



THE EDDY LINE

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Different Strokes By Allen Hedden

I'd like to present you with a few perspectives on white water slalom racing. Credentials -- my slalom racing career is defined more by quantity than quality. In other words, I've raced a lot, but haven't achieved a lot of significant medals or a lot of fame. But I have raced long enough and hard enough to develop some perspectives on slalom racing.

I firmly believe my success in the sport should be measured by what it has done for my recreational boating. To compare my abilities on white water before I took up slalom racing vs. after I had been racing for a while is, to me, like comparing a rookie high school football player to an accomplished veteran pro football player. Well, maybe more like a not-so-great pro ;-). I believe that slalom racing is possibly the best thing a paddler can do to develop skills and abilities for recreational river paddling, whether your racing career is

stellar or just mediocre. Additionally, it's just a whole lot of fun!

A quick rundown on exactly what slalom racing is: A white water slalom race consists of propelling your boat through a rapid, usually between a couple hundred yards to perhaps a quarter mile long, through a series of numbered gate poles suspended above the river in numerical order, creating a fairly complicated route through the gates, going both upstream and downstream through the gates as designated by color, red for upstream, green for downstream. All this is done in the correct order and without missing any gates or touching any poles. Penalty points are assessed for any poles touched, gates missed or negotiated in the wrong direction or wrong order. The scoring is done by timing your run and adding the penalty points to your time, giving you a score for each run. Entries are divided into classes based on the type of boat you paddle, your age, your experience level, your gender, and the number of paddlers in the boat, solo or tandem. You generally get two runs in each

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class, with the best run being the one that counts toward placing 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. within the particular class. That's the simple version. There are additional rules and quirks that get added based on what level you are racing at, your type of boat, etc.

Benefits I've received from slalom racing:

I think the most useful benefit I've received has been my white water memory. Before I started racing, if I were on a river trip and came across a fairly complicated rapid that I needed to scout, I would scout carefully both from above and from below the rapid and walk the whole thing in both directions, fret over it a bit, get back in my boat and start the run. Immediately I would start to wonder, just where the heck am I? And where did all my landmarks disappear to? Was that big hole BEFORE or AFTER the small eddy on the left? Etc. I would usually be totally lost by the time I got to the bottom of the rapid.

I soon found that the more racing I did, the better I was at doing a quick scout of a rapid and actually remembering the lines. Possibly this occurred because in addition to having to remember lines in a race, one must also remember the gates, where each one is in relation to your normal line, how to approach each gate, and which way you

have to be moving coming out of the gate to set up for the next gate. After having all that sort of thing to remember for a slalom race, just remembering your scouted line in a recreational run begins to look like a piece of cake.

Your ability to accurately place your boat in a certain spot very precisely and maintain control of its direction and speed become greatly enhanced. For instance, if you need to make an eddy on a recreational run, you have a fairly wide area which may be measured in feet that you need to hit the eddy line to catch the eddy and stay in it. In a slalom race, there would most likely be an ideal spot perhaps measured in inches where you must break the eddy line to catch the eddy, and then stay in it while maintaining your forward momentum through an upstream gate and peeling out into the current. That's a bit more complicated if you would, and requires more skill and more precise boat control than the similar move on a recreational rapid.

The race course designers will generally set up a slalom course with a few things in mind. They want the course to have a good flow to it in order for you to maintain your momentum. They want about an equal number of eddy turns on the left as on the right to give right side dominant paddlers the same chances as a left side dominant paddler. They want

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to place the gates in such a way as to give you a hint exactly where they have in mind for you to go on the course, sometimes not being very kind, and leading you into places where you would not consider going on a recreational run.

Paying a lot of attention to where these gates are placed increases your focus and puts your attention more on making the gate touch free rather than worrying so much about the features around the gates, through which you may have to travel to get to or through the gates. In other words, your paddling skills sort of go on auto pilot while you mentally focus on making the gate. This will greatly increase your confidence level, carrying over into your recreational boating. With all this to consider, you may soon understand why many racers consider course designers as a devilish lot intent on making your life as difficult as possible ;-)

Your water reading skills naturally will be increased by participating in slalom racing. Reading the water and using river features to enhance your speed and your ability to turn and maneuver quickly will give you a much better elapsed time, so you must learn to do it well. These water reading skills will carry over to your recreational paddling as well.

