



adventure sports center international



## What you need to know to enjoy watching a Whitewater Open Canoe Slalom

The object of slalom racing competition is to negotiate a rapid river course, defined by gates, without fault, in the shortest possible time.

In an open canoe, the competitor paddles in the kneeling position using a single bladed paddle. Slalom canoes are split into two types, RAC and REC. The RAC category canoes are designed specifically for racing and for the most part are made of lightweight composite materials like kevlar or carbon fiber. The REC category canoes are designed for recreational use like running rivers and playing in holes. They are usually made of ABS plastic or other durable material and are somewhat heavier than their RAC counterparts.

In a slalom race, competitors are timed for each of two runs on the course. Gates are run in numerical sequence. Penalty seconds for each gate, if any, are added to the running time to determine a final score for each run. Electronic timing equipment as well as radios are used between the Start Line and the Finish Line to time the competitors and to report running times to the Scoring Tent. Radios are also used between the Gate Judging Stations and the Scoring Tent to report penalties. Results are posted on Score Boards along the course.

Rules include:

- Green gates are negotiated in the downstream direction
- Red gates are negotiated in the upstream direction.
- Fifty penalty seconds are added to the running time for failing to negotiate a gate.
- Ten penalty seconds are added to the running time for touching any gate.
- Touches are assessed for anything on or in the canoe striking a gate pole except wind or water.
- The better final score between the two runs is used to determine the final ranking.
- Ties are broken by comparing the non-counting runs of the two boats involved.

Classes are defined as follows:

- By boat: RAC or REC as discussed above.
- By number of paddlers: OC1, (one paddler) or OC2, (two paddlers).
- By age: Jr. (18 +under), Youth (16 +under), Sr. (25 +older), No designation (anyone), Master (40 +older).
- By gender: Male, Female, Mixed (one Male & one Female), Open (anyone).

In most cases, it's fairly obvious which paddlers have more experience and greater skills. It's a good thing to go fast, go through all the gates in order and not touch any of the gates. Try this: count the number of paddle strokes it takes a competitor, once the boat is turned upstream for one of the red gates, to paddle up through the gate and turn to continue downstream again. Less than three or four strokes are very good!

If you have any questions, ask anyone with a numbered bib on. We hope you enjoy watching today's whitewater open canoe slalom races. Have a very nice day.

**We hope we see you at the ACA Open Canoe Slalom Nationals & North American Championships  
August 6-8, 2010 (practice Aug 2-5)**