

# Eskimo Roll

... a brief  
description of this  
important kayak maneuver  
illustrating one  
method which has  
proven successful.

Antique Boat Museum

## Old Town

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## How to Execute the

# ESKIMO ROLL

This maneuver is as old as the Kayak itself and has been handed down to us by the seal hunters of the far north. A primitive version of this craft is still used in remote areas of Greenland for hunting and the Eskimo roll is common work-a-day procedure.

**THIS ROLL CANNOT BE MASTERED BY READING ABOUT IT.** Only through diligent practice, trial and error can anyone become proficient. For this reason, it is recommended that after reviewing what is said here, go out and get wet. Then, refer back several times as you practice.

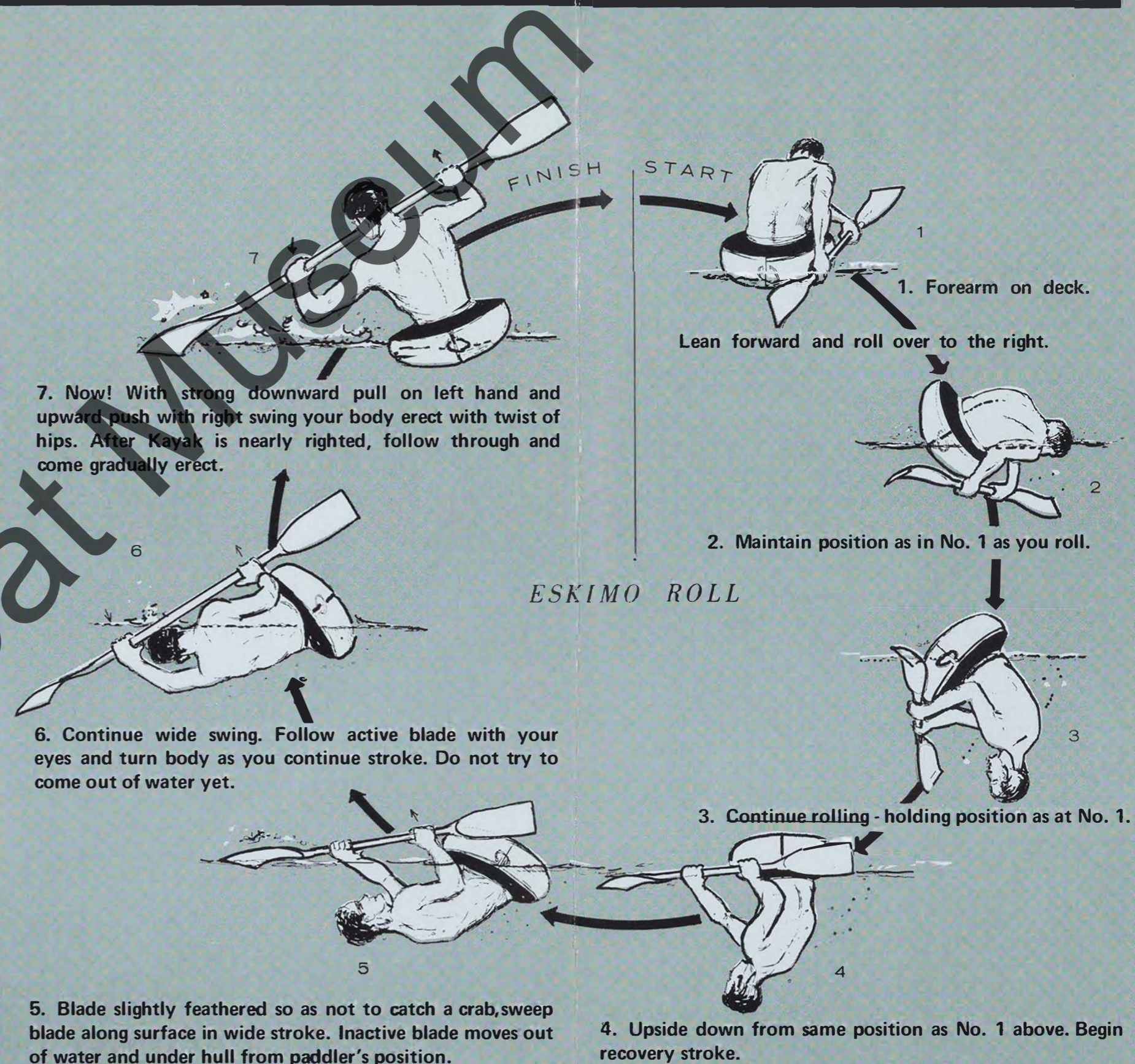
Before proceeding, the following suggestions should be noted:

