



## *Canoeing Ireland Club Pack*



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# ***A basic guide to the Fundamentals Required to Establishing and Developing a Canoe Club in Ireland***

This booklet is a publication of the Training & Development Unit of the Canoeing Ireland. It has been developed to help with the work involved in setting up a new club for Canoesport. We hope this guide will be of use to you and your club. If you have any further questions or even just idling thoughts please do not hesitate to contact the Canoeing Ireland office.



## **What do we have here?**

- How to start about setting up a club
- What considerations must be made about members?
- What equipment and training will be required by your club?
- What is the Canoeing Ireland (CANOEING IRELAND)?
- A look at the CANOEING IRELAND Awards Scheme...
- How about you're SAFETY?
- What are good paddling conditions?
- What type of paddling can I do in Ireland?
- Meet the CANOEING IRELAND Training & Development Unit...

## **What help is this guide?**

Clubs play a key role in encouraging sports participation and development both at local and national level across the spectrum of sports available in Ireland. It is hoped that by providing such a resource as this booklet that the formation of a successful kayak/canoe club will be that much easier and more efficient, meaning more time on the water for all.



## **Forming a Club...**

Usually the formation of a club starts around an individual or a group of individuals who are already involved in paddlesports. In some cases friends, family, onlookers or work



colleagues may have shown an interest in the trying out canoeing and at the point where curiosity gets the better of them existing paddlers may feel that there is enough interest in the locality to form a club from the existing and the prospective paddlers. It is now that the work begins...

## **Membership**

If you are forming a new club from scratch it is a good idea to start with a small group of members, maybe eight to ten. These numbers are easier to cater for in terms of ratios for trips when starting out, but sufficient enough to elect a committee and delegate club duties. If the club is already formed and are hoping to inject new life into the club there are a number of ways in which new members can be attracted:



- Staging of 'come and try sessions' for the general public
- Advertising of club activities in local media
- Distribution of a club newsletter through existing members to prospective members

## **Always remember that all Club Members are entitled to:**

- Be safe
- Participate in sporting activities on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability and stage of development
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Have fun and enjoy sport
- Comment and make suggestions in the constructive manner
- Make a complaint in an appropriate way and have it dealt with through an effective complaints procedure
- Be afforded appropriate confidentiality
- Be represented at decision-making bodies/meetings within their sports clubs
- Have a voice in the running of their club
- Be listened to

## **Administration**

Hold an AGM/Appoint Officers/Draw up a Club Constitution/Register the Club.

The first official task in the formation of a new club is the holding of an Annual General Meeting (AGM). At this meeting a title for the club is decided and more importantly a committee is selected to help with the maintenance and running of the club. The committee members need to be chosen from the future members present, the committee ratified and a club constitution adopted. A list of committee members might be as follows:

Chairperson	Training Officer
Treasurer	Safety Officer
Secretary	Equipment Officer

In order for a club to be appropriately administered and regulated, it is usual to have a club constitution. This is often a prerequisite of many grant aid bodies and key funding programmes. A club constitution should be a simple document that outlines the functions





of the club, procedures for membership, meetings and committees. Having a constitution will help to clarify how the club's procedures should work for all the club's members. Some canoe clubs in Ireland will have their constitution and membership forms on their websites, which you can look at before drawing up such documents for your own club. The CANOEING IRELAND office can also supply generic versions of such documents.

### Equipment.

As most paddlers progress become more committed to the sport they will begin to acquire their own paddling equipment. This equipment will usually consist predominantly of a helmet, a wetsuit, a cagoule (cag or dry top) and wetsuit boots; these will keep them warm and make the winter paddling experience much more pleasurable.

As paddlers progress further again they will begin acquiring a buoyancy aid, spray deck, paddles and canoe/kayak, however, for beginners it may take some time to acquire all the pieces of equipment and it can be helpful to have sets of club gear for specific purposes of giving to beginners. This is one of the main areas that will have a drastic effect on whether or not the club can develop or grow. If the club wishes to expand, a supply of club gear is essential to allow people to get a better appreciation of the sport. A typical club equipment list would consist of club gear for general use and safety equipment e.g. throw ropes, slings, cow tails.



