



Make a Splash With Canoeing, Kayaking, and Stand Up Paddleboarding

Long before people voyaged across the oceans in ships powered by sails and engines, they began to cross the water using paddlecraft. Early in human history, what started off as swimming with something that floated turned into building rafts and using a device for paddling. Simple boats gradually became more refined and more efficient. For example, people in the north needed protection from the cold, so they created kayaks, with skin-covered decks that could be righted if capsized.

Today, modern building materials have led to a wide variety of watercraft. Which type of paddlecraft your group chooses will likely be based on location, availability, and interest. Regardless, you will master similar skills to those of people from long ago. Whether you meet whitewater challenges or journey through the Boundary Waters with the Northern Tier National High Adventure Program, you will make a splash and have fun doing it.

Objectives

This month's activities should:

- Provide Scouts an understanding of basic paddle sport safety practices.
- Teach Scouts how to select and fit a life jacket.
- Inform Scouts of paddling skills needed for different craft and water conditions.
- Encourage Scouts to work as a team to plan an on-water outing.
- Emphasize the use of outdoor ethics to help protect the environment.
- Foster a sense of communion with nature and God.

Opportunities in boats on the water are crucial for learning paddling skills. Fewer than four dry-land meetings may be appropriate prior to an essential main event, which in turn may be a precursor to a challenging event.

RELATED ADVANCEMENT AND AWARDS

- Tenderfoot requirement 1b
- Second Class requirement 1a
- First Class requirement 1a
- Canoeing, Kayaking, and Whitewater merit badges
- Kayaking BSA award
- BSA Stand Up Paddleboarding Award
- 50-Miler Award
- Ranger: Watercraft elective
- Quest: Requirement 5



Leadership Planning

As a leadership team, you may want to discuss the following items during your planning meetings when choosing paddle sports as your program feature. If your council has an Aquatics Committee, that group may help with planning and resources.

1. What is our unit's current skill level?
2. How will we accommodate Scouts and leaders who have not met the BSA swimmer classification?
3. Is our online Safety Afloat training current?
4. Are unit leaders able to take Aquatics Supervision: Paddle Craft Safety training prior to the main event?
5. Do we know a paddle sports expert or a certified instructor?
6. What equipment will we need? Where will we get it?
7. What will we do for the main event?
8. What summer camp program opportunities will help us prepare for the main event?
9. What additional subtopics would fit well with this feature?
10. How can we involve parents?

11. How can we incorporate Scout skills and advancement into the main event?
12. To meet our needs, what should we change in the sample meeting plans?

PARENTS CAN HELP WITH THE PADDLE SPORTS PROGRAM FEATURE BY:

1. Loaning equipment (canoes, paddles, life jackets, etc.)
2. Providing transportation and leadership for the main event
3. Hauling gear to the campsite if it can't be transported in boats
4. Providing paddle sports expertise
5. Researching places in your area to paddle
6. Maintaining current Youth Protection certification, which is required of all adults providing transportation for or participating in outings



SIZING YOUR LIFE JACKET

Check the label to determine that you have the appropriate size for your weight. On land, have a buddy stand behind you and firmly pull up both shoulder straps. If the shoulder straps pull up to ear level, the life jacket doesn't fit snugly enough. Readjust the jacket or try a smaller size or different style.

In calm, shallow water, test the fit of a life jacket by relaxing your body and tilting your head back. It should keep your chin well above water. If it doesn't, readjust for a snugger fit or try a life jacket with a higher buoyancy rating. Check the label to find the rating.



TYPES OF PADDLE SPORTS

Paddlecraft refers to any human-powered watercraft that is propelled and maneuvered by a handheld paddle. This program feature focuses on canoes, kayaks, and stand up paddleboards.

Canoe. The basic canoe is one of the oldest watercraft designs known to humankind. Throughout history, canoes have been made with whatever materials were found locally. Most early canoes were carved out of logs or made from bark stretched over a wooden frame. As new materials were developed, it became popular to make canoes first out of wood covered with canvas and then aluminum. Modern canoes are often made of synthetic materials like plastic, fiberglass, Kevlar®, or carbon fiber. These materials allow canoes to be both lighter and stronger.

