

Paddling Skill Games

Edited June 3, 2019

The long term objective is to establish a national event with regional championships leading to a national championship. Other disciplines (horse riding – see International Mounted Games and Prince Phillip Games) use this format to an international level. This is an event that promotes skill development, team camaraderie, strategy, spectator appeal and parental involvement. It is also a lot of fun.

Benefits:

1. To develop paddling skills through individual and team support
2. To create a venue for fun, camaraderie, learning and reward
3. A paddling event that is entertaining for spectators (leading to sponsor funding)
4. To have a national network of common games where regional champions compete against each other at a national venue
5. The Games develop skill progressions building competency.
6. Most games can be adapted for other paddling craft (canoes, SUP, SOTs, etc.)

What it takes to make it work

1. A champion. One person to organize the event and the people well in advance.
2. A coach willing to train paddlers before the event and work with other coaches to coordinate and refine events.
3. Willing volunteers to run the event.
4. At least 8 paddlers, with multiples of 4 after that. See Team Structure.
5. A venue = a bay, a large pool, a place free of other boat traffic.
6. Cooperating weather.
7. A willingness by everyone to have fun and to work together.
8. A small budget for ribbons and trophy updates. A BBQ at the end is nice too.

The Arena

There must be clear waterfront access, enough for up to four teams of four to compete. The water area must be clear of other users, hazards and available exclusively for the event time. A deep bay is ideal. A 50m pool is also a great venue.

Waterfront Venue

Choose natural landmarks whenever possible. A deep bay with a beach at the end is ideal. Crossover lines on the water can be designated by two buoys, ranges from stationary objects, paddlers (judges) maintaining position or a distance from the opposing shores. Note the effects of tide and current on the buoys. If there are teams of better skilled paddlers then this line could get further apart for those

events. With younger paddlers keep the distances shorter. It is confusing to change these lines, so avoid it if possible.

The centre line can be set up by having the Start Judge be at the middle line outside the arena. The event can be run solely by the Start Judge. The line can be an estimate and determined by the participants. It will be better to leave it up to the participants to determine the halfway point during each event. There are no advantages if they misjudge.

If there are lots of parent volunteers, there could be a 'Judges Area' on the beach where the Head judge resides. The Points Judge could be here as well (under a tent if raining). The beginning of each race would be indicated from here to the Start Judge. There could even be a public announcement system. All event administration (ribbons, stationary, record keeping, etc.) can be displayed here. There would need to be a communication mechanism (radio, runners, observers) required.

The Arena Area is defined as a rectangle with the Crossover lines on the ends and the side boundaries. As the event progresses it is up to the Event Judge to make sure teams are adhering to the Crossover line positions. See Paddling Skill Games Arena.

Beach Venue (for le Mans type starts)

A start line is delineated on the beach with either two flags and/or a line marked in the sand (thick rope works well for this). The line must be parallel to the water line and 25 feet from shore and accommodating for tide as event progresses. The distance needs to be enough paddlers a chance to get a run in before launching, as well as giving an area for a beach activity before launching.

The Team Structure

Team structure will depend upon participants' skill and number. Each team should have the same four members for the event. Male and female teams would not be important as it is more the skills and smarts that are the focus. A fifth paddler with each team can be added to spell off participants, deal with odd numbers and encourage more participation.

Option One – *Team members with the same skill level.*

This option allows each event to be tailored to this skill level, increasing complexity with skill level. This also gives more novice paddlers a place to commiserate with those at the same skill level.

Option Two – *Team members from the same organization/group*

This option allows for friendly competition between them. There would have to be a balance of skill levels on each team.

Option Three – *Team members with a variety of skill levels*

This option takes a bit more organizing to balance groups but works well with smaller numbers of overall participants.

Option Four - *Not enough on a team*

A member will need to go more than once. Note that most games involve two people. Many events can be done with two team members.

With five per team one person sits out each event. Good for people who may get tired easily or have challenges with certain events.

Event Programming Suggestions

Choose events appropriate for participants ages, skills and equipment. Watch for mismatched people and kayaks (i.e. Switcharoo will need to be adapted if someone cannot get into kayak)

Most Games last for 12 events or less. This should take roughly three hours from initial meeting with participants. This will depend upon how skilled participants are at completing each event and which events are chosen.

Have a few minutes water break in the middle.

Save wet events for the end.

Having two score keepers is a good idea. Especially with lots of teams.

Do a dry land demonstration of each event prior to getting on the water for novices.

