



Off to the Races: CPA Just-For-Fun Kayak Races

By Brian Blankinship

The first races will be held at Jack's Boathouse (Pirates of Georgetown). The first is on May 13, 2006, and will be short (2.75 miles). A second of 5 miles will be held on June 24. On July 15, there will be a 5-mile and a 10-mile race at the West River Center, near Galesville, MD.

Prior to the race series starting, we plan to hold Performance Paddling clinics. Those attending SK102 will have the chance to learn better strokes and be introduced to wing paddles. We also plan to hold mini-clinics at the Pirates of Georgetown and Pier 7.

All race days will feature a "standard" race and a "fun" race. The fun race will be something like team racing where two boats paddle, but one is being towed by the other, a slalom, or Wet Start (start outside the boat in the water or have to roll). Another fun race would be a "Leader Turn". This race would be a down and back along the same course. Once the person in the lead passes you, you can turn right then rather than go all the way to the mid point. We may simply do a relay race or something else that makes it more fun than a standard sprint-type race.

June 24 will also feature a Recreational Kayak race. Only boats shorter than 14 feet will be allowed to compete and there will be two classes. The first class will be people that paddle a rec boat at least 80% of the time. The second class will be people who paddle a rec boat less than 80% of their paddling time.

Speaking of classes, the "normal" races will be divided into classes and each class will be divided by gender. If we have enough competitors to make it useful, we can also divide by age group. The classes are borrowed from the Blackburn Challenge race:

Kayaks (Racing):

- Racing Kayaks: Less than 20" beam, wing paddles allowed. For those paddlers who concentrate on racing and have the equipment to go with it. Previous top finishers of the Fast Touring Kayak class are encouraged to enter this class.
- Fast Touring Kayaks: 20" beam or greater, wing paddles allowed. For fit paddlers who don't specialize in racing but have faster than average kayaks and/or are faster than average paddlers.

Kayaks (Recreational):

- Touring Kayaks A: 20" beam or greater, 17' or longer, no wing paddles. For first time racers in typical sea kayaks, and experienced paddlers who are less serious about racing.
- Touring Kayaks B: 20" beam or greater, less than 17' in length, no wing paddles. For first time racers and beginner paddlers in slower boats.

Winners in each class will receive a CPA Race medal. Second and third place will receive a ribbon. Every participant will receive a race rocker.

CPA is sponsoring these races for its members so anyone competing either has to already be a member or join CPA. Since the races are being insured by the ACA, competitors will either need to be ACA members or become an event member (\$10).

For those who attend SK102, we are offering a special on ACA membership. They can pay an additional \$20 at SK102 and we will make them ACA members for the year, a \$40 value.

For more information on the CPA Just-For-Fun Kayak Races, visit the Performance Paddling forum at www.cpakayaker.com/forums.