

# WaterTribe Boat Classes

***"The purpose of WaterTribe is to encourage the development of boats, equipment, skills, and human athletic performance for safe and efficient coastal cruising using minimal impact human and wind powered watercraft based on kayaks, canoes, and small sailboats." – Chief, February 2000***

There are five main classes of boats and one exhibition class. All boats in the five main classes must use human or wind power only. All boats must have bulkheads and/or positive flotation. Boats with bulkheads must have positive flotation in the event of a breached hatch or leaking hull. The various hulls of a multihull boat can be counted toward the positive flotation requirement. **Reefing rules are at the end of this document. READ THEM.**

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**Class 1 - Expedition Kayaks and Canoes:** These are kayaks or canoes that are suitable for safe and efficient coastal and open water expeditions of four weeks or more. They are limited to singles, doubles, and triples only. The length to beam ratio cannot be more than 10.99 : 1.

A downwind sail rig is allowed but is limited to 12 square feet per paddler with a 24 square feet limit. Note that if a double or triple is using a single sail with 24 square feet, then the reefing rules apply. If a double is using two sails with each sail up to 12 sq feet or one sail up to 12 square feet, then they do not have to have reefs. Easy dousing is always required.

Outriggers are not allowed. Centerboards, leeboards, daggerboards, etc. are not allowed.

Sponsons are allowed.

All sailing equipment including sponsons must be removable and stowable in a seaworthy manner.

Most canoes are intended for lakes and rivers and cannot meet the above criteria. An example of a canoe that can meet the criteria is a Kruger Sea Wind or similar canoes if they have a full cockpit cover.

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**Class 2 - Racing Kayaks and Canoes:** These are skinny and fast kayaks or canoes that are suitable for safe and efficient coastal and open water expeditions of four weeks or more. They are limited to singles, doubles, and triples only. The length to beam ratio is greater than 10.99 : 1. Basically, if it is very long and very skinny it must go in class 2.

No sail rig of any kind is allowed. Kayaks that normally would go in class 1 may elect to join class 2 to avoid sail paranoia.

Surf skis and SUPs go in this class and must carry the required equipment in a safe and seaworthy manner. Special attention will be given to the equipment inspection of these boats, and due to past abuses, these boats will be subject to surprise inspections at any checkpoint.

Single outrigger canoes go in this class. A safety ama or sponson on the off side is highly recommended. These boats are also subject to special attention regarding equipment.

Do these special inspection rules for surf skis, SUPs, and outrigger canoes mean I don't like them? Heck no. Some of our best and most capable WaterTribers have used surf skis and outrigger canoes and they didn't cheat. And we've had some great finishes with SUPs. But carrying a real expedition load is difficult for these boats and some cheating has been brought to my attention. Basically some pass inspection but then launch leaving much of the required equipment out of the boat. If you cannot safely carry all the required equipment, why would you want to be in these races? There are plenty of races that don't require any equipment.

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**Class 3 - Sailing Kayaks and Canoes:** These are Class 1 kayaks or canoes that are suitable for safe and efficient coastal and open water expeditions of four weeks or more that have added a sail rig. They are limited to singles, doubles, and triples only. The length to beam ratio of the kayak or canoe hull cannot be more than 10.99 : 1.

A full sail rig is allowed but must be stowable inside or on the kayak or canoe in a safe a seaworthy manner. **These sail rigs must adhere to the reefing rule for sailboats located at the end of this document.**

Outriggers are allowed. Leeboards are allowed. Centerboards and daggerboards are not allowed because then the hull would not be a kayak or canoe.

Sponsons are allowed.

All sailing equipment including akas, amas, leeboards, and sponsons must be removable and stowable in a seaworthy manner.

Most canoes are intended for lakes and rivers and cannot meet the above criteria. An example of a canoe that can meet the criteria is a Kruger Sea Wind or Dreamcatcher or similar canoe as long as they have a full cockpit cover.

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**Class 4 - Monohull Sailboats and Small Craft:** These are monohull small boats whose primary means of propulsion is a sail or rowing or pedal drive. Due to filters in the course design, it is highly recommended that any boat in this category be able to propel itself in shallow and constricted water. Also, you may have to use secondary propulsion for long distances in order to finish a Challenge. Reliance on sail power alone will not work most years. There are numerous mud banks and oyster bars so shallow draft is highly recommended.

Human or wind propulsion only. No motors of any kind are allowed on or in the boat. Anyone who thinks a motor is needed as part of your safety equipment should not be in these events.

