

## Helping Your Advisors to Help You

from The Paddlin' Shop 202 S. Dickinson St. Madison, WI 53703 800-386-1299 - <http://www.paddlin.com/>

Substitute "advisor" for "sales person" when you work with us. We like to think of ourselves as advisors possessing knowledge and working towards a good match between customer and canoe or kayak. Any friend that you tap as a resource would likely try for the same, but probably wouldn't have as much experience with as wide a range of boat models as we do. Review this list to get an idea of information useful to your resource/advisor in helping them to help you. The world's most knowledgeable paddler can not match you to a boat without your working to give them information about who you are, and how they will know when you will be pleased by a boat.

Print up this form and send it to us or bring it along when you visit. You can efficiently learn about the best options from each store you shop at by sharing this information. Share the gathered information about recommended boats with a stores competition and with paddlers you respect. The hardest part is figuring out who's advice makes the most sense, so **test paddle**. Any claim by an advisor should be provable.

- 1.) I want a:  Solo Kayak  Tandem Kayak  Solo Canoe  Tandem Canoe
- 2.) I weigh? \_\_\_\_\_ lbs., and my height is: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.) Most of my weight is :  High  Low
- 4.) If Tandem: weight of partner is: \_\_\_\_\_ lbs., and height of partner is: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5.) I'll store this boat inside?  Yes  No
- 6.) Length of storage space. \_\_\_\_\_ ft.
- 7.) The vehicle I'll use to transport this boat is: Make \_\_\_\_\_ Model \_\_\_\_\_
- 8.) Closest body of water that I'll paddle is: \_\_\_\_\_
- 9.) With this boat I see myself paddling (where & how) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 10.) 90% of the time I'll actually paddle: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11.) In my mind I categorize this dream boat as:

Circle the one most important quality and check three other qualities you're looking for.

- Family boat  Solo Boat  Fast  Fishing Platform  Versatile  Quick  Dry
- Solo/ Tandem Combination  Tripping Boat  Lively  Stable  Efficient  Wet
- Child's Boat  Weekend Tripper  Racer  A Beater  River Tripper  River Cruiser
- Exercise Machine  Working Platform  Seaworthy  Cruiser  Relaxing Platform
- Quietwater Cruiser  Wildlife Observation Platform  Maneuverable Whitewater Craft
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

12.) I am a:  Strong Swimmer  Fair Swimmer  Poor Swimmer  Swim Like A Rock

13.) My Balance is:  Great  Good  Fair  Poor

14.) I'm prone towards:  Exaggeration  Accurate Self Assessment

15.) I am a:  Skilled Paddler  Paddling Instructor  Experienced Paddler  
 Intermediate Paddler  Inexperienced Paddler  Novice

16.) I Tend To :  Approach things with gusto  Prefer to relax  See physical tasks as work  
 Be fairly energetic in activities  Have a wide range of approaches

17.) I Tend To : (check one or more)

- Resist learning new things  Resist being taught new things
- Am open if you prove your skill  Have an open mind
- Love to risk learning something  Think I know it all

18.) I Tend To : (check one)

- Learn best by seeing  Learn best by hearing
- Learn best by doing  Learn best by seeing & doing
- Learn best by hearing & doing  Learn by seeing, hearing & doing

19.) Boats I have paddled are: \_\_\_\_\_

20.) My favorite boat so far has been: \_\_\_\_\_

21.) My concept of heavy is: (check one)

- 30 lbs  40lbs  50 lbs  60 lbs  70 lbs  80 lbs  You've got to be kidding?

22.) I'm willing to spend: (check one)

- \$500  \$1000  \$1500  \$2000  \$3000  \$4000  You've got to be kidding?

23.) I'm open to paddling:  Kneeling  Sitting  Only With Back Support

24.) Specific Concerns I'd like to discuss are: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## The Test Paddle

The test paddle is a **critical** part of buying a boat. By test paddling, you'll learn a great deal about the characteristics of boats and help your body get involved in the buying decision. It is very important to test with a plan. In hopes of helping you, we've prepared an example of a logical plan that you should expand upon. This plan will be most valuable if you do the same thing with every boat you try.

Record your reactions. You will ultimately create a score card that will help you finalize your decision. Keep in mind that there are all kinds of reasons why you might want one boat over another that go beyond, or are in addition to, on water behavior. Does it matter to you that one boat is better looking than another or obviously more neatly built? Add to this list and derive your own plan. Take charge of the buying process and you will have a lot more fun, get better service, and end up with a boat that you are happy with.

### Here Are Some Helpful Tips !

- 1.) Carry the boat to the water.
  - a. How heavy is this boat?
  - b. Can you move it around easily by yourself?
  
- 2.) With the boat in the water, enter it as recommended by a staff member.
  - a. Can you comfortably execute this maneuver?
  - b. Are there tips or tricks you can learn?
  
- 3.) With a hand on the dock gently lean the boat from side to side. If you do this with too much snap you won't easily feel the resistance points on the hull.
  - a. Does the boat feel firm beneath you?
  - b. Does the boat resist capsize?
  - c. Does the stability of the boat comfort you?
  
- 4.) With paddle in hand, scull away from the dock.
  - a. Does the boat side slip easily?
  - b. Does it need to be leaned to do this?
  
- 5.) Using forward strokes move ahead.
  - a. How easily does this boat pick up speed
  - b. How well does it track?
  - c. Where do you feel resistance?

- 6.) Gradually pick up speed.
  - a. When do you start to feel the boat hold back?
  - b. Are you satisfied with this hull speed range?
  
- 7.) Stop paddling.
  - a. Does this boat glide or quickly decelerate?
  - b. Does this boat pull left or right?
  
- 8.) Using draws or sweeps turn the boat.
  - a. How large a circle must you trace?
  - b. Does the boat swivel, skid, or carve?
  - c. How does this vary with speed?
  - d. How does this vary with a heel to one side?
  
- 9.) Turn with a slight boat lean.
  - a. Does leaning help?
  - b. How secure is a lean while paddling?
  - c. Is custom padding ( outfitting ) needed?
  - d. Is the seat appropriately placed for you?
  
- 10.) Take a minute to observe the wind and weather conditions during your test paddle.
  - a. Were the conditions appropriate for you and your concerns?
  - b. Should you return on a windier wave filled day or a calmer day?
  - c. Did you load the boat with enough weight?
  - d. Did you come prepared with dry clothes, so you could try everything you wanted to try?
  - e. Did you ask your salesperson to observe you paddle?
  - f. Did you make it clear that you wanted coaching or a critique?

On the next page is an example of a simple score card that you can use to keep track of your impressions after each test paddle. Add your own criteria in the spaces provided. You can create your own scoring method and use your score card information in many different ways, it's up to you. It might be helpful to rank each criteria, and number them along the margin, based on their importance to you. That way you can easily see which boat you rated highest on the criteria that are most important to you.

Be consistent. Have a plan. Be fair. Have an open mind and be willing to listen. Ask lots of questions. Remember, **It's YOUR decision.** Above all else, have fun and try to enjoy the process as much as possible.

