



Level 4: Advanced Whitewater Stand Up Paddleboarding

(Sample Skills Course)

Course Overview: The **Advanced Whitewater Stand Up Paddleboarding** course emphasizes safety, enjoyment and skill acquisition for intermediate through advanced individuals in class I-III whitewater. This course builds upon the ACA Level 3: Whitewater SUP skills course in that it refines skills on how to paddle boards in challenging whitewater and perform self-rescues.

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 (inflatable lifejackets not allowed in this course), helmet, elbow and knee pads, SUP paddle, Stand Up Paddleboard designed for moving water and whitewater, appropriate clothing for the weather.

Instructors: ACA Level 4: Advanced Whitewater Stand Up Paddleboard Instructor (SUP)



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Course Prerequisites: None, but previous experience on a board in whitewater is strongly recommended

Course Duration: 8 hours (or more at instructor discretion)

Course Location / Venue: Course may be conducted on sections of whitewater rivers rated up to class I-III

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

Succeeding courses:

None

The following is a general summary of course content for the **Advanced Whitewater 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, inflatable lifejackets not allowed in this course)
- Leash guidelines
- 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)

Getting Started:

- Launching, carries, landing
- Water confidence and comfort
- Rescue Priorities: People, gear, & boards
- How to fall off a board
- The Terminology of Paddling (frequently blended in with stroke instruction)
- Types of strokes: power, turning & bracing
- Stroke components: catch, propulsion, recovery, control and correction
- Effective Body Usage and Bio-Kinetics
- Use of larger torso muscles
- Arms as struts connecting paddle to torso
- Avoidance of positions that contribute to shoulder injury or dislocations



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The Paddling Environment:

Fundamentals of River Running

- Characteristics of Current
- Downstream and Upstream V's / Chutes
- Eddies/ Eddy Lines
- Waves/ Wave Holes
- Bends
- Effects of Obstacles
- Ledges/ Horizon Lines
- Strainers & Sieves
- Rocks/ Pillows
- Holes/ Hydraulics
- Other Hazards
- Power of the Current / River Level
- Cold Water
- Dams/ Flow Diversion Structures/ Pipelines
- Undercut Rocks / Ice
- International Scale of River Difficulty (handout: American Whitewater Safety Code)

River Running:

A. Strategies in Running Rivers

1. How to paddle in current
 - Spacing / Avoid "tunnel vision"
2. Scouting
 - From board / From shore
 - How to establish the "best" route / "Plan B"
3. Portaging Hazards

B. Group Organization on the River

1. Group cohesiveness (lead, sweep boards, etc.)
2. Universal River Signals System

C. Emergency Procedures

Equipment:

- Boards: types, materials, parts (including safety features: foot straps, grab loops)
- Leash wear (when appropriate)

- River Knife
- Boards outfitting: comfort & safety
- Fin set ups
- Paddle: types, parts, length, blade size & shape, fitting, hand position
- Care of equipment
- Personal Equipment: water, food, shoes, sunscreen, bug spray, sun glasses, eyeglass straps, protective clothing for impact, heat or cold, hat, foot protection, food, whistle,
- Life jackets (PFDs): types, fit
- Helmet: types, fit
- Elbow pads, knee pads
- Car topping: loading and unloading, racks, tie downs

Safety & Rescue:

A. Principles of Rescue

1. Priorities - People, Boards, Gear
2. Responsibilities of Victim
3. Responsibilities of Rescuers

B. Types of Rescue

1. Falling techniques (deep water vs. shallow rocky)
2. Self-Rescue in moving current
 - body/board positions
 - handling equipment
3. Board-Assisted Rescue
 - Tired Swimmer
 - Towing
4. Bumping
5. Shoreline Rescue - Extension Rescues
 - Use of Throw Bags/Ropes
 - Pinned Craft
6. Principles of wading
7. Basics of Foot Entrapment

Standing & Balance

- Prone
- Sitting
- Kneeling
- Neutral stance with variation/slight stagger



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- Board wiggle: legs act independently from upper body, head/torso remain over center of board
- Offset (surf) Stance: offset stance with various weight distribution nose to tail
- Offset surf stance variations: narrow, wide, drop knee on back leg, toes forward
- Laterally biased staggered stance (rail stomping)

Maneuvers:

Flat-Water:

- Spins (onside and offside): boards pivots in place
- Forward: boards moves in reasonably straight line
- Reverse: boards moves in a reasonably straight line
- Stopping: boards stops within a reasonable distance
- Moving Pivot Turn with Submerged Tail
- Veering, Carving, and paddling the “inside circle/outside circle”
- Abeam: boards moves sideways without headway
- Sideslips: boards moves sideways with headway

Whitewater (class I-III)

- Front Ferry
- Paddling on Edge in and out of current
- Eddy Turns (wide / shallow)
- Peel Outs (wide / shallow)
- C-Turn (peel out and eddy into same eddy)
- S-Turns (peel out one side and eddy into opposite side)
- Front Surfing (larger waves than in the L2: WW SUP course)

Strokes:

- Forward
- Reverse (back stroke)
- Forward Sweep
- Reverse Sweep
- Draw (dynamic / static)
- Draw to the Nose
- Rudder Stroke (tail draws and prys)
- Cross Board Draw
- C-stroke (Draw to the Nose into forward stroke with j-stroke exit/recovery)
- Low brace
- High brace
- Cross forward stroke
- Extended Forward Sweep (Cross Board Draw & forward sweep combo)
- Cross Tail – Heel Side Low Brace

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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