- (a) Learning the Eskimo Roll should be practiced in shallow water with sufficient clearance between the surface and bottom to execute the maneuver without striking. Waist deep is about right.
- (b) Learning to roll should be done with an assistant, when possible, one who understands the maneuver himself. This is considered normal safety practice and will save much time otherwise wasted in beaching and emptying the Kayak of water.
- (c) The use of a face mask or nose plugs is helpful while learning unless you happen to have a taste for large quantities of water.
- (d) To acquaint yourself with the feel of being upside down in your Kayak, deliberately roll over while sitting in the cockpit and hang there for a few moments before leaving for the surface. Practice leaving the cockpit several times by pushing yourself downward, thrusting on the deck with both hands. The spray skirt will disengage itself automatically. This practice will lend confidence to your ability to free yourself.

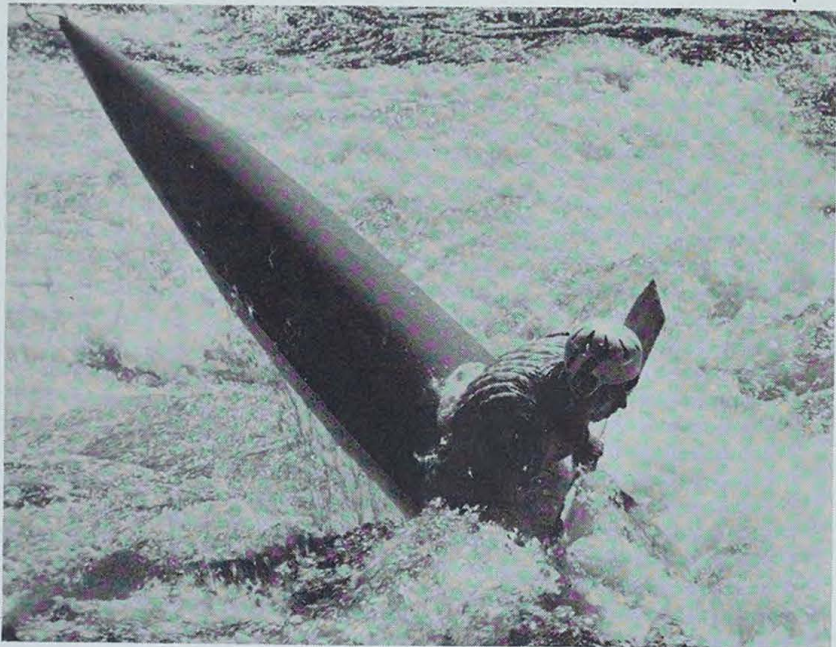
There are many acceptable methods of accomplishing the roll. We have found the following method to be one which is easily mastered, and with practice will add to your skill and versatility. The roll can and should be mastered with equal facility on either side, however, for clarity, only the right hand roll is described here.

