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1) History of Outrigger Canoeing

THE HISTORY OF THE OUTRIGGER CANOE

Website:

<https://www.woo-outrigger.com/en/article/the-history-of-the-outrigger-canoe-between-religion-and-fascination-trip-and-traditions>

HISTORY OF THE OUTRIGGER CANOE

THE OUTRIGGER CANOE, ONE BOAT, ONE RELIGION, ONE STATE OF MIND

The outrigger canoe represents to itself, the escape, the journey, see the temptation ... Asymmetric and nevertheless so graceful, the outrigger canoe which we know today contains a history rich in 5000 years of traditions and innovations. It is in the Neolithic that we find the first tracks of outrigger canoes which testify of a big avant-gardism as for the used process technique: tracks of carbonization on the found vestiges prove to us that already, the prehistoric men of the Neolithic mastered perfectly the technique of hollowing-out by the fire .Thus the outrigger canoe was dug in single one-of-a-kind piece of wood which we added various elements as benches or outrigger or still of a sail weaved generally by the women of the village. Very fast the outrigger canoe occupies an important place in the organization of companies. Only the great masters in carpentry of navy, Tahu' , who knew process techniques could possess one. She is also very fast invested with a religious dimension and decorations are added on the hull to protect the fishermen of the scoffing attitude and the danger of the sea.

The construction becomes a religious rite has whole part. She is followed by high priests and is given rhythm by invocations to the gods as Tané-i-té the god of the toll manufacturers of "pahi". Once ended the outrigger canoe was baptized and dedicated to a god. The launch of the outrigger canoe was always preceded by an offering to Pōhū, the god "shark". The offering in the atua (" god in Tahitian) was very often proportional in the importance of the journey for which the outrigger canoe was intended. The launch of the boat was followed by all the population and the leader of the village. She came along with numerous ceremonies and with meal of parties. All these traditions still are for the greater part respected by the Hawaiian and Tahitian peoples. The outrigger canoe knew how to cross ages by keeping all its authenticity. It represents by itself the culture of the ocean today and is the emblem of the Polynesian islands of which it is native in the same way as the tiare flower.

FROM A SIMPLE MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO THE REAL SPORT

The arrival of composite materials literally upset the vision and the use of the outrigger canoe. Lighter, more profiled and more oriented to the deep-sea conditions, the outrigger canoe does not limit itself anymore has a simple means of transportation but becomes a true sport. It is during the colonization of the western Polynesia then the oriental Polynesia more than 3000 years ago the Europeans were able to assist the first sports confrontations in the course of which outrigger canoes were decorated of all kinds of decorations. It is then the French authorities that put the outrigger canoe at the honor by organizing numerous commemorative or patriotic parties with tests of double or triple outrigger canoes. But it is at the beginning of 1950s when the races as we know them today appeared. The categories and the models diversify and outrigger canoes are designed specially for the races today. Today the outrigger canoes of competitions are made in carbon ultralight and weigh no more than one tens of kilos for a length of 6m50 (for a model 1 place)! We can, today, differentiate two big types of races: lagoon's sprint and the races long deep-sea distances (ocean racing) with or without change of crews which can go to 150 km of distance to be traveled on three days. Many races became mythical for the rowers of the whole world as the Molokai in Hawaii or Te Aito in Tahiti. In metropolitan France va'a has also found his place and is governed by the French Federation of canoe and possesses too some big races on his coast.

From V1 to the OC1, the recent and surprising evolution.

