

DRIVERS TRAINING

CLINIC OUTLINE FOR AKA TOURNAMENT BOAT DRIVERS

I. Introductions and ice breakers

- A. Introductions
- B. Background, Current Ratings

II. General and preparations to drive

- A. Introduction part of “Art of Tournament Boat Driving” video.
- B. Being a good driver
 - 1. Impact on skiers
 - 2. Rewards and responsibilities
 - 3. Dealing with mistakes and criticism
 - 4. Attitudes and relationships to skiers.
- C. Preparations to drive
 - 1. Personal equipment
 - 2. Practice and feedback
 - 3. Dealing with different towboats
 - 4. Dealing with local conditions
 - 5. Check out boat prior to event (throttle, tach, speedos, boat check in form)
- D. Rules and Officials
 - 1. Knowing the rules
 - 2. Relationship to timers and boat judges
 - 3. Getting the “crew” to work together for the skier.

III. Safety consciousness at all times

- A. When skiers are boarding the boat.
- B. When skier has had a bad fall.
- C. When the rope pops into the boat.
- D. Avoiding hazards in the water and on the shoreline.
- E. Driving the official safety boat.

IV. Slalom driving

- A. Video: Slalom portion of “Art of Tournament Boat Driving.”
- B. At the dock
 - 1. Communication
 - 2. The start
- C. Before the course
 - 1. Path
 - 2. Speed and entry
- D. In the course
 - 1. Throttle control
 - 2. Speed
 - 3. Steering
- E. Shortening the rope
 - 1. Path
 - 2. Time limits
 - 3. Communication
- F. Re-ride situations

V. Trick driving

- A. Video: Trick portion of “Art of Tournament Boat Driving.”
- B. At the dock
 - 1. Communication
 - 2. The “pin person”
 - 3. Boat balance
 - 4. The skiers start
- C. Outside the course
 - 1. Setting the speed
 - 2. Path
- D. In the course
 - 1. Holding the speed
 - 2. Path
- E. After a fall
 - 1. The turn around
 - 2. Retrieving the rope
 - 3. Picking up the skier
- F. The turn around between passes and prep period
- G. Handle throw and reride situation

VI. Practical (on the water)

- A. Pull 2 or more skiers per event (as time permits) with instructor(s) in boat. Pull 4 to 6 if practical test for assistant.
 - 1. Evaluate and critique as per Practical Test form.

VII. Mini seminars held during practicals:

- 1. Boat check out and preparation
- 2. The driver and skier as a team
- 3. Chief Boat Driver clinic
- 4. Safety boats
- 5. Timing

DRIVER CHECKLIST

HERE IS A QUICK CHECKLIST THE DRIVER SHOULD GO THROUGH BEFORE TOWING A SKIER.

- Gas - Make certain you have the proper fuel for the type of engine you have (refer to the owner’s manual).
- Paddle
- Bailing Can
- Rope
- Fire Extinguisher - Your boat should be equipped with a portable fire extinguisher even though it may not be required by law.
- Check to ensure the observer knows his/her responsibilities and if not, explain them.
- Ensure that both the skier and the observer know the hand signals - communication is vital.
- Confirm with the skier exactly what type of tow he/she wants -- how fast, how long or alternately determine his/her ability.
- Ensure that you and the skier know the water with respect to obstacles, reefs and shallows. Choose an area free of moorings, swimmers, divers, fishermen and other boats.

DRIVERS SELF QUIZ

- T F 1. Any towboat that has ever been USA-WS approved may be used in AKA sanctioned tournaments.
- T F 2. The Chief Boat Driver is responsible for or overseeing that the Towboat documentation forms are filled out. This involves check in and check out of the Towboats.
- T F 3. Assistant drivers may drive any class tournament.
- T F 4. In slalom, it is recommended you drive as close to the slow tolerance as possible.
- T F 5. After a competitor misses a buoy but does not fall the driver should take a path between the boat guide buoys and the turn balls on the return trip to the dock.
- T F 6. In tricks, a kneeboarder may have one fall or one handle throw out of the course with no penalty.
- T F 7. If the driver sees a situation ahead that would compromise safety, he should cut the throttle to slow the boat significantly, thus alerting the competitor of possible danger.
- T F 8. Most of the safety equipment required by the Coast Guard and USA-WS must be in the towboat for it to be used.
- T F 9. A driver should always check the towboat for proper fluid levels before beginning an event.
- T F 10. No boat driver or safety boat driver should ever pick up kneeboard or rope with the ignition on.
- T F 11. When a contestant finishes the slalom or trick run and is still in tow, it is okay to go back to the dock at 30mph to save time.
- T F 12. When approaching a kneeboarder in the water, you must always position the boat with the kneeboarder on the drivers side.
13. The preferred location of the safety boat in the slalom event is between buoys:
(A) one and two (B) two and four or three and five (C) three and four
14. The maximum speed for Junior Boys tricks is:
(A) 16mph (B) 18mph (C) 20mph (D) None
15. When shortening the line in the slalom event, the driver should:
(A) Motion the competitor to the right side of the boat and cut the throttle.
(B) Cut the throttle when the competitor is looking
(C) Motion the competitor to the left, turn slightly to the right and cut the throttle.

In addition to the training manual the drivers program includes an on water practical section designed to teach boat drivers, beginner through advanced, to safely operate a towboat while towing a water skier. The major emphasis of this program is safety consciousness at all times, and upon completion of the program, the driver will have the knowledge and skills to implement all necessary precautions to safely tow a kneeboarder.

