

Title:

Kayak Racing Tips - Take the Lead

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Summary:

Kayak racing has become an increasingly more popular sport. If you are interested in venturing in the sport of kayak racing use the tips to pull ahead.

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Article Body:

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Kayak racing has become an increasingly more popular sport. If you are interested in venturing in the sport of kayak racing use the tips to pull ahead.

Kayak Racing Tips Practice makes perfect. Practice the course before the race. Marker buoys are often set weeks in advance. Use your practice sessions to figure out the lines that you will be taking during the race.

Try to get a run in a day or two before the race, this will give you an indication of what the current will be like on race day.

When racing avoid the shallows. When you're moving with the current, deep water is your friend. When the water level is less than 2.5 feet deep, there's increased hull resistance and your boat will slow down considerably. Shallower water can be useful if you're paddling against a current. When going against the current, find transitional areas where the bottom isn't too shallow to slow your hull down.

Check the weather to determine the prevailing winds. Afternoon gusty winds are always a possibility, and can make going against the current even more challenging. When paddling against wind, minimize the amount of time your paddle blades are in the air, slightly hunch forward to make your body as small as possible, and draft directly behind boats as much as possible.

Set up your turns around the buoys so you're always paddling, this will help you

from losing momentum. If there is no traffic on the race course, take a sharp line around the buoy. Try to make the buoy turns as close as possibly without hitting the buoy. If there is a lot of race traffic, stay to the outside to avoid colliding with other kayaks and paddles. Collisions can be time consuming and colliding paddles can cause an interruption to rhythm, both of which can cost a kayaker the race.

Wake riding and wash hanging both refer to drafting off another boat. Studies have shown that drafting 1 to 2 meters directly behind a boat can produce energy savings of up to 30 to 32%. Kayaks positioned 1 to 2 meters off the sides of a leading boat can achieve 16 to 18% energy savings. Try to draft whenever you have the opportunity, leapfrogging from one boat to another. This can be a key strategy to kayak racing.

Practice drafting before the race, it's both an art and a science. When drafting, don't get sucked into staying behind a considerably slower boat. If a boat is traveling at a slower speed than you are comfortable with pass it. If competitor is drafting your kayak, dump him or her out of your wake by maneuvering your boat suddenly, the kayak drafting you will end up in undisturbed water or in the shallows. While this might seem mean, since there are no rules against drafting it's a valid race tactic that serious competitors might consider during tight races. This technique takes practice and you have to know what you're doing, so practice with friends.

Many recreational paddlers in the race do not have good boat handling skills so if you end up in traffic, prepare to paddle defensively.

At the finish of the kayak race your legs are going to feel rubbery when you get out of your boat. If you are competing in a multi-sport race and required to sprint after the kayaking leg, you will need to practice the transition. Practice running immediately after a paddling workout. Also practice paddling with the shoes that you will be wearing for the run. Try circuit workouts to help get your legs used to the transition of paddling to running, this will also help improve boat entry and exit skills.

Before the race set a goal and have a plan but be willing to adapt if necessary. During the race, stick to your plan, but be adaptable should the need arise. Most of all enjoy the sport of kayaking and have fun!