Describe event before beginning each one, unless members are familiar with the event already. Ensure they know where they need to begin and end up. (Usually on the opposite side from where they started)

Encourage a team name and team chant that includes team name. Encourage lots of shouting and team support. Judges can add drumming on the kayak to get the energy up. Be aware of waking up the neighbours if it is too noisy.

Prizing

A perpetual trophy is a good idea to add to continuity.

Rosette placement ribbons are an enticement. (Note used 'Paddling Skill Games' with no date, get four per placing)

Display on a table at the beginning of the event for added enticement.

Kayaking Equipment

The games should not rely on a specific type of equipment. There can be no equipment changes during the competition. If something breaks so be it – make do as you would have to in the field.

Each kayak and paddler should be coast guard compliant.

More advanced kayaks may be an advantage in some events but may also be a handicap in others.

Officials

If it is just you...

You will position yourself on the Arena boundary at the middle line. From this position you can identify the middle line for participants, call the event, keep score, judge and cheer. Note that you will need a scoring sheet (laminated page with a grease pencil). See Appendix.

If you have lots of people who want to help...

(Note positions can be combined)

Head Judge

This person makes all the calls including:

- Safety – participants, equipment, kayaks
- Go or no go for event.
- Arena layout approval
- Which events and in what order they will run (event selection (but not the order) should be published two months in advance if possible)
- Point allocation (Points Judge) arbitration
- Head Judges word is final (hopefully after consulting with other judges and participants) – the goal is fun and not literal translations of the rules! Bribery is optional.

Points Judge

This person records results on a publically viewed dry erase board. See Point structures.

Arena Manager

Oversees the setup and dismantling of the venue with volunteer help. Oversees marks people to ensure floating marks stay consistent. Ensures beach start line is maintained

Finish Line Judge

Makes the final call on who crossed the finish line in what order. Reports to Points Judge. Could be Head Judge who does this.

Starter

Responsible for making sure paddlers are attentive to the start and beginning the event. May call a false start with multiple whistle blows.

Line Judge

Creates the Centre Line by lining up with Start Judge.

Scoring

Each team gets a score for each event based upon their placing. 1 = first, 2 = second, 3 = third, etc. For those not finishing an event they get last place. Note that there should be a finish line judge (could be Head Judge). Scores are added up for the entire event to determine overall winner. Some options would be to discard the worst event for each team to allow for glitches. Lowest score wins.

Team Placements

Each event requires four participants. Each team member has a number: 1,2,3,4. This is their order of go. Members can change their order to strategically take advantage of skills and/or equipment.

When two are needed on one side and two on the other side, both behind their respective crossover lines, then this will be called a 'Split Group'. 'Paddler '1 and 'Paddler '3 are at their Crossover line. 'Paddler '2' and 'Paddler '4' are at their Crossover line.

All team members have to remain out of the Arena Area (area between the crossover lines) unless they are actively competing.

Each event will have a given time frame to reach completion, that is at the discretion of the Head Judge. If the participants take too long to complete the event then a long whistle will be blown once to finish the event.

In all events paddlers will always end up on the opposite side from where they started. This means that Paddler 1 will be on the opposite side for the succeeding event.

Signals

A flag/upright paddle hitting the water/whistle will signal the beginning of an event. A multiple whistle blow will signal a false start and need to re-start. There will be events where Paddler 1 and may start simultaneously from both their Crossover lines.

Multiple whistle blows denotes a danger that all participants must stop and assist. Event can continue after danger has passed and flag will denote resumption.

When a team has finished an event then they must immediately put their paddles vertically in the air. This will assist the Points judge in determining placings from a distance. Judges may determine ties by the speed in which paddles were put in the air.

The Start Judge should ask Paddlers to identify themselves at the beginning of each event by raising their paddles when their numbers are called. The raised paddle identifies the paddler sequence and that their team is ready to go.

Programming

Event Determinants:

1. Venue (beach or dock)
2. Skill levels (Mixed, B, L1, L2+)
3. Number of participants
4. Tolerance for cold (weather, wind, water temperature, immersion gear: wetsuits, drysuits)
5. Time constraints

Each event should be choreographed to allow for maximum enjoyment and skill development. Wet time should be minimized and coordinated with Upright time to get warm if water is cold. Split group activities should follow each other to minimize group setup time. Keep wet stuff for the end but space out with Upright. Head Judge should have discretion to alter events on the fly taking into account Event Determinants.

