



Duckling Course 2012

Invitation

You are hereby invited to join the Duckling Course in order to:—

have fun on the river

Here is an opportunity to:—

- see nature from a different perspective
- get fit, doing healthy exercise (not high-impact stuff)
- get away from the noise and stress — and breathe fresh air
- share the enjoyment of the adventure with others

If it wasn't fun for us, we wouldn't be there — chances are you'll become as addicted as we are

prepare for the Berg

You learn:—

- how to be safe on the river
- the skills you need to survive safely, compete amicably and endure comfortably
- about the Berg and the Breede (or at least parts of them)

Over the years an average of 6 Ducklings complete their first Berg River Marathon in their first year of paddling

join your local Canoe Club

(if you have not already done so)

It is not a prerequisite, but it is suggested because:—

- to get the full benefit of the river paddling adventure you need to be registered for racing
- canoeists are a friendly bunch typically very welcoming to newcomers
- the membership ranges from some of the most competitive and accomplished in the country to some of the least competitive (even non-paddlers), with a large contingent of social paddlers in-between
- the clubs in the Western Cape offer all levels of coaching, from specialised high-performance training to children's classes

Who can join

The Duckling Course is open to anyone from about 15 (subject to parental authorisation) to about 60 (or older if you feel energetic enough and subject to filial approval)

- we have never yet turned anyone away, but lots of aspirant Ducklings have left of their own accord when they found out that water is wet, the weather gets cold and canoes are unstable and don't have engines or training wheels

Previous experience is not a prerequisite but not a drawback

You must be able to swim

- to be allowed to paddle on the river, you have to pass a proficiency test, which includes a swimming test

What it does for you

it builds confidence

We start off with sessions on (or sometimes in) the Duck Pond where you learn boat handling skills

- getting in and out (voluntarily and involuntarily), emptying, paddling (forwards and backwards), steering, bracing, ducking and generally getting to feel at home with the boat

There are also extended talk sessions, where you learn all about what you need to know on the river

- kit and preparation, reading the river, negotiating various types of obstacles, paddling long distance and general tips for survival

Once you have qualified, we take you to the river — easy stretches initially, where you put into practise what you have learnt

- the weather is good (usually)
- the environment is safe (safer than crossing the street)
- we'll look after you (to the best of our ability — we usually get everyone home safely)
- you will learn how to read and use the current, how to ferry-glide, how to eddy into and out of rapids and control the boat in moving water

As you progress and your confidence grows, the stretches become longer and more challenging

- the channels become narrower, the river faster, the rapids more exciting and the bush more intrusive
- you will learn about slip riding and surviving long distances, how to help and be helped
- you will also get to know the river, where to go and what to avoid, you might even get to know about the odd shortcut
- the river also gets fuller and stronger and the weather gets worse

When you are ready for it, you will participate in races where you will be left to your own devices, without babysitters

- you will experience chaotic starts, get lost in mis-remembered shortcuts, find jungles and obstacles you never dreamed of, learn some vocabulary your mother never taught you, enjoy the camaraderie on the diamond and eventually arrive at the welcome end, tired but victorious

By the time you get to the Berg Marathon, you will have acquired the skills to tackle it with confidence

it makes you fit (quite inadvertently)

Apart from the initial Duck Pond sessions you will be doing Time Trials — as soon as you can stay in your boat for long enough — this is part of the qualification process

- PCC Time Trials are on Tuesdays at 18:15 and cover 10 KM route which the winners do in about 45 minutes
- initially you may want to do only half the Time Trial, just to find out what it is like
- but in order to qualify for the river, you will eventually have to do the whole thing in less than 70 minutes
- once you get into it, you'll probably do it in 60 minutes or less within a couple of months

just by the way, Tuesday is Club Evening — after the Time Trial we have drinks and a social get-together in the club house

- *it's easy to get to know people there*
- *make contacts for group training sessions and pick up tips on style, techniques and racing tactics*
- *listen to tall stories and exchange experiences*
- *find out about boats and other kit, what is good or bad about it and who may have something to sell*

There are also informal training sessions, organised by some of the club members, at various levels of proficiency, which you would be welcome to join

- even the top paddlers in the club are very approachable and friendly and prepared to give assistance to new-comers

Then the river trips themselves provide the opportunity to get fit — you will be spending a lot of time on the water

- although the emphasis is not on speed but rather on skills development by way of playful exercises, monitored experimentation, supervised exploration and constant practise

And then there are the races — and the spirit of competition at every level in the field, even amongst the tail-enders

- even for those who say they are not competitive — you will surprise yourself
- when there is a diamond to hang on to; or a slip to catch; or a narrow gap to reach ahead of another competitor; or the final sprint in friendly rivalry — you will be amazed at the competitive drive you thought you never had

The program

Every Sunday, from 29th January 2012, until the Berg River Marathon — except Easter Sunday (in mid-July)

Published as part of the WPCU Event Calendar

- a copy of this will be provided to each participant on the Course
- it can also be viewed on the internet — address: www.wpcanoe.org.za

Session nature and duration

- the Duck Pond Sessions are half-day, they start at 09:00 and go on until about 13:00 — consisting of about 2 hours of paddling exercises and about two hours of talk session — where a lot of theoretical preparation is handled

- the River Trips are full day, they start at 08:00 (departure from PCC — be there early so we can be packed and ready to leave on time), and finish any time between 16:00 and 19:00 (sometimes even later, owing to unforeseen circumstances)

