

2008 Rookie Racer Practice

26 weeks of Fun, Camaraderie, Inspiration and Perspiration

April 21 through October 27

What is it? An evening paddle for canoe racing technique and practice.

Who comes? Women and men who are interested in long distance canoe racing in marathon racing canoes.

How does it work? "Rookie Racers" are paired up with expert or more experienced racers. We get on the water right away and learn by paddling.

When? Monday evenings during Daylight Time, April 21 through October, except for three day Holidays.

Time? Meet at 5:15-5:30 p.m., we pair up, get on the water by 6:00 p.m. and paddle until 7:30/8:00 pm

Place? Except for possible special Monday evenings for "Buoy Turn Practice" we meet at the Miss. R. Flats which are below the U. of Mn. Campus Coffman Union on the East Bank of the River (off East River Road)

You Need? A positive attitude (the racing stroke is like no other) and willingness to do some vigorous exercise. Canoes are provided by the experienced paddlers. Initially, you should bring a water bottle and a change of dry clothes (We change in our cars in the parking lot.) Eventually, we'd like you to bring your own paddle and your own PFD (life preserver).

Parking Fees? Yes, you need about 10-12 quarters for 2 hours on the meters, or click up this link <http://www.minneapolisparcs.org/default.asp?PageID=82>

and buy a Park Patron permit (12 Month). This permit is good at many park sites and especially at Thomas Beach on Lake Calhoun, the site of the popular Hoigaards series of canoe races (Thursday evenings, in June and July)

Cost? Amazingly, since it is informal, it is still free. We will want contact information provided.

Canoes? If you have a fast cruising canoe such a We-No-Nah "Jensen 18", or the We-No-Nah "Minnesota II", bring it, you'll not be left on the bank. If we are short canoes, it is first come, first served unless some experienced person is willing to do a split run. The experienced folks will bring racing canoes of the "pro spec" or the "USCA spec". Old pros, please bring extra canoes, or a single if you have them so that we won't have to turn any rookie away. We've been doing this for about 35 years. We know the river well. We go upstream and down. When we reach bridges or certain other points, we stop, drink (from bottles, not the Mississippi), chit chat, give some paddling tips and wait for slower teams to catch up. Then we're off again. There are about 5 stopping points going downstream and about 5 coming back up, so the paddling is not continuous, but it will be vigorous.

Apres Canoe? After our practice session, many of us head up the hill to Oak and Washington and have supper at the Lotus Restaurant (Vietnamese)—informal and lots of good company.

Regulars: Bring racing canoes and/or (especially for early in the season) a fast cruiser, or USCA spec boat for stability. But hey, if you don't have a stable boat, then bring the tippy one! An extra paddle or two helps as well as an extra lifejacket.

We try not to leave anyone standing on the bank. Tip-overs are rare, but a couple of us usually throw a dry bag with some warm clothes into the racer in case anyone gets chilled after a tip.

We usually have about 14 paddlers, but have had as many as 33. In a typical season, we see some high water, some low water, some rain, lots of beautiful sun, a lightning storm (maybe). In season, we might have some watermelon treats and in Oct. take some Jack-O-Lanterns in the canoes.

Come and share le esprit de corps des canotiers!

Joe Conrad