

A Duckling's

guide to





So you're interested in knowing more about the Canoe Club huh?

Here's our attempt to set out some of the basics and make it a little easier to get involved with the club - every society has its quirks and with a sport as varied as canoeing, there's a lot to get your head around.

Before we even start, we should probably clarify something: we call ourselves a Canoe Club, but that really doesn't cover it. We're here to have fun and do some exercise - with a reputation for great socials, you can learn to enjoy yourself when you're wet or dry. If you're interested in competing as part of Team Durham, we compete nationally in three separate disciplines: river racing, slalom and canoe polo. You don't have to have canoed before but let's be clear: it's possible spend the next three years paddling every day and never once go in an open canoe, because most of the time we're in kayaks.

kayak noun

kay·ak | \ 'kī-, ak \

Definition of *kayak*

: a light narrow boat that has both ends tapered to a point, is propelled by a double-bladed paddle, and often has a closed top except for an opening in which the paddler sits with the legs extended straight out in front:

We're a gold medal winning team, getting Durham University lots of BUCS points, and we've got lots of supportive alumni members, which altogether means a very well-stocked boathouse and great training opportunities. If you're less competitive, we also are situated in one of the best areas of Britain for white-water paddling, and have enough drivers to ensure a weekly rivertrip so you can keep topping up on adrenaline.

The purpose of this guide is to answer some of the questions you should be asking, but crucially, it's only a demonstration of the type of question you should feel comfortable asking any of the exec.

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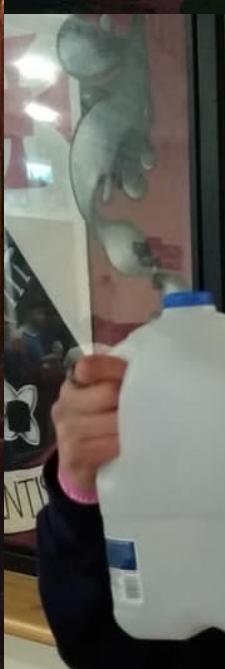


Tom Clare
Photography



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Boathouse

Welcome to our damp layer of concrete and plastic. We enjoy the privilege of a prime position at Maiden Castle (MC), Team Durham's sport centre, overlooking the River Wear. If you're struggling to navigate your way over to us (it's fifteen minutes walk from the Hill and less than half an hour away from most colleges), put "Maiden Castle" into your phone until you get to this place (the main entrance to MC).



Follow the arrow, along the road towards the river. It's actually very simple but it's amazing how Fresher's Week tires people out so much they get lost.



This is where The Magic Happens.

What should I wear?

Here's the exciting/stressful bit explained fully so hopefully it'll just be exciting.



What do I bring?

Taster session: You can change in the Maiden Castle changing rooms/toilets. Arrive in a dry set of normal clothes (or weird clothes), and bring: a towel (also useful for changing with), a pair of shorts/exercise leggings, trainers you can get wet, and a top. If you wear glasses, either contact lenses or something to hold your glasses to your head. If it looks to be cold/rainy, bring a fleece/thermal layer (not cotton). We will lend you a wetsuit, cag (waterproof jacket), BA (life jacket), helmet, paddle and boat.

Pool session: Come in normal clothes, because we'll be driving to a swimming pool in Darlington. There's changing rooms there, but we get changed as quick as possible so we can maximise our time in the pool and **minimise faff!** This is a warm swimming pool, so all you really need to bring is a towel, tshirt, shorts, and water bottle, with a swimming costume to wear underneath and a bobble if you have long hair. If you're feeling fancy, shower gel - but again, it tends to be quite a rush to get changed at the end. I'd recommend also bringing a small, unmessy snack to eat in the car on the way back - it's quite tiring. We will lend you a BA, helmet, spraydeck, paddle and boat.