1. The paddle should be held over the right side, its shaft nearly parallel with the surface and the active blade flat above the water well forward. The left hand should grasp the paddle shaft forward, with knuckles out. The right hand (also with knuckles out) should grasp the shaft and hold it at a point slightly behind the body. The inactive blade (toward the stern) should be raised slightly and kept out of water as long as possible to avoid drag and fouling with the Kayak.
2. With the paddle in position, lean forward and to the right rolling the craft upside down. When in a full upside down position begin the recovery stroke by twisting at the waist in the same direction. The recovery stroke should be a smooth continuous movement in which the active blade describes a sweeping motion from its point of beginning at the bow along the surface of the water as you roll.
3. When the body is almost parallel with the surface and nearly awash after completing three-quarters of the roll, the active blade should be well out at about 90 degrees from the keel line and skimming along the surface. The paddler, then levers himself upright with a strong upward thrust on the paddle shaft with the right hand, the left still sweeping, but now with a downward thrust. With reference to the paddler's position the inactive blade is in the air beneath the hull. As the stroke continues beyond a 90 degree deflection from the keel line, coordinate a push upward with the right hand while the left sweeps out and downward levering the body gradually erect following the Kayak onto an even keel.

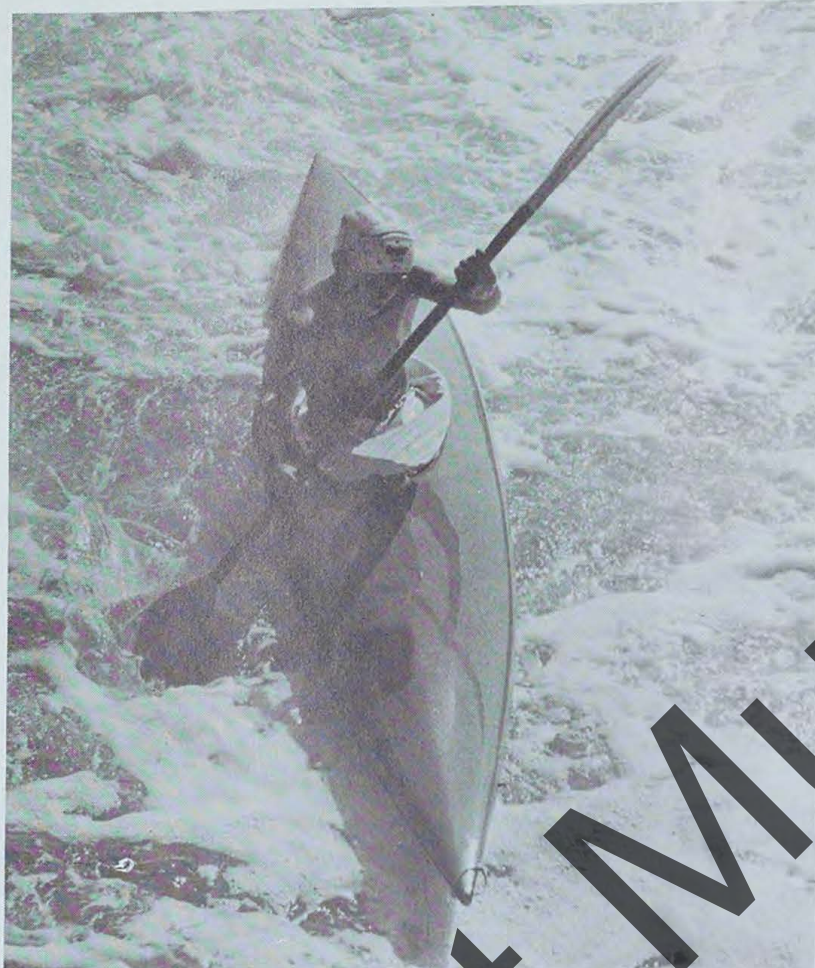
Assuming that everything has been done correctly, the paddler is again in an upright position ready to proceed. This will not be the case on the first attempt, or the second. Be prepared for several failures while learning. The Eskimo Roll is mastered only through practice. It is a "MUST" for those who aspire to white water competition. It will be found that once learned, it will add greatly to your skill as a Kayaker because any fear of overturning will have been overcome.



