



# Dis+abled

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**GAME 14 - KAYAKING & CANOEING**  
TRADITIONAL AND ADAPTED **GAMES**  
**FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION OF**  
**PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND ABLE-BODIED**

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### INTRODUCTION

#### What are Kayaking and Canoeing?

Kayaking and canoeing are water sports that involve paddling small boats using a paddle. While similar in many ways, they differ mainly in design and paddling technique:

- **Kayaking** involves sitting in a low, enclosed or open-deck boat (kayak) and using a double-bladed paddle.
- **Canoeing** typically involves kneeling or sitting on a bench in an open-top boat (canoe) and using a single-bladed paddle.

Both sports can be practiced on calm lakes, rivers, whitewater rapids, and even in the sea.



## WHY PRACTICE KAYAKING OR CANOEING?

- They offer a unique combination of sport, exploration, and connection with nature.
- Promote a healthy, active lifestyle.
- Accessible to beginners, yet challenging for professionals.
- Provide a meaningful way to explore natural environments sustainably.
- Encourage both independence and teamwork.

**Kayaking and canoeing** are versatile water sports that offer a wide range of physical, mental, social, and recreational benefits. Their global popularity continues to rise, making them excellent choices for anyone looking to stay active, enjoy nature, and engage in a fulfilling outdoor activity



## SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY ASPECTS

- Kayaking and canoeing are often practiced in clubs or groups, fostering teamwork, cooperation, and friendship.
- They are excellent activities for families, school trips, and team-building events.
- In competitive settings, they teach discipline, resilience, and goal-setting

## SPORTING ASPECTS

- Both sports are part of the Olympic and Paralympic Games
- They include various competitive formats: sprint racing, slalom, freestyle kayaking, marathon canoeing, and dragon boat races.
- Athletes train with high intensity, requiring strength, technique, and mental focus.

## GLOBAL REACH AND POPULARITY

- Widely popular in North America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand.
- Growing interest in Asia, Latin America, and parts of Africa due to increased tourism and sports development.
- Recreational kayaking is especially booming in countries with access to lakes, rivers, and coastlines.
- Ecotourism and adventure travel have made these activities more accessible and attractive globally.

## RECREATIONAL AND HEALTH BENEFITS

### 1. Physical Fitness:

- Improves cardiovascular health
- Strengthens upper body, core, and back muscles
- Enhances endurance, flexibility, and coordination

### 2. Mental Health:

- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Promotes mindfulness and relaxation, especially in nature
- Encourages focus and concentration

### 3. Recreation and Fun:

- Ideal for both solo and group outings
- Suitable for all ages and skill levels
- Can be a peaceful nature experience or an adrenaline-filled adventure (e.g., whitewater kayaking)



### INTEGRATION VALUES - PARACANOEING:

Paracanoeing evolved from a leisure activity to a high performance sport (from 2010) has two types of boat, the traditional Kayak and the Va'a – a canoe with an outrigger to provide stability. The same principles apply with the double-blade being used for the Kayak and the single blade used in the Canoe (Va'a).

### Values of paracanoeing:

- a huge contribution to all dimensions of health, including mental and social one
- highly inclusive and very adequate for many social groups
- useful and helpful in fight against discrimination and exclusion.

Paddling an open canoe or a kayak can range from recreational trips on a lake, river or out in the archipelago, to determined training and competition on elite level. Paddling is an activity that enhancing health both physically and intellectually. Being part of paddling activities together with others both impaired and not impaired persons is an important step to freedom, meaningful time and social inclusion. The persons that are involved in paddling usually inspire others and can witness about the joys and profits of kayaking and canoeing.

### ADAPTATION FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Kayaking and Canoeing can be enjoyed by both able-bodied and disabled individuals, thanks to various adaptations that ensure safety, comfort, and accessibility. For people with physical disabilities, specially designed kayaks may include wider and more stable hulls, supportive seating, backrests, or outriggers to prevent capsizing. Adaptive paddles with hand grips, arm supports, or pedal-powered systems can also assist those with limited arm or hand mobility. Launching docks and ramps are often modified to allow easier entry and exit from the kayak. Instructors or guides are trained to provide additional support and tailor the experience to the individual's needs. These adaptations make kayaking an inclusive activity that promotes physical activity, mental well-being, and a connection with nature for everyone.



Everyone, regardless of physical or mental functionality, should have the opportunity to experience the joy of paddling, whatever the purpose is. For people using wheelchair for daily life activities, paddling is an excellent way to sense the freedom of mobility in an outdoor environment. Paddling can also be a good way to become part of a social community and to ensure equal opportunities to training and competing.



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