and is alone responsible for decisions as to false starts. The Starter's decision is final. He/She can refuse to start a competitor if the competitor:
 - a. Fails to follow the safety rules, including wearing an appropriate helmet and lifejacket;
 - b. Fails to appear at an assigned start time;
 - c. Appears without a correct number bib;
 - d. Fails to follow the Starter's orders; or
 - e. Appears in a canoe or kayak that has not been measured and marked.
6. ___ The Finishing Line Judge shall note the order in which the competitors have passed the finishing line, and must rule on disqualification for crossing the line capsized.
7. ___ The Race Director shall appoint a Jury/Protest Committee of 3 or 5 members. The Chief Judge shall be the chairman of the Jury. The Jury controls the correct running of the race, receives any protests concerning the non-observance of these rules, and ultimately decides in the event of disagreement on the interpretation of these rules. The decisions of the Jury shall be guided by these rules insofar as possible, but it must also decide on all matters arising during the race which are not covered herein. The Jury can disqualify a competitor for all or part of the race.
8. ___ Timekeepers are responsible for noting the time and bib numbers.
9. ___ The Measurer shall supervise the measuring of canoe and kayaks
10. ___ The Safety Officer shall have overall responsibility for safety measures. Assisted by his/her team and according to the circumstances, shall do his/her utmost for the rescue of competitors who

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have capsized and do not refuse assistance, unless the safety personnel believe it is a life-threatening situation. They shall also make a reasonable effort to recover equipment.

Article XI: ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The announcement and entry form for an ACA Collegiate Race Series event should be distributed at least five weeks prior to the entry deadline. The announcement should include the following information:

- a. Time and place of competition.
- b. Description of course, including water conditions and degree of difficulty.
- c. Classes to be run and eligibility requirements.
- d. Sequence and approximate starting times.
- e. Safety measures to be taken.
- f. Address to which entries should be sent and amount of fee.
- g. Last date for entries to be postmarked.
- h. Whether late entries will be accepted and conditions.
- i. Time and place for racer's meeting.
- j. Limitations on entries, if any.
- k. Nature of awards to be given.
- l. Required work assignment for competitors, if any.
- m. Regulation on training runs.
- n. Whether meals, camping, or other accommodations are available including public transportation and driving directions.
- o. Schedule of events, (including water releases, boat measuring, meetings, etc.)
- p. ACA Waiver and Release of Liability form
- q. Special information for the disabled.
- r. Any other information as deemed necessary.

2. In the event that an entry is rejected, notice of rejection (with reasons for the latter), shall be sent by mail (or email) to all affected competitors. At the discretion of the Race Director or the ACA National Office, alteration of entries may be accepted prior to the close of late registration. No entry may be altered after late registration has closed.

Article XII: INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPETITORS

1. ___ Each competitor shall receive instructions before the beginning of the competition concerning the following:

- a. Detailed information on the courses and their markings
- b. Starting time, interval and order
- c. Finishing time
- d. Starting time and procedures
- e. Competitors racing number
- f. Safety procedures

2. ___ It is particularly important to cover any late changes in the course, or hazardous spots. Competitors may ask questions about the course or the operation of the race. Additional meetings may

be held as deemed necessary by the Race Director. Information presented at these meetings shall be made available to competitors excused from the meeting by a race official.

Article XIII: DISQUALIFICATIONS

1. ___ Any competitor who attempts to win a race by other than honorable means, or who breaks the racing rules, or who disregards the honorable nature of the racing rules shall be disqualified.
2. ___ Should a competitor have completed a race run in a canoe or kayak which is shown upon inspection to not comply with these rules, the Race Director shall take appropriate action which may include disqualification of the individual or relay team.
33. ___ No supplies, provisions, or equipment of any kind may be picked up or intentionally discarded along the course except during the relay at designated exchange areas.
44. ___ No assistance of any kind along the race-course shall be permitted except during the relay at designated exchange areas. Paddlers receiving assistance will be disqualified. Safety personnel should not assist contestants if the latter specifically refuses help (Unless the safety personnel believe that it is a life threatening situation). However, once assistance has been accepted, the competitor(s) is automatically disqualified and should be listed as DNF even if the competitor(s) continues on to the finish line.
55. ___ Any competitor who shall fail to remain on the marked course as outlined in advance by the race organizer, or who makes a portage or portages not marked as mandatory or optional shall be disqualified, regardless of advantage gained.
66. ___ Failure to perform a work assignment or safety assignment, unless excused, will entail disqualification for the entire race.
77. ___ Deliberate misrepresentations on an entry form or in statements to Officials will result in disqualification from the category involved or from the entire race, depending on their nature.

Except as required above, the Race Director and Chief Judge may disqualify a competitor or relay team from a single class, or from an entire competition, depending on the nature and severity of an infraction.

Article XIV: STARTS

1. ___ Canoes and kayaks may be started en masse, singly, or in randomly chosen sub-groups as determined by the Race Director or Race Committee when applicable.

Article XV: OVERTAKING

1. ___ It is the duty of the overtaking craft to keep clear at all times of the boat/board being overtaken. However, the craft being overtaken is not allowed to alter its course to create difficulties for the overtaking craft.

Article XVI: FINISH

1. ___ The finish line is reached when any part of the upright canoe or kayak with paddler(s) in it crosses the finish line.

2. All finish times should be rounded to the nearest tenth of a second. Except when a class was started en masse and a winner can be ascertained by visible means, finish times which are the same after rounding result in a tie.

3. ___ A competitor may not cross the finish line more than once.

