

4 Star Surf - Training Notes

For clarity of understanding and following the logical sequence a surf paddler will usually experience, some of the elements appear in sections different to that of other disciplines. The intention in the surf context is to break down the physical knowledge under headings that describe in sequence the skills the paddler is acquiring i.e. paddle out followed by take-off.

Aim

A four star paddler is aiming to control their craft with purpose on the wave face. They should be harnessing an understanding of the hydrology of a wave and position themselves relative to the shoulder. They should be trained to ride the wave on their terms, making decisions about the choice of manoeuvre and its timing. They should be able to cope with varied conditions on beach break waves but would not be expected to ride exposed points or reefs.

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

A.1 Paddle out

Training in understanding the relevant information to collect in order to take up an accurate position ready to ride, having used the line of least resistance. Chopping the stern and pre jumping the waves should be done when necessary. During training the students should experience the positioning the boat left and right, alternating the paddling speed, and looking for an appropriate route. It should be a measured strategy that is based on building up of sound surf knowledge.

A.2 Take off

The trainer should provide input to allow a candidate to develop their tactical understanding in terms of their wave selection, position in respect of the initial breaking section or wall and the physical skill of accelerating their craft whilst maintaining good trim and posture. This will allow the choice of direction to be followed on good boat speed leading to an accurate initial turn. It is envisaged that their skills in this respect should be such that most waves deliberately paddled for are caught.

A.3 to A.6 Riding

This award is defined by the paddlers ability to ride a shouldering wave. The kayaking skills must be both appropriately chosen and timed in relation to the pattern of the wave being ridden. Proximity to the shoulder and the use of the power at the steepest part of the wave need to be understood practically. The training will need to focus initially in the posture of the paddler when maintaining balance in a sideways ride in broken water, this good forward posture whilst controlling the hull angles is the corner stone of the carving turn, the central skill in the four star. The paddle should be reinforced as a pushing and triggering agent rather than its more usual rudder at the stern of the craft employed in river paddling. The carving turn should

clearly illustrate the relationship between the three key elements: forward trim, paddle in front of the hips and the head and torso rotation coupled with dynamic lean to the inside of the turn. Students should gain an understanding of future water, 'charc' and the role of fins and hull design in allowing different variations of a carving turn to be performed.

Once this turn is a reliable feature of the paddlers repertoire the run can be developed by combining a number of secondary but important skills. The central theme needing development at this stage is the decision making and wave craft so as to allow the craft to be ridden with the shoulder (or grain) or go back toward the shoulder (against the grain). Thus opening up the options for the boating skills of dropping and climbing, predominately performed with changes in trim and edge. Regains using hull speed and a carve turn set up and turns at the top of the wave, beginning with stalling the hull to allow the wave to 'catch-up' and developing toward carved sliding and slashed versions. The understanding of paddle independence should be emphasised by the trainer and developed at four star standard.

The finish to a ride on both a terminal green wave and broken water should be a carve back toward the section of the wave which has been broken for the longest period of time therefore has lost more of its energy.

Part B – Rescue Skills

Training should be completed in safe, easy to manage situations beginning with flat water and only moving into more dynamic environments when appropriate in the following rescues listed below

B.1 Deep water rescue.

Students need to be aware of the importance of safe lifting techniques.

The development of techniques which allow them to perform the whole exercise without assistance should be practiced. A range of craft should be experimented with allowing the students to develop a range of solutions necessary when responsible as a leader. When training as a leader the student could possibly be based in shallow water with the group working in relatively shallow water in the reform. Here an understanding of how a safely executed pro-active response to a capsize might stop the paddler having to exit the kayak would be an advantage.

B.2 Towing.

Experience a number of different ways to tow a kayak, understand the importance of a releasable system and the inherent dangers of towing particularly with reference to moving water.

B.3 Swimming

Experience how to safely negotiate surf zones whilst swimming ashore. Guidance in active swimming strategies when in the various surf zones should be covered in training.