Clubs may require a trailer to transport the boats, but they may not be necessary if people have roof racks or access to water on site. Small trailers can be built at local ironworks or old trailers can often be converted to suit the club's transport needs.

A good idea when it comes to buying some club gear for the first time is to seek advice from other clubs and paddlers before investing. If there is an outdoor adventure centre in your locality, it will have a supply of basic but hardwearing gear suitable for beginners and club use, which is usually changed on a regular basis and equipment in good condition, can often be purchased second hand. It is important to remember that members should always look towards buying their own equipment if they choose to continue in the sport, this will help them to progress and also will allow for new beginners to enjoy the club equipment. If a club is in a position to purchase new equipment then a trip to the local outdoor shop is always enjoyable. There are various outdoor shops located throughout the country all providing various levels of service and broad selections of paddlesports products. A good idea when looking to buy new gear is to seek advice from other clubs, paddlers or from the CANOEING IRELAND. In the case of canoes/kayaks it is often possible to get a 'DEMO' boat to try out and gauge its suitability.



### Note:

**There are safety regulations on all outdoor equipment especially helmets, buoyancy aids and rescue equipment. Make sure they have the correct safety standards approval (CE Standard). If unsure seek advice from the professionals.**



### Recognising potential leaders and instructors

Your club will need paddlers who are willing and able to lead other members on club trips and other outings. There are certain skills and safety aspects they should be aware of if they take on the role of leader. To help with this the CANOEING IRELAND has developed instructional qualifications as part of the Training Coaching & Accreditation Scheme. These instructor qualifications prepare individuals to teach and lead groups of paddlers on varying grades of water.



Deciding on the type of waters your club operates on you will have to decide on what level of instructor is most useful and effective for your club. There are various levels of instructor qualifications to suit the needs of any club. The central pages of this guide show two illustrated montages, these are a guide to the proficiency and instructor awards offered by the CANOEING IRELAND. The awards themselves are intended to flow similar to the manner in which they are displayed allowing people to develop as paddlers through the training provided. The different levels of proficiency and instructorship allow people to take on more challenging and difficult trips as they develop themselves. In the end the Training Coaching & Accreditation Scheme is designed as an aid to your development as a paddler and to help all paddlers develop in a fun and safe environment.

### Club facilities

A club can operate at a number of different levels, it could quite simply be a 'roof rack' club meaning that members store their own boats/equipment, provide their own transportation and meet at designated rivers/harbours/etc... to go paddling. The next step up from a 'roof rack' club is a club that has its own storage facilities and possibly a supply of club equipment. This could be located close to or on a riverbank, canal bank or harbour area. This aspect of the club is important in developing the club further and attracting future members, in order to have a base from which to run training sessions (e.g. introduction to paddling courses/evenings) and club trips. At the top of the scale would be a club with a fully fledged club house offering changing facilities, meeting rooms, boat storage, etc... This is possible when a site is obtained and fundraising or sponsorship enables construction to go ahead. This is the desired situation for most clubs; however finances and acquisition of suitable sites can be difficult. If you are interested in pursuing such a development you should contact Canoeing Ireland, the Irish Sports Council, National Lottery, your local county council and other funding agencies to see what funding may be available.



### Children in the Club

Children are a very important part of sporting life in Ireland and represent the future of your club. While paddlesports clubs in general do not attract many people under the age of 12 years, clubs and in particular leaders should always strive to interact positively with children, enhancing the child's involvement and enjoyment of the sporting activity and promoting the welfare of the participant.

When working with children Sports Leaders are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with young participants. All Leaders should operate to the club's agreed code of conduct, which emphasises enjoyment, equality, fair play and the general well being of young people.

The Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland is in place to ensure that best practice is being followed by sports club. To further ensure this all sports clubs should adopt and implement the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland as an integral part of its policy on children in the club. A copy of the Code is available on the Irish Sport Council website ([www.irishsportscouncil.ie](http://www.irishsportscouncil.ie))

### Removing Barriers to Disabilities

Canoeing is a sport that is suitable for practically everybody. Many people with a wide range of disabilities go canoeing everyday. A recent highlight being the terrific performances of the Irish Special Olympics team in the 2003 World Games in Ireland



### Considerations:

Asking people about their disability and what they can or can't do is a good start, that way you can begin to tune into their needs and make any adaptations that are necessary, if any are in fact necessary.

#### *Some more specific considerations:*

Have they got access to suitable transport? Is the location suitable for the participants to move around without difficulty? Are the changing facilities adequate? What to wear? Is wetsuit suitable? A lot of difficult to get into, they can circulation and cause pressure aids with a zip up can often on than the overhead ones. with a neck collar can give to some people. Boats should for their participants? Where canoes can be used. In all exit during capsized is an consideration. Do any have medication at hand



Most considerations involved are those that should be taken into account with all groups anyway. To find out more about canoeing with people with special needs get in touch with the Disability Awareness Officer in the CANOEING IRELAND or get Geoff Smedley's book 'Canoeing for Disabled People'.



## Canoeing Ireland.

Canoeing Ireland is the National Governing Body of paddlesports in Ireland. The Canoeing Ireland undertakes the responsibility of managing and developing services for the sport in this country. Their responsibilities include a whole range of activities from organising national competitions and selecting teams to developing training courses for coaches and officials. Canoeing Ireland supports paddlesports at a local level by providing guidance to clubs on issues such as health and safety, supply of equipment and so on.

By being affiliated to Canoeing Ireland, you can enter Canoeing Ireland run competitions, train and qualify as instructors and coaches, and be part of a bigger picture which enables you to access wider support. Affiliation has an associated cost, but assuming your club and its members are serious about starting a club and developing paddle sports in your area, it does bring benefits.

### The Structure of the Canoeing Ireland

The affairs of the Canoeing Ireland are managed by an annually elected Board which has overriding authority in all matters

**Canoeing Ireland Board** The Canoeing Ireland Board is elected annually at an Annual General Meeting. The Board delegates its responsibility to a number of specialist committees as listed below. The Chairperson of each committee are elected at their respective AGM's and represent their discipline on the Board.

Board Composition	
<b>Executive</b>	President Chairperson Treasurer Secretary Member Member
<b>Officers</b>	Training & Development Marathon Racing Sprint Wild Water Racing Canoe Slalom Canoe Polo Canoe Surfing Freestyle

**The Executive Committee:** - Responsible for the financial and administrative affairs of the Union as a whole. The Executive is responsible for the day-to-day general administration of the Union, employment of staff, and the achievement of Canoe Union policies and objectives.

**Specialist Competitive & Technical Committees:** - The Executive delegates its responsibilities to a number of specialist committees, who are authorised to act in all matters connected with their own branch of the sport, and to draft regulations for the proper management of their discipline. The specialist committees are:

Marathon Racing  
Canoe Slalom  
Canoe Polo  
Freestyle

Sprint Racing  
Wild Water Racing  
Canoe Surfing  
Training & Development

### Training & Development

The Canoeing Ireland's Training and Development Unit through its countrywide network of qualified instructors is responsible for the promotion of recreational canoeing in all its forms throughout Ireland. The Training and Development Committee is the annually elected representative body of the Training and Development Unit. It is responsible for the management of the training, development, promotion, and administration of the Union's Training, Coaching & Accreditation Scheme and for the improvement of canoeing standards. The Committee comprises the following positions:

Chairman  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Safety Officer  
PRO & Club Liaison  
Kayak Officer  
Sea Kayaking Officer  
Canoe Officer  
Coaching Officer  
Youth Officer

The Chairman of the Training and Development Committee is also a member of the Canoeing Ireland Management Board.