6. Weather

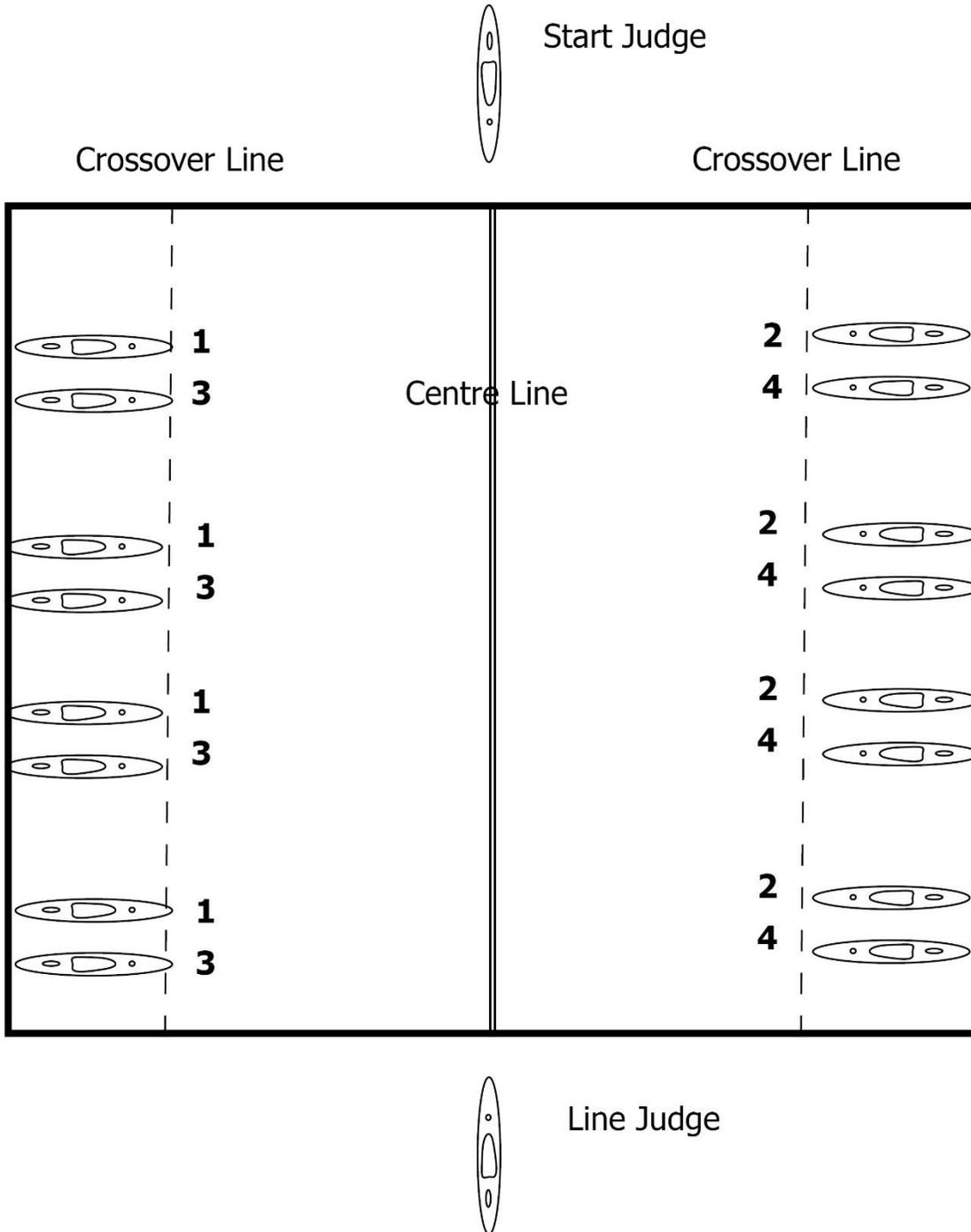
Beach Variations

Start line is 25 feet from shore. Finish line is deemed to be the shoreline.

1. Lemans start where paddlers must run to kayaks – good for events that require the skirt be attached
2. Paddler must put paddle upright in the sand and hold onto it as they run three times around with team mates counting
3. Kayaks to be towed could be fully on the beach, towee can help with seal launching technique
4. Finish line is the start line = paddlers must get out of the kayak (and ring a bell?)

