

Huli Drill and Recovery

Canoes huli for a variety of reasons - excessive wind and sea state, too much water in the canoe, too many paddlers on the right or not paddling, paddlers not staying centered, steersman poking on the right, etc. we all need to understand our role in preventing a huli, and what to do when we actually experience one.

How to prevent a huli:

1. Stay centered in the canoe. Your top hand should be outside the gunnel, but your head and body should not.
2. Do not throw your body sideways during a changeover, especially if switching from left to right.
3. Seats 2 and 4 should push down on the iakos if the ama pops out of the water. While it's important to recognize when a canoe is tippy, and be ready to push down on the iako, recognize also that speed is your friend and to stop paddling also destabilizes the canoe.
4. Paddlers on the left should lean left and hip check left. Paddlers on the right should hip check left and push their paddles down on the right (much like you would do when flying the ama in an OC1).
5. Excessive water in the canoe will make it sit lower in the water, essentially raising the ama and making the canoe more unstable. If you are directed to bail the canoe, do so quickly, so that you can get back to paddling as soon as possible, and bail to the left (unless the wind blows the water back into the canoe). Everyone should be proficient at bailing. Also be aware that if 4 is bailing, 5 should switch over and follow 2, so you have two paddlers on each side.
6. Try to minimize missed strokes, but if you need to adjust your hat or take a drink from your camelback, do this while paddling on the right side. Never while paddling on the left.

If the canoe is going over take a big breath and go along for the ride. Do not try to exit early—stay flexible and roll with it. Unzip. Get out. If your zipper is stuck, put your feet flat on the bottom of the canoe and push your way out. (By the way, never zip your zipper all the way up, always leave about 2" unzipped. Some people also have a hard time with a low back camelback—just recognize that if you give a good push you can get clear).

Huli Recovery:

If you have hulled your canoe, stay aware of your surroundings, note possible danger areas (reef, pier, surf breaks, etc.). Never get between the canoe and one of these danger areas.

Each paddler has a function:

Paddler #1. Hold the bow of the canoe, keeping the canoe pointed into the waves. Keep an eye on the other paddlers.

Paddlers #2 and #4. Step up onto the iako, and climb over the canoe onto the stub of the iako opposite the ama. Then reach over and grab either the iako or the gunnel, and pull the canoe back over to upright. Do not allow the ama to slam down into the water, it can be broken this way.

Paddler #3. Swim to the ama, and when paddlers #2 and #4 are in place, assist them in lifting the ama by scissor kicking in the water while pushing up on the ama.

Paddler #5. Count paddlers and ensure you account for all six. See if anyone is injured. Collect all of the paddles, and see if there is any other gear adrift, such as bailers, etc.

Paddler #6. Hold the stern of the canoe, head into waves. You are still the captain and the crew is still in your charge. Be aware of changing conditions around you.

It normally does not take too much power to get the ama out of the water and the canoe back over to its upright position. Once the ama is out of the water and coming over, paddlers #2 and #4 should slide off of the iako and control the iako as it comes down so that it does not slam into the water. In flat water it may be possible to hold the ama up in the air and allow the water to flow out.

Once the canoe is upright:

Paddler #1 continue to hold the bow of the canoe into the waves.

Paddler #5 place all of the paddles and loose gear back into the canoe.

Paddlers #2, 3, 4 and 5 rotate in to bail water out of the canoe. Two paddlers should be in and bailing while the other two are holding the ama down. Never climb up onto the ama.

Paddler #6 monitor the level of water in the canoe, rotate bailers in and out as they get fatigued, and when the water level in the canoe is low enough, get all the paddlers back in the canoe. **Paddlers #3 and 4** continue to bail, all others paddle.

If one of the paddlers is injured, keep in mind that you have a flotation device and attempt to get them somewhere that they can get medical attention.

There are a lot of videos online that demonstrate how to recover from a huli. Some have procedures slightly different from these, but they are all pretty close. There is a lot to learn from watching these videos, but one thing you'll notice is they are all done in flat, calm water. But in real life a canoe doesn't huli in flat, calm water, it hulis in rough water and bad conditions, often with danger near. Knowing the procedures for every seat and practicing the recovery maneuver until it is second nature is mandatory.

Here is a good place to start:

<https://youtu.be/ApYFF1ZcP7Q>