Refer to the Boat Driver's Critical Skills & Evaluation Report for topics of discussion and practical exam.
Refer to rule book Slalom Event 2.2-2.15.

Event Drivers Responsibilities - Areas of discussion

**AMERICAN KNEEBOARD ASSOCIATION
BOAT DRIVER'S EVALUATION REPORT
PRACTICAL EXAM**

DRIVER'S NAME CURRENT RATING ADDRESS

NAME, CLASS, DATE, LOCATION OF TOURNAMENT OR TESTING SITE

FILL IN THE NUMBER OF SKIERS PULLED IN EACH EVENT AND DIVISION

LIST TYPES OF BOATS USED: _____ BEST SLALOM RUN PULLED _____ BEST TRICK RUN PULLED _____

Events	JB	B	M I	M II	M III	M IV	M V	M VI	M VII	M VIII	M IX	JG	G	W I	W II	W III	W IV	W V	W VI	W VII	W VIII	W IX	OM	OW
Slalom																								
Tricks																								

		Skier #1	Skier #2	Skier #3	Skier #4	Skier #5	Average Point Value
SLALOM	TIMES						
	SPEED						
	PATH IN COURSE						
	PATH OUT OF COURSE						
	SKIER ACCEPTANCE						
	GENERAL ABILITY-SLALOM						
TRICKS	SPEED						
	PATH IN COURSE						
	PATH OUT OF COURSE						
	SKIER ACCEPTANCE						
	GENERAL ABILITY-TRICKS						
OTHER	SAFETY						
	GENERAL BOAT HANDLING						
	ATTITUDE						

Practical test construction is as follows.

- A. Driver must pull minimum of five contestants in each event, with a minimum of one Open skier for aspiring regular & senior drivers.
- B. The driver will be scored on the five point system with attention to safety, speed, boat path in/out of course, acceptance, general ability and attitude.
- C. The examiner shall rate the driver with the Boat Drivers Evaluation Report using the Driver Critical Skills on reverse side of report. A score shall be computed by averaging the examiners score. On a 5 point basis passing is 2.5.
- D. The test will graded on site and results given to driver immediately.

COMMENTS

RATING APPLIED FOR ASSISTANT REGULAR SENIOR GRANTED DECLINED
(granted pending green sheet verified by Statistician)

SIGNATURE OF EVALUATOR & RATING _____ DATE _____

MAIL COMPLETED EVALUATION REPORT TO:

NAME: _____ STREET: _____ PHONE _____

CITY: _____ ST _____ ZIP _____ EMAIL _____

AMERICAN KNEEBOARD ASSOCIATION DRIVER CRITICAL SKILLS RATING FACTORS

	5 (Outstanding)	4 (Excellent)	3 (Good)	2 (Fair)	1 (Poor)
TIMES: SLALOM	Actual times with little variation none out of tolerance.	Times consistent with small variation - almost none out of tolerance.	Times good with some variation - an occasional out of tolerance time.	Times varied significantly- with some out of tolerance.	Times mostly out of tolerance.
SPEED: ALL	Acceleration smooth-controlled Proper speed set well ahead of course for all skiers.	Acceleration smooth. Speed set quickly for most skiers.	Speed set prior to entering course.	Some difficulty in setting speeds prior to entering course (slalom & tricks)	Speed never set or heavy acceleration or deceleration as entering course (slalom & tricks)
PATH IN COURSE: SLALOM	Path always in center of course. skier never disadvantaged.	Path consistently in center-an occasional deviation due to large or erratic skier.	Path generally in center-small deviations.	Path deviates occasionally. boat sometimes hits buoys.	Boat runs over buoys.
PATH IN COURSE: TRICKS	Path is always consistently straight.	Path consistently straight.	Path generally straight.	Path deviates slightly.	Path deviates significantly.
PATH OUT OF COURSE: ALL	Driver consistently follows the exact same path. Boat is always aligned with the course well ahead of the entrance.	Driver follows the same path. Boat is aligned with course ahead of entrance.	Driver usually follows the same path. Boat usually aligned with course prior to entrance.	Path outside of course varies. Driver lines up with course only at entrance.	There is no path. Driver never lines up with course.
SKIER ACCEPTANCE: ALL	Most all skiers felt ride was outstanding.	Most all skiers felt ride was well above average.	Most all skiers felt ride was average.	Most all skiers felt ride was marginally acceptable.	Most all skiers felt ride was unacceptable.
GENERAL ABILITY: ALL	Consistently exceeds all standards. (top 4%)	Consistently above most accepted standards. (top 10%)	Generally meets most all accepted standards. (majority of all drivers)	Considered acceptable Marginally meets accepted standards.	Fails to meet accepted standards. (failing)

OTHER FACTORS:

SAFETY - Consider

- * Drivers safety with others in the boat.
- * Entering/exiting drivers seat-motor off, neutral switch out.
- * Approach and pickup of skiers.

GENERAL BOAT HANDLING - Consider

- * Docking and care of boat.
- * Is rope tight prior to pulling skier?
- * Throttle control.
- * Smoothness in driving.

ATTITUDE - Consider

- * Rapport with skiers.
- * Rapport with officials.
- * Acceptance of criticism.
- * Openness to improving driving technique/skills.