To the 70s, the practice of the outrigger canoe was an important cultural sign and concerned mainly the Hawaiian of origin. These staked mainly on outrigger canoes 6 places and surfed with happiness the shore break by means of OC4. The individual practice of the outrigger canoe was non-existent! It is in fact the Czechoslovak, Karel Tresnak who is at the origin of the design of the OC1 and his history is surprising: In the 70s, Karel Tresnak is one of the best Cistus of slalom in the world: twice world champion (in 1973 and 1975), he defects at the beginning of 1980s and passes on the West by obtaining a green card in the USA. At that time, the Eastern countries were recognized as far ahead regarding sports preparation while the western countries were far from the scientific and individualized techniques practiced behind the Iron Curtain. At the beginning of the 80s, Karel is contacted by one of the biggest club of the island of Ohau in Hawaii who wished to optimize the training of their teams OC6 with the aim of first one Molokai to Ohau, the race which was going to become a true myth in the world of the outrigger canoe. Arrived on the spot, Karel noticed that there was no plan of training individualized according to the morphology and according to the place of every rower. The team contented itself with a volume of ream in common driven by a coach on a boat follower. Thus he made V1 of Tahiti come so that every

rower of the team can make training individualized besides the trainings by team. In front of the difficulty of the rowers to hold their cape, he had the idea to adapt a rudder on V1. Then one thing leading to another, and with the aim of adapting outrigger canoes to the local conditions, he had the idea to reduce their size, to give them some "rocker" and to replace the coaming by a position seat on top. Even if it means designing a new format of outrigger canoe, he said to himself that it would be good to return it practical: aluminum iatos clickable was the last evolution. THE modern OC1 had been born and does not stop being since improved.

To learn more about the differences between Va'a and OC, click [here](#)

2) Positions in the canoe

Website: <http://tazocc.com/paddling-101/positions-in-the-canoe/>

From the website:

SIX PERSON CANOES – SEAT POSITIONS

Crew and Positions

It takes an entire team working harmoniously in practice sessions and races to cross a finish line in first place. While each individual canoe can only seat six paddlers, every member of the team plays an important and vital role to the success of a crew, six paddlers in the canoe all working in unison. Each seat in the canoe requires certain talents and needs from a paddler, and each seat comes with its own sets of challenges and responsibilities.

Six paddlers in the canoe all working in unison, but each with a role to play. Each paddler from seat number 1-5, paddles alternately on the opposite side from each other:

- Stroke and Number Two

The stroke sits in the very front seat of the canoe. Paddlers one and two, are primarily concerned with ensuring the rhythm and pace of the paddle strokes, which seats, three through five follow.

They paddle on opposite sides and as such neither has a paddle to follow. The stroke at the front of the canoe must set a more or less consistent pace which varies according to the nature of the race and water conditions, but usually between 65-75 strokes/minute, whilst the paddler behind in number two seat, must follow in perfect time, mirroring the strokes pace so as the power distribution remains equal and synchronized down the length of the canoe.

The stroke's job is crucial in ensuring the consistency of the crew working at an optimum pace and rhythm. When rounding markers, the stroke and number two work together to turn the front of the canoe.

- Seats Three and Four

Often referred to as Power Seats, the heavier, stronger paddlers will generally take these positions. It is their primary task to provide the brute power required to push the canoe along. Number four seat generally takes responsibility for ensuring the canoe remains as dry as possible, bailing when needs be.

- Seat Five

Again a power seat but also needs to have knowledge of steering to assist the steerer when necessary. They are also referred to as the keeper of the ama. This entails that they must eyeball the ama (the outer float) to make sure it is stable. If it looks at any time to be lifting threatening capsize, they must quickly react to save it. Failing this, numbers three and four need to recognise the predicament and also try to save a capsize. Number five must also take responsibility for bailing if required should there be an excess of water in the canoe as by the time water is collecting towards the aft end of the canoe, there is definitely too much water inboard.

- Steerer

The steerer, who is ideally the captain of the canoe calls the shots, motivates the crew and sets the canoe up for the best course and catching the swells. They plan and navigate a course and have a big responsibility during sprint races, where they must set the canoe up for a good turn around the buoys.

They need to have a good paddling relationship with number 5 in protecting the ama and indeed with all the crew. Steering a 40ft plus canoe on the open ocean in rough water is an art form. Those that learn their trade well can be considered masters of a task which requires intimate understanding of the dynamics of the ocean and the nuances of the canoe and crew.

- What are the characteristics of a good stroker?

