

3 Star White Water Kayak Training Notes

Technical Syllabus

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

The emphasis for the paddler is that they have a holistic approach to running the river. The manoeuvres and strokes should be blended as appropriate. The assessment should not be seen as a tick box of skills.

It is expected that paddlers are able to perform all skills on both sides and on moving water.

A.1 Lifting, carrying, launching and landing

Training should aim to develop good lifting and carrying techniques amongst paddlers. An understanding of why certain lifting and carrying techniques are more appropriate than others e.g. spine in line, slide and glide. This along with an awareness of the importance of sharing the load whenever possible should be developed. Training should also incorporate loading and unloading boats from trailer, roof racks and other common storage facilities. Paddlers should be trained in launching and landing from a range of reasonable access / egress points commonly found on the river.

A.2 Efficient forward paddling

Paddlers should understand the key points of good forward paddling technique and the importance of engaging all the larger muscle groups of the body, not just relying on their arms.

Training should explore the relationship between a good active posture so that through the positive contact points within the kayak the paddler can deliver the appropriate power transfer to move their kayak.

Training should look at the ability to drive the kayak in such a way that the paddler can:

- Accelerate from a stationary position and maintain control of the kayak.
- Gain momentum as required while paddling.

This should leave the paddler with the understanding of the importance of acceleration when executing a variety of moves around the river.

A.3 Moving sideways on the move

Paddlers are required to be able to move sideways while under momentum for a variety of tasks on the river e.g. avoiding rocks or positioning.

At this level a continuous fluid movement should be evident.

Paddlers should be encouraged to experiment with introducing the stroke into the normal forward paddling cycle. This should be co-ordinated and smooth, with a clear movement of the kayak

sideways and yet the kayak should continue moving forward on its new path with little loss of forward speed.

Paddlers should appreciate the role that the boat's speed has on an effective sideslip and they should be able to maintain this speed using fine adjustment of blade angle in combination with boat trim and edge.

A.4 Supporting

The key here is the range of skills. Paddlers need to understand why they would choose one skill over another.

Paddlers should experience ways to maintain their balance, and recover this by using their positive contact points. They should also experience how the paddle can aid this.

When engaging the paddle in the water paddlers should be aware of the need to keep shape and form.

A.5 Rolling

The ability to roll is a key river skill. Paddlers are encouraged to spend time learning to roll before coming on a 3 star training course, as this will help their confidence and outcomes from training.

Training will give paddlers practical help to move their effective roll from swimming pool / flat water to the river.

A.6 Breaking in and out

Paddlers should be trained how to choose a suitable technique to get into and out of eddies successfully. Training should cover positioning on the river and choice of where to cross the eddy line. The importance of using the appropriate speed, angle, edge, trim, timing, dynamic balance and good body rotation should be highlighted throughout. The concept of using and reading the water with the idea of looking for 'future water' should be understood and evident.

A.7 Ferry gliding

Paddlers should experiment with crossing a consistent grade 2 flow without any major loss of momentum, maintaining the appropriate ferry angle and making adjustments as required.

Coaches should highlight the importance of being able to read and use the water to the paddler's advantage.

A.8 S-turns

Often eddies are not opposite each other and therefore the white water kayaker needs to link different turns together and complete an 'S-turn'.

Paddlers should leave the training course understanding the importance of how to open up a ferry angle to allow the kayak to move across and down the river to gain the new eddy.

As with ferry gliding coaches should highlight the importance of reading and using the water to aid the manoeuvre.

Coaches should be looking to blend the river skills throughout training; blending breaking in / out, ferry gliding and S-turns should allow the paddler to appreciate the flow and rhythm required in white water kayaking.

A.9 Maintaining direction

Paddlers should leave the training course with a range of ways to maintain their direction while travelling on the river. Training should cover options including: use of linked strokes, use of the edge & timing, and the use of these stay on line.

A.10 Changing direction

Paddlers should leave training with a range of ways to change their direction while travelling on the river. Training should cover options including: use of linked strokes, use of the edge & timing, and the use of these stay on line.

A.11 Reverse paddling and stopping

During training paddlers should develop an understanding of how to stop or reverse their kayak. This should be done within context of being able to stop forward direction and move away from a hazard.

A.12 Surfing

Surfing a wave is a fun but essential skill that will enable paddlers to manoeuvre their kayak around on the river. This should be done within the context of using the wave to cross or manoeuvre around on the river. Training should cover the essential skills of leaving eddies to establish a surf as well as catching them from above.

Part B – Rescue Skills

The emphasis for the paddler is that they can be an effective member of a team; this includes being able to look after themselves and others while paddling white water. During this element of training paddlers should act as the rescuer and also be rescued.

B.1 Use of tape and karabiner

An essential piece of equipment for any white water kayaker is a length of tape and a karabiner. These can be used in many ways to look after paddlers and equipment. Training should cover different types of tape, lengths of tape and where to carry them. The combination of tape and karabiner should also be explored. Key in here is type and size of karabiner.