Article XVII: SAFETY

1. ___ All competitors must wear:
a. an inherently buoyant U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (life jacket)
b. Hard-shelled head protection, bike helmets are not allowed.

2. ___ Adequate flotation is required in all canoes and kayaks.

3. ___ It is the responsibility of each contestant to stop racing and assist other competitors in serious personal danger. Failure to do so shall result in lifelong disbarment from ACA sanctioned competitions.

4. ___ Any boat withdrawing from the race must notify the officials as soon as possible.

5. ___ The organizers shall make every effort to provide other safety measures according to the difficulty of the course and the experience of the paddlers. Safety boats and/or other safety measures shall be provided along the course.

6. ___ Every reasonable measure must be taken to remove any disabled boats or equipment obstructing the course.

7. ___ Safety personnel should not assist contestants if the latter specifically refuses help (unless the safety personnel believe that it is a life threatening situation). However, once assistance has been accepted, the competitor(s) is automatically disqualified and should be listed as DNF even if the competitor(s) continues on to the finish line.

8. ___ Competitors must at all times be in a position to free themselves immediately from their boats.

Article XVIII: DETERMINING THE RESULTS

1. ___ The lowest elapsed time from start to finish determines the placement of the individual and tandem competitors making up a collegiate team.

See Appendix A for the detailed Scoring Overview.

Article XIX: PROTESTS

1. ___ The Chief Judge and Jury (see Article X) shall serve as the Protest Committee along with the Race Director.

2. ___ Any protest during a competition must be addressed to the Race Director not later than one hour after completion of the race. If protests involve a violation of the rules, the Race Director may decide; if the protest involves interpretation of the rules, said protest must be referred to the Protest Committee.

3. ___ A late protest shall be referred to the ACA National Office, in writing not later than 10 days following the completion of the race, and accompanied by a fee of \$50.00. If the protest is upheld, the fee is returned to the protester.

4. ___ Competitors have a right to appeal to the ACA National Office a decision of the Protest Committee within 30 days from the announcement of said decision.

5. ___ Any protest concerning the right of a competitor to participate must be handed to the Race Director, not later than one hour before the start of the competition. A protest against the right of a competitor to participate may be lodged with the ACA National Office within 30 days after the competition if it is based on facts which became known later than one hour before the start of the competition.

Article XX: AMENDMENTS

1. ___ These rules are to be in immediate effect as of the latest revision date on page 1. These rules and regulations may be amended by the ACA National Collegiate Paddling Competition Committee only after input has been received by interested parties.

2. ___ The ACA National Office may issue interpretations and supplementary rulings on questions as they arise. Such rulings shall take effect immediately upon publication, and shall be noted within the body of the rules.

APPENDIX A: Scoring Overview

Individual Classes - Men & Women

- Classes: OC1, OC2, K1 Long Boat, K1 Short Boat
- The lowest elapsed time from start to finish in each class determines placing.
- Individual Medals for Men & Women will be awarded for the top 3 finishers in each class

Team Relay Race - Men & Women

- Class: Two OC-1 paddlers and two K-1 paddlers – for the canoers, the canoe serves as the baton, for the kayakers, the kayak serves as the ‘baton’, for the exchange between canoe and kayak, physical contact (paddle to boat) is needed.
- 4 person Teams, composed of either 4 men or 4 women
- The lowest elapsed time from start to finish determines placing.
- Medals will be awarded to the 4 team members for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place

Overall Team Scoring – for Men & Women’s Categories

The Overall Men’s Team Champion & Women’s Team Champion is determined by points scored in both the individual races and the team relay race with the lowest overall team score determining the winning school.

- The highest place finisher from each team in each individual class scores points for their team
 - 1st place = 1 point, 2nd place = 2 points, 3rd place = 3 points, etc
 - All other finishers from a team act as place-holders, but don’t score points
 - Scenario Examples:
 - If School A places 1st and 2nd in an individual class, and School B finishes 3rd; then School A gets 1 point towards their team score and School B gets 3 points
 -
 - If a team does not have a competitor in any one of the individual OC-1 or OC-2 races, or if they have no competitors in **both** of the kayak classes, they will receive the number of points associated with last place for that class (or for one kayak class) If there are 10 competitors in the OC1W class, a school without a competitor in this class would receive 11 points. If two schools don’t have competitors in the same individual class (in the above example), then those schools would both receive 11 ½ points (11+12=23, 23 divided by 2 =11 ½).
- **A school only needs to have an entry in **one** of the kayak classes (K-1 Long or K-1 Short) to be considered entered in the kayak class. If a school has entries in both kayak classes, their score will be determined by the class in which they placed the highest. For example, if school A places first in the K-1 Long, and 3rd in the K-1 Short, then their school will receive 1 kayak point, and the 3rd place in the K-1 Short will be a place-holder.*

- The Team Relay Race is weighted accordingly:
 - 1st place = 0 points, 2nd place = 5 points, 3rd place = 10 points, 4th place = 15 points, etc.

Example:

- If School A has two teams in the team relay event and they place 2nd and 3rd, and school B finishes 4th; then School A gets 5 points and School B gets 15 pts. Any school without an entry in the relay event will be awarded points as if their team finished in last place.
- The total # of team points is calculated by adding the team points from each individual class to the points from the team relay. This determines the overall team winner for both the Men's & Women's categories.
- Tie breaker: In the event of a tie in overall team points, the team with the fastest team relay time will be declared the winner.
- Separate Team trophies will be awarded to the College/University with the lowest overall point total in the Men's Championship and in the Women's Championship categories.