

Xcite

by Tiderace Sea Kayaks

Xcite—20 years of development, a design built around a comfortable, dynamic seating position. The Xcite is a boat shaped so I may paddle the way I wish to paddle. The Xcite paddles best for me when I forget that the boat is there, I have a notion in my head of where I want to go and what I want to do, and I just get on and do it, the boat should not interfere with the paddling process. This is my idea of an “advanced boat,” it’s not about the conditions nor the size of the water, it’s about being allowed to perform the way you want to perform, it’s about having a reserve, a performance margin and a comfort zone. The harder I push it, the more I learn. It’s suited for paddlers ranging between 5’ 5” and 6’ 2”, and weighing up to 224 pounds (16 stone).

—Aled Williams, designer

REVIEWERS

JK: 5’ 6”, 150-pound male. Tide race with current to 6 knots, whirlpools and boils, boat wakes to 1 foot, wind gusts 10 to 15 mph. No cargo.

GL: 5’ 11”, 165-pound male. Day paddles. Light chop, wind to 12 knots. No cargo.

TW: 6’ 1”, 200-pound male. Wind at 5 knots. Ship wakes to 4 feet. No cargo.

Length overall	17’ 4 3/8”
Beam	21 5/8”
Volume	12.17 cu. ft.
Cockpit size	16 1/2” x 30 1/2”
Cockpit coaming height:	
Forward	12 1/8”
Aft	6 3/4”
Height of seat	1 1/2”
Weight	56 lbs.

First Glance

The Xcite is a “great looking long, lean, kayak with a very smooth finish. The carbon/Kevlar hull feels rock solid, absolutely no oil-canning” (GL). “The interior seam tape attaching the hull and deck stops nearly 2 feet from the ends of the boat and the fiberglass tape ends are left rather ragged. The remainder of the kayak shows fine levels of construction, a very rigid hull and deck with excellent gel coat finish. Four hatches would normally equate to a heavy kayak, however the Xcite was easily hoisted to my shoulder by the cockpit coaming and with little effort, balance easily for carrying. Carry toggles at each end, secured from flopping about with light shock cord, made two-person carries easy” (TW).

The recessed fittings anchor bungs and retroreflective grab lines. A spare paddle “can fit on foredeck or stern deck, but is most secure on the foredeck. A nice touch is a pull tensioner on a short piece of front and rear shock cord, where a spare paddle shaft can be quickly clamped for a more secure carry” (GL).

Fit and Outfitting

For JK, the smallest of the three reviewers “the cockpit is spacious yet secure. I could easily sit in the seat and then put my legs in. The deck is a bit low on the sides. My size-10 booties were a little squeezed, but there was plenty of clearance for paddle strokes.”

GL noted the “foot room was excellent for my size-12 mukluks. Hip room was a little slight: very large paddlers won’t fit with this seat/cockpit. Overall excellent for function.”

The molded plastic seat is bolted to flanges on the coaming and fitted with a foam pad. GL “felt it was OK for the 1- to 2-hour test paddles” and JK found the seat “comfortable. The back band provides good, low support, just the way I like it. It does not pivot but was low enough not to inhibit lying back.” The thigh-brace flanges are “well-positioned. Pressure was spread nicely across inner thigh—perfect” (GL). The foot braces were “very easy to adjust while I was in the kayak. No fishing around with my toes, I just reached down, grabbed the control rod and slid the foot braces to the correct position” (TW). “All in all, the Xcite was quite comfortable. It was like getting into a car where everything is already set for you; you don’t think about it, you just go” (JK).



GL noted “the skeg was stuck when I received the kayak, not from pebbles but from what felt and sounded like sand in the cable tube. After running it back and forth a few times, it worked OK. The control knob was still a little hard to push back and forth but I didn’t have any jamming problems.” TW also “found the control to be a little sticky” but for JK it “worked smoothly and easily.”