Training should cover:

- Knots to create a sling.

- Storage of equipment.
- When/how to use them for rescuing equipment.

B.2 Eskimo rescue

Paddlers should work on an efficient and safe means of approaching a capsized paddler. They must be aware of the need not to crush the hand of the victim against the side of the boat yet be able to quickly and accurately move in and help.

Paddlers should leave with an understanding of when to use this skill and options for both bow and paddle presentation.

Coaches need to consider the location for this element of training.

B.3 Throwline rescue

Training should include practice-throwing lines to rescue a swimmer 10m from the bank in moving water.

Paddlers should be aware of the different types of bags available as well as the limitations of the throwline. Paddlers should be aware of:

- Stance for throwing.
- Types of throw.
- Holding the load.
- How the swimmer will hold the line.
- Where the swimmer will end up.

B.4 Capsize, swim and self-rescue

Capsizing and swimming is part of learning to white water kayak. Paddlers should have an understanding of how being able to look after themselves and sort out their own capsize means that they might not put anyone else at risk during a rescue.

Training should cover:

- Safe swimming including defensive and aggressive swimming.
- Choice of where to swim to.
- How to deal with your paddle and kayak including: swimming with your paddle, turning kayak upright & use of swim tails.
- When to let go of equipment and swim for safety.

B.5 Rescue a capsized, swimming paddler and their equipment

Training should look at ways that paddlers can be part of a team and help another paddler. This should cover:

- Picking up swimmers.
- Picking up paddles.
- Moving kayaks back to bank.

- Combination of all three of the above.

At this level it should be done at the bottom of rapids and in a pool. Paddlers should be aware of their limitations and options when rescuing another paddler.

Part C – Safety, Leadership & Group Skills

During the assessment paddlers should show they have the ability to contribute to the successful descent of the river. These skills will be blended throughout the assessment. These skills include:

C.1 Personal risk management

Training needs to ensure that paddlers have the experience and judgement required to safely operate on moving water up to and including grade 2.

Paddlers should be able to understand what they need to do look after themselves and to not put themselves in any danger. This should include:

- Equipment needed for a day on the river.
- Hydration and energy required.
- Warm-ups.
- Manual handling.
- Identifying hazards.
- Choosing suitable lines to paddle.
- River etiquette.

C.2 Awareness of others

Paddlers should be aware that there are others around them and that they all contribute to being part of a group on the river. They should be aware of these other paddlers and be responsible for their own actions amongst the group. This may include areas such as: positioning within the team, following each other, moving out of the way at eddies or their positioning during rescues.

C.3 Paddle a section of grade 2 water as part of a led group

Paddlers should be able to part of a group being led on grade 2. Paddlers should experience different ways of moving down the river, from one at a time to all together. This should help them be part of that group, and be aware of different ways to descend the river and their responsibility within those differing ways.

Part D – Theory

The emphasis of the assessment is that the paddler shows the required knowledge of an intermediate white water paddler. Training will blend the following subject areas:

D.1 Equipment

Sample subject areas:

- Choice of equipment for white water kayaking.
- Where to store throwline, tape and krab.
- Spare equipment required.

D.2 Safety

Sample subject areas:

- Choice of clothing for white water kayaking.
- Hydrology and river features.

D.3 Weather

Sample subject areas:

- Where to gain up-to-date weather information.
- Important elements of a forecast for white water kayaking.

D.4 Wellbeing, health and first aid

Sample subject areas:

- Prevention, signs and treatment of hypothermia & hyperthermia.
- Importance of first aid for the white water kayaker.
- Choice of first aid courses to recommend for the white water kayaker.

D.5 Access

Sample subject areas:

- Current access situation around the UK.
- Paddler rights & responsibilities.

D.6 Environment

Sample subject areas:

- Our role in protecting the white water environment.
- Leave No Trace principles.

D.7 Planning

Sample subject areas:

- Where to find information on white water kayaking trips.
- Using and interpreting white water guidebooks.
- Understanding of the international river grade system.

D.8 Group awareness

Sample subject areas:

- Skills required to be part of a team white water kayaking.
- Communication strategies for the river.

D.9 General knowledge

Sample subject areas:

- How to organise shuttles.
- Equipment repairs.
- Spares.

D.10 Navigation

Sample subject areas:

- Use of maps and compass for the white water kayaker.
- Understanding hydrology and how this effects your paddling route.

D.11 Etiquette

Sample subject areas:

- Understanding river etiquette and / or other users.
- General awareness of others coming into eddies and own positioning.

D.12 Personal paddling skills

Sample subject areas:

- Understanding of key concepts such as:
- Correct shape and form.
- Future water.
- Fundamental Paddlesport Skills (posture, connectivity, power transfer, feel).