

Sea-Doo Challenger 180 (2006-)

Brief Summary

What do you do with a supercharged 185-hp jet boat? You have a ton of fun and make everyone else drool with envy! The new Challenger 180 has some great features, plus the added safety and maneuverability of Sea-Doo’s jet system, making it a great choice for an all-around family boat.

Price

Base Price \$22999.00

Prices, features, designs, and equipment are subject to change. Please see your local dealer or visit the builder's website for the latest information available on this boat model.

Key Features

- 21-gallon fuel capacity
- 12-inch draft
- Built-in cooler
- 185-hp Supercharged Rotax standard
- Sharp, eye catching graphics
- Seats eight

Test Results

RPM	MPH	Knots	GPH	MPG	NMPG	STAT. MILE	NM	dBa
2500	5.8	5	1.4	4.26	3.7	81	70	74
3000	6.5	5.6	2.4	2.69	2.34	51	44	79
3500	6.9	6	3	2.28	1.99	43	38	80
4000	7.6	6.6	4	1.9	1.65	36	31	86
4500	8.7	7.5	4.8	1.8	1.57	34	30	88

RPM	MPH	Knots	GPH	MPG	NMPG	STAT. MILE	NM	dBa
5000	10.6	9.2	5.9	1.8	1.56	34	30	87
5500	22	19.1	7.6	2.89	2.51	55	47	87
6000	28.7	24.9	9.1	3.15	2.74	60	52	89
6500	34	29.6	11.6	2.94	2.56	56	48	92
7000	38.3	33.3	13.4	2.85	2.48	54	47	95
7500	42.1	36.6	16.4	2.56	2.23	48	42	97
7800	46	40	18.3	2.52	2.19	48	41	97

[View the test results in metric units](#)

Sea-doo 180 chart.jpg

Specifications

Length Overall	17' 7"
BEAM	8' 2"
Dry Weight	2,075 lbs.
Tested Weight	
Draft	12"
Draft Up	
Draft Down	

Air Draft	
Deadrise/Transom	20 deg.
Max Headroom	open
Bridge Clearance	N/A
Weight Capacity	
Person Capacity	
Fuel Capacity	21 gal.
Water Capacity	none
Length on Trailer	
Height on Trailer	
Trailer Weight	
Total Weight	
Aft Deck	
Salon Inside Width	
Salon Fore & Aft	
Salon Height	
Salon Volume	

Galley Volume	
Master SR Width	
Master SR fore & Aft	
Master SR Overhead	
Master SR Volume	
Eng. Room Volume	

Acceleration Times & Conditions

Time to Plane	3.8 sec.
0 to 20	
Ratio	1.0 : 1
Props	Impeller
Load	2 persons, 3/4 fuel, no water, min. gear
Climate	81 deg., 56% humid., wind: 15 knots; seas: 1' chop

Sea-Doo Combines Space and Innovative Features

By Capt. Vince Daniello

Test Captain

New for Sea-Doo in 2005, the Challenger 180 is an economy-minded 18-footer designed as a versatile family sportboat. With room for eight people, plenty of storage, two engine options, and an optional wakeboard tower, Sea-Doo expects the Challenger 180 to compete with outboard and stern drive family boats. What Sea-Doo offers that the competitors can't is the added benefits of a jet boat's extremely shallow draft, uniquely responsive maneuvering, and inherent safety over propeller-driven boats.

Benefits of Jet Power

In essence, jet power pumps water out the stern to push the boat through the water, rather than pulling a boat through the water by a propeller. Water is drawn from beneath the boat and forced through a pump inside the engine compartment, and then ejected out the back of the boat through a 6-inch diameter nozzle to propel the boat. The nozzle turns for steering, and a “reversing bucket” folds down over the nozzle to direct water straight down for neutral, and toward the bow for reverse. This offers several advantages over conventional propulsion.

First is shallow draft. With rare exceptions, a propeller must be located under the bottom of a boat so it can bite into undisturbed water. Since a jet drive sucks water from below the boat and shoots it out the back, the Challenger 180 can go into water almost as shallow as the hull, about twelve inches. And with no outdrive to raise, beaching the boat is simple. One disadvantage to jets, the pump can get clogged with seaweed or debris, which is most likely to occur in very shallow water with a lot of loose seaweed on the bottom. Sea-Doo's ICS system (Inlet Clearance System) cleans debris from the intake grid, but large amounts could still foul the pump.

Improved Maneuverability

Another advantage to Sea-Doo's jet power is uncanny maneuverability. Because the jet system is always pumping water whenever the engine is running but redirecting the water for neutral or reverse, jet boats of the past were notoriously squirrely in neutral and reverse. After testing two different Sea-Doo sportboats, I'm pleased to say the company has taken what was once considered a negative and turned it into a huge positive, particularly for beginner boaters. With the engine running and the shift in neutral, the Challenger 180 sits nearly stationary, drifting with the wind like a propeller driven boat would. But even though it is not “in gear”, the boat still steers by simply turning the wheel, hovering in one spot but still in control. To maneuver, just turn the wheel until the bow is pointed in the desired direction, shift into forward, and steer normally. While a twin engine boat with a bow thruster comes close, I have yet to run a conventional-powered recreational boat that has this ability.

A third advantage to jet power, is not having a propeller outside the boat, creating much less chance of injuring a skier or swimmer, although it is always prudent to turn the engine off when a swimmer is alongside. Since a jet boat is always pumping water while running, I find it makes people turn the engine off instinctively – something often ignored on conventionally powered boats.

Power and Performance

To power the jet, Sea-Doo offers two Rotax engine choices, a 3-cylinder 185 horsepower four-stroke engine, and a similar engine with a supercharger and intercooler that develops 215 horsepower. Our test boat, equipped with the larger engine, topped out at 46 mph, and cruised quite economically at 28.7 mph, burning just 9.1 gph or 3.15 mpg. The boat planned off in 3.8 seconds and went from 0 to 30 in 7 seconds, with plenty of pulling power for water toys.

Plenty of Features

The layout of the boat should appeal to family boaters. Sea-Doo calls it a 20-foot cockpit in an 18-foot boat,

and I must admit, it does have a lot of room for an 18-footer. There is plenty of seating, a large sun pad with the bow filler cushion installed, and adequate storage. The swim deck is nice too, with a telescoping boarding ladder and well placed handrails to make it easy to climb aboard.

The new Challenger 180 has some great features, plus the added safety and maneuverability of Sea-Doo's jet system, making it a great choice for an all-around family boat.