Stability and Maneuverability

The Xcite’s initial stability was “a little light of moderate—easy to edge but not tippy” (JK), “low” (GL) and “remarkably more stable than I expected and inspired plenty of confidence in confused waters” (TW). Secondary stability was, respectively, “quite good,” “moderately high—pretty secure on edge with a fun feel” and “stout, providing security during sharply executed turns and edging.”

JK thought the Xcite “can carve gentle turns while on edge but is not what I would call agile; it is better at course correction than tight maneuvering,” but GL and TW thought it had “excellent” maneuverability with “plenty of secondary stability to lean up against and a quick turner” (GL). All agreed the Xcite tracked well. It had “slight weathercocking in 10-knot breeze. I didn’t feel the skeg was needed for tracking across the wind and I could turn down wind fairly easily without it. The skeg worked perfectly to eliminate weathercocking when partly deployed, and it created lee-cocking to aid a downwind turn when fully deployed” (GL). TW noted “the bow would plunge in waves but not substantially and would quickly shed water that washed over the deck.”

Speed

JK noted the Xcite “accelerates well” and recorded “3.5 knots cruising, 4.5 knots exercising, 5.5 knots sprinting.” For GL the Xcite had “good acceleration, fair sprint speed and very good cruising speed. I had no problem at a fast 4-knot group

BEST FEATURES

- Solid layup

- Cockpit fit

TO IMPROVE

- Interior seam

pace.” TW also noted it was “quick to accelerate: I felt I was at cruise speed in 3 strokes. A brisk pace provided 4 plus knots of speed. Pushing harder I was able to maintain just over 5 knots”.

“On large wakes from shipping traffic the Xcite proved it was fun. It’s quick acceleration and nimble handling made surfing a blast. Quick reflexes will keep it on the wave without resorting to the skeg” (TW).

Rescue and Rolling

“The Xcite is easy to get into and to fall out of. It is stable enough for a cowboy re-entry” (JK). “The rear deck lines are not designed for paddle-float self-rescue, but by pinning the paddle to the deck, I found a side re-entry doable” (GL). “The cockpit allowed easy re-entry and roll. The stability gave great confidence once I was righted” (TW). “Locked in with the thigh braces, solid foot pegs and low back deck, rolls were pretty easy” (GL).

Cruising

While TW found “the storage space is limited,” JK and GL thought it could hold gear enough for a week by “breaking the gear down into small packages” (GL). The composite bulkheads are glassed in. The four KajakSport hatch covers are all tethered. “The small compartment, accessed through a small hatch, on the foredeck was my favorite feature. I was able to stash safety gear,



The compartment forward of the cockpit provides safekeeping and easy access for small items.

cell phone, wallet and lunch in an immediately accessible location. The hatch covers sealed extremely well and were a breeze to install and remove. Overall it was a watertight kayak” (TW). No one reported more than a few drops in any compartment.

The Bottom Line

“The Xcite could be fine as a novice’s boat on flat water, but it can also tour and handle rough stuff as well. The Xcite performed well and was comfortable and predictable. It might need bigger winds and waves than I had to make it shine” (JK). “With excellent edging, good tracking and cruise speed and decent gear stowage, the Xcite is definitely a top contender in multi-day playboats; for the serious paddler who yearns for a boat that can handle both outer coast miles and rock gardens with aplomb” (GL). “The Xcite certainly lives up to its name. Perfectly suited for a great day of playing. Kayak instructors will also find the Xcite a useful kayak. It responds very well to input making it a great platform for demonstrating paddle strokes or facilitating rescues” (TW).

MANUFACTURER’S RESPONSE

We would like to thank *Sea Kayaker* for the assessment of the Xcite.

It’s very satisfying to read that all three paddlers appreciated the Xcite as a “paddler’s boat.” Over the last few years, the Xcite has dominated the rough-water day boat market in Europe and has become the benchmark standard for performance, responsiveness and comfort that many other manufacturers aspire to. It’s good to see the reviewers have tuned in to the playful nature of the Xcite. The review’s Bottom Line says it all.