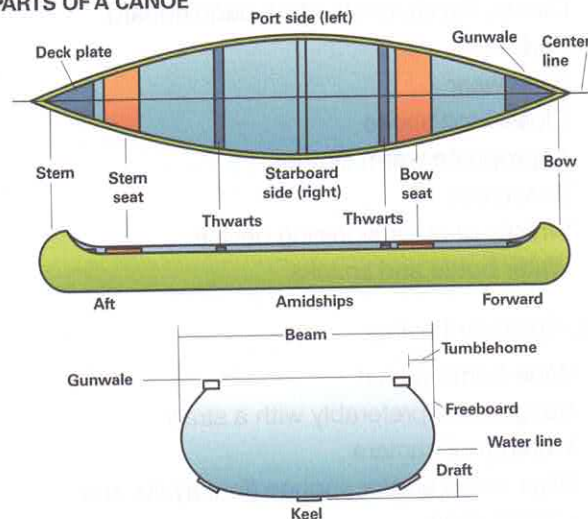
Kayak. Originally developed in the far north for hunting, the first kayaks were created by stretching waterproof skins over a wooden or bone frame. Today's kayaks are made with the same variety of materials as canoes, but they are also designed for very specific purposes. Your group should decide between rigid boats or inflatables, and among recreational, touring, whitewater, or sit-on-top kayaks.

Stand up paddleboard. The fastest growing type of paddlecraft is the stand up paddleboard (SUP) in which a paddler stands atop a long, buoyant "surfboard" and uses a paddle with an extended shaft. The board may be made of rigid synthetic materials or be inflated. Many of the paddle strokes are very similar to those used in canoeing, and SUPs have fins that allow tracking in a straight line. Modern-day stand up paddleboarding takes much of its terminology from the surfing culture. For example, the front and back of an SUP are called the nose and tail, rather than the bow and stern.

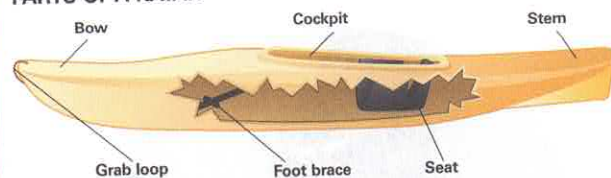
Parts of Paddlecraft

While most paddlecraft have similar parts, there are differences between kayaks, canoes, and SUPs.

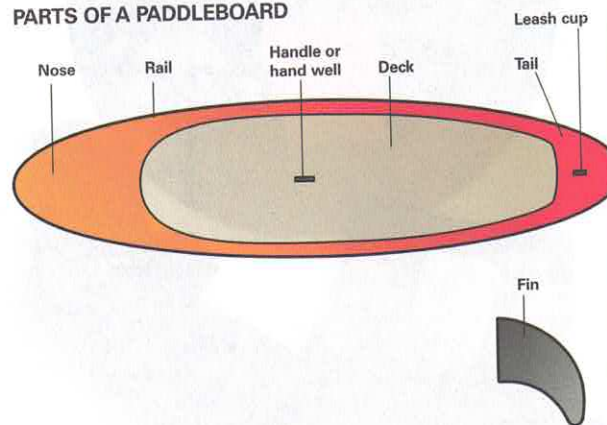
PARTS OF A CANOE



PARTS OF A KAYAK



PARTS OF A PADDLEBOARD





Paddle Sports Equipment

To participate safely in paddle sports, all participants need:

- Life jacket
- Canoe, kayak, or stand up paddleboard
- Paddle
- Swimwear
- Closed-toe shoes
- Appropriate warm clothes
- Sunscreen
- Whistle or other signaling device
- Water bottle and snacks

Also consider having:

- Wide-brimmed hat
- Sunglasses, preferably with a strap
- Waterproof camera
- Bilge pump and/or sponge (for kayaks and canoes only)



Paddlecraft Safety

For any BSA activity afloat, participants must understand and respect the Safety Afloat plan, summarized below. Leaders should review the entire plan in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/.

1. **Qualified supervision.** All paddle sports activities must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult who understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of the group and is currently trained in Safety Afloat. The supervisor must be skilled in the safe operation of the craft for the specific activity, knowledgeable in accident prevention, and prepared for emergency situations. One adult supervisor is required for every 10 participants.



2. **Personal health review.** The supervisor should review the health histories of all participants and adjust the activity to anticipate risks associated with individual health conditions.