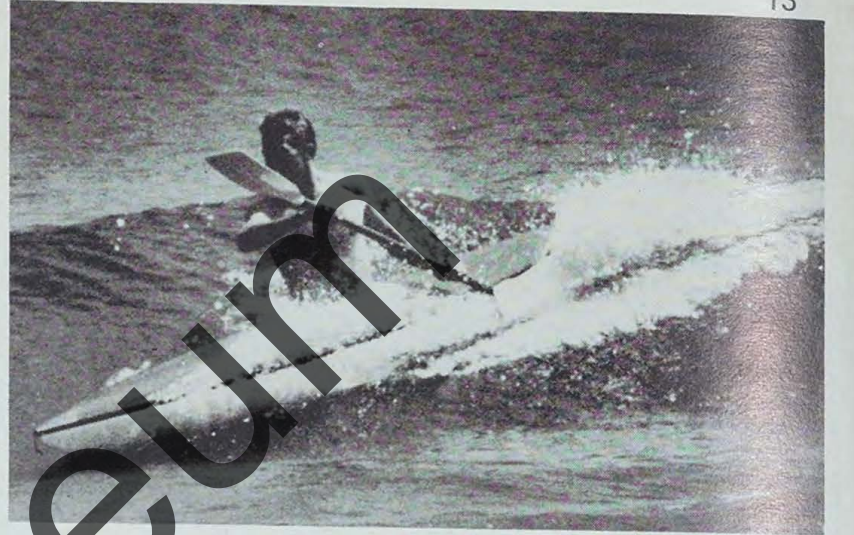
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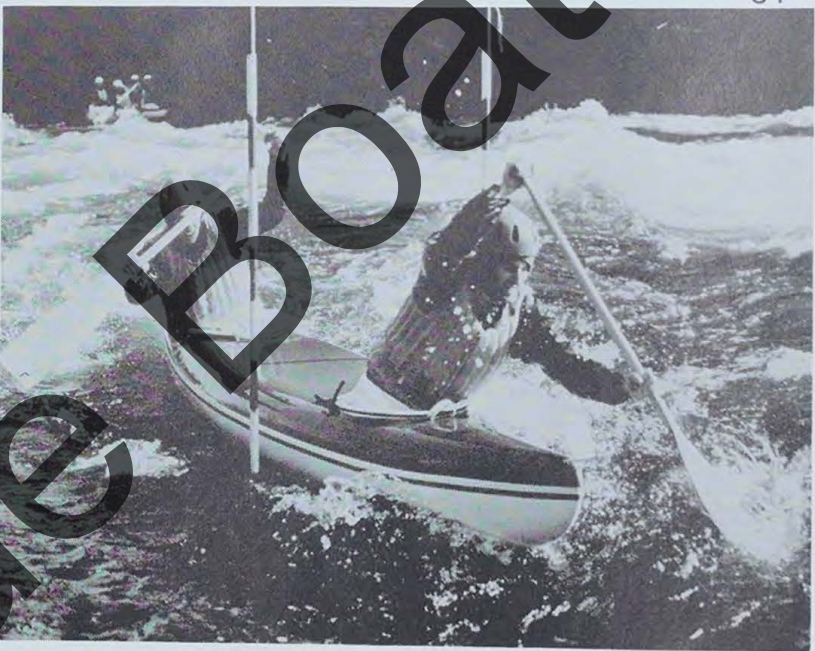
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