Being stroker is first and foremost psychologically challenging as they have the position of not being able to follow anyone and must therefore remain at all times self motivated and alert. In many respects their role is mentally more challenging

than any other in the canoe, with the exception of the steerer.

They must have a natural sense of timing and rhythm and have eyes in the backs of their head, being able to intuitively feel how the canoe is travelling and respond by increasing and decreasing the stroke rate where necessary. They need to be aerobically very fit as they may not pull as much water as those behind but they will be working hard on an aerobic level. Above all they need to be good natural athletes with a capacity to read the water and have an understanding of what the paddlers behind can tolerate as an effective, efficient stroke rate.

- What are the characteristics of a good number 2 paddler?

Much like the stroker, a good sense of timing and rhythm. It is crucial that number 2 stay in time with the stroker, made all the harder by the fact that they cannot actually follow a blade in front of them, but only the paddlers body movement. Number 2 needs to talk to the stroker to encourage and keep them on task at all times. A good paddling relationship at the front of the canoe will ensure the rest of the canoe is firing well. Numbers 1 and 2 are the source and all that happens here, travels back along the canoe.

- Why are paddlers 3 and 4 often the heaviest and strongest paddlers?

In order to create a stable canoe, it is preferable to have your heaviest paddlers in the middle of the canoe between the two spars (iako). In this way their weight stabilizes the canoe by ensuring that it sits reasonably deep in this mid section and therefore that the float (ama) on the outer spar (iako) maintains contact with the water.

Ideally three and four need to be concerned with little else, other than following the front two paddlers and applying maximum leverage. Beyond this, the canoe is widest at its mid point and therefore physically large paddlers can fit in these seats but often have trouble fitting into seats 1 or 2!

Number three will often take responsibility for counting the number of strokes per side and call out when it is time to switch sides. They should also be in a position to note how the stroke rate is going and read the swell to make changes as needed.

- Why does number 4 take responsibility for bailing?

When water enters the canoe it will tend to pool first of all in the mid section of the canoe. Number 4 can recognize this and react by bailing. They can also sit up on the spar (iako) to do so, so that the canoe remains stable whilst they do this.

- So when does number 5 bail?

When there is a serious amount of water and the pool has extended to the rear of the canoe.

- What are the characteristics of a good number 5 paddler?

The number five paddler has a varied role and perhaps needs to be the most all around paddler. They should ideally be competent steerers and of course strong paddlers. They need to be able to be totally flexible in their paddling ability, so as they can eyeball the ama and protect it and change paddling sides rapidly and frequently if needs be. They may also need to paddle for long stretches at a time, much like the steerer, on the left side to protect the ama, so as the steerer can concentrate on steering. Their reactions must at all times be fully intuitive, working in with the steerer when it is needed.

- What are the characteristics of a good steerer?

The steerer has without question the greatest degree of responsibility within the canoe, one that is often overlooked by other paddlers. They must steer a good course, read the ocean and work the canoe so its interacts and travels at its maximum potential at all times. They must motivate the crew, call changes to stroke rates if they feel it necessary and ensure the overall safety of the canoe.

Experience counts for a lot in this position. Time on the water in all conditions is crucial and an intuitive understanding of ocean dynamics is crucial to achieving maximum canoe speed. In this respect it is said that surfers often make the best steerers. Curiously the best steerers happen also to be more and more so, excellent solo outrigger canoeists.

How important are timing and rhythm to the crews performance?

One of the fundamental secrets to making an outrigger canoe travel well, is precision of the crews timing and rhythm. All paddles entering and exiting the water at the same time, all paddlers pulling in unison and all using the same technique. The power from the paddles which travels from the paddle along the paddlers arms to their butts, is what drives the canoe forward and the power surge must be synchronised. Time in the canoe as a crew working on these fundamentals are paramount.

