



Mississippi River Challenge

5 & 6 August 2006

Paddlespeak

ACA - American Canoe Association

Abeam - to move at a right angle to the centerline

Blade - the broad working end of your paddle

Boat - the craft you balance and propel through the water [It's the boat that moves not the blade.]

Body - you. Good body mechanics protect you from stress injuries and improve your performance on the water.

Bow - the front end of a canoe, kayak or any other watercraft

Bulkhead - an interior wall in a kayak that creates a watertight compartment and provides structural support

Capsize - orienting your craft towards middle earth, which must be followed by either a wet exit or a roll

CFS - cubic foot per second, the volume of water flowing past a given point along a river. A cubic foot of water is about 7.5 gallons or 62 pounds.

Cockpit - the hole in the deck the paddlers sit or kneel in

Control Hand - the grip hand for a canoeist, typically the right hand for a kayaker. This hand controls blade angle throughout the paddle stroke.

Deck - the top side of a closed canoe or kayak

Deck Plate - small triangular piece at the bow and stern of a traditional open canoe

Draft - the depth of the water required to float a canoe or kayak. Also, what you drink after paddling, but never while paddling.

Foot Pegs - plastic or metal adjustable braces to rest your feet on in a kayak

Grab Loop - the strap or loop at the bow and stern ends of a kayak used for carrying or in a rescue situation. Also, the loop at the front of a spray skirt used to pull the skirt and free the paddler in a wet exit.

Grip - the top of your canoe paddle which is held by the control hand. Grips come in T, pear and palm shapes.

Gunwale - [gunnel] the longitudinal strip of ash, aluminum or vinyl along the top edge of a canoe, extending to the deck plates at both ends. Gunwales provide structural support.

Hull - the body of any watercraft. Hull shape dictates how a boat behaves in various conditions.

Keel line - the longitudinal centerline of a watercraft. Some canoes have keels to hold their parts together; they are otherwise useless.

Lead Boat - the boat leading the group downriver, the lead set a general course to be followed by others.

MCA - Minnesota Canoe Association, promoting the state of paddling for more than four decades

Offside - the side opposite the working blade for a kayaker. The side a canoeist is not paddling on.

Onside - the designated paddling side for a canoeist, or the side of the working blade for a kayaker. In a tandem canoe, the onside of the craft is the bow paddlers designated side.

Painter - a length of highly visible floating rope attached to the end of a canoe, useful for mooring, towing or rescuing

PFD - personal floatation device. You must wear your PFD while on the water.

Portage - carrying your craft and gear from one waterway to another or around "Mr. Big & Nasty".

River Left - the side of the river on your left as you face downstream

River Right - the bank on your right as you face downstream

Put-in - the starting point on a river run

Rethrog - a rescue priority: reach, throw, row, go

Rocker - an upward curve along the keel line towards the bow and/or stern ends of a boat. More rocker means a more maneuverable craft.

Roll - a post-capsize maneuver, staying in the kayak or canoe to reorient the topside to the sky

Shaft - the part of the paddle between the blades or the blade and the grip

Sit-on-Top - a kayak without a cockpit, most production models are intended for recreational use

Spray Skirt - a nylon or neoprene garment worn around the paddlers waist that attaches to the rim of the cockpit for a watertight seal.

Stern - the hind end of a watercraft

Stem - the sharply upward curve at the bow and stern ends which slices through the water

Suitcase Carry - two or more paddlers take grab loops or thwarts in hand to carry a boat at arms length, top-side to the sky

Swamp - to fill your boat with water

Sweep Boat - the last boat in the group, taking responsibility for assisting other paddlers if needed

Take-out - the ending point of a river run

Thigh Braces - molded plastic or foam structures inside the cockpit that connect the paddler to the boat for better boat control

Throat - the point where the paddle shaft becomes a blade

Thwart - spreaders or cross bars that extend across the canoe from one gunwale to the other. Thwarts provide structure and help define the hull shape of a canoe.

Tip - bottom edge of the paddle blade, or what you give the raft guide after a good dousing

Trim - the angle a boat rides in the water, i.e., stern-down, bow-down, listing to one side or the other. A trim boat sits level in all directions.

Wet Exit - coming out of a capsized kayak or canoe

Yoke - a cushion or shoulder harness that allows a boat to be carried [portaged] upside-down on a paddler's shoulders.

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