

Loose spray-deck loops

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Issue

Some basic kayak spray-decks need to have the adjustable elastics pulled quite tight if they are to stay on in white water. The elastic loop this leaves at the rear can become a potential hazard if a student swims. AALS have been told of one very recent case when this elastic loop caught over a small but pointed rock on the river bed (in this case fortunately in shallow water). The elastic did not break and the student had to be released by the instructor. This could have been a potentially fatal situation in faster or deeper water.

Outcome

It would be difficult to prevent all possibility of snagging. However, general awareness of the problem is more likely to give rise to specific solutions, ideally in advance of an incident, rather than as a result of one. The specific solution found on this occasion was to cut all these loops – a simple and sensible solution.