Event Equipment

1. 10' x 10' tent
2. Dry erase board with markers
3. Start flag/paddle and whistle
4. Megaphone (with batteries)
5. Start line buoys/ Line marking material (flour/Lime)/flags
6. Crossover line buoys
7. Binoculars for judges
8. Flagging tape for some events
9. VHF radios for line judges to communicate with Point Judges
10. Prizes, ribbons and trophies
11. Record keeping
12. Event Manual

Paddling Skill Games Arena

Paddling Skill Games Events

Fast Forward

Upright

Arena Set Up: Split Groups

Activity:

All levels: Paddler 1 has a foam paddlefloat stowed and paddles as fast as possible to the crossover line where Paddler 1 hands over their paddlefloat to who paddles to opposite crossover line, passing paddlefloat to Paddler 3, passing off to Paddler 4 at Crossover and with Paddler 4 going to start line.

Skill Focus: fast forward, upright posture (with duck) easy event introduction, how to quickly stash a foam paddlefloat.

Options: Active paddler must balance a rubber duck on their head (instead of paddlefloat)

Going Back in Time

Upright

Arena Setup: Split Group

Activity:

B: Paddler 1 must paddle backwards to opposite Crossover line. Paddler 2 can begin when Paddler 1 bow has touched Crossover line paddling backwards to Paddler 3 at Crossover line who paddles backwards to Crossover line where Paddler 4 paddles backwards to Crossover line.

L1: Paddler 1 and Paddler 3 start at the same time and must touch gunwales at mid-point as they pass each other. Paddler 2 and 4 can only start when both Paddler 1 and 2 have crossed their respective Crossover lines.

L2: Same as L1 but at mid-point instead of touching gunwales they need do a circle around the other paddler using reverse sweeps.

Dos Sea Dos

Upright:

Arena Set up: Split groups

Activity:

B: At the start signal one member of each team paddles to the middle. Paddlers must pass each other with their backs facing each other and maintaining their forward orientation. Each paddler then paddles to the opposite end from where they started. Next paddler can start when nose of kayak crosses the line.

L1: and gunwales must touch at time of passing.

L2+: paddlers stop after passing each other and repeat passing each other back to back in the other direction.

Skill focus: Draw on the run, body rotation, and reverse draw on the run.

Paddler Portage

Possible Upright/Wet

Arena Setup: Split Groups

Activity:

B: Paddler 1 paddles to opposite Crossover line and Paddler 2 gets onto the back of Paddler 1 kayak. Paddler 4 holds Paddler 2 kayak. Paddler 1 with 2 on back deck, paddles to Paddler 3 where Paddler 2 moves from Paddler 1 deck to Paddler 3 deck. Paddler 3 with Paddler 2 on deck goes to Paddler 4 where Paddler 2 moves to Paddler 4 deck, leaving Paddler 3 to hold empty kayak. Paddler 4 with Paddler 2 on deck paddles over to Paddler 1. Paddler 2 goes onto Paddler 1 deck and they paddle across. Paddler 2 gets back into their kayak and paddles back to Paddler 4. The event ends when Paddler 1 and 3 are on one side and Paddler 2 and 4 are on the other = starting positions.

Blade Runner

Upright:

Arena: Split Group

Activity:

B: Paddler 1 and Paddler 2 depart at the same time to meet in the middle. Blades must stay completely immersed the entire time on one side. At mid-point/ passing point the blade is immersed in the opposite side. Paddler 3 and paddler 4 must wait until last paddler has crossed before starting.

L1: Paddlers must turn at the midpoint and go backwards with the blade constantly immersed on the opposite side.

L2: Paddler 1 must paddle to the crossover line where Paddler 2 may start.

Switcharoo

Upright/Wet

Arena: Split Group

Activity:

B: Paddler 1 and Paddler 2 meet in the middle and switch boats. Paddler 1 continues to Crossover line and Paddler 2 continues to opposite Crossover line. Paddler 3 may start when Paddler 2 has touched Crossover line and Paddler 4 may start when Paddler 1 has touched Crossover line. Paddler 3 and Paddler 4 switch places and return to the Crossover line.

L1: as above but Paddler 1 then switches kayaks with Paddler 3 at Crossover line, Paddler 2 switches kayaks at Crossover line with Paddler 4

L2: paddlers must wet exit kayaks and re-enter and roll up the others kayaks and paddle to start and crossover lines – with water in boats.

Musical Boats (

Upright/Wet

Arena: Split Group

Activity:

All Levels: All paddlers go to middle line and must cross Crossover line in a different kayak than what they started with. Paddlers must finish as Paddle 1 and 3 on opposite side from where they started.