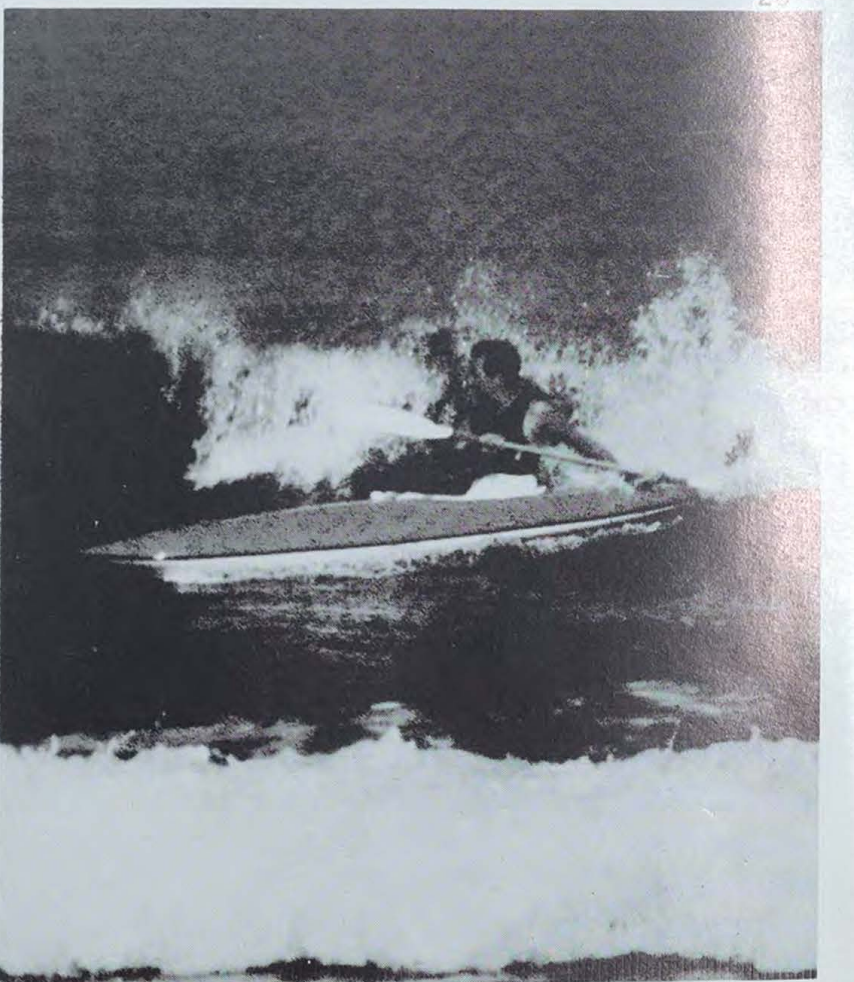
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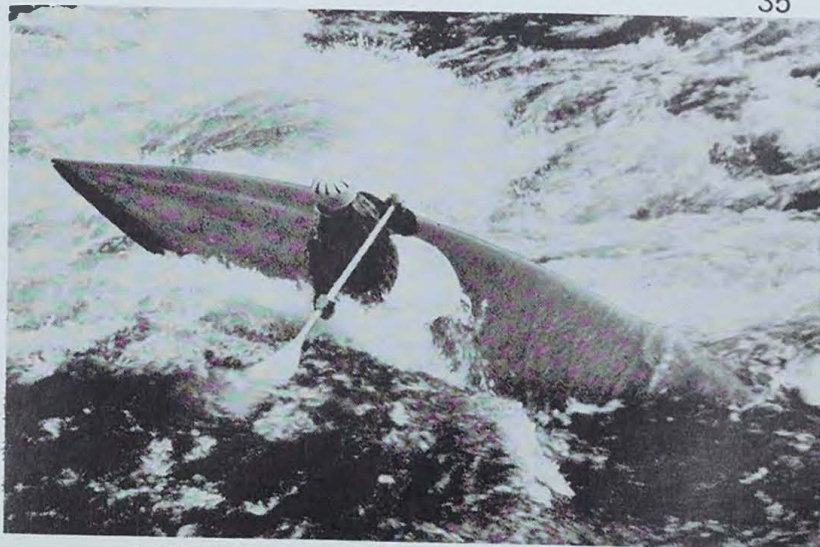
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