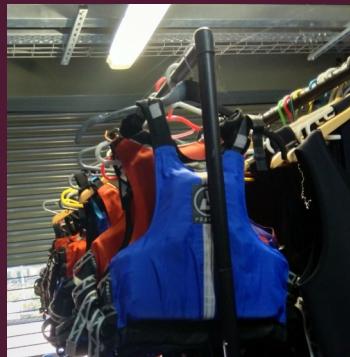
River trip: The important thing here is layers. Make sure you're not wearing cotton, because it sucks your body heat out of you (if you're wondering why, ask a BSc student). Thermal tops become essential in the dead of winter. Generally, you'll need a lunch (in a waterproof, Tupperware box, whelp) and a set of dry clothes. You'll have to get changed by the side of the road, so bring a big towel. Bring snuggly clothes for afterwards, and a phone, and maybe £5 cash just in case. For on the river, I'd say a pair of shorts, a thermal top, shoes that will get wet, waterbottle (oh the irony), and a fleece. We'll lend you a wetsuit, BA, helmet, spraydeck, paddle and boat. Let your river leader know if you have any dietary requirements, so they can make sure they have some suitable emergency rations.

Club Kit

Okay so you've found our den, now let's talk kit. Exec members will be around to help you, but we'd hope that soon enough you'll be able to kit yourself out. Our catchphrase is **minimise faff!** There's soft kit (stuff you'll wear, and put inside a car or inside a boat); and there's hard kit (stuff you'll tie to the top of a car).

As well as a boat, here's all the stuff you'll soon get used to borrowing.

BA: for the river



Helmet: for the river



Spraydeck: for the river



Paddle: for the river



Cag



Wetsuit



BA: for polo



Polo helmet



Spraydeck: for polo



Polo paddle



Check your paddle says "DUCC" on it - otherwise it might be personal property of other club members (yikes expensive)

Weekly schedule

We run 8 regular sessions throughout the week - we don't expect you'll attend them all, but the best way to improve is to attend 3 sessions per week. We have three session specifically for beginners, so we'd recommend starting with the two pool sessions and the Wednesday Wear afternoon session. Meet at the Boathouse before each session to grab kit.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Weekend
Morning Training @ Boathouse → 07:20am Ø 1 hour £ No travel costs	Rest day	Morning Training @ Boathouse → 07:20am Ø 1 hour £ No travel costs	Morning Training @ Boathouse → 07:20am Ø 1 hour £ No travel costs	Wear Racing @ Boathouse → 07:20am Ø 1 hour £ No travel costs	Check the website for updates, but expect polo tournaments, river trips and weekends away
		Skills session @ Boathouse → 13:00pm Ø Up to 2 hours £ No travel costs			
Skills Pool Session @ Swimming pool → 19:40pm Ø 3 hours £5 travel cost*		Strength and Conditioning @ Maiden Castle → 15:00pm Ø 1 hour £ No extra cost	Polo Pool Session @ Swimming pool → 19:40pm Ø 3 hours £5 travel cost*		
	Socials!	Whitewater Skills @ Tees Barrage → 16:00pm Ø 3+ hours £15			

* Subsidised to £3 throughout Michaelmas

Financial details



How do I become a member?

After you come along to three sessions, you'll have to pay an annual membership fee of £40 in order to continue to have access to the club. This covers equipment hire, and insurance costs. Entry into competitions and fuel costs will be charged separately should you choose to attend.

Where do I send my money?

This should be paid to Durham University Canoe Club, Sort Code: 20-27-66, Account Number: 53770109.

When will I be charged for sessions?

As a rule, any trip which involves a car drive will need you to pay to split the cost of fuel. For pool sessions, this is a set amount (£3 in first term, £5 for the next two terms) but for independent events eg. polo competitions or river trips, this will vary depending on the number of miles driven. It's important you sign up on the website for car journey trips, so we can reserve you a seat in a car - but should you then withdraw, you will still be charged unless someone takes your space.

Do I have to buy my own kit?

No - but the club kit is standard, and kept basic, so should you wish for greater comfort, after a while you may want to buy your own kit.

How much are trips?

For freshers day trips during the first few weeks, the price is subsidised so they will be £3. But beyond this can vary; it literally depends on how far we drive. You can ask the trip organiser for an estimate, because accommodation will be a set rate, and you can let the organiser know if there is a maximum you can afford, and where possible, we will try to accommodate this.

How rich is the club?

