

### **SBOCC Members:**

Here is some “pre-season reading”, to get your minds back on track with your paddling seats and responsibility. Besides technique work, we must understand what our role is in every seat of the canoe as you will find yourself in all of them throughout the season. To make yourself a more valuable paddler to your crew, take the time to read these notes, with different ones that I will be sending out throughout the season as we prepare for each category of training. For now as we are just starting the season back up, let's be reminded of what our roles are in each seat in the canoe.

~Sabrina

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### **Seat breakdown:**

#### **Seat 1 (stroker):**

You should have excellent technique and should be easy to follow. You must be flexible in setting a rate that works best with the crew and the boat. Hence, you should have tremendous boat feel. You should know exactly when the boat is running well and when it is not.

To a large degree, you determine the stroke rate and style. Your job is to maximize the strengths of the crew by determining which rate and style work best. You must be consistent and methodical. Any changes in the stroke initiated by you must be gradual.

Other than the steersman, you will have the greatest effect on the up and down or side to side motion of the canoe brought about by a paddler's movement. You are at the narrow end of the canoe hence it's important that you keep a quiet upper body movement.

#### **Seat 2:**

You should be close to or superior to Seat One in technical ability. You are the second part of the stroke pair and as such is responsible for Seat 4's timing. If your timing is out, then fully 40% of the boat may be hitting the water out of time with the stroke. So your timing must be impeccable. And since you cannot always see the stroke's blade, you must be able to determine the rate by a combination of feel and visual cues that do not involve watching the blade enter the water.

You must also be good in diagnosing a canoe's run. It is the job of the stroke pair to identify problems with the way the boat is running and fix them, if they can be fixed, by rate and style changes. Seats 1 and 2 must be able to discuss the situation and determine ways of correcting a perceived difficulty with the boat's progress. You are also the liaison between the stroker and the rest of the boat.

You must keep a close eye on the ama.

#### **Seat 3 and seat 4:**

You both are the canoe engines. You are the strongest (and in most cases the biggest) paddlers in the boat. You should have tremendous endurance and strength. Whenever the boat must be accelerated, it starts with a push from these 2 seats.

Your timing must be good.

Seat 4 shares the responsibility with Seat 2 in keeping a close eye on the ama.

**Seat 5:**

You are a power seat as well, but with added responsibilities. You should have tremendous endurance and strength. You should also have good boat feel because you, along with Seats 3 and 4 are responsible for accelerating the boat to surf or to challenge another crew. This requires some anticipation on the part of those seats.

You may be called upon to help steer the boat in certain conditions. In those circumstances, if the steersman must pry on the right, you may be called upon to draw on the left to balance the boat, to assist in turning the stern to the left and to prevent a huli.

You are also the liaison between the steersman and the rest of the boat.

**Seat 6 (steersman):**

You should be the most experienced of the paddlers in the canoe. You are ultimately responsible for the performance of the boat. The steersman has the final say on the stroke rate, the change call, surfing the canoe, the course the canoe follows, and when and where to bail the boat. You must prevent the canoe from becoming unstable increasing the risk of a huli and must coordinate righting the canoe if it does flip.

The job of the steersman is the most complicated and involves the greatest degree of discretion. The act of steering a canoe slows the boat down. Your job as the steersman is to interfere as little as possible with the speed and run of the boat when initiating steering maneuvers. You must also contribute to forward propulsion as, and when you can. So, steer, but don't steer very much. Paddle, but don't paddle so much you have to steer to correct.

A good steersman should also know how to work her crew to bring out their best.

As the steersman you will use the widest variety of strokes for both power and for steering and everything in between.

Steering is an act of subtlety. The less steering you can get away with, the better for the boat. It is an art to steer a boat well. Your skills will improve through good knowledge, experience, ocean sense and water time.