3. **Swimming ability.** Every participant who intends to train for or paddle a solo kayak, canoe, or SUP at a Scouting function must be classified as a swimmer by completing the 100-yard BSA swimmer classification test. Operation of any boat on a float trip is limited to youth and adults who have completed the BSA swimmer classification test. Those not classified as swimmers are limited to multiperson craft during outings on calm water with little likelihood of capsizing or falling overboard. They may paddle or ride in a paddlecraft designed for more than one person when buddied with an adult swimmer who is a skilled paddler.
 4. **Life jackets.** Properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets must be worn by all persons engaged in paddle sports. Type III life jackets are recommended for general recreational use.
 5. **Buddy system.** Scouts never go on the water alone. Every person must have a buddy. When several craft are used on a float trip, every craft on the water should have a “buddy boat.”
 6. **Skill proficiency.** All persons in an activity afloat must have sufficient knowledge and skill to participate safely. Anyone classified as a swimmer may engage in paddle sports training provided by qualified instructors. For unit recreational activities in calm, confined waters, participants need to be able to control their paddlecraft adequately to return to shore. For unit float trips, participants should receive either a minimum of three hours of training or demonstrate proficiency in maneuvering the craft and recovering from a capsize. (The skills required for paddlecraft merit badges or special awards are appropriate.) Additional training is needed for whitewater trips or coastal open water treks.
 7. **Planning.** Proper planning is necessary to ensure a safe, enjoyable paddle sports activity. All plans should include a scheduled itinerary, notification of appropriate parties, communication arrangements, contingencies in case of foul weather or equipment failure, and emergency response options.
- **Preparation.** Provide participants with lists of personal gear and arrange for group equipment and supplies. Organize safe transport of gear and participants to and from the site, including shuttles if the take-out location varies from the put-in. Follow state and local regulations, and obtain permission to use or cross private property. Select a route appropriate for the group, check water levels, and determine alternative pull-out locations. Consult those who have traveled the route recently.



OTHER SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

All groups need to check the paddling location for fixed hazards (rocks, current, bottom conditions, fishing hooks, trees, etc.) and mobile hazards (other people, other watercraft, weather conditions). Be sure to choose protected sites. All paddlers must wear life jackets. Closed-toe shoes will protect feet from blisters in the boat and foot injuries outside the boat. Be sure that adequate instructor-to-student ratios are maintained and that groups aren't excessively separated. During float trips, have experienced paddlers familiar with the route in lead and sweep boats.



- **Float Plan.** Complete the preparation by writing a detailed itinerary, or float plan, noting put-in and pull-out locations and waypoints, along with the approximate time the group should arrive at each. Travel time should be estimated generously.

Sample Float Plan (Different formats may be used, but should include all relevant information.)

MEMBERS		AGE	Check if currently trained in:			
			Safe Swim	Safety Afloat	CPR	First Aid
Trip leader:						
1. _____		___	()	()	()	()
Assistant leader:						
2. _____		___	()	()	()	()
3. _____		___	()	()	()	()
4. _____		___	()	()	()	()
Youth members:						
5. _____		___				
6. _____		___				
7. _____		___				
8. _____		___				
9. _____		___				
10. _____		___				
11. _____		___				
12. _____		___				
13. _____		___				
14. _____		___				

ITINERARY

Date: _____ Start at: _____ Via: _____ Overnight: _____

CONTACT INFO—Names and numbers or radio info for:

Party: _____

Emergency services: _____

Emergency contacts: _____

TRANSPORTATION

Automobiles: _____ Boats: _____

Number: _____ Type: _____

License: _____ Registration: _____

Parked at: _____ Rented from: _____

NOTES

Carry float plan with health histories, consent forms, and required permits. Leave copies with contacts.

- **Notification.** File the float plan with parents, the local council office, and local authorities as appropriate. Assign a member of the unit committee to alert authorities if prearranged check-ins are overdue. Make sure everyone is promptly notified when the trip is concluded.
- **Weather.** Check the weather forecast just before setting out, and keep an alert weather eye. Anticipate changes and bring all craft ashore when rough weather threatens. Wait at least 30 minutes before resuming activities after the last incidence of thunder or lightning.

- **Contingencies.** Planning must identify possible emergencies and other circumstances that could force a change of plans. Develop alternative plans for each situation. Identify local emergency resources such as EMS systems, sheriff's departments, or ranger stations. Check your primary communication system, and identify backups, such as the nearest residence to a campsite. Cellphones and radios may lose coverage, run out of power, or suffer water damage.