The comfort and fit of the cockpit are of paramount importance. The boat was designed around the dynamic seating position. We believe the interaction between paddler and boat is the most important feature of a kayak’s design. The ergonomic and secure contact with the composite seat, backrest, footrest and highly molded thigh braces allows the paddler to receive the maximum amount of feedback about

how the hull interacts with the water.

We are proud of our kayak’s construction and are pleased to see the reviewers take interest in this. The core employed in the hull’s laminate prevents oil-canning; a hull this stiff is a good foundation to build a solid structure. New for this year, our hull and deck moldings now overlap at the seam, this join is bonded then tapes are glassed both inside and out to give quadruple thickness—bombproof! This construction method also allows us to bond and glass in the composite bulkheads for maximum strength.

What better compliment than, “The Xcite certainly lives up to its name”? That the reviewers were left wanting to play in more challenging conditions is testament to the Xcite’s providing that comfort zone and confidence in all conditions. We hope they have opportunity to do so in the future.

—David Felton, Tiderace Sea Kayaks

KAYAK REVIEWS

XCITE

MANUFACTURING DATA

Designed: 2007 (2011 model year tested)

Standard construction: Classic—TCT (TideRace Core Technology) multi-layer laminate of unidirectional woven fiberglass fabrics and epoxy resin. Post-cured.

Optional construction: Hardcore (reviewed)—TCT multi-layer laminate of woven fiberglass deck, fiberglass/Kevlar/carbon hull. Epoxy resin and post-cured. Hardcore PRO—Vacuum-infused TCT laminate of lightweight fiberglass deck and fiberglass/Kevlar/carbon fabrics with a lighter core in the hull. Epoxy resin and post-cured.

Standard features: Ergonomic cockpit with molded thigh braces, composite seat and adjustable foot braces, four lightweight hatch covers, reflective deck lines and recessed compass, skeg.

Weight: 48 lbs.–56 lbs. dependent on construction

Price: \$3,749 U.S.

Availability: see website for dealers

Manufacturer: Tiderace Sea Kayaks, UK

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SPEED VS. RESISTANCE

Resistance in pounds

Speed	Winters/KAPER	Broze/Taylor*
2 knots	0.91	0.90
3 knots	1.91	1.92
4 knots	3.56	3.59
4.5 knots	5.22	5.18
5 knots	7.92	8.10
6 knots	13.95	14.61

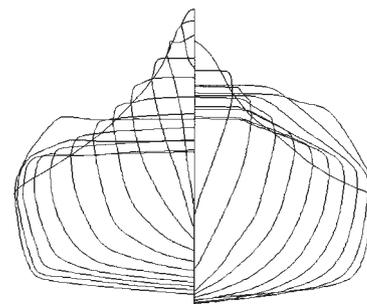
*automated with the Gertler program by Robert Livingston

HYDROSTATICS

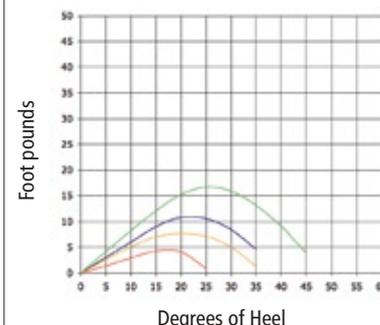
Waterline length	14' 11.3"
Waterline beam	20.9"
Draft	5.2"
Prismatic coefficient	0.50
Wetted surface in sq. ft.	21.27
Center of buoyancy	49%

(Hydrostatics calculated with a 250-pound load.)

TECH TALK: Readers interested in the full set of hydrostatics can find them posted on our website at www.seakayakermag.com along with additional data. An explanation of the terms and procedures used in the kayak test program is also available on the site.



Righting/Heeling Moments (Fixed-weight)



Stability Curves*

- 150 lb. paddler, no cargo
- 200 lb. paddler, no cargo
- 150 lb. paddler, 100 lb. cargo
- 200 lb. paddler, 100 lb. cargo

*Formula revised December 2009. (Not comparable with stability graphs generated prior to December 2009.)

Sea Kayaker Magazine

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