



Flatwater SUP Fishing

Sample Skills Course

Course Overview: The **Flatwater SUP Fishing** course is designed as a program emphasizing safety, enjoyment and skill acquisition for entry level individuals in public, private, and commercial settings. This course is appropriate for individuals interested in learning the skills needed for fishing from a SUP in calm water conditions in both fresh water and coastal environments.

Course Prerequisites: All participants must acknowledge personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).

Course Duration: 8 hours or more upon instructor's discretion

Course Location / Venue: This class is taught in the following conditions:

- Access to safe landing within 0.5 nautical miles/0.9 kilometers from shore (required)
- *Note: conditions, if present, should not exceed 1 foot/0.3 meters waves or 2 knot currents*

Class Ratio: 5 Participants : 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 10 : 2

Instructor: ACA Level 1: Introduction to SUP Instructor (or higher) holding the ACA Paddlesports Angler Endorsement.

Related courses:

- Level 2: Essentials of Coastal Kayak Fishing
- Level 2: Essentials of River Kayak Fishing

The following is a general summary of course content for the **Flatwater SUP Fishing** course. The content covered, and sequence of instruction should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location and time allowance.

Note: Instructor should refer to the published ACA curriculum for Level 1: Introduction to SUP and combine with the SUP Fishing curriculum included below.

Introduction, Expectations, & Logistics

- Welcome, introductions, paperwork
- Student and instructor course expectations and limitations
- Course itinerary and site logistics
- Review waiver, assumption of risk, challenge by choice, medical disclosure
- About the ACA
- PFD policy (always wear on water)
- Appropriate personal behavior
- No alcohol/substance abuse
- Proper etiquette on and off the water
- Respect private property



Flatwater SUP Fishing

Sample Skills Course

- Practice “Leave No Trace” ethics
- Promotion of an angling “Culture of Safety”
- Importance of Fishing Licenses and other related regulations

Preparing to Depart

- Discuss weather conditions, forecasts, and other environmental hazards (wind, water/tides, weather, waves)
- Review elements of a float plan (Who, What, When, Where, filing practices)
- Identify coastal trip planning criteria for SUP fishing:
 - Use of tidal charts and topography
 - Use river data gauges, dam release schedules
 - Use weather, wind, and surf reports
 - Recognize trip criteria when fishing familiar waters
 - Recognize trip criteria when fishing unfamiliar waters
 - Identify methods of rigging equipment in a SUP:
 - Identify tackle management methods
 - Identify rod holder types and placement
 - Identify paddle holder types and placement
 - Identify electronics and power management placement and concerns
- Discuss importance of developing good judgment and group responsibility for a trip
- Evaluate individual’s ability, water comfort, and confidence prior to trip
- Review life jackets appropriate for the operator’s size, SUP, and activity, assuring all others in the group are properly wearing their life jacket
- Inspect the fishing SUP and all safety equipment to meet state, federal, and local requirements for the vessel and activity
- Review proper techniques to safely lift and carry the SUP on shore and/or use of a cart when SUP is loaded with fishing gear
- Review fishing equipment needed for fishing from the SUP, activity, and environment, including the wearing and use of waders
- How to hold the paddle in correct orientation and grip for effective paddling, when SUP is loaded with fishing gear

Technical Knowledge:

- Review fishing gear and equipment terminology; types of fishing rods/reels, types of lines and their differences, common tools used when SUP fishing, electronics and power management, and overall care of gear
- Choose proper clothing for fishing environments and conditions
- Loading SUP for safety: checklist of fishing gear, stowing fishing gear securely, mitigating entanglements, and ensuring the SUP is balanced
- Recognize the various types of bait
- Fishing techniques from a SUP:
 - Structure vs. cover and how it affects fishing
 - Shallow and deep water
 - Moving water and still water



Flatwater SUP Fishing

Sample Skills Course

- Windy and calm conditions
- Clear water and stained Water
- Identify methods of locating fish in coastal environments:
 - Locate fish in marshes/bays
 - Locate fish in estuaries
 - Locate fish in tidal creeks and pools
- Explain proper etiquette towards other anglers, boaters, paddlers, and landowners
- Proper fishing handling techniques, conservation methods, and practices

Maneuvers: To be performed on-water with appropriate and efficient strokes:

- Enter and launch SUP from shore in a controlled manner, checking for clear departure when SUP is loaded with fishing gear
- Paddle the SUP forward, stop it, reverse it, and turn it when SUP is loaded with fishing gear
- Loading SUP for safety: checklist of fishing gear, stowing fishing gear securely, mitigating entanglements, and ensuring the SUP is balanced
- Access fishing tackle and other fishing gear and equipment with minimal or no movement of SUP, and maintain balance of paddler
- Cast a fishing rod with minimal or no movement of the SUP, and maintain balance of paddler and SUP
- Retrieve a fishing line with minimal or no movement of the SUP, and maintain balance of paddler and SUP
- Land a fish with minimal or no movement of the SUP (can be simulated by using an empty net or imaginary fish), and maintain balance of paddler and SUP
- Describe the proper types and use of an anchor, including anchor line management and anchor safety
- Situational Awareness: recognize the importance of keeping an eye on waterways, boats, other paddlers, other anglers, water conditions, weather, environment, and wildlife while fishing
- Arrive at destination point, checking for clear approach, and exit the SUP in a controlled and safe manner

Safety and Rescue:

- Rescue priorities: people, SUP, paddle, and gear while SUP is loaded with fishing gear
- Describe the responsibilities of: the group, rescuer, swimmers when the SUP is loaded with fishing gear
- Recognize safety criteria for SUP fishing, including safe approach to hazards:
 - Strainers
 - Laydowns
 - Jetties
 - Docks
 - Rip tides



Flatwater SUP Fishing

Sample Skills Course

- Describe recommended guidelines for the use of tethers and leashes; discuss entanglement hazards
- Identify and demonstrate the use of appropriate rescue and safety gear for the craft and planned activity when the SUP is loaded with fishing gear
- Exit the craft after capsize, using proper body position and contact with the craft and paddle
- Rescue self and the SUP using an effective self-rescue technique (e.g., swim self and board to shore, or deep-water re-mount)
- Rescue a person in the water and capsized fishing SUP using appropriate techniques and equipment for the craft (tow lines, etc)
- Techniques for bulldozing or towing a swimmer to shore
- Wearing and use of waders when fishing from paddlecraft or when wading in water
- Discuss safety and rescue concerns when wearing waders, emphasizing the neutral buoyancy factors (demonstrate then allow students to participate if they desire)

Conclusion and Wrap Up:

- Group debrief or individual feedback
- Course limitations
- Importance of First Aid and CPR
- Importance of additional instruction, practice, experience
- Importance of appropriate level of safety and rescue training
- Life sport and paddling options
- Local paddling groups and clubs
- Handouts and reference materials
- ACA membership