3) Canoeing- health benefits

Website: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyiving/canoeing-and-kayaking-health-benefits>

From the website:

Health benefits of canoeing

Canoeing is a low impact activities that can improve your aerobic fitness, strength and flexibility. Specific health benefits include:

- Improved cardiovascular fitness

- Increased muscle strength, particularly in the back, arms, shoulders and chest, from moving the paddle
- Increased torso and leg strength, as the strength to power a canoe or kayak comes mainly from rotating the torso and applying pressure with your legs
- Reduced risk of wear-and-tear on joints and tissues, since paddling is a low impact activity.

Other benefits of canoeing

Some other good reasons to paddle include:

- Canoeing can be peaceful and meditative or can be exhilarating – depending on where and how you do it.
- Paddling is a great way to enjoy our waterways.

Preparing for canoeing

General tips for beginners include:

- Join a club – the best way to learn how to paddle is to join a local club. While it's possible to learn a great deal about the sport through reading, lessons will improve your technique, reduce your risk of injuries and help you become more aware of safety issues when on the water.
- Be a competent swimmer – since paddling involves the occasional tip into the water, make sure you are a competent swimmer. If necessary, brush up on your swimming technique.
- Try before you buy – paddling can be an expensive pastime. Consider borrowing or hiring equipment at first until you are sure that you enjoy canoeing enough to pay for a full kit.

Basic gear for canoeing

Paddlers have different gear preferences, but some basics and suggestions include:

- appropriate clothing- water wicking workout clothes
- neoprene gear for winter months
- sunscreen
- sunglasses and strap
- hat or visor
- paddle (club paddle provided as needed)
- plastic water bottle
- dry clothes and towel for after practice
- mobile telephone inside a waterproof container

4) Southern California Outrigger Racing Association (SCORA)

Website: <http://www.scora.org/>

Website: <http://www.scora.org/mission-statement/>

From the website:

Mission Statement

Southern California Outrigger Racing Association (SCORA) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit public benefit corporation dedicated to the perpetuation of outrigger canoe racing both regionally in Southern California and worldwide, and to further maintain the rich Pacific island culture and traditions that are rooted in the sport.

SCORA is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, Federal TIN 11-3716854 and is California Corporation No: 2651271 registered with the State Attorney General as California Charitable Trust No. 125256.

SCORA Through the Years

The Southern California Outrigger Racing Association (SCORA) is the governing body for the sport of outrigger canoe

racing in Southern California, Arizona and Nevada. Most of its teams reside on Southern California beaches between San Diego and San Luis Obispo with several outlying teams in Catalina and surrounding states. SCORA sanctions outrigger competitions and provides competitive ocean training programs to foster the healthy, active lifestyle of its members.

SCORA is a member of both the Pacific Outrigger Canoe Association (POCA) and the International Va'a Federation (IVF), the latter being the governing body for outrigger canoe racing worldwide. The IVF, Va'a meaning canoe in Tahitian, sanctions international races including biennial World Sprints. Members of the IVF reside in all points of the globe including Tahiti, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Hawaii, California, New York, Guam and France. The World Sprints are held in select global venues for the specific purpose of gaining recognition as a competitive sport in the Olympics.

In addition to racing in the IVF events, SCORA teams participate in those of other Associations throughout the United States and the world. In June 2004, 2005, and 2006 SCORA paddlers not only participated in, but took home 1st place medals in the renowned PowerAde Hamilton Cup in Hamilton Island, Australia. In September and October of 2004, 2005 and 2006, SCORA women and men paddlers competed in the world class Molokai Channel Crossing, a 41-mile race from the island of Molokai to Waikiki Beach on Oahu. SCORA teams have also successfully competed in the Liberty Cup in New York and the Gorge Games in Oregon, and the prestigious Hawaiki Nui performed, and respect of the traditions of the Polynesian culture at it relates to the canoe – not stepping over a canoe and traditionally naming and blessing canoes with Hawaiian names.