- Equipment.** All equipment must be suited to the activity, the water conditions, and the individual. Equipment must be in good repair and meet all applicable standards. Appropriate rescue equipment must be available. Safety helmets are needed for whitewater paddling. During treks, safety gear such as navigation aids, weather radios, individual signal devices, throw bags, first-aid kits, spare paddles, and spare clothing should be carried. Gear should be stowed to prevent loss and water damage.
- Discipline.** Scouts must know and respect the rules, and always follow instructions from the adults supervising the activity afloat. Rules and safety procedures should be reviewed before each group launch.





PADDLE SPORTS GAMES

Life Jacket Relay

Equipment: Several life jackets of the same style in various sizes

How to play: This is a relay where teams compete to put on a life jacket properly. Teams form lines equidistant from a stack of life jackets at the center of an arc. The first member of each team runs to the pile, puts on a life jacket, adjusts the straps, has the fit checked by an adult or senior patrol leader, takes it off, drops it back on the pile, and runs to tag the next team member.

Scoring: First team to have all of its members wear a life jacket correctly wins.

Paddle Course

Equipment: Large paper cups, chairs, paddles or foam pool noodles, tape

How to play: Create a paddle course similar to the one in the diagram below. As paddlers go through the course, they must use paddle strokes to hit the cups in the right direction and in order. Place cups on chairs if using a kayak paddle or pool noodle and on taped marks on the floor if using an SUP paddle.

Scoring: This is a timed race. Five-second penalties are given for hitting the cups out of order or in the wrong direction. If time allows,

let everyone take a slow practice run to better understand how a real boat would react to the paddle motions.

Name That Part

Equipment: One or more identical paddlecraft, cards with parts of the boat color-coded by team

How to play: Teams are stationed equidistant from one or more boats. The first member draws a card, runs to the boat, places the card on the correct part of the boat, runs back, and tags the next member to draw a card.

Scoring: First team to successfully place all the cards wins.

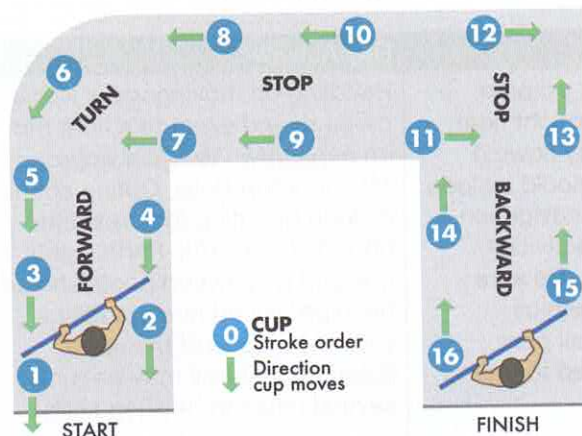
Dress for Success

Equipment: Duffel bag for each team, full of proper paddling apparel (including life jackets, footwear, etc.) and apparel not suitable for a paddling outing (flip-flops, cutoff jeans, cotton hoodies, etc.); four cards identifying the type of paddling (cold water, spring/fall, summer, and worst outfit)

How to play: A card is drawn, and each team has 60 seconds to find the best outfit for that type of paddling and have one member put it on. Have the group debrief as to what they chose and why.

Scoring: Have a judge determine which group chose the best outfit.

Note: A modification of this game puts all the equipment in one big pile at the far end of the room; each member races up to get one piece of clothing.





E.D.G.E. Ideas

Explain how it is done—Tell them.

Demonstrate the steps—Show them.

Guide learners as they practice—Watch them do it.

Enable them to succeed on their own—Have them practice/teach it.

EXPLAIN

- Explain how life jackets save lives, how various styles support different activities, what information is on the label, and when to discard them.
- Discuss the need to carry boats to and from the water, from lake to lake, or around river hazards.
- Discuss trim and stability as essentials for good paddling.
- Explain strokes used for different maneuvers, such as going straight, turning, and side slipping.

GUIDE

- Have Scouts select and put on properly sized life jackets and paddles. Let buddies check fit.
- Have Scouts practice unloading and carrying boats.
- Have Scouts board boats and test stability (e.g., three points of contact in a canoe; J-leans for kayaks; prone, kneeling, and standing positions for stand up paddleboards).
- Have Scouts practice individual strokes.

DEMONSTRATE

- Show how to properly fit a life jacket.
- Demonstrate proper boarding of selected paddlecraft, trim, stability, and effective paddling positions.
- Demonstrate individual strokes and their effect on the boat.