Another facet of slalom racing is the racers you meet and associate with at a given race. By and large, they are pleasant, fun, helpful people who are more than eager to help you learn the sport and how to do it well. They love the competition and won't think twice about giving you tips on how to improve your run, alternate ways to negotiate a particular gate, how you might, in the case of an open boat, do something to keep your boat dryer in a certain feature. A dryer boat is a faster boat. The first people to cheer you on when you make a particularly good move will be your fellow racers.—EL



GCA welcomes paddlers from all races, genders, and sexual orientations. We will continue to strive to promote diversity among the paddling community and work to create a safe space for all to enjoy

Peachtree City Roll Practice
By Lisa Haskell

This year GCA once again ventured south to paddle some of Florida's beautiful springs and rivers. We had 19 people who participated in the 2021 Florida Winter Paddle. Many of us stayed at the Chassahowitzka Hotel again. This was our second year using this facility and they did a wonderful job - we would highly recommend staying there if you are in the area.

On the first day, we paddled something new to us: the Winter Park Chain of Lakes. The weather was sunny with a high of about 70 degrees. There were winds of about 12 mph. We had 13 people on this trip: me, Joy and Keith Moses, Karen Heath, Keith King, Margaret Amoss, Kris Petti, Nancy Evans, George Evans, Carol Reiser, Brannen Proctor, and Dan and Elise MacIntyre. This was the first time any of us had paddled anything



like this. It was just lake paddling but it was really interesting that you could paddle between the different lakes through navigable canals. We launched from Dinky Dock in Lake Virginia and paddled through a canal to

Lake Osceola. We paddled across Lake Osceola to another longer canal and paddled through it to Lake Maitland. Just as you exit this canal you will find Kraft Azalea Gardens on the right. We then paddled over to Dog Island and got out for lunch. This island was big enough for all of us to land and then it had paths so that you could walk around. After lunch we paddled around to locate Howell Creek and we paddled up that direction as far as we could. Then we turned around and headed back to Dinky Dock. There was some wind to deal with in the middle of the lake



but we were fairly protected for a good bit of the trip (while we were in the canals and the creek). This was cool to do but I probably wouldn't want to go do it every year.

On Saturday, we did another new section of river. The original plan was to paddle from the Dunedin Causeway to Caladesi Island. Unfortunately there were high winds that day which made the trip unsuitable. Instead we paddled a section of the Withlacoochee River South in the Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve. The weather was mostly sunny with a
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high of about 60 degrees and we were well protected from the wind. We had 19 people



on this trip. The Withlacoochee South actually rises from the Green Swamp and the current here was very mild. We were able to paddle both directions without any difficulty. We started out going upstream and paddled almost two miles. There was one tree we had to go under. Then we paddled a bit fur-



ther until there was a large blockage which we decided not to portage around. We paddled back to the launch area and stopped for lunch. After lunch we paddled downstream for a couple of miles and then paddled back up to the launch site. The upstream portion was narrower and more winding and most of

us thought it was more scenic than the downstream portion. Overall this was a very scenic paddle.

Our third day, we paddled one of Florida's beautiful, clear springs - Silver River. The weather was cool with a high in the 50s and



overcast most of the time. We had a bit of wind in the afternoon. We had 20 people on the trip today. We saw a few manatees, alligators, birds, turtles and monkeys.

On day four of the GCA Florida Winter Paddle 2021 we did another familiar favorite: Chassahowitzka River. It was sunny with a high of about 60 degrees and there was a light wind. There were 14 people on this trip. We looked at the manatees near the launch area first and then went to see the Seven Sisters springs with the high tide so that we could paddle over the springs. This year the water was not as clear as usual and there seemed to be more particulates. After looking at the springs we turned around and paddled out past the launch to the first cove on the left. There are often manatees there but not this year.