Southern California families are brought together by the sport as well. It is truly an all encompassing sport offering the ocean/surfing lifestyle with a team environment that is family focused. SCORA provides organized outrigger races for paddlers of all ages. The Keiki (children) races allow children from ages 12 to 19 to compete in short races. The open divisions are comprised of individuals from ages 20 to 35, and the masters and senior-masters divisions provide competitive fields for ages 35 to 65 or older. It is not uncommon to see a family of paddlers, with moms and dads paddling in the open and masters divisions and the kids participating in the keiki races. It's a great way to spend time with your family and also enjoy the thrill of racing an outrigger canoe on the open ocean.

SCORA and each of its member clubs strive to share their wealth of cultural and athletic camaraderie with the community at large. SCORA continues to support the healthy, active and culturally rich lifestyle of outrigger canoe paddling and continues to pursue its goal of one day to further enrich the global community through a presence in the Olympic Games.

- [History of SCORA clubs](#)
- [SCORA Officers](#)
- [CA Teams Placing in Top Races](#)
- [Evolution of Canoe](#)

2020 Race Schedule

2020 Race Schedule

| Race Date | Race | Location | Host |
|-----------------|--|----------------------------|--------------------|
| May 9 | Crystal Pier | San Diego, CA | Hanohano OCC |
| May 16 | Rig Run | Santa Barbara, CA | Ka Nai'a OCC |
| May 30 | Kahanamoku Klassic | Marina del Rey, CA | Marina del Rey OCC |
| June 6 | Ventura Outrigger Challenge | Ventura, CA | Hokuloa OCC |
| June 13 | Kahakai Iron Challenge | Long Beach, CA | Kahakai OCC |
| June 27 | Iron Outrigger Championships | San Diego, CA | Kai Elua OCC |
| July 18 | Kahakai 9man Sprint Relay | Long Beach, CA | Kahakai OCC |
| July 25 | Noah Kalama Sprints | Long Beach, CA | Imua OCC |
| August 8 | Whitey Harrison 9-man | Dana Point, CA | Dana OCC |
| August 22 | Paopao 9-man | Oceanside, CA | Oceanside OCC |
| September 12-13 | Catalina Crossing – US Championships | Newport Beach & Avalon, CA | SCORA |

Race Day Information

Race Packets

2019

- [2019 Crystal Pier Race Packet](#)
- [2019 Rig Run Race Packet](#)
- [2019 Kahanamoku Klassic Race Packet](#)
- [2019 Ventura Challenge Race Packet](#)
- [2019 Battle of Breakwater Race Packet](#)
- [2019 Iron Champs Race Packet](#)
- [2019 Back Bay Round Up Race Packet](#)
- [2019 Kahakai 9-Man Race Packet](#)
- [2019 Noah Kalama Sprints Race Packet](#)
- [2019 Whitey Harrison Race Packet](#)
- [2019 PaoPao Race Packet](#)
- [2019 Catalina Race Packet](#)

Race Rules

- [2019 SCORA Race Rules](#)
- [Escort Safety Policy](#)

6) History of the Catalina Crossing

From the website:

The first outrigger race held in California was on September 20, 1959. This first race was a long distance race from Avalon on Catalina Island to the Newport Dunes inside the California Coast.

The famous Duke Kahanamoku served as the Grand Marshall of the first California Outrigger event and founded the Catalina to Newport Dunes race – the original California Outrigger Classic. The subsequent races were underwritten by the Balboa Improvement Association and Ira Dowd, part owner of the Newport Dunes.

The first race involved two canoes shipped to California from Hawaii through the efforts of Albert Edward “Toots” Minvielle. Both of them were koa wood canoes with the names Malia meaning calm waters and Niuhe, meaning shark.

The Malia team was composed of Hawaiian All Star outrigger paddlers organized by Toots. Some of the members of that first Hawaiian team to paddle the Catalina Channel in 1959 were Chris Bodie, Blu Makua, Archie Kuana, Joe Gilman, Sonny Henriques, and Dougie Carr. The California team paddled the Niuhe. This first mainland team included George Kopa, Tom Johnson, Dan Uadis, Frank Saddler, Mike Johnson, Dave Arne, Doug Wood, Ron Druman, Lorrin Harrison and others.