ENABLE

- Observe life jacket function during capsize drills.
- Observe Scouts transporting boats to water and portaging where needed.
- If poor practices are observed, ask the Scout involved to explain what should be done differently and why.
- Use games and courses to foster stroke selection and execution for maneuvers.

MAIN EVENT SUMMARIES

● ESSENTIAL	■ CHALLENGING	◆ ADVANCED
Day Activity A day of paddling—Spend a day on the water learning and practicing basic paddling skills with qualified instructors. This may be a day excursion to a local park or an afternoon set aside during a weekend campout near a lake. Kayaking BSA and BSA SUP awards may be earned. For canoeing, the activity can be an introduction to or review of the Canoeing merit badge skills.	Overnight Activity Paddling trip—Plan, prepare, and execute an overnight float trip on calm or gently flowing water. This outing should include paddling, camping, navigation, and possibly other activities such as geocaching. Be sure to practice outdoor ethics techniques. Ideally, all gear should be transported to the campsite by boat.	Day Activity Paddling on moving water—Plan, prepare, and execute a float trip on moving/white water appropriate for group skills. Outing should include Scouting features and portaging hazards. Participants in the lead and sweep boats should be experienced river paddlers with knowledge of the route. Selected features may be run several times to develop skills.



PADDLE SPORTS

Meeting Plan: Safety Afloat and Equipment



Week 1 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	As Scouts arrive, show internet videos of Olympic canoeing competitions.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Introduce the paddle sports program feature and preview the main event.Conduct a Safety Afloat overview; a "Jeopardy!"-style quiz provides a fun review.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Learn or review the purpose of a life jacket.Learn or review how to select a life jacket.Learn or review how to fasten a life jacket.Learn or review how to check the fit of a life jacket.Select, put on, fasten, and check the fit of a life jacket.		7:30 p.m.
Breakout Groups 20 minutes	For the main event, discuss the skill level needed and make a list of group and personal equipment.		7:50 p.m.
Game 15 minutes	Play Life Jacket Relay (described earlier).		8:10 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.






PADDLE SPORTS

Meeting Plan: Paddling Basics



Week 2 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Play Dizzy Paddle Standoff. In pairs, Scouts run up to two paddles lying on the ground a short distance away. Each Scout stands a paddle on the tip, butts their nose near the grip, and spins seven times. The first player to return to the starting point wins.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide an overview of how wind, weather, and waves affect paddlers.• Describe appropriate dress for various paddling conditions.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 30 minutes	 View a video of the basic strokes and how to handle a capsize for the craft selected for the main event.		7:25 p.m.
	 View a video of basic strokes and how to handle a capsize.		
	 View a video of river paddling skills (ferries, eddy turns, peel outs) and river features.		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan group duty roster for the main event.• Update the individual equipment list for the main event.		7:55 p.m.
Game 15 minutes	Run the Paddle Course (described earlier).		8:10 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team review plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



PADDLE SPORTS

Meeting Plan: Emergency Planning



Week 3 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Demonstrate commercial and/or homemade versions of containers for keeping supplies dry in canoes.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 15 minutes	Discuss the most common injuries that occur while paddling, how to avoid them, and how to treat them.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 35 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss hazards for the main event and what to do to avoid and respond to emergencies (for example, when thunder is heard).• Discuss why you should stay with the boat in case of a capsize.• Discuss the HELP and huddle positions.• Learn and practice throwing a rescue bag for accuracy.		7:25 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the above topics as they relate to the main event. For example, discuss what to do if a heavy rainstorm floods the campsite and the lake level is visibly rising.• Learn and practice throwing a rescue bag for accuracy.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the above topics for the main event.• Review a map of the river route, identifying locations of hazards and alternate take-out locations.• Learn and practice throwing a rescue bag for accuracy.		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine main and alternate communication systems for getting emergency help during the main event.• Continue planning for group participation in the main event.		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Name That Part (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event. Make plans for swim tests if members haven't had them within the past year.		

*All times are suggested.