Considerations: Could be done after Switcharoo to get back into their own kayaks and good event to finish on

In and Out

Wet

Arena: Split Group

Activity:

B: Paddler 1 goes to the middle and does a wet exit and a paddlefloat re-entry and continues to Crossover line using spare paddle. Paddler 2 does the same, Paddler 3 and Paddler 4 as well. Boat can have water in it.

L1: Paddler 1 goes to the middle and does a wet exit and a cowboy re-entry and continues to Crossover line. Paddler 2 does the same, Paddler 3 and Paddler 4 as well. Boat must be 'substantially empty of water'

L2: Paddler 1 paddles to the middle must wet exit kayak, crawl over the hull of the kayak (to ensure a full wet exit) and re-enter and roll up and paddle to start and Crossover line – with water in boats.

Twist and Shout

Upright

Arena: Split Group

Props: Flagging Tape

B: Paddler 1 goes to middle and pulls legs out of cockpit and rotates 360 degrees with bum in seat, re-enters legs and continues on to Crossover. Paddler 2, 3, 4 follow same.

L1: Paddler 1 goes to middle and pulls legs out and goes to front of boat to get flagging tape from bow toggle, returning to cockpit and continues to Crossover line. Paddlers 2, 3, 4 follow same.

L2: Combines B and L1 = rotating in cockpit and getting flagging tape from bow toggle.

Chariot Races

Upright

Arena: Split Group

B: Paddlers must start sitting their kayaks. Paddler 1 holds onto Paddler 3 kayak. Paddler 3 puts one foot in each cockpit and stands up. Paddlers 1 and 3 chariot paddle to Crossover line where Paddler 2 and Paddler 4 must be in position to go. Paddler 2 and 4 head to opposite Crossover line to finish.

L1: Each paddler must have a go at standing up

L2: Supporting paddler faces backwards

Tow Me Another One

Upright

Arena: Split Group

B: Paddler 1 and Paddler 3 contact tow to middle and then switch roles to Crossover line

L1: Using a 14' tow line Paddler 1 tows Paddler 3 to middle and they switch. Paddler 2 and 4 repeat.

L2: Group all paddle to the middle with tow lines stowed. Paddler 1 and 2 do an inline tow with a long tow towing Paddler 3 and 4 holding each other. At Crossover line, roles switch with Paddler 3 and 4 towing Paddler 1 and 2.

All Hands On Deck

Upright

Arena: Split Group

B: Paddler 1 meets Paddler 2 in middle. Paddler 1 must stow paddle and start at the bow or stern, pull their boat totally around Paddler 2 with only their hands and touch starting point toggle to finish. Paddlers go to opposite Crossover lines. Paddler 3 and 4 repeat.

L1: Same as above but after Paddler 1 is finished then Paddler 2 must do the same resulting in two complete circles at the middle line.

L2: Same as L1 but must do it going backwards

Get Into the Tow

Upright

Arena: Split group

All levels: Paddler 1 goes to Crossover line and clips medium tow line to Paddler 2, they paddle together to the start line where Paddler 2 clips onto paddler3. Then with everyone still attached they all paddle to Crossover line and paddler3 attaches to Paddler 4 and they all race to Crossover line.

Pirouettes

Upright

Arena: Split Group

B: Paddler 1 goes to the middle and does a 360 pivot and goes to opposite Crossover line. Paddler 2 paddles to middle does a 360 pivot and continues to opposite Crossover line, Paddler 3 and 4 repeat.

L1: Same as above but reverse pivot.

L2: Same as above but paddle must stay on one side of the kayak

L3: Same as L2 but must keep blade in the water.

Time to Draw

Upright

Arena: Split group

B: Paddler 1 and 2 paddle forward stroke (or??) to middle line and continue with a draw stroke to the opposite side. Paddler 1 and 3 MUST MEET in the middle before they begin drawing to the opposite side.

L1: Same as above but paddlefloat must be in the water, trapped while drawing and pushed to next paddler.

L2: Same as above but with tennis ball

L3: Use a sculling pry.

Sweep it Up

Upright

Arena: Split Group

B: Paddler 1 meets Paddler 2 in the middle and they do sweep strokes following each other 360 degrees and continue on their respective Crossover lines. Paddler 3 and 4 repeat.

L1: Same as above, but reverse sweep.

L2: Paddler 1 does forward sweep, Paddler 2 does reverse sweep inside Paddler 1 circle

Daisy Do

Upright

Arena: Split Group

B: Paddler 1 meets Paddler 2 in the middle and they must keep their bows touching or within 30cm and paddle together 180 and then paddle backwards to their team mates. Paddler 3 and 4 repeat

L1: Same as above, but only using draw strokes

L2: Each paddler goes 360 degrees and then paddles forward to opposite side

Getting Handy

Upright

Arena: Split Group

B: Paddler 1 must stow paddle and use hands to middle point and then use spare paddle to paddle to Crossover line. Paddler 2 stows paddle, hand paddles to middle line and uses spare to start line. Paddler 3 and 4 repeat.