### Administration of the Union's Training, Coaching & Accreditation Scheme: -

One of the main objectives of the Training Committee is the promotion of the Training, Coaching & Accreditation Scheme. This Scheme, with its emphasis on safety, training, and development is based upon the achievement of successive levels of personal proficiency and instructional and leadership skills. The Scheme is broadly divided into three categories based on the type of craft being used. The categories are Kayaking, Canoeing and Sea Kayaking. There are personal proficiency awards and instructional qualification in each category. A system of training and registration exists for those instructors interested in running proficiency courses and assessments while for higher level personal proficiency and Instructor courses and assessments a Panel system operates which is revised on an annual basis. All trainees instructors must be registered with the Training and Development Unit.

The main aim and goals of the Training & Development Unit are

- To promote the Award Scheme
- To keep up with new developments and modern teaching practices
- To propose changes and develop new courses where needed
- To arbitrate in the event of disputes
- To continue to assist in the development of an integrated Coaching Scheme
- To promote the further training of club canoeists
- To develop a range of materials to help in the development of Canoe Clubs





- To provide a forum for members contributions e.g. Newsletter /Website
- To ensure a consistency of courses and assessments
- To organise various workshops, such as Instructor Refresher
- To design and develop a Course Provider Pack
- To actively promote and review safety issues
- To set up a means of communicating problems and possible solutions
- To promote further youth participation on training courses
- To develop a system of licensing Course Providers to ensure consistency and quality assurance
- To produce canoeing safety guidelines for clubs and general users
- To produce canoeing safety guidelines and operational standards for canoeing in Outdoor Centres

These aims and objectives are to be achieved through

- Through the Canoe Union's Training Officer
- through its network of instructors
- through training courses
- through the production of resource material relating to canoeing safety
- through the Union's Safety Officer

### Safety & First Aid

Paddlesports in Ireland are wide and varied encompassing competitive disciplines as well as activities considered adventure sports. As with all activities where water is involved safety is paramount and we must always remember to keep things safe and fun for all involved. For this reason it is the responsibility of all involved to ensure that they are provide the necessary safety cover to keep their activities in the comfort zone. The Training & Development Unit uses the catchphrase "Safety through Training" to describe a philosophy which can help you and your club develop in an adventurous but safe atmosphere. For this reason the CANOEING IRELAND has included many aspects of safety awareness in the proficiency awards scheme appropriate to each proficiency level. It has also developed the instructor awards to allow people to teach and lead others having been suitably trained and assessed. Further to these the Training & Development Unit has developed River Safety and Rescue Courses in order to help people to undertake training in safety and rescue techniques suitable for a river environment without having to go through the proficiency award scheme. There are two courses available, which are aimed at developing paddler's safety and rescue skills for different grades of river environment. The aims of these courses include:



- Developing an understanding of safety/rescue protocols
- Developing an understanding of the correct and appropriate equipment
- Executing self rescue
- Rescuing of others in various river conditions



- Recovery of equipment in various river conditions

It is advisable for all paddlers to have minimum first aid knowledge. All instructors are required to have a first aid qualification that is recognised by the CANOEING IRELAND in order for their instructorship award to be valid. Instructors must keep their first aid qualification up to date as the validity of their instructorship award will lapse with that of their first aid qualification.

A list of approved first aid courses is available from the CANOEING IRELAND office. The training Committee reviews courses in order to ensure that they train you in how to deal with injuries that may occur in water based activity where weather and environmental conditions can have a significant effect. If you wish to have a course accepted for CANOEING IRELAND purposes then feel free submit a syllabus to the CANOEING IRELAND office for review.







# Personal Proficiency Awards

Within the Training, Coaching & Accreditation Scheme there are five levels of Personal Proficiency Awards - starting with the Introductory Level 1 - for each of the three categories of canoeing – River Kayaking, Sea Kayaking and Open Canoeing. The awards provide pathways for improving and increasing a canoeist's range of skills and techniques in response to increasingly more difficult water environments. The different levels are colour coded from yellow to black to assist identification.

