

Children's Controlled Capsize Session

This a big first day for the children, some may be worried and nervous, others will be excited. As the capsizes will be done with a buddy, it's a good start to pair the confident children with the nervous children, so we can make this a fun day.

For the deep water controlled capsizes you will need for each opti:

1 well rigged opti

1 buoy with anchor

1 patrol boat with 1 instructor and 1 adult over 15.

1 Instructor in a kayak, to help with the capsizes, as they can get much closer than the PB. They can also shadow the swimmers back to the shore.

You will have decided beforehand how many optis, Instructors in PB, and how many instructors will man the beach and shallow water demonstrations.

The boat handlers can start getting the buoys and optis out into the deep water. The optis need to be anchored deep enough for the sprit not to touch the bottom on capsizing. You will also think about which way the tide is going so the kids can easily swim back to shore.

There are 2 easy steps to prepare for the final deep water capsizes and swim.

Step 1 - Beach Demonstration

For the Beach demonstration you will need, on a flat piece of beach, big enough for the whole class to watch:-

1 fully rigged opti without a centreboard

1 upturned hull with centreboard

Everyone on the beach, vests fitted, etc. everyone able to watch.

Explain they will be doing the deep water capsizes out there, point to the anchored optis, but first a beach demo, then a shallow water demo, and a practice to right the hull.

You will need a volunteer who is confident. Explain that to right the opti, first they must capsize it.



The volunteer is to crawl on the sand, climb into the hull, (make sure the opti is already on a beam reach, so it's clear where they are going to stand).



Using arms pull their head and shoulders over the side and slide in like a seal.



When inside the hull look for and hold the figure 8 at the end of the mainsheet.



Stand up, on the same side as the sail, feet in the corner, calves touching the side, pull the mainsheet in until you can feel the sail on your back, now lean back on the sail.



As we are on the beach the opti will not capsize on its own, so 1 or 2 adults will have to tip it slowly over, explaining the importance of not letting go of the mainsheet. Make sure they can all see.



When the sail is resting on the sand, helpers can let go, and child can let go of the mainsheet and move away from the hull. Explain that in the water, the opti will continue to roll over.



Now we all move to the upturned hull with centreboard, to watch how to right it on the beach. Still pretending to be in deep water the volunteer to crawl to the hull. When they are in line with the centreboard, they grab the bottom of the centre board moving their hands to the top, holding at the sides. With your feet pushing on the side of the hull, pull with your hands to make the opti start to turn.



With the help of an adult, the hull will slowly tip over.



You will need to take out the centreboard before it can turn upright again.
End of Beach demo.



Step 2 - Shallow Water Demonstration

Before beginning the shallow water demonstration explain to the children, how the Deep water capsize and righting will work, they are more likely to listen when they are dry!

“The PB will take 4 children, 2 sets of buddies, out to the anchored opti, the first 2 will jump off the PB, 1 will swim to hold on the painter, and the other will swim to the opti, do the capsize, and right the opti, swap with your buddy, so they can do the same. When they are both done, they can swim back to shore together, with a kayaker shadowing them. The next 2 in the PB can jump in now and repeat the whole process. The PB will keep picking up more children until the whole class has done it.”

For the shallow water demonstration you will need:-

- 1 Rigged opti
- 2 Capsized hulls all with centreboards, and someone holding them.

Option to stick wrapped lollies with duct tape inside the cockpit of one capsized hull for air space demo

Walk into water with rigged opti to about waist deep for adults, you need two confident buddies to demonstrate the process. You will also need a parent being the “ Buoy” to simulate the painter out there. Everyone watching?

One buddy swims to the painter and holds on, the other buddy swims to the hull and slides in like a seal. Once in the opti they stand on same side as the sail and pull mainsheet tight. The opti will tip over on its own this time. Buddy can let go when the sail, momentarily stops when it reaches the water, swims away, to let it keep going.



As this is shallow water it will not turn turtle, and will stop when the sprit reaches the bottom. See picture



Now is a good time, to show the children how they can help their buddy who might be having difficulty, or maybe smaller buddy, climb into the hull. They can help by pushing down on the side to make the opti tip a bit, making the side not so high, and easier for them to slide in like a seal.



Also they can help when their buddy having trouble getting the opti right over, grab the mast with both hands from the front of the opti, (so you won't be under the sail when it does get to the water), as the opti starts to tip more



You can 'walk' your hands along the mast until the sail is in the water, then move away.

Now the class can move to the upturned hull, also being held by its painter, and start to right the hull. Some children may find this much harder to do when their feet can't touch the bottom and everything is wet and slippery.



Their buddy can help by putting some more weight on the side to tip the hull, to make it easier to climb onto it. Maybe even grab the centreboard.

When the hull righting is complete, the buddies can swap places and repeat the whole process again.

The children will now have watched one beach and two shallow water demos, of capsizing and righting the opti.

When that is done the opti can be towed out to a buoy ready for the deep water capsize.



Before the children can do the deep water capsize, they must first all practice righting the opti hull, and going into the airspace of an upturned hull (can use lollies). This is to teach them that every upturned hull will have an airspace. Ensure you show them where the airspace is ie. where they sit when sailing. This can be a daunting exercise and some children will need encouragement. Parents and or instructors will need to supervise this, and keep turning the opti back over after they have capsized it.

End of shallow water demo.

Deep Water Controlled Capsize



PB can take 4 children at a time to the anchored opti, with engine in neutral, let the first 2 jump in to start the sequence, make sure the other 2 are watching how it's done .

The kayaker can help, calmly talking, encouraging, and even helping capsize if the children can't do it themselves, the PB needs to stay further away with the motor going.



When both finished they can swim back to shore together, shadowed by kayaker. Once the children have swam back to shallow water they can play in the 2 hulls, with adults holding painters, whilst waiting for everyone to finish, and pack up time. They enjoy climbing in, jumping off, and seeing how many it takes to sink an opti. Generally getting a bit more friendly with the hulls. Great confidence building.

The Skills Learned today Some may have been more challenged than others, but should all be beaming now. *Remember, lots of praise*

Capsizing and righting an opti

That if you pull the main sheet tight and sit on the same side of the opti as the sail you will capsize

Going into the airspace, learning that all boats have an airspace when capsized.

Jumping off the PB in deep water

Swimming to the opti and painter in deep water

Swimming back to shore with a buddy

Having a chance to play , climb on and jump off an opti hull

Learning a correctly fitted vest keeps them afloat, and they can still swim in it

All of them life skills