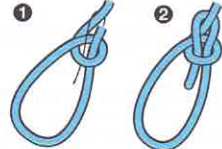


PADDLE SPORTS

Meeting Plan: Transportation and Logistics



Week 4 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Conduct a shakedown of personal gear for the main event.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 10 minutes	Explain and demonstrate the proper way to load a canoe, kayak, and stand up paddleboard on a cartop and trailer.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 40 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn the basic techniques and materials for transporting paddlecraft on a trailer or cartop rack, including straps, bungees, and ropes. Learn and practice the following knots: Trucker's hitch   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn proper boat-carrying techniques. 		7:20 p.m.
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	Complete a detailed trip plan for the upcoming main event.		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Dress for Success (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



PADDLE SPORTS

Main Event: A Day of Paddling



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: 4 to 8 hours

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____

Float plan: Completed _____ Submitted _____

Essential (Tier I)

Spend a day on the water learning and practicing basic paddling skills. Use local guidebooks and experienced paddlers to identify a location in your area for a flatwater canoe, kayak, or stand up paddleboard training activity. Work on requirements for Kayaking BSA or SUP BSA awards or Canoeing merit badge as time allows. Be sure to include both fun games and individual practice time to build boat sense and skills. Basic training should be in a small defined area free of other boat traffic and within easy view of a lookout on shore. Depending on the unit's previous experience, the activity may conclude with a short round trip or feature of a longer trip after a brief skill review.

Equipment List

- Canoes, kayaks, or SUPs
- Appropriate apparel, including footwear, for weather conditions and potential or planned capsize
- Paddles of appropriate sizes for all paddlers, plus spares
- Life jackets of appropriate sizes for all paddlers
- First-aid kit and rescue equipment
- Water-protected cellphones (for adults, check coverage)
- Lunch (this can be a group lunch event)
- Dry bags for extra gear while on the water
- Drinking water
- Sunscreen
- Scout Basic Essentials (Review the list and take what you need.)

Activity

- Identify the local body of water for the activity.
- Travel to put-in location with equipment, if not provided at the location.
- Pair experienced and inexperienced members as buddies.
- Check life jacket fit and review safety rules just prior to launch.
- Introduce and refine skills for launching, trim, paddling, and capsize as appropriate.
- Use games and course to practice maneuvers.
- Go on a short paddling trip, practicing proper paddling etiquette and group management.
- Return to the starting point and load up for the trip home.

Safety

- Follow all Safety Afloat procedures. Identify and mitigate hazards. Confirm your ability to communicate with emergency services. Those who have not passed the BSA swimmer classification must be buddied with a skilled adult swimmer in a multiperson boat. Always use the buddy system.
- Two-deep adult leadership is required for all activities.

Notes

Parents wishing to participate in the event must follow the same procedures as Scouts with regard to swimming ability, life jacket use, and all other aspects of Safety Afloat. Do not assume that adults will have stronger boating skills than the youth. It may be more successful to pair a new Scout with another Scout who has earned the Canoeing or Kayaking merit badge rather than a parent with no previous boating skill. The unskilled parent will also benefit from having a skilled adult as a buddy. That procedure also makes it easier to trim tandem boats.



PADDLE SPORTS

Main Event: Overnight Paddling Trip



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: Overnight

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____

Float plan: Completed _____ Submitted _____

Challenging (Tier II)

Plan, prepare, and execute an overnight float trip on calm or gently flowing water. This outing should include paddling, camping, navigation, and possibly other activities like geocaching. Be sure to practice outdoor ethics techniques. Ideally, all gear should be transported to the campsite by boat.

Equipment List

- Canoes, kayaks, or SUPs
- Water-protected cellphones (for adults, check coverage)
- Paddles of appropriate sizes for all paddlers, plus spares
- Dry bags for gear transport
- Life jackets of appropriate sizes for all paddlers
- First-aid kit and rescue equipment
- Group and individual camping gear and food
- Drinking water
- Sunscreen
- Scout Basic Essentials (Review the list and take what you need.)
- Appropriate apparel, including footwear, for weather conditions and potential or planned capsizes

Activity

- Choose your on-water trip location, including the campsite, and plan a campout.
- Review equipment needs and confirm all is available.
- Meet and travel to put-in location. Load boats.
- Pair experienced and inexperienced members as buddies.
- Check life jacket fit and review safety rules just prior to launch.
- Paddle to camp, set up camp, prepare meals, have campfire programs, etc.
- Plan time to work on paddling skills and potentially complete requirements for paddling awards or merit badges.
- Consider adding outdoor activities like geocaching.
- Plan a service project to clean up part of the riverbank or campsite.
- Pack up camp and equipment, and paddle to the take-out location.