Levels	<b>1</b> Introductory	<b>2</b> Basic	<b>3</b> Intermediate	<b>4</b> Advanced	<b>5</b> Advanced Techniques & Rescue
River Kayaking	<b>Level 1 Kayak Proficiency</b> This is your first introduction to kayaking. Contains elementary strokes and techniques. Takes place under very controlled conditions.	<b>Level 2 Kayak Proficiency</b> This level provides you with the first structured training which will enable you to undertake simple trips as part of a supervised group on flat or Grade I water.	<b>Level 3 Kayak Proficiency</b> This is an important level to aim for - its intermediate level skills will allow you participate more fully in club trips on rivers up to Grade II.	<b>Level 4 Kayak Proficiency</b> This level equates to the skills and techniques required to competently undertake trips on white water during the winter months.	<b>Level 5 Kayak Proficiency</b> Level 5 canoeists have highly developed advanced white water leading skills and can also undertake rescues in extreme conditions.
Sea Kayaking	<b>Level 1 Sea Proficiency</b> The strokes and techniques learned on this award are the same as the Level 1 Kayak Proficiency Award and again takes place under very controlled conditions.	<b>Level 2 Sea Proficiency</b> Similar to the Level 2 Kayak Proficiency Award. This award focuses on the skills required to journey in very sheltered sea areas as part of a supervised group.	<b>Level 3 Sea Proficiency</b> This level introduces you to the skills required to journey in accessible coastal areas in light to moderate wind conditions as part of a supervised group.	<b>Level 4 Sea Proficiency</b> This level equates to the skills and techniques required to take part in sea journeys accompanied by more experienced sea kayakers	<b>Level 5 Sea Proficiency</b> For those who journey on the open sea. Includes route planning, rescue and leading skills for advanced sea and weather conditions
Open Canoeing	<b>Level 1 Canoe Proficiency</b> This is your introduction to open canoeing and contains elementary canoeing skills and techniques.	<b>Level 2 Canoe Proficiency</b> This is for those who have mastered the skills and techniques required to handle a canoe on flat water.	<b>Level 3 Canoe Proficiency</b> Successful performance at this level indicates an individual's competence to canoe on Grade II rivers.	<b>Level 4 Canoe Proficiency</b> Attained by those who have reached a level of competency whereby they can journey with groups of similar ability on rivers of Grade II+.	<b>Level 5 Canoe Proficiency</b> Equates to the competency required to canoe at the highest level and involves route finding and rescue in advanced white water conditions.





# Instructor & Coach Qualifications

There are five levels of Instructor and four levels of Coach Qualifications. The first four levels of the instructional qualifications relate to an individual's competence and experience to take charge of and instruct groups in progressively more challenging water environments. A Level 5 Instructor qualification holder has extensive experience, knowledge, and ability to train and assess for the advanced awards and qualifications. The coach qualifications are intended for those interested in coaching others in competitive canoeing.

## Levels

1

2

3

4

5

## Kayak Instructor

**Level 1 Kayak Instructor**  
Level 1 Kayak Instructors are qualified to instruct kayaking on flat water. They are specifically not qualified to journey.

**Level 2 Kayak Instructor**  
Level 2 Kayak Instructors are competent to instruct and lead journeys on flat water. They can prepare participants for low level competition.

**Level 3 Kayak Instructor**  
Qualified to instruct and lead on moving water. They have an important developmental role in training and assessing in clubs and outdoor centres.

**Level 4 Kayak Instructor**  
Qualified to instruct and lead on advanced white water. They have an important developmental role in training and assessing for the more advanced awards.

**Level 5 Kayak Instructor**  
Have considerable river kayaking experience. Involved in programme design. Also the training and assessing of all levels of instructor qualifications.

## Sea Kayak Instructor

**Level 1 Sea Instructor**  
Is the same qualification as the Level 1 Kayak Instructor. On the sea, the Level 1 Sea Instructor is confined to instructing within harbours.

**Level 2 Sea Instructor**  
Qualified to lead groups in non tidal areas and sheltered coastlines. Level 2 Sea Instructors cannot lead groups in winds above Force 3.

**Level 3 Sea Instructor**  
Qualified to instruct and lead groups close to accessible coastlines that do not involve tidal races or overfalls.

**Level 4 Sea Instructor**  
Qualified to instruct and lead groups on open sea crossings and areas where there are tidal races or overfalls.