**Your sails must adhere to the reefing rule for sailboats located at the end of this document.**

**Any class 4 or class 5 boat that is not self-righting is required to have mast head floats and sealed masts.**

You must launch off the beach from above the high-water mark without assistance. You may use rollers and kedge off the beach, but all equipment that you use must be carried with you for the entire event. You must safely drop the mast for at least one obstacle during the race. **Note that although we allow a crew of three as of 2016, only one or two may participate in the launch at the start of the event. The third crew member may sit in the boat during launch or may board the boat after it is in the water.**

Kayaks, SUPs, or surf skis that would normally be in class 2 are placed in class 4 if any type of sail is used. Your boat must fit the spirit of the WaterTribe events. That means it is an expedition capable boat - not a round-the-buoys boat. If there is any doubt, it is your responsibility to send pictures and specs to Chief prior to registering. If you get DQed on the beach, it will be your fault and you won't get a refund.

**All class 4 boats must adhere to the reefing rule for sailboats.**

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**Class 5 - Multihull Sailboats and Small Craft:** These are multihull small boats with the same rules and guidelines as for class 4. The only difference is two or more hulls – usually a catamaran, trimaran or proa. Also, any class 3 type boat that has a non kayak or canoe hull(s) would go in this class.

Outrigger canoes that would normally be in class 2 are placed in class 5 if any type of sail is used.

Non-modified beach cats and tris are not allowed. What is a beach cat or tri? Any cat or trimaran that is sold without reefs in the main is a beach cat or tri and is not allowed. ***By rerigging and modifying the sail(s) to conform to our reefing rules a beach cat or tri is more than welcome in this class.***

**Your sails must adhere to the reefing rule for sailboats located at the end of this document.**

**Any class 4 or class 5 boat that is not self-righting is required to have mast head floats and sealed masts.**

Your boat must fit the spirit of the WaterTribe events. That means it is an expedition capable boat - not a round-the-buoys boat. If there is any doubt, it is your responsibility to send pictures and specs to Chief prior to registering. If you get DQed on the beach, it will be your fault and you won't get a refund.

**All Class 5 boats must adhere to the reefing rule for sailboats.**

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**Class 5 - Hobie AI or TI or MI:** Hobie AIs and TIs have their own class within Class 5. All Class 5 rules apply. In addition, only standard Hobie sails and foils are allowed for the AI or TI. If the sails or foils are modified or a non-standard sail is added, then it falls into the MI class and there is no distinction between the AI and TI.

A TI can be used by a single paddler/sailor.

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**Class 5 - Hobie Cat:** Hobie Cats have their own class within Class 5. All Class 5 rules apply. In addition, only standard Hobie sails and foils are allowed but they must be modified to comply with the WaterTribe reefing rules.

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***Special Note for All Class 5 Boats: The same launch rules apply for class 5. Although we allow a crew of three as of 2016, only one or two may participate in the launch at the start of the event. The third crew member may sit in the boat during launch or may board the boat after it is in the water.***

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**Class 6 – Solar Powered Small Craft:** Any boat that would normally go in any other class goes into class 6 if they have solar powered propulsion. The solar powered propulsion may be the primary or the auxiliary propulsion source. The class they would normally go in without solar power is their base classe.

You may arrive at the launch beach with fully charged batteries. But after the launch, you may NOT plug in at any location during the event. All your charging power must come from one or more of the following:

- Solar panels on your boat.
- Human powered generator located on your boat.
- Wind powered generator located on your boat.
- Generators towed behind your boat ARE NOT ALLOWED.

**All rules for your “base class” must be followed.**

**If your boat has sails, your sails must adhere to the reefing rule for sailboats located at the end of this document.**

**If your base is class 4 or class 5 and your boat is not self-righting, it is required to have mast head floats and sealed masts.**

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**Reefing Rule for ALL Class 3, 4, 5, and 6 Boats:** All sailing classes must have a safe and efficient reefing, furling, or recovery system for all sails. You must know how to use your reefing system and it must be fully rigged and ready to go before you launch. If there is a small craft advisory at any time during the event and you don't have all reefs in your sail, you will be immediately DQed.

Reefing is highly recommended but not required for standing sails less than or equal to 12 sqft.

At least one reef point is required for standing sails less than or equal to 36 sqft. Having two reef points is highly recommended for these sails.

At least two reef points is required for any standing sail greater than 36 sqft.

Instead of reef points, any standing sail can use roller reefing.

All standing sails must have a dousing and retrieving system that can be safely and efficiently operated from the cockpit or main trampoline.

Headsails may use roller furling, roller reefing or dousing and retrieval systems that can be safely and efficiently operated from the cockpit or main trampoline.

Cruising spinnakers and screechers are allowed keeping in mind the roller reefing, roller furling and/or sail dousing and retrieving requirement for all headsails.

All class 3, 4, 5, and 6 WaterTribers must have "Reef Early and Reef Often" tattooed on their forehead. (Just kidding, but you get the idea.) If you are a hard-core racer, remember this: A capsized boat is much slower than a properly reefed boat. And you cannot win if you don't finish.