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Then we went to the second cove on the left and paddled up Baird Creek to The Crack. This year, as with most years, we were not able to paddle all the way up into the spring. We beached the boats and walked the last few yards to the spring. The spring was much lower this year than last year and the log



over the main vent was gone. A few of us went swimming or waded around. We ate lunch here and then headed back out Baird Creek. We started toward the launch area and then turned left into Crab Creek and paddled back to see the house at the spring. That was fun but the water was quite low this year. We returned to the launch area and decided to paddle back to the Seven Sisters

and look at the springs when they weren't covered with water. They were much pret-



tier this time. A few of us brought snorkeling gear and went snorkeling with the manatees near the launch area. This was a lot of fun and we got some great pictures. I'm planning to snorkel again next year so if you join us bring your mask and snorkel! - EL





Georgia Water Coalition's Capitol Conservation Day is an annual event of the Georgia Water Coalition, of which GCA is a member. The event is designed to get the environmental community in touch with their legislators in the middle of the legislative session. Of course, this is all done virtually this year. The primary (but not only) goal for this year is to get the legislature to enact the enabling legislation needed to implement the Constitutional amendment we have gotten passed by the legislature and approved by the voters. (Amendment one on your November ballot.) The purpose of this amendment and legislation is to make sure the money that is raised from fees (such as the extra dollar that you pay for each new tire that is supposed to go to cleaning up legal and illegal tire dumps - many of which are too close to rivers we paddle) go for their intended purpose. Without this, the fees go into the general fund to be appropriated for any purpose.

As a GCA member, you are invited to attend.—
EL



THERE IS NO MORE BEAUTIFUL PADDLE IN THE WORLD THAN THE OKEFENOKEE SWAMP BUT THE SWAMP IS IN GRAVE DANGER.

GCA has donated \$1000 and will match donations for an additional \$1000. Nine GCA donors have contributed an additional \$385 to date. Thank you! See our webpage for more information.

Donate now to stop a proposed titanium mine at the swamp's border and protect it from future development!

<https://www.gapaddle.com/>

KEEP YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS CURRENT

Each month numerous "copies" of the pdf version of *The Eddy Line* bounce back due to bad or outdated email addresses. If an email to you bounces back, you will be deleted from the recipient list until we get an updated email address.

Hello Paddle Friends,

I'm delighted to present our GCA Spring Paddle line up. I hope there is something for everyone. Additional trips may be added moving into the season. Some trips have limited participation and most require you make contact with the Trip Coordinator to receive information about the paddle. Please READ the details when you RSVP. Additionally, remember if there is severe weather or water levels are not conducive to the planned river, the Trip Coordinator may change the river or reschedule the trip.

March wraps up our GCA roll practice sessions at both facilities. If you haven't located your gear and checked your boat for small animals, it's time! The new Canton location requires pre-registration and has a limited number of participants. Peachtree City has plenty of room.

Our Semi-Annual Membership paddle is Sunday, April 18th at Wildwood Outfitters. Our GCA President, Carol Reiser, will make announcements about everything in the works including a new selection of GCA Gear. We hope to have samples present. Products can be custom made to your online order. Note: No food provided at this event. Bring your own "River" lunch. There is more than one paddle option from this location; the traditional "Upper Hooch" or a bit more relaxed paddle from Outfitters to Mossy creek. Let me know prior to the 18th, if you want to do the paddle to Mossy Creek.

The Spring Extravaganza in May, will be home based from Smoky Mountain Meadows again this year. We are very lucky to have coordinated trips ranging from the Class III Middle Ocoee to the remote Toccoa Canoe Trail with overnight riverside camping. Our popular Wildcard, trusty Tuck and Sunday Nanty will be back too with the possibility of another trip or two. Thank you to the dedicated "River Souls" who have agreed to make this event happen.

Wanted: Trip Coordinators and support boaters for the Summer. All levels. We need you!!!

Warmest regards from your Cruise master.

Terri Abbott

abbott.terri@gmail.com

TRIP AND EVENT SCHEDULE

- March 13th - Chestatee (Class I)
- March 20th - Spring Wildcard Trip (Class II-III)
- March 27th - Dawson's Forest (Class I)
- March 27th & 28th - Smoky Mountain Weekend (Class II-III+)
- April 3rd & 4th - Coastal Georgia Kayaking
- April 10th - Nachoochee Hooch (Class I-I+)
- April 11th - North Georgia Wildcard Paddle (Class I-II)
- April 18th - Spring Membership Paddle at Wildwood - Upper Hooch with possible option of Wildwood to Mossy
- April 24th - Spring Wildcard Trip (Class II-III)

Please see the GCA Calendar for details, updates, and to sign up at www.gapaddle.com. For any questions or class suggestions, e-mail eddylineeditor@gmail.com.