L1: Hand paddle entire length of arena

L2: Hand paddle backwards to middle point and then using spare paddle, paddles backwards to Crossover line

Kick in the Assisted

Wet

Arena: Split group

B: Paddler 1 meets Paddler 2 in the middle. Paddler 1 wet exits only when Paddler 2 touches their kayak. Assisted re-entry with no water in kayak. Paddler 1 goes to Crossover, Paddler 2 goes to other Crossover. Paddler 3 and 4 repeat. Optional if you want to repeat with all having a chance to be rescuer.

L1: Same as above but Paddler 2 contact tows Paddler 1 to start line. Paddler 3 signals with paddle vertically in the air for Paddler 4 to meet in the middle and repeat. Paddler 3 gets wet and Paddler 4 contact tows to start line. If time permits event could be repeated with everyone having a chance at being rescuer.

L2: Same as above but rescuer must do a scoop re-entry and both pump. Kayak must be 'substantially empty'

Blind Leaders

Upright

Arena: Split Groups

Props: Blindfold (old ties)

Activity:

B: Each paddler will begin their heat with a blindfold. Paddler 1 begins and must get to Crossover line taking directions only from Paddler 3. Paddler 2 puts on the blindfold and takes directions from Paddler 4. Each paddler should have their own blindfold as they may not be near to other paddler when they touch line. Paddlers must stay within Arena.

L1: same as above but paddling backwards

L2: must do a pirouette at middle line

Skill focus: Magniception (direction finding)

Sitting Down on the Job

Upright

Arena: Split Groups

Activity:

B: Each paddler will begin their heat sitting on the back of their boat. Paddle across arena to Crossover line. Paddler 2 can begin when Paddler 1 has crossed the Crossover line. Paddler 3 and 4 repeat.

L1: same as above but paddling backwards

L2: must do a pirouette at middle line

Nose to Nose

Upright

Arena: Split Group

B: Paddler 1 paddles across to Paddler 2. They touch nose to nose. Paddler 1 then paddles in reverse with Paddler 2 paddling forward keeping their nose within inches of each other while paddling to Paddler 3. Paddler 2 then paddles in reverse with Paddler 3 going forwards, keeping noses close. Paddler 3 connects noses with Paddler 4. Once at the other side Paddler 4 sprints in reverse to their Crossover line.

L1: A piece of flagging tape is attached by the other paddler. For example, when paddler 1 comes to collect Paddler 2, Paddler 3 will attach two feet of flagging tape. The object is not to break the flagging tape.

L2: Tie the flagging tape closer.

Advanced

Roll Me Another One

Wet

Arena: Split Group

L3+: Paddler 1 goes to middle and rolls three times and then goes to Crossover line and tags Paddler 2 who goes to middle and does the same. Paddler 3 and 4 repeat.

Tow and Top

Very Wet (drysuits)

Arena: Split Groups

L2+: Paddler 1 goes to middle towing Paddler 3 in the water who is hanging on their toggle and their kayak. At the middle they switch places. Head to opposite Crossover lines where Paddler 2 and 4 repeat to opposite Crossover line.

Beach Variations

Arena is rotated so that the middle line is now parallel to the beach and Paddlers 2 and 4 are on the water. Paddlers 1 and 3 are on the beach. Each event begins and ends on the beach. You can use a bell that must be rung when Paddler 4 finishes. Keep the bell at the start line.

Paddler 1 is 25 feet from the waterline on the beach and does a le Mans start. Run event the same but Paddler 3 must run and launch as well. Paddler 4 runs up the beach to the finish line.

Most events can be run with this venue. Much more spectator appeal

Paddling Skill Games

Event	Team One	Team Two	Team Three	Team Four

Paddling Skill Games

Order	Event	Team One	Team Two	Team Three	Team Four
	Fast Forward				
	Back in Time				
	Nose to Nose				
	Dos Sea Dos				
	All Hands on Deck				
	Twist and Shout				
	Get Handy				
	Switcharoo				
	Sweep it up				
	Sitting down on the job				
	Daisy Do				
	Blind Leaders				
	Paddler Portage				
	Chariots				
	Musical boats				
	Kick in the Assisted				