

METHODICAL ASPECTS REGARDING THE USE OF RECREATIONAL KAYAK

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Abstract

Due to the technique that is easy to assimilate, the accessibility of the materials and the minimum water traveling conditions, kayak has turned in a very short period of time into competition tests. Thus, during modern times, the kayak competitions have greatly contributed to the promotion of this sport on world level. The sports competition has transferred quickly on the scientific level and caused the initiation of some studies in order to create the best hydrodynamic forms for increasing the rate of travel, but also for finding some cheap, light and easy process able materials. Recreational kayak has become widespread especially due to the constructive features, the satisfaction of the adventure spirit, the movement freedom, the need for physical effort and for water traveling. People have grown fonder of it as it is regarded as a high risk sport because it can capsize easily. The use of kayak at its maximum possibilities: traveling on all kinds of water (lakes, slow and mountain rivers, sea), easy maintenance of balance, as well as the possibility to return to the initial position, through different techniques, after capsizing from various reasons. The main learning areas refer to: creating the abilities for linear traveling, making turns, stopping and righting after capsizing (overturning), conquering fear and becoming aware of the position of the body in a capsized kayak.

Key words: Kayak, learning, capsizing, methods

Introduction

Known since the oldest times, invented as a need of men to travel by water, kayak is a fast, cheap and easy means of locomotion that uses only the individual abilities. The name "kayak" comes from the Inuit tribe from Canada that used boats that resembled more closely the boats that we use today. Later on, the European colonists from the American continent built boats from tree bark in order to navigate on the running waters from North America. The historical sources mention the use of these boats by the Eskimo tribes along the Greenland coast, in the present day North Norway and Canada, on the habitable coasts of Antarctica, by the native population from the North-West Pacific and in many other places on earth. The Aleut Tribe and other arctic populations built kayaks from a strength structure made of whale bones and cork wood, over which they stretched sea lion skin treated with whale fat. The boats were extremely important for the survival of the Eskimos; they needed the boats for fishing and hunting. (M. Chirazi, 2008). Due to the fact that the technique is easy to assimilate, the materials are accessible and the water conditions must be minimum, kayak has quickly turned into a competition. Thus, during the modern age, the kayak competitions greatly contributed to the promotion of this kind of sports on international level. As a sports branch, it determined the beginning of some studies in order to create the best hydrodynamic forms so as to increase the shifting speed, but also finding some cheap materials that were light and easy to process. The competition kayak reached extraordinary shifting performances due to the high training level but also to the constructive performances: hydrodynamic forms,

extremely light materials, modern training methods. Due to the fact that the aspects specific to competition kayak regard only a small segment of the population, it is not included in our field of activity. On the competition level is also the slalom kayak event, a competition that requires special abilities; it is more spectacular than the speed race but it requires special arrangements (artificial routes). Due to the popularity enjoyed as a sports event, the satisfaction given by the water shifting, the manageability it enjoys, more and more people have become interested in practicing this sport as a maintenance activity. For this reason, the builders have faced the need to create models as stable as possible and with features specific to remaining for a long time in the boat, characteristic to lake and running water expeditions. Thus, models for one person, for two persons or several persons, for children and for adults (provided with adjustments depending on the somatic parameters), for calm waters (lakes), for the sea, have been built. (M. Epuran, 1994). The desire of men to live life at full speed has determined the builders of these boats to create special models for the running whirling waters specific to mountain regions (whitewater). Thus, in a short period of time, it transformed from a need to travel into a leisure activity greatly enjoyed by the public and into one of the most spectacular extreme sports event. The equipment for this sports branch includes elements that protect the exposed areas of the practitioner (specific helmet, special neoprene costume, life-saving jacket), protection elements for the boat (cover against water infiltration, rubber parts for some exposed areas, etc.) and still accidents happen.

Accidents happen due to the great risk that the amateurs expose themselves to by going into extremely rapid waters, with big obstacles (rocks), high debit, great level differences. There is a high risk every time someone gets into the water, especially in unknown waters, without visibility, to which it is added the use of some abilities specific to kayak shifting, as well as unpredictable situations resulting from the use of this equipment.

In order to prevent accidents and transform the leisure activity into something spectacular, some of the abilities from the slalom kayak have been taken over.

Thus, we have the returning from:

- a. – capsizing with the paddle parallel to the body
- b. – capsizing with the paddle parallel to the kayak.
 - a. The first returning is specific to big calm waters (lakes, seas), where the capsizing can be predicted. It is a returning that takes a longer time, it requires letting a grasp of the paddle (grasp of the hand on the opposite side of the capsizing), but it is safer and it can be executed only on the side where the capsizing took place. From the methods of teaching, we present some stages:
 1. learning to let the grasp and placing the paddle on the extension of the body;
 2. placing the paddle on the surface of the water;
 3. hitting the water with the paddle maintained with a part parallel with the body;
 4. capsizing at 90° and hitting the water with the paddle maintained in the best position;
 5. capsizing preparing simultaneously the paddle, on the spot.
 6. capsizing preparing simultaneously the paddles, from shifting.

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It is recommended to learn the procedure on both sides (left-right).

b. The second returning is specific to running, rapid waters where the capsizing can happen in a fraction of a second, in a moment of losing the concentration or the incorrect positioning of the kayak on the water current. It is a fast returning that does not require the letting of the gasps of the paddle, that is relatively safe, it allows the returning to the initial position on the desired side (best known). From the methods of teaching, we present the following learning algorithm:

1. lateral capsizing with a partner in order to get used to the sensation resulting from the position;
2. lateral capsizing on a floating surface in order to learn the movement of the pelvis; it can be executed even with a partner in order to feel more secure;
3. learning the position of the paddle and working with the arms, without capsizing;
4. capsizing with the paddle in the prepared position;
5. capsizing with the paddle parallel to the kayak and returning;
6. capsizing with returning on the opposite side of the kayak (360°).

It is recommended to learn the two returning procedures in a swimming pool with the water at the best temperature or at least clean water in order to view the movement and to correct them. From the spectacularity point of view, the second one is more spectacular. From the difficulty point of view, it is recommended to learn the first returning (returning with the paddle parallel to the body) at the beginning of the training. (E. Dimitriu, 1982) Knowing one of the two returning procedures decreases the level of fear of the practitioners and increases the pleasure related to the water traveling by these boats.

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