**Level 5 Sea Instructor**  
Has indepth knowledge and experience of sea kayaking and closely involved in its development.

## Canoe Instructor

**Level 1 Canoe Instructor**  
Level 1 Canoe Instructors are qualified to instruct canoeing under very controlled situations.

**Level 2 Canoe Instructor**  
Level 2 Canoe Instructors are qualified to instruct and lead on slow moving water or designated lake areas.

**Level 3 Canoe Instructor**  
The Level 3 Canoe Instructor is qualified to lead and instruct on water up to Grade II and lakes.

**Level 4 Canoe Instructor**  
Qualified to instruct and lead on advanced white water journeys and inland waters. Have an important role in developing open canoeing.

**Level 5 Canoe Instructor**  
Has indepth knowledge and experience of open canoeing and closely involved in its development.

## Coach

**Level 1 Coach**  
Equates to a club level coach who introduces and prepares participants for low level competition canoeing.

**Level 2 Coach**  
At this level a coach specialises in the competitive discipline of their choice. Prepares participants for medium level competitions.

**Level 3 Coach**  
This qualification indicates that the holder has sufficient knowledge to prepare teams for domestic and overseas competitions.

**Level 4 Coach**  
Holder has sufficient knowledge and experience to prepare teams for the highest level of international competition.





## River Grading

Quite often when people talk about rivers they will apply a grade to the river or a specific rapid. There are a number of different systems used throughout the world, but in most cases they use a numbers based system to class the features by increasing difficulty. The following grades are taken from the CANOEING IRELAND proficiency awards scheme and are the system commonly used by Irish paddlers.

**Grade 1 (flat water):** The water is slow moving and without obstructions.



**Grade 2 (moderately difficult):** The way down the river is clear but simple obstructions exist. Small stoppers and small drops can be present. There are places where the flow accelerates. There is a choice of routes.

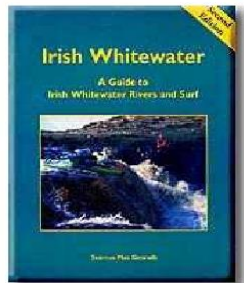
**Grade 3 (difficult):** There is a route that is easily recognisable from the water. Waves can be irregular. Boulders and obstructions can be numerous. Stoppers and small eddies exist. Inspection is advisable.

**Grade 4 (very difficult):** The route is not always clear. Inspection is advisable. Rapids are continuous and breakouts are few and small. Stoppers are powerful. The paddler is required to manoeuvre continually with precise control and good decision-making.

**Grade 5 (extremely difficult):** Inspection is essential because serious dangers can exist. The paddling can include large drops, narrow passages, very complex boulder fields, ever changing water and difficult holes. Difficulties are numerous.

**Grade 6:** The consequences of a mistake are extremely serious.

## Guidebooks



*At the moment there is a guidebook for canoeists available that looks at a wide variety of Irish Rivers and Surfing locations. It is a very good way to find out what is in your area. It provides guidance to the approximate grades of the rivers thus allowing trip planning beyond your familiar locality. As this is a guidebook it does not account for weather conditions or the changing of river and coastline features from year to year due to erosion. Thus you must always be aware of your surroundings and canoe safely. This guidebook was produced by Seamus MacGearailt of UCD Canoe Club, and has received many updates since with particular attention to local knowledge*



### ***Different types of Canoeing:***

Many people have images of what canoeing as a sport is about, some think of aboriginal Americans using canoes, some of Eskimo or Inuit peoples using kayaks, other images are more modern maybe that of Shaun Baker or Tao Berman breaking waterfall records. Whatever it is, there are many different types of paddlesports out there engendering the many different aspects of sport in general. All in their own way are thoroughly enjoyable. The next few sections give very brief introduction to some of the more popular incarnation of canoeing in Ireland. All that is left now is to try them out for yourself.