Structure of the program

- it is geared to build up skills and confidence gradually, starting with the Duck Pond and then easy River Trips
- the latter part of the program is closely linked to the official WPCU racing calendar to ensure that participants have had a chance to get to know each section of the river before the respective race takes place
- provision has also been made for intakes of further participants (inevitably people only get to hear of this fantastic opportunity later in the season)

Disclaimer

- whilst it is the intention to adhere to the program as published, circumstances, such as weather or river levels or decisions by the WPCU Committee, may compel us to change the program or arrange alternative trips or possibly even cancel at short notice

What you need

for the Duck Pond sessions

almost nothing (boats and paddles will be provided for those who don't have them yet)

- bring some clothes you can get wet in (footwear is recommended — booties or old tackies); a towel and warm clothes to change into after the paddling exercises (there are showers)
- don't buy anything yet, this is your chance to find out what type of boat would suit you, what else you will need for tripping and racing and whether you want to be there in the first place

for the River Trips

your own kit (boat, paddle, life jacket, etc)

- a kit list will be provided as a handout and discussed as part of the course

for participating in Races

you will have to be a member of a club, be affiliated to the canoe union, and have passed the River Proficiency Test

Conditions

our part of the bargain

We undertake to make each trip as enjoyable as possible and an experience to be remembered (preferably in a positive light)

- we go out there to have fun and we would like you to join us in that

We undertake to provide coaching, advice, guidance and assistance to the best of our ability during the course, but we cannot guarantee that you will ultimately become a proficient river paddler, authorised to race as per WPCU requirements

- your progress always remains dependent on your own aptitude and application, and your ability and willingness to accept and utilise the guidance and advice given

We undertake to do everything in our power to ensure your safety on the river, but we cannot guarantee that nothing will go wrong and we

can therefore not take any legal responsibility for loss or damage to life or property

- you are participating in this course at your own risk, and you will be asked to sign an indemnity form to that effect

We reserve the right, at our sole discretion, to determine when you are ready for the river and in which trips you may participate, based on our assessment of your capabilities

- this is obviously subjective, and it may seem unfair and be disappointing, but at least you'll live to complain about it

We reserve the right, at our sole discretion, to cancel or prematurely terminate any trip should circumstances warrant this

- we have had situations where it would have been unwise, if not insane to go, or to go on

We reserve the right, at our sole discretion, to prevent any individual from participating in any given trip, or to take any individual off the water at an opportune moment, if we believe that the safety of that individual or the group could be placed in jeopardy unless this step is taken

- we don't want to bully anyone, just bring them all back alive

your part of the bargain

Before you can get on the river

- you must sign an indemnity form, as approved and made available by Canoeing South Africa and the Western Province Canoe Union

- you must have completed a 10 KM Time Trial in less than 70 minutes (if you can't come to PCC on a Tuesday, you can do it at another club's time trial, and bring us proof of your time, and the name and time of the winner of that event) and then we'll see whether that qualifies

- you must have your own boat (with sufficient buoyancy fore and aft), and other paraphernalia such as life jacket, paddle, etc

- you should have attended Duck Pond Sessions (or have verifiable previous experience which impresses us sufficiently to let you qualify)

When on the river

- have a buoyant boat and wear a life jacket at all times

- remember, in the final analysis, you have to rely on yourself and your equipment for survival, we're each paddling our own canoe and any assistance even the most experienced river guide can give is of necessity limited

- listen to the organisers and do what you are told, remain within earshot — don't ever go off on your own (we might never find you again), unless expressly authorised by an organiser or designated river guide

- where visibility is limited, such as in long narrow passages, co-operate with the organisers with whatever precautions are being taken to safeguard the cohesion of the group

- where possible, assist others in difficulty, but not at the expense of your own safety — rather call for help

- look after the environment, don't litter, don't damage the vegetation, (learn to handle the obstacles, don't destroy them)

- respect property — we are mostly on the private property of riparian farmers and we are very dependent on their goodwill for our sport

- no dogs!!

- contribute to a good vibe, we are all in this adventure together and it can sometimes get a bit tense

When off the river again

- tell everyone what a fantastic time you had (you probably don't have to lie about that) and encourage others to join

If things go wrong (which we all hope won't happen)

- contribute in any way possible to the benefit of the group
- don't lay blame and don't hold the organisers or anyone else responsible for what went wrong — you went in there voluntarily and at your own risk ... remember !!

Generally

- if you have suggestions or contributions to make, please do so, we are always prepared to listen (what will be done about it is another matter)

Costs

the Course consists of

up to 22 Sessions, comprising:

up to 6 Duck Pond Sessions

up to 16 River Trips

(the specific schedule will be discussed during the course)

the price:

Participation	Students & Juniors	Adults
Full Course	R 2500	R 4000
Casual — Duck Pond	100	150
Casual — River	150	250

what this gets you

The coaching expertise and guidance

what it doesn't

Food, drink or any other provisions

Transport — we would generally be travelling in convoy — arrangements will have to be made with individual drivers in respect of petrol contributions

Club membership fees, racing licence and any other canoe-related expenses

Transport to Races — these are not part of the Duckling Course itself and petrol contributions are a separate cost.

Course Start Date

Sunday - 29 January 2012 at 09:00

— at the Peninsula Duck Pond

For further Info - Contact

Edgar Boehm — **083-301-5001**

or

come to Peninsula Canoe Club on any Tuesday evening.