

United States Canoe Association (USCA) is a nationwide community of canoe and kayak racers who race hard, train hard, and know how to have fun. USCA is dedicated to this lifetime sport and wants to help you meet your paddling goals. Join today.

What is marathon canoe and kayak racing?

Marathon racing, solo or in pairs, is tough, challenging and fun for men and woman of all ages and abilities. Race distances range from two to 200 miles, and, incredibly, sometimes longer. Though most races are on rivers, rapids rarely exceed Class II. Many races also feature one or more portages. For the ultra adventurous, ultra marathons: from the 70-mile General Clinton Regatta on the Susquehanna in central New York to the 450-mile Yukon River Quest, which features stunning scenery, countless blisters, and inspires scores of tall tales. These are the hardest of the hard but there are many more great events featured on the USCA calendar.

Marathon canoes are open boats propelled with carbon-fiber bent-shaft paddles with single blades. Most racers use sleek, lightweight boats made of fiberglass, Kevlar, carbon fiber or wood. Often there are classes for stable aluminum and recreational canoes. Kayaks are closed-decked boats propelled with a doubled-bladed paddle and typically feature a rudder for steering. There are classes for a variety of kayak types – down river, sea kayaks, surf skis and ICF, or flatwater racing boats.

What does the USCA offer?

- Information and guidance for clubs and racers on topics like safety, promotion, standardizing rules, and hosting a national event.
- An annual National Championship that brings together hundreds of the best paddlers in North America. National events include marathon racing, youth and adult sprints, canoe orienteering and stock aluminum canoe racing.
- A magazine, Canoe News, with reports on races across the country and articles on training, safety, nutrition, conservation and much more
- A website, www.uscanoe.com, with the latest information on race schedules and results throughout the nation with links to other paddlesport activities.
- A national body that governs the specifications for racing canoes and kayaks in order to provide fair and fun racing.
- Insurance and safety guidelines for race organizers.
- Instructional programs and manuals for canoeing and kayaking directed toward youth and adults. Welcome Paddler (a safety education brochure). A video: Introduction to Quietwater Canoeing.

As a nonprofit, amateur athletic, educational organization, USCA sanctions and promotes marathon canoe and kayak racing for both serious and recreational paddlers.



What racing classes are included?

Age divisions are offered for youth and adults, from age 5 up to 70+ for males and females, paddling solo or tandem. In addition, races are divided into "racing" (often called "Pro") and recreational classes.

USCA Membership benefits

- USCA's Canoe News magazine
- Being part of a dynamic community of canoe and kayak racers
- Eligibility to participate at USCA National Championships
- Access to schedule of regional and national races and results
- Access to water safety program and paddling clinics
- Contributions are tax deductible
- Liability insurance and sanctioning for events

Do I have to be fit to race?

Canoe and kayak races attract athletes from a variety of backgrounds with varying levels of conditioning. Fitness certainly helps and the top competitors train intensely throughout the year. On the flip side, a number of shorter races are less competitive and require less training. The good news is that paddling is primarily an upper body sport with low impact and fewer injuries than running.

How can I become involved?

As an Athlete: If you want to compete USCA wants you! Recreational and "serious" racers alike can enjoy the camaraderie of training, competing and developing skills in a lifetime fitness sport.

As a Club Affiliate or Race Sponsor: Paddling clubs and Race Sponsors are the lifeblood of paddlesports. Starting a club can be exciting and rewarding, both for the individual and for the community. USCA can provide guidance and support, including advertising, insurance, and contacts with experienced organizers. Call us if you want to start a club or stage a race in your town.