### ***CANOE POLO***

Canoe Polo is a team sport involving teams of five players where the objective is to score in the opponent's net. The teams pass the ball in order to move closer to the opponent's goal and for good shooting positions. The opposing team members try to block these passes and get the ball so that they can get a scoring opportunity. It is difficult to describe the passion and excitement, which is created when a Canoe Polo game is in progress. The participants speeding the length of the pool weaving through the opponent's lines of defence and spinning in their short unstable craft to receive a pass creates a fast and thrilling event.



### ***WHITE WATER RACING***

An exhilarating canoeing discipline in which participants' race down White Water Rivers against the clock. Races are conducted on a time trail basis with each competitor starting at one minute intervals and racing over rapids of varying difficulties.







### **CANOE SLALOM**

Similar to the Wild Water Racer, the Slalom canoeist races alone against the clock. In this discipline, the challenge is to pass through approximately twenty five gates suspended above the water, avoiding a touch with any part of the boat, paddle, or body. The competitor must pass through the gates in the correct order and direction. Green and white striped poles must be passed in a downstream direction and double red poles in an upstream direction



The object is to negotiate the course as quickly as possible without incurring any penalty points. Penalty seconds are added on to the overall time to produce a total score. Each competitor has two timed runs and both are combined to give a final time and result. The course designer's job is to hang the gates in a sequence which forces the competitor to work out best possible route choices and then to select the one which will give the best chance of a fast clean run.

Within Canoe Slalom there are four categories - Men's and Women's Kayak (MK1 and WK1) and Canoe Singles and Doubles (C1 and C2). Because of the need to have large volume water on which to train and compete, the main centre for Canoe Slalom in Ireland has been Liffey Valley, which is, dam controlled. Other less developed sites are located throughout the country.

### **CANOE SURFING**

Surfing is exhilarating to participate in and a spectacular sport to watch. The sheer enjoyment of feeling the force of the surging sea and learning to harness its power is a feeling, which is difficult to surpass. To feel your boat being lifted by a large green swell, to experience the wave steeping underneath as you gradually pick up speed and take control, carving out turns as you cut across the steep face of the wave - pure magic.

The adrenaline rush of planing down the face of a wave is enough for some. Others want to be screaming down the largest wave possible, performing the most radical manoeuvres on the most powerful section of that wave, seeking to out perform their friends. This is the basis of paddle surfing competitions.



### **SPRINT RACING**

Sprint Racing has a direct parallel with athletes. Sprint competitors must be extremely focussed, concentrating on the development of a strong, efficient, and consistent forward paddling technique which can be sustain over specific distances. Ideal conditions for sprint racing require that no external factors interfere with a competitor's short intensive burst of energy to get from the start to the finish line.

### **MARATHON RACING**

Marathon Racing takes place primarily on flat water with typical distances of 15 to 28 miles in major international events. Races in Ireland vary from approximately four miles upwards. A race course will generally include a number of portages where competitors must carry their kayak/canoe for a given distance before re-entering the water.





### SEA KAYAKING

There has been an explosion of interest and activity in Sea Kayaking in Ireland in the last ten years. It seems only natural in a country that is surrounded by some of the most spectacular coastlines and blessed with a splendid variety of islands.



Sea Kayaking appeals in many ways. It can be a way of leaving a busy week behind, slipping away through a still sea, the only sound being your paddle splash. To canoe amongst uninhabited islands, to pass under daunting sea cliffs and camp beside deserted famine villages is a great way to spend a few days.

On the Irish coastline you will find spectacular sea arches, large dramatic caves, towering cliffs and long white beaches which have been fashioned by the constant buffeting of the Atlantic Ocean.

The great attraction of Sea Kayaking is the opportunity it gives to journey amongst this wilderness with the freedom to explore wherever the mood takes us. At other times the appeal can be the exhilaration of crashing through rough seas, fighting against a wind whipping the sea against your face... the feeling of urging your kayak up a steep wave face towards the curling crest willing it not to break before you reach the top.

Each year Ireland hosts an international Sea Kayaking symposium that includes workshops on topics such as safety, navigation, paddling technique as well as the opportunity to meet paddlers who share a similar interest. Part of the Union's Training and Accreditation Scheme is devoted to meeting the training needs of those interested in canoeing on the sea and to promote good and safe practice.

