



# KAYAKING 101

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Rowing is a sport filled with strange and wonderful terminology. From catching a “crab” to “way enough,” here’s a quick run through some of the more common terms...

New to kayaking? This low-impact Olympic sport is enjoyed by people of all ages.

## **Sprint**

Sprint racing is a fast-paced sport that includes both canoe and kayak events. Athletes race in separate lanes on a straight course with calm water. Sprint kayaking focuses on 200m, 500m and 1000m racing. More challenging than recreational kayaking, sprint kayaking gives you a great workout with a competitive edge – and the Oklahoma River offers one of the top sprint kayaking courses in the world.

In kayak events paddlers are seated in their boats and use a double-blade paddle. Both men and women race in kayak events; single (K1), double (K2) and four (K4). In canoe events, paddlers kneel and use a single-blade paddle. 2010 marks the first time ever that Womens Canoeing will be a full medal sport at the World Championships in both Slalom and Sprint racing. Canoe events can be single (C1) or double (C2). Governed by the International Canoe Federation (ICF), flatwater sprint was first added as a full medal sport in 1936 at the Berlin Olympic Games.

## **Slalom**

Whitewater slalom racing will soon be the newest water sport to hit Oklahoma City when the new \$35 million Whitewater Rafting and Kayak Center is completed as part of MAPS 3, a city based public facilities initiative funding by a penny sales tax. Both elite athletes and recreational enthusiasts will find world-class courses as part of this new and exciting development on the Oklahoma River.

Whitewater slalom athletes navigate their canoe or kayak through gates as they work their way through 300m of whitewater rapids in the fastest time possible. Hitting one of the hanging gates or missing one completely results in penalties which are added to the paddler’s time at the end of his or her run. A 2-second

penalty is given for a touched gate, and if the gate is missed completely there is a 50-second penalty.

Each course has approximately 18-24 hanging gates that are color-coded to indicate which direction the paddler must pass through. Green gates are negotiated heading downstream while red gates require the paddler to reverse direction and pass through them heading upstream. Male athletes compete in three classes: Kayak (K1), Single Canoe (C1) and Double Canoe (C2).

Women compete in Kayak (K1W) and now in the Single Canoe (C1) and Double Canoe (C2)). Slalom boats made from carbon, kevlar and epoxy resin, are light and stiff but still fragile compared to plastic boats. All slalom boats must meet minimum length and weight requirements. Kayaks have to weigh more than 9 kg (about 20 pounds), be more than 3.5 m (11 feet) long, and 60cm (around 2 feet) wide.

As an Olympic sport, whitewater slalom made its debut during the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, Germany, but did not reappear until the 1992 Games in Barcelona, Spain. Today, it is fast growing in popularity as one of the more exciting Olympic sports. Whitewater slalom events may be held on natural river courses, or increasingly, on courses such as the one to be constructed on the Oklahoma River.

**We hope you've enjoyed learning about this fascinating sport – now join us on the Oklahoma River!  
You can learn more about rowing lessons and coached rowing programs  
at [riversportokc.org](http://riversportokc.org) or by calling (405) 552-4040.**