

How To Set For Turns In Outrigger Canoes By Gabriel Jaramillo gabrieljaramillomd@yahoo.com

This document is intended for the use of Capital Outrigger / Ohana Kai. Also, there are several ways to execute a turn, however I am focusing on only one technique in this document.

As mentioned above, there are several ways to execute a turn during a sprint regatta; the method that will be discussed in this document is one of the most efficient. I will focus on the job of each seat, as well as the position of the canoe in relation to the turning buoy/flag.

During the sprint regatta, seat 2 calls the changes. For this reason, seat 2 needs to keep an eye on the turning buoy in order to set him/herself on the left/ama/port side about two boat lengths away from the turning buoy. This means that seat 1 will be on the right/non-ama/starboard side. If the change is called too early, then the crew will stay on one side for too long and they will not have enough power to keep the momentum for the turn. If the call is made too late, then the crew will not have enough time to power the boat into the turn.

About one boat length away from the buoy, the entire crew needs to increase power in order to increase the momentum of the boat. Think about it for a minute: canoes on average are 45 feet long and weigh 400 lbs - in addition to six paddlers weighing 200 lbs on average. That is over 1500 lbs of weight in the water that need to make a 180 degree turn in less than 5 seconds! The entire crew needs to power the canoe in order to have the most momentum possible.

As soon as the steersman/captain calls the "UNI," seat 1 must come over from the right to the left to start drawing water. In the small fraction of time that seat 1 has to make the change, seat 2 will post and start drawing water as soon as seat 1 comes over. It is critical that seat 1 and 2 draw at the same time. It is also critical that as seats 1 and 2 draw, their lower elbow touches the water to ensure the water goes under the canoe and does not hit the side of the canoe.

When the steersman calls the "UNI," seats 3, 4 and 5 (the power of the boat) will go from 100% power to 0% power, however they need to keep timing (a slow pace with seat 3). The reason being is that seats 1, 2 and 6 are doing all the work to turn the canoe, and any power from 3, 4 and 5 will interfere with the turn. Furthermore, seats 3, 4 and 5 need to take a breather. Finally, the boat becomes unstable during a turn, so seats 3, 4 and 5 need to SLIGHTLY lean left - not too much because that will interfere with the turn, but just enough to give stability to the canoe. As soon as the steersman calls "go, pull it out, straight out" seats 3, 4 and 5 need to go back to 100% power in order to gain momentum again and pull out of the turn as fast as possible.

For seats 1 and 2, as soon as the steersman calls "go," both must start to paddle again, keeping in mind that they are both still on the left side of the canoe at this point. Seat 2 will call the change five to eight strokes after the "UNI." Seats 2 through 5 will make a change except for seat 1 (this places all seats on alternating sides again). Then seat 2 will call another change at 5 to 8 strokes for a second time in order to give seat 1 a breather.

Visual Summary:

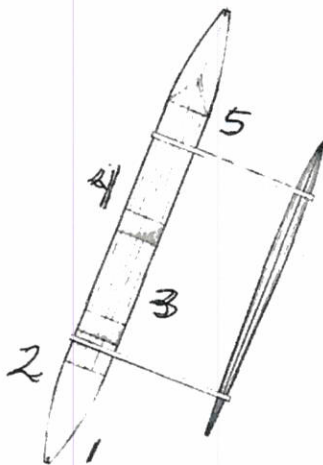


Figure 4: Steersman will call "STRAIGHT OUT"
SEATS 1 & 2 paddle forward (both on the left still)
SEAT 2 calls change in 5 to 8 strokes (all paddlers change sides, except 1).
SEAT 2 then calls change in 5 to 8 strokes and ALL SEATS makes a change, including 1.

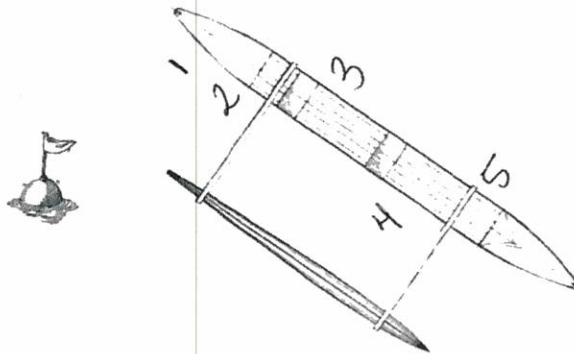


Figure 3: As you enter the turn, the Steersman will call "UNI."
SEAT 2 posts and waits for SEAT 1.
SEAT 1 makes change and starts to draw in time with SEAT 2.
SEATS 3, 4, 5 keep time, but do not "power."

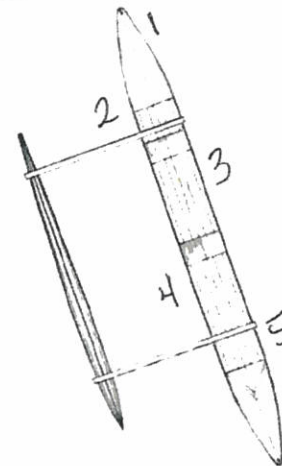


Figure 2: When you get approximately 1 canoe length away from the flag ALL SEATS increase power.

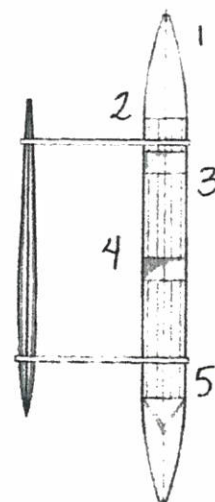


Figure 1: As you approach the flag/buoy (at approximately 2 canoe lengths) SEAT 2 makes sure to call change to put themself on the LEFT (SEAT 1 on the right).