

## Mini Review of the Advanced Elements **Expedition** & the Advanced Elements **AirFusion** Inflatable kayaks.



Having been approached to test paddle and review 2 inflatable kayaks, I wasn't sure what to really expect, however I was pleasantly surprised.

For the review a calm and sheltered section of the lake was chosen.

Both kayaks took a little time to adjust the sitting position, in some ways because the craft has such a flexible layout, you can trim the seat forward or back by inflating or deflating the bow air bag and then fixing the seat with a couple of side straps, to suit the person. With understanding and practice this seemed fairly smooth.

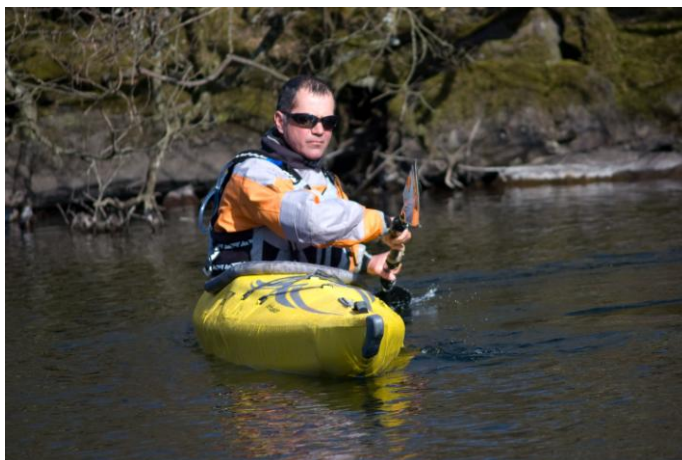


The **Expedition** is a much broader inflatable, comfortable, stable and reasonably responsive to turning strokes. In my opinion was more manoeuvrable than a sit on top kayak, yet also having a large cockpit area. Significantly harder to edge, but if approached positively and applied in a similar way to a sea kayak, edging away from the turn was effective. Although to be honest, it still responded, to good sweep strokes, while the craft was fairly flat.

If your used to using your lower body and edging with weight transfer between lower buttock and upper knee, to assist turns, then this is more difficult on the **Expedition** and I would imagine the kayak is not aimed at that market.

The **AirFusion** however, once the seat was adjusted, so knees were firmly under the cockpit coaming, edged well and after little practise 180 degree moving turns were possible, with three paddle strokes. It also side slipped well when draws were applied on the move.

On an earlier attempted with a deep support stroke, knees were too close to the edge of the coaming, so they slipped out and I was in the water. What surprised me was how easy it was to self rescue, by clambering on to the back deck, legs astride shuffling up the craft, until being able to drop back into the kayak. With adjustment to the bow air bag (to allow for my long legs) and bringing the seat forwards, my knees were better braced and the craft, paddle rolled well.



The only area that concerns me and I feel could give a new paddler a false impression was the spray deck. The cockpit coaming that the spray deck fits on to is an inflatable tube, this was difficult to get the deck to fit over (easier with assistance). Once on it didn't feel really secure and i'm not sure how it would perform if a wave landed on the deck, it may just pop off?

The seat position felt higher than what I'm used to and was fine on the lake, I would be intrigued to see how the **AirFusion** performed on rough open water and winds or in current and flow and how this influenced it in any way.

Overall both boats have been well thought out, well designed with what appears to be durable materials and with the **AirFusion** a new and more responsive inflatable kayak has been created, which impressed me.

*This mini review was written by Roger Chandler of [www.coastalspirit.com](http://www.coastalspirit.com). Roger is a UKCC 4 star sea trainer and assessor, holds a national diploma in youth work, a degree in development training and has over 20 years experience of working in the outdoors.*