

# Review of the KXONE Slider 485 Inflatable Kayak

## What is it

The KXONE Slider 485 is a European designed Inflatable kayak made with a very durable and stiff poly material. It is a uniquely made drop stitch configuration making the inflated kayak very rigid. Once inflated it is, as advertised, a very rigid and sturdy kayak at 4.8m, with two seats, foot rests and paddles all as part of the package.

## Designed For

The KXONE Slider 485 is a two person double kayak or can be used by one person. I chose the Kxone Slider 485 as a potential single person-touring kayak or with the option of a two-person kayak for exploring rivers and lakes. I wanted a package that was robust and could fit in the car – rather than on the roof racks. I like to explore remote rivers, creeks and lakes and transporting a hard kayak on very rough dirt roads is risky – as I have experienced.

## Package

The package arrived in a large cardboard box and when unpacked the kayak bag with all its accessories measured roughly 100x55x60cm. Included in the bag were two seats, two foot rests, 2 four piece paddles, a waterproof container with a repair kit, a hand pump with a pressure gauge and a detachable fin. The bag itself is substantial with zips giving easy access to the inside for unpacking and packing. It has wheels, which is very handy as the whole bag would be quite awkward to move around otherwise. The full package fits into my Prado well.

## Inflating

Inflating is very easy and I estimate that the 3 chambers to be filled require around 70 full pumps to reach the required 8psi – per chamber. The valve system is great with locks so when you detach the pump the kayak does not deflate. It takes me around 3 or 4 minutes to complete the full inflation process.

## Kayaking

The big test was in the water! My first kayak was on a very windy day and on my own. The first thing I noticed was the speed I was able to get to without trying very hard. It tracked exceptionally well with the fin inserted and was very easy to paddle. The seat was remarkably comfortable – I particularly liked the high adjustable backrest. Similarly the adjustable foot rests made kayaking a lot more comfortable. In my first paddle I had to battle a strong side wind and noticed that it was a bit difficult keeping the kayak on course, as the bow wanted to swing left. I realise now that having a bit of weight in the front would have fixed this. Despite the wind and the fact that I was sitting a fair way back in the kayak with the bow slightly elevated and catching the wind - I was still able to manoeuvre the kayak in the direction I wanted.

My second attempt was with my partner – down a lovely river. Part of that trip was against the current and into a headwind. This time with the weight balance right – I was amazed at the kayak's performance. I took the GPS and tracked our speed. With very little effort we were cruising between 6-7kph. Our average was 6kph – again with very little effort and with a headwind!! Not only did we track really well but our speed was not limited at all by the wind. We both found it very comfortable and as an extra bonus the distance between us meant that our paddles never clashed when we

got out of sequence – another words the two of us could paddle at our own pace without interfering with each other. This is rare for double kayaks.

The kayak is extremely stable and easy to get in and out of and has huge capacity and plenty of legroom.

### **Touring**

While I haven't done any yet – I think this kayak would be excellent for touring rivers and lakes – either as a single or double. I wouldn't hesitate using it for week or two week long trips.

### **Packing Away**

My first attempt was a complete disaster! When I unpacked the kayak I failed to observe how it was folded and as a consequence could not fold it in such a way as to fit it back in its bag. The 'manual' that came with the kayak is mostly a series of pictures and it is easy to miss the special technique. Eventually I found a video on YouTube where someone explained that the kayak first folds in half along the floor line. I was folding in the sides. After folding it in half along the floor you start at the keel and pick a point between the beginning of where the fin slides in and one of the side bailing plugs – a few centimetres further toward the bow. Once you make that fold it is relatively straightforward. The second time I deflated and folded it – I managed to get a much smaller package and was able to fit all the accessories in the bag – unlike my first attempt. All up the deflating and packing takes around 5 minutes. However, it takes a little longer obviously if you spend a bit of time washing down the kayak before packing it away.

### **Summary**

This is a beautiful and remarkably fast kayak that is surprisingly very rigid and very easy to paddle, is extremely good at tracking and especially good that two kayakers can adopt their own paddling pace without paddles clashing. The seats are very comfortable and adjustable – same with the foot rests. The kayak has a huge amount of space for touring – either with one or two people. It is also very easy to inflate and deflate. The overall size of the packed kayak means that one needs a reasonable amount of space in your vehicle to carry the kayak. Overall a really excellent kayak for just having fun with or doing serious touring.

**Pros:** Easy to unpack and pack, inflate and deflate, very pleasant to paddle, fast, very rigid and stable, easy to get in and out of and perfect for touring and playing.

**Cons:** Only issue is the overall bulk and fitting it into a really small car – which is not a problem for me.

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