

4 Star White Water Leaders Award – Training Notes

The emphasis should be on developing skilful paddlers on moving water who can perform appropriate and effective manoeuvres rather than textbook strokes. Candidates should be entirely comfortable on grade 2 water and be able to show evidence of having paddled sections of grade 3 in a competent manner. As a trainer you should therefore lead students on a river with grade 3 sections so that they can evidence this aspect on assessment.

They also importantly need to also understand the skills required to lead others on grade 2 water and can carry this out efficiently.

Kayak & Equipment

The training course should link the theoretical understanding outlined above with its practical application. Students need to understand how to evaluate any equipment they use and the importance of how it should be maintained and carried or worn when in use.

The following items of equipment should be presented for inspection:

1. **Kayak and paddle** Ideally through training students will experience a wide range of both craft and paddles.
2. **Personal clothing** Through training students need to develop the skills so that they can choose appropriate personal clothing relative to the prevailing conditions
3. **Spare clothing and waterproof kit bag.** They should also gain knowledge of suitable alternatives available and how it may be carried within their boat
4. **Buoyancy aid and helmet.** Training should enable students to identify the key features of a suitable white water buoyancy aid and how it should be worn. Helmets are compulsory and CE markings should be explained.
5. **Simple first aid kit, repair kit, throwline and emergency equipment for personal use.** Training should provide students with knowledge of and simple but effective solutions to, the most common or most likely incidents they may have to deal with.
6. **Packed lunch** Students should be provided with the knowledge of how to choose appropriate food for the trips to be undertaken. They also need to be made aware of the importance of good hydration and the benefits that might be gained from a hot drink.
7. **Sling, Karabiner and an appropriate knife, plus a map** Training should provide students with knowledge of practical uses of each.

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills On grade 2 water.

A.1 Lifting, carrying and launching/landing

Nothing new here, but constant vigilance and correction will be necessary so that students follow the best practise and principles when moving equipment.

A.2 Efficient and Effective River running skills

- Forward paddling
- Breaking in/out
- Ferry gliding

All of the above helps to show that the candidate is competent and confident in moving water. Therefore training on appropriate water will be necessary but a wide range of open skills needs to be introduced so that students can experience the above skills in a variety of settings. Note: that in reverse ferry gliding the need to break into the current is not necessary, all that is needed is the ability to arrive above a 'safe' fall or weir and perform a simple reverse ferry glide as if inspecting the drop

- Surf small waves
Students should experience surfing small waves, using waves to cross and move from eddy to eddy using a combination of skills such as stern rudders, low brace strokes, body trim and quick change of edge. (Small waves are those that are under 40cm.) Obviously these skills will need to be introduced at appropriate times in a variety of settings.
- Paddle into and out of small stoppers
Students should experience paddling into and then out of small stoppers in a relaxed manner. They should gain understanding in the advantage of using a constant dynamic edge, correct posture and an active core. A suitable site is very useful here and often a shallow stopper is useful as the trainer can stand in the water helping the candidate. Being able to identify 'safe' stoppers is also crucial.
- Draw stroke on the move
As in the 3 star but now done on moving water.
- Supporting
Students should look at using support strokes on moving water. They should appreciate that with the upper body forward over the cockpit it lowers the centre of gravity and being sat back over the stern deck could lead to the exposure of the shoulder to hyper extension and dislocations.

A.3 Rolling

Students should learn to roll on moving water; it is permissible to allow them to up, prior to rolling.

Part B – Rescue Skills

B.1 Demonstrate skilful application of appropriate boat and bank-based safety and rescue skills.

All this is covered on a BCU white water safety and rescue course and would be excellent training.

- Swimming
Students should experience defensive and aggressive swimming at a safe site for experimenting with differing styles.
- Throw line rescue

As in 3 Star but now performed on a grade 2 river. Students should understand how the belay (direct and indirect) works and why positioning is important.

- Rescue capsized, swimming paddler and equipment
Students should look at performing a push style of rescue. Towlines must not be used. How to carry a swimmer on the back of a kayak should be looked at and put into use.

B.2 Incident management and first aid in the 4 star environment

Students should experience dealing with basic first aid incidents in 'real' situations. Students should be encouraged to transfer their first aid qualifications into practical and useful tools.

B.3 Effective team leader and team member in rescue / incidents.

Students should be encouraged to deal with rescue incidents by learning not to panic, thinking clearly and working logically with regard to the incident. A full mountain rescue situation is not envisaged where as a minor incident on a river such as dealing with a small cut on the head or loss of a boat/paddle in a semi remote setting is.

Part C – Safety, Leadership & Group Skills

C.1 Skilful application of leadership e.g. - CLAP principles

C.2 Appropriate leadership strategies, judgement and decision-making

C.3 Safety awareness and risk management

C.4 Group control and management

All of the above are about the students being able to effectively lead a group down a grade 2 river. Lots of practise will be needed with regular reviewing of the above aspects

Students should experience

- identify hazards
- choosing suitable lines
- being an active member of the group
- contributing to the prompt descent of the river
- playing a leadership role
- being able to place themselves in effective rescue locations
- use of some signals or other communication strategies

It is important that students learn how to add to the group dynamic, which enables swift decision making, clear communications and positive outcomes. Gear and equipment carried should be looked at but remember each 'leader' does not need to carry everything; rather it is a 'collective responsibility'.

Students should understand the use of a map the ability to show where they are on the map and suitable escape routes.

Theory

D.1 Equipment

Students should experience using a range of equipment including the most up to date. They should also understand of how and why modern equipment has evolved and the best way to use it.

D.2 Safety

Training should provide students with a broad awareness of the dangers and problems associated with paddling on moving water, and the position which should be adopted if swimming in fast moving water. Training should provide students with simple solutions to common problems that they may encounter whilst paddling moving water and larger sections of open water in a kayak. This should include undertaking dynamic risk assessments for them and the group they are paddling with.

D.3 Weather

Students should be introduced to a very basic understanding of weather i.e. low and high pressure and which is likely to bring rain, the influence of mountains and wind direction in relation to rain fall and its dangers on open water.

D.4 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 grade of water. They should look at dealing with an incident and seeing it through to its conclusion. This should include simple evacuations, dealing with emergency services and group care. This training should complement any other first aid training where it exists.

D.5 Access

Students should understand the range of access issues that exist throughout the UK and where they can find additional information.

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 gain maximum enjoyment from this natural environment and how to protect it.

D.7 Planning

Students should show an understanding of what is involved in planning a trip down a river such as access and egress, equipment requirements, significance of a weather forecast, shuttle procedures, lunch stops and contingency plans.

D.8 Group awareness and management

Students should experience being a productive member of a paddling group. They need to know what questions to ask themselves and others and how to go about organizing a group both on and off the water.

D.9 Water Features / Hazards

Students should understand the features of what constitutes dangerous water features e.g. dangerous stoppers, weirs etc.

D.10 Navigation

Students should learn to align a map, work out the distance between two points, and identify any particular features, which would indicate position. They should also be able to use an appropriate guidebook.

D.11 Etiquette

Students should understand the country code and BCU code of conduct.

D.12 General

Students should have a gain a understanding of the types of canoeing in which they are involved, and know something about the range of activities which the sport incorporates, together with an awareness of one or more of the competitive forms of canoeing which have World Championships or Olympic status, and Britain's performance in them.

D.13 Leadership Responsibilities

Students should understand the legal and moral responsibilities a leader carries – not in great depth but a realisation of the importance of their responsibility to their group, Club and the BCU.

