

Basic Paddling Technique

SET-UP : Body poised with paddle out of the water “Paddles Up Position”. The outside (gunwale) arm is straight, wrist in neutral position, hand grips the shaft about two fingers up from the junction of the shaft and blade. The inside hand is on the T-Grip of the shaft, elbow high with a slight (5 degree) bend. This is known as the A-FRAME. The outside (gunwale) shoulder is forward; top shoulder is back; outside leg is bent, inside leg is straight, trunk / and outside hip is rotated forward. There is a slight bend forward at the waist.

CATCH (POSITION 1) : In order for the blade to enter the water at a positive 60 degree angle, lower the body by driving down with top arm and locked shoulder, top hand is behind the bottom hand, upper body is forward with chest over the legs and the outside (gunwale) arm extended forward. The body should follow the angle of entry into the water until the blade is buried. Hips and shoulders are rotated inward so the chest is facing the inside of the boat. Both feet are forward with heels braced against the foot press. Head is up and eyes are forward. Trunk/outside hip rotation are still in place.

PRESS PHASE : This is the work phase where you actually move the boat forward. Driving the blade down, water pressure weight is on the paddle and the inside hip is up off the seat. Downward pressure is exerted on the blade utilizing a rotated core and back to keep blade fully buried. Maintaining pressure is key as the water will start to separate from the paddle. Maximum energy is exerted at the “Sweet Spot” as you exhale. The Correct Sequence of movement is the outside (gunwale) hip DE-Rotates as the outside leg pushes against the foot press, outside hip is rotated on the seat rather than driving the hip back (as in a hinged motion) and paddler sits up in a fluid motion.

EXIT (POSITION 3) : Taking the paddle out of the water cleanly with minimal drag is key. The top hand presses down, the outside elbow bends slightly at mid-thigh over paddle and the blade exits the water when thumb joint is at the hip. The hip leads the exit. The action of taking the paddle out of the water is similar to taking a sword out of its sheath. Top hand then guides paddle towards the inside shoulder of the paddler in front of them.

RECOVERY (POSITION 2) : This phase is referred to as Air Time , when you inhale and get ready to move again to the Catch Phase. Top arm is bent at 5 degrees. Top hand is stacked over bottom hand. Recovery is that point of transition to the Catch Phase. The outside hip initiates rotation led by the top arm. Outside leg begins to load onto the foot press. Outside shoulder moves forward towards the Catch.

LEG DRIVE : Power = Hips + Legs. Two points of contact in the boat are buttocks (glutes) and feet. Our feet are the most important basic connection to the boat. Feet/heels on the heel press are the weighted fixed point of contact. The less weight we have on our feet, the less connection to the boat, which means less power generated through the legs (quads). Example: Outside knee/leg is bent/flexed at the Catch. Outside knee/leg straightens/extends (like a spring) during leg drive Press. Thumb knuckle comes to hip bone as the hip pushes back. Next lead with the hip off the exit, so that the outside leg relaxes and the inside leg straightens/extends. Motion is similar to pedaling a bike.