B.4 Rolling

Students will need practice in righting themselves in the surf zone. The context needs to be developed to allow the students to have variations in parts of their roll i.e. feeling for pressure from the wave to bring them upright when caught in the wave. Rolls when knocked in or after failing in an attempt to pull off a specific manoeuvre should be practiced so as to limit the students chance to set-up.

B.5 Shepherding

Students should understand the rationale for the choice of the position to take up inside and to the side of the swimmer (a position which eliminates any possibility of an collision or being surprised by a wave) maintaining this position with visual and or verbal contact with the swimmer, whilst paddling over the incoming waves. Any errors in terms of position will be quickly overcome and contact re-established.

B.6 Carries.

Experiment with stern and bow carries varying the degree to which the swimmer is supported when picking up a swimmer on the rescuers boat in the surf zone. Experience of different craft in this respect is important.

Part C – Leadership and Group Skills

This award contains an assessed element on leadership; training should be given in theoretical areas such as beach bathymetry to allow the students to choose safe beaches on which to build a safe working framework for their group.

C.1 Risk Management

- Moving and handling techniques. – Use and understand appropriate lifting and carrying techniques by sharing the load, spine in line, slide and glide.
- Safe paddling. – Use and understand risk assessment, group management, judgement and safe paddling techniques for surf up to three feet in height.
- Develop an understanding that proactive paddling and avoidance is at the heart of an enjoyable and safe experience.

C.2 Group control and communication

Training should endeavour to allow students to experience leading groups in surf up to three feet in height. They should be made aware of the principles of good safety and leadership, as well as the selection of appropriate leadership strategies.



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Experience in identifying hazards, outline a safety framework which will also have contingencies if incidents occur during the session, clear signals and eye contact should be gained.

Part D – Theory

The intention here is to cover the priority knowledge relevant to a performer at this level. Extensions to the detail should be actioned if trainers feel the students are receptive.

Students will develop the skills to interpret the bathymetry of a beach, anticipating wave profiles to be found through a rising tide; they will develop accuracy in macro and micro forecasting, and will understand the principles of synoptic chart interpretation. They will become fully conversant with all of the rights of way in surf, both in theory and practice.

D.1 Surf specific and rescue equipment

Gain knowledge and experience of using a range of equipment including the most up to date, specific surf kayak design, in particular the design factors that govern speed and manoeuvrability will also be covered. Also understand how and why modern equipment has evolved and which use each piece of equipment best serves. Experience of finned and flat hull surf boats should ideally be provided as well as access to tow lines long enough for surf situations.

D.2 Tides and bathymetry

Students should understand long range multi source forecasts, combined with beach selection and site choice at the beach based on shape. Tide and phase should be covered in detail.

D.3 Etiquette

Training should deal with the understanding and practical implications of the right of way, dropping in, converging shoulders, the line-up and other surf zone users.

D.4 Planning, Group Awareness and the Safety framework

The aim of the training is to allow the students to become aware of the dangers and problems associated with paddling in dynamic situations. They should be exposed to simple solutions for common problems that they may encounter whilst paddling in a moving water environment. This should include undertaking dynamic risk assessments for them and the group they are paddling with. Understand the need to have a framework with which to plan a safe surfing session using specifically verbal, instructions, signals, equipment, problem solving and positioning

D.5 Hypothermia/first aid

Linked with sound safe judgement coaches should ensure students can deal with the most likely injuries that may occur as part of paddlesport activities on this type of water. This training should complement any other first aid training where it exists. This could include basic 'first aid', dislocation of a shoulder, facial cuts, rubbing sores on the neck and hands

D.6 Environment

An appreciation of the environment we paddle in is a key underpinning principle for many in paddlesport. Students should be helped to understand how to gain maximum enjoyment from this natural environment and how to protect it. Understanding sources to establish water quality, care of beach fauna and flora, dune destruction

D.7 General

Paddlers with this award would be expected to have a broader understanding of paddlesport in order to have the knowledge to impart options to other paddlers looking for other options in the sport i.e. racing or competing. A broad understanding of historical contexts should also be covered.