### OPEN CANOEING

The Canadian Canoe or Open canoe is immediately distinguishable from a kayak because it is paddled using a single bladed paddle. The canoe originated with the native tribes of

North America and was traditionally made from a timber frame covered in one of a variety of barks, usually birch. Nowadays, most canoes are made from plastic, fibreglass, or aluminium. The original designs which were used to travel across



the large expansive lakes of Canada were open on top for transporting people and goods.

Canoeing is particularly suited to exploring the inland waterways of our country. Ireland offers an attractive network of inland waterways for canoeing - providing endless possibilities for exploring, fishing, and multi-day expeditions. One attraction of this form of canoeing is that it can be enjoyed by the whole family. Whilst the majority of those involved in Canadian canoeing favour leisurely trips on slow moving rivers such as the Shannon or Barrow, others have begun to use Canadian canoes in marathon races. Due to innovations in materials and design, canoes are now seen increasingly on rivers with small rapids and fast moving water. The kneeling position and single blade associated with Canadian canoeing is found within the Canadian category of canoe slalom competition. These canoes have closed cockpits and are designed for either one or more competitors and are called C1 or C2 respectively.

### Definitions for canoeing on rivers and lakes





**Very sheltered water** describes canals with bank side access and which have a minimum of commercial traffic, small lakes with easy landing areas, and specified sites on slow moving rivers. The equipment necessary to work in these conditions is in accordance with the requirements of the Level 1 Kayak Instructor.

**Sheltered Water** describes flat slow moving rivers without weirs or rapids. Discretion and common sense must apply when considering the use of lakes. This definition includes a perimeter of no

more than 250 metres from shore on a large lake. To paddle in offshore breezes on large lakes requires the same degree of caution as for the sea. The equipment necessary to work in these conditions is in accordance with the requirements of the Level 2 Kayak Instructor.

**Moderate Rivers and Lakes** describes Grade II Rivers and equivalent weirs. This definition includes lakes up to two miles in diameter. Caution should be exercised while paddling on lakes and this definition excludes conditions where there are offshore wind conditions of above force four. The equipment necessary to work in these conditions is in accordance with the CANOEING IRELAND Level 3 Kayak Proficiency Award, while the instructor responsible must be equipped in accordance with the requirements of the Level 3 Kayak Instructor syllabus. While paddling on moving water, kayaks and canoes must be equipped with additional buoyancy.

**Advanced Rivers and Lakes** describes Grade III/III+ rivers and very large lakes. The equipment necessary to work in these conditions is in accordance with the Level 4 Kayak Proficiency Award. For paddling on advanced white water kayaks and canoes must be fitted with additional buoyancy.

These definitions imply weather conditions, which are not in themselves likely to cause a problem. *Care must be exercised when water temperatures are low.*



## Definitions for Sea Kayaking

These definitions are used to define different sea conditions for the purposes of instructor qualification, participant ability and instructor/participant ratio.

### **Sheltered Tidal Water:**

In all cases the wind and weather conditions must be favourable. Enclosed harbours where there is minimal possibility of being blown offshore. Harbours are defined as harbours with minimum of commercial traffic which are enclosed on three sides and there is a minimum possibility of being blown offshore. Small enclosed bays where there is minimal possibility of being blown offshore. Defined beaches (a short section of beach with easy landing throughout, no tide races or overfalls) – winds not above Force 3 (Force 2 if offshore when the greatest caution must be exercised). The upper reaches of some suitable slow moving estuaries.



### **Moderate:**

A stretch of coastline or estuary in close proximity to the shore, with easy landing, not involving fast tidal streams, tidal races, or overfalls. Winds not above Force 3 (Force 2 if offshore, when the greatest of caution must be exercised). Open crossings of over 2 miles are specifically excluded. The upper reaches of some estuaries.

### **Advanced Sea:**

Any journey on the sea where tidal races or overfalls may be encountered which cannot be avoided. Sections of coastline where difficult landings may be encountered or where landings may not be possible. Difficult sea states and/or stronger winds (Force 5 or above).