To Volunteer To Coordinate Trips email Cruisemaster Terri Abbott: abbott.terri@gmail.com.

As usual, we need trip coordinators for all types of trips, from flatwater to Class 5 white-water. Our excellent trip schedule depends on the efforts of volunteers, so get involved and sign up to coordinate a trip on your favorite river today! The GCA needs YOU!

Thinking of joining a paddling trip?

When deciding to join a GCA trip, whether an "official" trip posted on the website, or a pop-up trip posted on the Facebook page, please keep the following bit of river etiquette in mind: **Always** check with the trip coordinator before inviting a guest to come along on the trip with you, especially if your guest is an inexperienced paddler. This is to insure the skill level of your guest matches the targeted skill level of the group. Many pop-up trips will not have safety boaters., and it's considered rude to expect the other paddlers in the group to be responsible for an unexpected paddler. Please don't put the trip coordinator in the uncomfortable position of having to turn someone away because their experience level doesn't match that of the group.

KEY TO GCA SKILL LEVELS

Flat Water - no current will be encountered; safe for new paddlers.

Beginner - mild current, occasional Class I riffles; new paddlers can learn basic river techniques.

Trained Beginner - moving water with Class 1-2 rapids; basic strokes and bracing skills needed.

Intermediate - rapids up to Class 3; eddying and ferrying skills needed; kayakers need solid roll.

Advanced - rapids up to Class 4; excellent boat control and self-rescue skills required.

Address: 141 Railroad St
 Canton, Ga 30114
 Phone: (470) 292-6706
 Website: www.nomadicflowoutfitters.com
 Email: info@nomadicflowoutfitters.com
 Hours
 Monday-Wednesday: Closed
 Thursday: 11am-7pm
 Friday: 11am-7pm
 Saturday: 10am-7pm
 Sunday: 12pm-7pm



Nomadic Flow Outfitters is Atlanta's premier paddlesports retailer conveniently located just north of Atlanta in Canton, Ga along the beautiful river banks of the Etowah River. We offer a full service retail shop carrying all the best brands in the industry, rental/demo programs, paddling schools and guided trips. Our friendly and knowledgeable team is dedicated to serving our amazing paddling community and making paddling adventures more easily accessible for all. So whether you're looking for those relaxing float trips, fishing your local spot or chasing after the rush of whitewater our team at NFO is here to help you!

Keeping In Touch

To contact the GCA, write Georgia Canoeing Association, Inc., P.O. Box 611, Winston, GA 30187.

Groupmail: GCA maintains a group email list to help members share information of general interest. To sign up, send an e-mail to gcalist-subscribe@groups.io.

Website: Information about GCA, forms (including membership application and GCA waiver form), a link to the GCA Store and links to *Eddy Line* advertisers are all at <http://www.gapaddle.com>.

Facebook: Visit the GCA Facebook page for photos, video, trip reports, or to join an upcoming impromptu trip.

ALL ABOUT THE EDDY LINE

The Eddy Line, the official GCA newsletter, is available in pdf format. To subscribe, contact Vincent Payne at 678-343-5292 or vincent.payne9354@gmail.com, or mail your request to P.O. Box 611, Winston, GA 30187.

Submissions/Advertising: All submissions and advertising should be sent to *The Eddy Line*, at: EddyLineEditor@gmail.com.



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GEORGIA CANOEING ASSOCIATION, INC.

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[WE'RE ON THE WEB:]
www.gapaddle.com

The purpose of the GCA is to have fun and promote safety while paddling.

GCA is a member-operated paddling club with over 500 family and corporate memberships comprising more than 1500 Individuals. Canoeists and Kayakers of all ages and paddling abilities are equally welcome. Some of our mutual interests include whitewater river running, creeking and playboating, river and lake touring, sea kayaking, paddle camp outs and competition and racing activities. We espouse conservation, environmental and river access issues as well as boating safety and skills development. Group paddling, training and social activities of all kinds are conducted throughout the year thanks to the volunteer efforts of our many members and friends. Membership is NOT limited to Georgia residents.