

# BILL DVORAK'S KAYAK & RAFTING EXPEDITIONS

Outline for Multi-day Kayak or Rafting Courses  
(Some principals apply for short instruction courses)

## 1. Initial Introductions

- Instructors
- Participants - Goals, expectations, paddling experience, etc.
- Equipment
  - Kayak-canoe: designs and materials
  - Emphasize the cruising-slalom crafts - why it is good for whitewater, rocker, stable, sturdy; grab loops, hung seat, foot braces, walls, float bags, plastic, fiber-plastic, fiberglass, kevlar, etc.
  - Concept of wearing the craft
- Paddle - how to choose one, offset blades, spoon vs. flat, power vs. non-power face, control hand.
- Spray skirt - spray decks, etc.
- PFD's - fit is the important thing. Compare type III and V if desired (Flotation to weight /water types, etc.)
- Helmet - again, fit is important, protection
- Personal equipment:
  - Depends on weather, trip length, etc.
  - Swim suit, shorts, poly-pro top, etc.
  - Fleece sweater, paddling jacket, pants (wool or fleece), hat, dry-suits, fleece underwear, water temperature options.
  - Wet suit, wet suit boots or river sandals
  - Wet suit hood or head warmers for roll sessions
- Types of paddling
  - Flat water - lake and rivers. Weather, wind and waves and be the big factors.
  - Whitewater - river classifications
  - Touring
  - Racing - Olympic style, whitewater, downriver and slalom

## 2. Orienting the Person to the Craft

- Carrying methods: suitcase technique by cockpit rim, shoulder, 2 person carry, also 1-2 boat carry
- Outfitting the craft - how to wear your boat, adjust braces, blow up air bags/flotation
- Getting into and out of the boat - in the river and on shore
- Putting on the spray skirt/deck
- Emptying the boat in shallow water, one end push and twist method, over the leg hernia method, two person, bank empty, in river empty.

## 3. Water Safety and Self Rescue with Boat

- Tread water and/or swim in PFD
- Head and feet first surface dives
- Hands paddling the boat
- Wet exit without and with spray skirt attached (one on one carefully)
- Eskimo Roll/Rescue (C to C technique)
- Boat over boat rescue and empty
- Deep water re-entry

## 4. Whitewater Safety

- Swimming in whitewater, with and without your boat; swimming rapids on purpose.
- What to do if boat broaches: basic rescue techniques
- AWA Safety Code, AWA river signals, river classifications: 1-6 scale or 1-10 scale

## 5. Paddle Strokes

- Paddle grip, control hand index and wrist rotation
- Propulsion strokes - forward and back
- Tracking - skip a stroke, pull harder on one side, sweep or draw to stern, rudders
- Turning and control strokes - forward sweep, reverse sweep, draw to bow stern and amidships
- Defensive strokes - high brace, sweeping high brace, low brace, sweeping low brace, sculling draw.
- Duffek - introduce concept of combining strokes

## **6. Maneuvers**

- Pivot turns, Side slips
- Forward and back in a straight line
- Landings - utilize same strokes as the eddy turn
- Games that require maneuvers and relax skill training

## **7. The Basic River Maneuvers**

- Introduce river obstructions, the eddy, the eddy line
- Ferry angle, upstream or forward, downstream or back
- Eddy turn and peel out techniques

## **8. The "Eskimo Roll"**

## **9. Water Reading or Learning to Read the Surface Features of the River**

- Rocks, eddy, eddy line
- River "V's"
- Standing waves
- Pillows
- Ledges
- Holes and River Hydraulics (river characteristics)
- Strainers, obstacles, undercut rocks, river drop lines

## **10. River Tactics or Where to Put the Boat?**

- Route selection - reading the rapid from bottom to top
- Control of the boat in current, running same speed as current, faster than or slower than the current
- Running a rock garden or ledges
- Running in waves or running a hole.
- Running a bend in the river
- Scouting - eddy scouting vs. getting out to look!

## **11. Basic Trip Organization - One day or multi-day**

- Pre-river planning - who, what, when, where, how many
- On the river - river safety, courtesy, guidelines
  - Trip should stay together behind the lead boat and in front of the sweep boat
  - Responsible for the boat behind you - know where it is and check on it frequently.
  - Stay far enough behind the boat in front of you that you will not run into him/her if he/she gets into trouble but not so far back as to compromise the continuity of the trip.
  - After you get into an eddy, move away from eddy line or to bottom of the eddy so others coming into the eddy have a clear line.
  - The boat in the current has the right of way.
  - Give other boaters a chance to "play" the river or wave.
  - Respect the rights of fishermen and landowners!
- Concept of Responsibility - leader and participant.