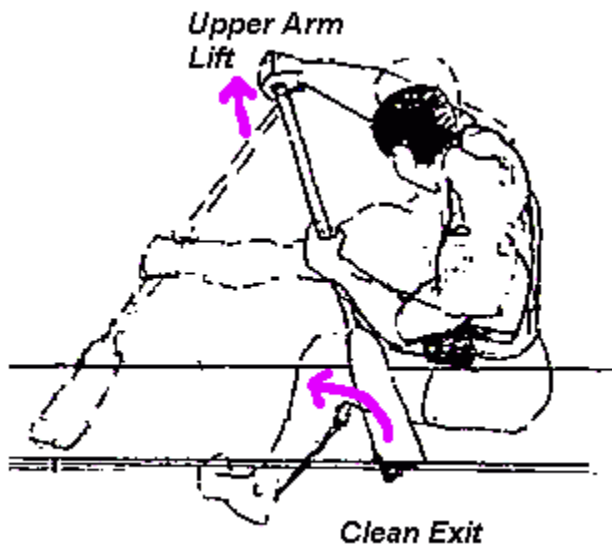


# Paddle Technique - Phase Three Finish



The power stroke is brought to an end when the elbow of the lower arm is aligned with body and the shoulders are parallel to the seat i.e. *the neutral position*, with the blade still fully in the water. Any power applied after this point, which is certainly possible, results from over-rotating the torso and more often will create a lifting force due to the angle of the paddle that will pull the boat down into the water and/or will ship water into the boat. This is an important point since the body is capable of exerting force beyond the neutral position, however, it is not an energy expenditure which will contribute effectively to the forward motion of the boat.

The paddle should be slipped diagonally up and out of the water leading with the upper hand as quickly and cleanly as possible with minimum resistance or splash (Deltoids). Many teams emphasize lifting the paddle high with the upper hand to keep the paddle as vertical as possible. This is good in flat water conditions and in boats with close seat spacing as it allows a paddler to reach up and around the paddler in front.

A common problem is that the FINISH is either initiated too early particularly when the stroke rating is high, or lacks any clear definition as the paddler begins to lift his blade out of the water half way through the COMPRESSION phase. It is imperative that the paddler focuses on keeping the blade deep in the water and applying full power to the stroke right through to the FINISH position. Think of the vertical upper arm drive!

It's worthwhile to focus on a 'power punch' at the FINISH to provide a kick at the end of the stroke similar to the aggressive CATCH at the beginning. To achieve this, the outside elbow should be kept close to the body and the paddle blade should be feathered out with a powerful kick from the forearms and biceps. The paddle should be brought out fast and enough high to avoid drag and to initiate a speedy RECOVERY. This will also help to push water away from the boat as the blade exits.

The FINISH should be executed with the same aggression and precision as the CATCH, and with the same timing throughout the boat.