

## KCKA Whitewater Paddle Skills Self-Classification

Here is a way to self-classify yourself so you will have an idea if you are qualified for various KCKA whitewater float trips. It will also help you describe your capabilities to a trip coordinator. These trips are generally suitable for whitewater kayaks, whitewater canoes and whitewater rafts. The water can vary from Class II with a few obstacles to Class IV with precise maneuvering, boulders, sharp turns, strainers, and logjams.

### **Beginning Whitewater Paddler; paddles Class I in control**

- ❑ Classify yourself as a Beginning Paddler if you have not yet attained all the Novice Paddler skills

### **Novice Whitewater Paddler; paddles Class II in control**

- ❑ Has at least 25 hours of paddling experience or 5 trips on Class II water
- ❑ Has learned and practiced the “wet-exit” (kayak only)
- ❑ Has successfully completed a techniques/skills instructional course
- ❑ Understands the basic strokes, including: Sweeps, High & Low Braces, Forward and Backward Strokes.
- ❑ Can exhibit good boat control in Class II by moving the boat in desired locations
- ❑ Can recognize hazards in river situation – strainers, low head dams, obstacles, etc.
- ❑ Can dependably steer boat around hazards or obstacles in Class II river situations
- ❑ Comes prepared for paddling, including: protection from sun, hot weather, cold weather, or rain, lunch, water, with dry change of clothes in a secure dry bag
- ❑ Is learning basic River Rescue skills

### **Intermediate Whitewater Paddler; paddles Class III in control**

- ❑ Has all of the Novice Paddler skills plus the following:
- ❑ Can reliably perform the basic strokes, including: Sweeps, High & Low Braces, Forward and Backward Strokes in Class III.
- ❑ Can reliably perform a good eddy turn and peel out in Class III water
- ❑ Can apply bracing techniques to keep boat upright when thrown off balance
- ❑ Can apply a “hip-snap” to help recover from tipping
- ❑ Can perform an upstream ferry
- ❑ Can move boat sideways using the draw stroke
- ❑ Has a strong, reliable roll (kayak only)
- ❑ Can be counted on for good River Rescue Skills
- ❑ A Strong Intermediate has all of these skills, but is not yet comfortable in Class IV

### **Advanced Paddler; paddles Class IV in control**

- ❑ Has all the Intermediate Paddler skills plus the following:
- ❑ Can recover from a capsize using a reliable Eskimo roll (kayak only)
- ❑ Is capable of leading or assisting others with various forms of River Rescue

[Compiled by members of the Kansas Canoe & Kayak Association – Kayak Chapter]

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