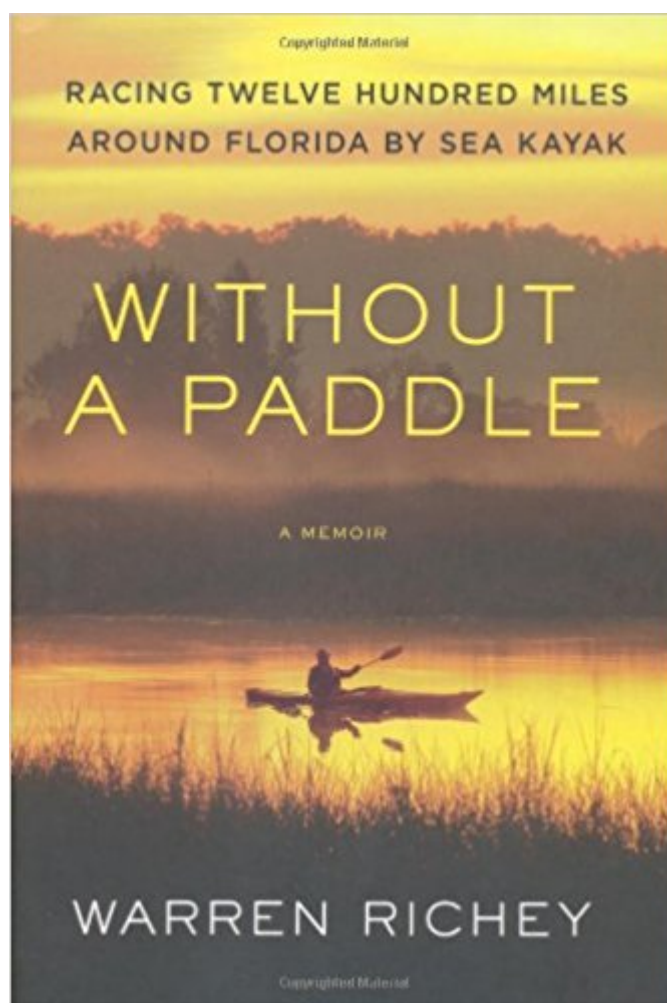


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# Without A Paddle: Racing Twelve Hundred Miles Around Florida By Sea Kayak



## Synopsis

As far as Warren Richey knew, his life was on course. A reporter with a beautiful wife and talented son, Richey couldn't imagine how it could be any better....Then his marriage falls apart and he can't imagine how it could be any worse. The divorce leaves Richey questioning everything, while struggling to find a way forward. To get his bearings, he enters the first "Ultimate Florida Challenge," an all-out twelve-hundred-mile kayak race around Florida. The UFC is less of a race than it is a dare or a threat. The thirty-day deadline sets a grueling, twenty-four-hour-a-day pace through shark-, alligator-, and even python-infested waters. But those twelve hundred miles are only a fraction of a journey that pulls Richey back to when he was embedded with troops in Iraq, reporting on missing children, and hiking the mountains of Montana with his son, and shows him where he went wrong, where he went right, and how to do it better the second time around. Warren Richey's memoir *Without a Paddle* is a remarkable physical and emotional journey that cuts to the heart of what it means to be a man, a husband, and a father.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

At its core, the idea of traveling 1,200 miles around the coast of Florida in a kayak sounds grueling--the organizers of the Ultimate Florida Challenge warn wouldbe entrants that "even if you are a wellprepared expert, you may die." But Richey, who writes for the Christian Science Monitor, shows in this fast-paced memoir that a persevering spirit can overcome all physical and mental exhaustion. Still feeling the effects of a divorce that threw his world into upheaval, Richey finds

solace in his sea kayak and enters the competition, despite the objections of family and friends. Nearly every day and night, he encounters all possible obstacles: physical ailments (blisters, sore muscles, sleep deprivation), the threat of predators like alligators and pythons, and solitude while paddling through the night. On a diet consisting largely of bagels and Snickers bars, Richey travels on, battling himself and the biggest enemy of all: the clock, as the rules mandate the race be completed within 30 days. Much of the tale centers on his nautical journey, but Richey seamlessly weaves that with his heartbreak from divorce, the bond of a father and son, and moving on with a newfound love. By the end of this wonderfully uplifting book, Richey's trip has taken him well beyond the perimeter of the Sunshine State. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Advance Praise for *Without a Paddle* — "As in the best of adventure literature, the physical journey in *Without a Paddle* is merely a portal through which Richey guides the reader on a voyage across the ocean of the heart. Read it. Go with him. It's a trip you'll never forget." — Mark Jenkins, author of *A Man's Life: Dispatches from Dangerous Places* — "In his great paddle around Florida, Warren Richey braced for battle against sharks, pythons, and crazed drunken motorboaters, but his most formidable foe turned out to be middle-aged self-doubt. This book is for anyone who believes in the redemptive value of hard physical challenge, and who believes that age is just a number." — Mark Obmascik, author of *Halfway to Heaven: My White-knuckled* and *Knuckleheaded* — *Quest for the Rocky Mountain High*, winner of the 2009 National Outdoor Book Award — "Warren Richey engaged in a grueling long-distance kayak race has laid a coastal map of Florida over his inner struggle for a new life after the disappointment of a divorce. In the course of these pages, Richey measures himself against his competitors and the sea, and he considers what it means to love and be loved." — Lou Ureneck, author of *Backcast: Fatherhood, Fly-fishing, and a River Journey Through the Heart of Alaska* — "This is the best kind of book; the kind that makes every day magical. I loved it for its humor and humility, its wonderful parables and pitch-perfect storytelling, its journey of discovery within and without, and its elegant ending. Bravo, Warren Richey. Florida is lucky to have you." — Kim Heacox, author of *The Only Kayak: A Journey in the Heart of Alaska* — "Warren Richey wields a pen like he maneuvers his kayak rapidly paced, lively, dipping between Florida lore, the wake of a failed marriage, the promise of love ahead, and the innumerable challenges of a race that can only be described as insane. A fun and invigorating ride." — Franz Wisner, author of *How the*

