

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.