I've no idea, but the treasurers always look stressed so please pay promptly because it's a lot to organise and otherwise we might have to sell the Captain.



Socials are only
awkward if you don't
attend

Socials

Many of us only started kayaking when we got to university, because DUCC is a fun community. Our social secretary organises a weird mix of gatherings to give us a break from kayaking. Recently this has entailed Durham-wide scavenger hunts, hide 'n seek with pints, and team yoga on palace green. The more people that come on socials the better, especially as it gives you a proper chance to introduce yourself to the club (polo helmets can be hard to talk through). Drinking alcohol is optional (except for during competitions), but here's some rare insider's tips for getting on the Social Sec's good side:

If there's an arrival time (usually 8 is late), dont be late, bad idea

If there's a dress code, do ur best to dress that code, enthusiasm and extras are highly rewarded

There may be some rules, there may not be, we cant say

Get involved, dont be scared or embarrassed, cos we've all been there

Help each other out

Chugging milk = instant rewards

How to swim



Try as hard as you can not to fall in. Like, really try.

Have a go at rolling if you've been taught. Then pop your deck and kick your way out. It's less scary once you're in.



Hold onto your paddle, let go of the boat. Kick your feet up and stick your hips forward. Face downstream. Don't try to stand up unless you're near the side.

Assess the situation. Is someone coming to get you? Can you swim? Is someone throwing a rope to you? Is a boat coming for you? Can you hear instructions?



If someone throws a rope, tuck it behind you, under your elbows. Let them pull you in. Stand up and empty the water out of your boat.

Get back in the boat, and keep paddling as soon as possible! It'll keep you warm! Everyone falls in! If you're embarrassed, tell jokes to distract people.



Canoeing is a sport that's all about pushing yourself. We thrive on fear, and excitement, but ultimately it's your decision what you want to do - and the coach's responsibility to ensure that's done safely. Some of the activities we do will be classed as "extreme" - remember that you know yourself better than anyone, and we're essentially here to have a good time and distract ourselves from doing a degree. We ask you to try your hardest, but in return, we'll trust you to be able to make the call over what your hardest is. All sessions will be led by appropriately experienced club members - you really can learn from some of the best. We want a positive, inclusive and inspiring club. We have two dedicated welfare officers whose responsibility lies with helping you feel comfortable, and are ready to hear any suggestions to further this.



If you are ill or might have to miss a session that you signed up for, please contact the trip organiser or coach. If it's early in the morning, make sure you have a reliable alarm and leave enough time to wake up.

FAQs

Who are the Tees Tigers?

A local canoe polo club that offer even more canoe polo to intermediate players. You'll have to borrow polo kit off them, as DUCC can't lend their equipment to external polo training.

How do I organise an extra paddling session?

If you're wanting to go out on the River Wear, you can ask a keyholder or exec member to help you out with this. If it's not a regular club session, please notify the Captain. If you want to go elsewhere, talk to the Trips Officer, and we'll see if there's interest in arranging a trip.

When can I use club kit?

If it's on the River Wear or Team Durham have been notified. This is an insurance thing.

What's Tyne Tour?

Go along and find out.

When can I get DU stash?

The vice president will do a stash order towards the end of Michaelmas term - ask them for details if you're keen.

How do I get good?

Your best chance is to turn up and be brave.

Can I go to the strength and conditioning gym session?

Yes, but it's a commitment - once you start, you really shouldn't miss sessions or else there won't be any development.

What are the big whitewater trips I can look forward to?

Michaelmas: Tyne Tour (a weekend away in Northumbria)

Epiphany: Refreshers Weekend (a weekend away in the Lake District)

Easter holidays: Scotland Trip (a week in the Highlands)

Summer holidays: In recent years this has tended to be a fortnight in the French Alps

What are the competitions I can look forward to?

Michaelmas: Fresher's Canoe Polo tournament, BUCS Slalom and BUCS River race

Epiphany: Yorkshire Polo League, Ladies' Development Polo League, NSR in Nottingham

Easter holidays: BUCS Polo (in Nottingham, with a training week the week before)

What if I fall in?

We'll catch you. But we do ask for you to be able to swim 50 metres without a buoyancy aid.