## World Makes Love

This book was great! Probably in a ten way tie for the best book I've ever read. Endurance. Perseverance. And finding what you're about and what you're made of. Then put on a heavy icing of adventure and you have the elements of this story. It is an insight into the Water Tribe and the endurance challenge races that the tribe puts on. Just before I read this I joined the Water Tribe, (my Tribe name is ArtlstSailor) and that's where I learned of this book. I've never done a Tribe Challenge but reading Mr. Richeys book gives you a very clear picture of life on a challenge. Of course every book has an end but I sure didn't want this one to end. I can't say enough good about it! When you can , read this book! You'll be glad you did!

Just finished Without a Paddle -- in a day -- could not put it down. My S.E. Fla kayak club has paddled many of the areas mentioned and it's fun seeing them through Warren's eyes. Have not had so many laughs reading a book in a long time. Even though I paddle frequently, there is no way I could possibly do the race. But, by Warren's laying out the different portions of the trip, my friends and I realize that we could do it in bits and pieces. This book allows an avid paddler or armchair-paddler to appreciate all the beautiful sights available from the water. Went to a book review and reading by Warren and he talks just like he writes--very knowledgeable and likeable. Looking forward to another adventure and book.

This is a fascinating story of how a man decided to forget his troubles and be part of a race all the way around Florida, paddling a kayak almost all the way with only a 40-mile portage over dry land. He had to pull his kayak over the portage on a kind of small wagon and it was just as challenging as the paddling. A great story with a great ending.,

I wasn't prepared for the journey I would take with Warren in this book, nor what I'd learn about myself, about the human race and the will to survive, keep moving forward and face our fears. Reading this book wasn't just an observation or view of a race as a spectator, it WAS riding in that kayak. I felt I was there with Warren and lived every moment of it. Being a Florida native from the Tampa area myself was the icing on the cake following along as he reaches the finish in the final hours of the race. I even spent much of the book tracing the race on Google Maps as I read. This book is a fine journey through Florida, Human emotion and will. Thanks Sharkchow for the ride, even though I don't feel privileged enough to call you that, and thank you for bearing your soul for

the good of us all. Reading this book may change your outlook on the Sunshine State for good or bad, but it will definitely change something inside of you for the better.

I read this book with deep personal interest because I knew Warren in the late 1970s, back when he was an up-and-coming newspaper reporter in New Jersey. I was keen to see his writing and how the story would unfold -- much less how the race went. As I turned each page, I got more involved with the storytelling, even though I knew part of the ending. He has a very lyrical style, though it was a bit sarcastic or exaggerated in places and I didn't expect this. Still, it was fun to move around the coast of Florida with him and imagine all the raw nature he encountered. Every time he talked about sleeping I was thankful for my soft, warm bed and knew never to complain about the daily luxuries that we take for granted. You really felt him pushed to exhaustion, not to mention pushed to the brink emotionally early on. The book is highly satisfying for its skillful weaving of a physical journey, an emotional journey, and a spiritual journey -- all intense, all coming together at the end.

There are many things that go on inside the cockpit during a 1200 mile race, some are race issues (camping, eating, etc) but many are not. The book touches on all the issues- including the myriad of emotions and sometimes truly odd thoughts that go through one's mind. But the book touches on much more than just the Ultimate Florida Challenge. Perhaps the best compliment that I can give the book is that for those who want a good feeling of what it is like to be in a 1200 mile event, "Without a Paddle" captures that and much more. Great read! Thanks for taking the time to write it and share part of your on and off the water experiences. Bill "SnoreBringGator" Herrmann 2010 UFC Finisher

Loved it! One of the classic books about long-distance kayak racing, with a little romance thrown in. Richey is a gifted journalist who can be both entertaining and provocative.

As a keen sea kayaker, member of WaterTribe (KiwiBird) and fan of Warren Richey as Sharkchow, I was drawn to the book. Not only did it fulfill my interest in learning more about the actual paddling and logistics and down-right hard knacker involved in a 1,200 mile paddling race, I learned more about the author than I knew. I want to thank Richey for sharing his heart, his soul and his love for life and for Linda, and for his son. I feel extremely privileged to have been able to join him on such a wonderful, beautiful journey.

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