

Basic Paddling Guidelines

A really perfect stroke position looks like the alphabet letter "A". One hand on is on top of the paddle, and the other is down towards the blade.

- Keep the paddle vertical when the blade is in the water (top hand over bottom hand)
- Your body should be moving in a general *forward movement*.
- Your hips should be touching the gunwale or "gunnel" (side) of the boat. Your paddle should also be kept close to the side of the boat—both during the stroke and the stroke "recovery".
- Keep your head up **and your eyes' forward** while paddling. It is important to pay attention to the lead stroke "pacers" at the front of the boat.
- Minimize extraneous movement when in the boat; rocking the boat will reduce the glide
- Lean forward during your stroke; it helps to get more length on the stroke. If you're not leaning forward, the person behind you won't be able to take a full stroke (or their full stroke may smack your arm—(always a good reminder to LEAN!))



(Notice how the paddlers are *leaning forward at the waist*)



Basic Paddling Commands

- PADDLES UP: Paddles above the water ready to take a stroke. Commonly used for starting the movement of the boat in a non-race situation.
- TAKE IT AWAY: Command to start paddling.
- LET IT RUN: Command from drummer/steersperson to stop paddling and let the boat coast with blades out of the water.
- CHECK THE BOAT: Bring the boat to a full stop with the use of the paddles.
- STEADY THE BOAT: To stabilize the boat. Paddle blades flat on the surface of the water with a slight downward pressure to stabilize the boat.
- READY: race command in a start situation for paddles to be placed in position for the first stroke (submerged or out of water).
- WE HAVE ALIGNMENT: Starter referee's call signifying that they have exact alignment of the boats the race start is imminent.
- ATTENTION, PLEASE: Command given by race starter to prepare crews for departure, the start gun will follow in approximately 3-5 seconds
- FINISH: The point towards the end of a race where the steersperson instructs the team to finish the race—give it all you've got!