The Hawaiian team won the race in a time of 5 hours. The newly formed California team in the Niuhe finished close behind in a time of 5 hours, 11 minutes. Lorrin Harrison – Part of first California outrigger team, and founder of Dana Outrigger Canoe Club (Est. 1972) Lorrin Harrison, the steersman and original member of the first California team had the following remembrances of the early beginnings and that first race, “when I first heard about canoe racing here, I had a dugout canoe that I built in 1950. We were surfing it down in Doheny. Noah Kalama came by, he knew my sister from Hawaii, and I knew him from body surfing. He said, “Lorrin can you get a team together of guys down here you think would like to paddle? We’ll have a race with a Hawaiian team.”

“I said, ‘Yeah, we can do that!’ So we started coming here to the Dunes, paddling here till 9 o’clock every night. There were about 15 guys all paddling. Other guys would build a fire and we’d stay here and paddle when the wind was howling. We worked for two months. We were so sick of paddling there. I thought we would never get out and see the ocean. Finally Noah let us go out and it was rough outside, too. That’s the way it all started, right here in these Newport Dunes.”

Then they brought the Hawaiian team over so we all hooked behind some big boat, towed all the people and the two boats over to Avalon. The race started the next morning after we were there. It was just two boats in the race from Avalon. Coming across we were making changes.

We had about 25 people to draw from. About half-way across, the escort boat ran ahead to drop people in the water and made a big wake. The wake flipped the boat straight up on edge with the ama (outrigger) straight out of the water. I stayed – stuck in, but my number one man was about 20 feet off the stern and it threw all the other men out too. So Noah put a whole new 5 guys in and we kept going. At that time we were right even with Blu Makua and the Hawaiian team. When we came into the south end of the Newport Dunes, they finished 11 minutes ahead of us. I had been in the boat for 5 hours and 11 minutes with no drink of water and I thought I’d just die when we hit the beach ‘cause of the paddle Noah gave me, he said ‘You gotta have a big paddle for this race’. That sucker weighed 10 pounds at least. I still got the paddle, I got the proof, if any one wants to paddle 30 miles with it, they can have it.”

While the first Catalina to Newport Dunes Race was a culmination of efforts and farsightedness on the part of several outstanding persons in canoe paddling, the spirit behind the spread and development of outrigger canoe paddling as a sport, both in Hawaii and California, is the famous Albert “Toots” Minvielle.

Toots Minvielle and 1958 were pivotal points in the history of outrigger canoeing, especially for California. In 1958 Toots met Tommy Zahn from Santa Monica, shortly after Tommy had paddled the Molokai Channel on a surfboard. Tommy Zahn responded immediately – there was sufficient interest. He arranged a luncheon meeting in early 1959 with Ira Dowd, the owner of the Newport Dunes, Sam Miller, (then commodore of the Balboa Bay Club), and Al Oberg, Harbor Master of Newport Beach in 1959. All the right people were there and California’s Outrigger racing history had begun.

Noah Kalama, sent to California by Toots Minvielle to coach the first California Outrigger team, and Tom Johnson, an original member of the first California outrigger racing team, were the first to perceive the need for California-based canoes. The boats used for that first Catalina race were scheduled to be shipped back to Hawaii after the competition was completed. Noah Kalama and Tom Johnson, realizing the development of California outrigger racing would hinge upon a local boat supply, were quick to act. They made a mold of the Malia hull – and California outrigger boat building was born.

Although Toots Minvielle initiated efforts to bring Hawaiian Canoe Paddling to the mainland in 1958, 1959 was the year paddling arrived – the same year that Hawaii joined the United States of America. What may have been initially seen as merely a gesture – sharing a facet of Hawaiian culture with the mainland through the Aloha Celebration and the aloha spirit of Toots Minvielle- has given mainlanders, especially Californians, a tease, a feel and a love for Hawaiian traditions.

Mahalo Hawaii, Mahalo Toots Minvielle for outrigger canoe paddling – a wonderful slice of Hawaiian life.

