

The Marathon Canoes of Ontario

Specifications for marathon canoe races in Canada are established by the Marathon Racing Council (MRC) of the Canadian Canoe Association (CCA) and used by Provincial Associations such as OMCRA, and by race organizers. Most Ontario races have both recreational classes for non-racing canoes and C1/C2 classes for specialized racing canoes. For example, the Upper Jock, the North Bay to Mattawa and the Nonquon all have classes for up to 4 types of canoes numbered 1-4 below.

(1) 16' Recreational Class



Specifications:

Maximum length: 16'

Minimum beam: 32' at the 3" waterline

Description:

This is the "Sportspal" class where any cottage or "backyard" canoe will do! As such, this class is arguably the most important class in marathon canoeing as it allows anyone to participate and is how most people get started in the sport. If you are considering the purchase of a 16', give strong consideration to Kevlar construction. Although Kevlar is generally more costly than other materials, it pays for itself on the first portage. Also note that asymmetrical tripping type models tend to be faster than "prospector" style canoes.

Manufactures:

- Any 16' canoe manufacturer

(2) 17' Recreational Class or 17' Open Classes



Specifications:

Maximum length: 17'

Minimum beam: 32' at the 3" waterline

Description:

For the most part any recreational canoe under 17' can complete in this class. However, over time the Jensen 17' (pictured above) has become the canoe of choice and often tends to dominate in this class. The Jensen 17' is a serious marathon boat however is stable enough to double as a weekend tripping or cottage canoe. The Novacraft 16.5' marathon boat was built to respect the original OMCRA recreational rules which maxed out at 16.5'. These are no longer in production but like the Jensen 17' are a good deal faster than the average recreational canoe. One feature essential to the marathon paddling style is the inclusion of a footbrace in these models.

Manufacturers:

-Any 17' canoe manufacturer

-Jensen 17'

- Wenonah
- Clipper

(3) C2 Racing (3X27 Pro Boat)



Specifications:

Maximum length: 18 1/2'

Minimum gunwale beam: 33"

Minimum beam: 27" at the 3" waterline

Description:

The ultimate and fastest marathon canoe. The C2 or "pro-boat" was originally designed in the early 1980s by Eugene Jensen and is so named since it was intended for pro class races such as the "triple crown" events. Although Eugene's original design is still in production, the design has been since refined somewhat by several other manufactures including John Diller, John Newman and Serge Corbin. These canoes are usually black in color (i.e. made of carbon fiber) and recognizable by their decked-in sections.

Over time the pro-boat has become the canoe of choice for serious amateur racers. Those interested in moving to a pro-boat should note that the canoe is comparatively unstable and is not really suitable for anything other than racing. It takes some time to master this canoe and even experienced paddlers will take the occasional swim.

Manufacturers:

- Clipper Canoes
- Grasse River Boat Works
- Savage River Canoes
- Wenonah

(4) C1 Racing



Specifications:

Maximum length: 18 1/2'

Minimum Beam: 32" at the 4" waterline (or >14.375% of length)

Description:

Similar to the "pro-boat", the C1 was originally designed by Eugene Jensen and since refined by others. Also like the pro-boat the C1 is only appropriate for racing. The C1 being a solo boat is favored by some because it eliminates the need for a training partner. These canoes are easily recognized by their flared center section or "wings" which are required to meet the 14.375% width rule. Wings have the added benefit of increasing stability.

The C1 and C2 designs in their current form have now been around nearly 20 years and as such it is possible to purchase these used rather than committing thousands of dollars to a new boat. However, it should be note that older boats, all things being equal, will not keep pace with modern carbon fiber boats. As such, it is recommended to talk with experienced paddlers before committing to one of these boats.

Manufacturers:

- Clipper Canoes
- Grasse River Boat Works
- Savage River Canoes
- Wenonah

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