Safety

- Follow all Safety Afloat procedures. Identify and mitigate hazards. Confirm your ability to communicate with emergency services. Those who have not passed the BSA swimmer classification must be buddied with a skilled adult swimmer in a multiperson boat. Keep participant boats between lead and sweep boats with experienced paddlers. Practice campsite safety. Always use the buddy system.
- Two-deep adult leadership is required for all activities.

Notes

Properly load gear in or on boats to prevent loss during potential capsizes. This is particularly important for stand up paddleboards with the gear carried on deck.



PADDLE SPORTS

Main Event: Paddling on Moving Water



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: Day or overnight

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____

Float plan: Completed _____ Submitted _____



Advanced (Tier III)

Plan, prepare, and execute a float trip on moving/white water appropriate for the skills of the group. Operation of any boat on a float trip is limited to youth and adults who have completed the BSA swimmer classification test. Those who have not passed the BSA swimmer classification must be buddied with a skilled adult swimmer in a multiperson boat. The outing should include Scouting features and portaging hazards. Participants in lead and sweep boats should be experienced river paddlers with knowledge of the route. Selected features may be run several times to develop skills.

Equipment List

- Canoes or kayaks suitable for moving water
- Paddles of appropriate sizes for all paddlers, plus spares
- Life jackets of appropriate sizes for all paddlers
- Helmets
- River maps and guidebooks
- Appropriate apparel, including footwear
- First-aid kit and rescue equipment
- Drinking water
- Sunscreen
- Scout Basic Essentials (Review the list and take what you need.)
- Food and overnight gear as appropriate

Activity

- Carefully choose a river within the capability of the group. Include the expected flow level.
- Review equipment and shuttle needs.
- Meet and travel to put-in location. Load boats.
- Pair experienced and inexperienced members as buddies.
- Review river route and locations of known hazards with all participants.
- Check life jacket fit and review safety rules just prior to launch.
- Keep participant boats between lead and sweep boats with experienced paddlers familiar with the river.
- When in doubt, get out and scout.
- Plan time to work on paddling skills; for example, practice ferries and eddy turns multiple times at good locations.

Safety

- Follow all Safety Afloat procedures. Identify and mitigate hazards. Confirm your ability to communicate with emergency services. Practice campsite safety. Always use the buddy system.
- Two-deep adult leadership is required for all activities.

Notes

Trips such as this are often highlights of a youth's Scouting adventure. However, proper preparation under skilled guidance is needed. Ideally, units should participate in Tier I and Tier II paddling events as a progression to Tier III. A unit that has its first exposure to paddle sports through this program feature is not ready. A skilled paddler can navigate moving water in a stand up paddleboard, but units should only consider that option if trained in whitewater SUP use by an instructor certified in that specialty.



RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Books and DVDs

Camping, Canoeing, First Aid, Geocaching, Kayaking, Sustainability, Swimming, Whitewater, and Wilderness Survival merit badge pamphlets

Aquatics Supervision Guide (SKU 621005). Boy Scouts of America. Be sure to consult the latest printing.

Fieldbook

Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys
Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls

American Canoe Association. *Canoeing* (Outdoor Adventures). Human Kinetics, 2008. (Includes *Quickstart Your Canoe* DVD.)

American Canoe Association. *Kayaking* (Outdoor Adventures). Human Kinetics, 2009. (Includes *Quickstart Your Kayak* DVD.)

American Canoe Association and Boy Scouts of America. *Reading the Rhythms of Rivers and Rapids* DVD, 2016; No. 430-605. For a free copy, contact BSA Outdoor Programs (telephone 972-580-2292) or the American Canoe Association (www.americancanoe.org/general/custom.asp?page=BSADVD).

Levin, Lon. *Basic Illustrated Canoe Paddling* (Basic Essentials Series). FalconGuides, 2008.

Marcus, Ben. *The Art of Stand Up Paddling: A Complete Guide to SUP on Lakes, Rivers, and Oceans* (How to Paddle Series). FalconGuides, 2012.

Roberts, Harry. *Basic Illustrated Canoe Paddling* (Basic Essentials Series). FalconGuides, 2008.

Websites

American Canoe Association

Website: www.americancanoe.org

BSA Aquatics

Website: www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/aquatics/

Northern Tier

Website: www.ntier.org

Paddling.com

Website: www.paddling.com

USA Canoe/Kayak

Website: www.teamusa.org/USA-Canoe-Kayak.aspx

Related Program Features

Camping, First Aid, Geocaching, Outdoor Ethics, Sustainability, Swimming, Wilderness Survival

Photo and Illustration Credits

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