– Excerpts from article written by Michael (Jake) Jacobs

- [Catalina Women Winners](#)
- [Catalina Men Winners](#)
- [Catalina Grand Marshals](#)

7) SCORA Materials

Website: <http://www.scora.org/scora-steersman-study-guides/>

From the website:

Review the following study guides to help you complete and pass SCORA's 2018 Steersman Accreditation.

- [Study Guide – SCORA Race Rules](#)
- [Study Guide – Marine General Liability Insurance Policy FAQs](#)
- [Study Guide – Outrigger Basic Safety Handbook](#)
- [Study Guide – Righting A Canoe Handbook](#)
- [Study Guide – US Coast Guard Navigation Rules](#)

(5) Canoe Safety & Information

Website: <http://www.scora.org/canoe-safety-information/>

From the website:

- [Basic Canoe Safety](#)
- [Righting a Outrigger Canoe](#)
- [ESCORT BOAT SKIPPERS INFORMATION_2017](#)
- [Escort Safety Policy 2017](#)
- [Paddlers Requirements For Change Races](#)
- [Coaching Ideas](#)
- [SCORA Risk Management Handbook](#)
- [SCORA Officials Handbook](#)
- [SCORA Volunteer Handbook](#)

7) Testing for Swimming

American Red Cross: QUIZ: Do You Actually Know How to Swim?

Website: <https://redcrosschat.org/2014/08/28/quiz-do-you-actually-know-how-to-swim/>

From the website:

For the past 100 years, we've been helping millions of kids, teens and adults learn how to swim and become lifeguards and instructors. This year, the American Red Cross launched a [new national campaign](#) to reduce the drowning rate by 50 percent in 50 cities over the next three to five years.

The new Red Cross drowning prevention campaign comes at a time when a new national [survey](#) shows that people believe they are better swimmers than they actually are. The survey, conducted for the Red Cross, found that while 80 percent of Americans said they could swim, only 56 percent of the self-described swimmers can perform all five of the basic skills that could save their life in the water.

What about you? Can YOU perform the five basic swimming skills? Take the quiz now!

Do you actually know how to swim?

Answer 5 simple questions to see if you really know how to swim or not.

Take Quiz (go to website listed above for quiz)

Instructional Swim Questionnaire

Website: <http://www.jccsanantonio.org/PDFfiles/Editable-Swim%20Form.pdf>

Evaluating Swimming Skills

Website: <https://jeanie-neal-n852.squarespace.com/evaluating-swim-skills/>

8) Is participation in team sports beneficial to children?

Team sports are beneficial to children in a variety of ways: they help children learn sharing and teamwork skills; they encourage the building of relationships; they can boost self-esteem; and they help keep children physically fit.

While many children enjoy sports, some children may prefer quieter activities, such as reading or drawing, or participating in sports that tend to be more solitary, such as long-distance running or biking.

There are some common reasons why a child may not want to participate in team sports. These include:

- Fear of failure or embarrassment.
- Fear of letting down other teammates.
- Fear of letting down parents.
- Physical self-consciousness, including low self-esteem.
- Fear of physical injury.
- Fear of a lack of coordination or grace.

There may be other reasons a child does not enjoy team sports. He or she may have undiagnosed physical problems that impede performance, or there may be arguing or bullying among teammates. The best thing to do if your child shows a distaste for team sports is to ask him or her if there is a reason for the disinterest.

It is important to remember that not all children will enjoy team sports. Some find the physical challenges or pressures of team sports to be unenjoyable. Forcing a child to join a team is not the best way to encourage team participation. Instead, find activities that suit your child's personality and interests. Keep in mind that your child may feel more comfortable participating in team sports that are not associated with his or her school or community. He or she may also feel more comfortable in a sport that is less competitive, or one that encourages individual growth.

If you are concerned about your child's physical fitness, discuss what types of physical activities your child is interested in pursuing. Sports traditionally geared to one gender are now available to anyone: girls can play hockey and take karate, and boys can figure skate and take dance class. The type of sport is not important -- your child's happiness and health should be the goal.