

3 Star Surf Training Notes

Technical Syllabus

Training at a 3 star level should aim to equip paddlers with the skills to surf in small friendly conditions across a range of beaches and varying tidal conditions, as part of a led group.

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

A.1 Lifting, carrying, launching and landing

Training should cover the safe method for paddlers to pick up and carry a boat, along with the safe lifting of boats from roof racks or similar. Methods of launching and landing should be explored on varying beach profiles. Training should cover the practicalities of launching with finned kayaks.

A.2 Control

Coaches should aim to equip the paddler with the skills to be able to move their boat with control in the surf both on broken waves and on green waves. The secondary surf zone or out back may be used. Paddlers should understand the concept of traveling along the wave, with significant distance gained in both left and right directions, avoiding surfing straight at the beach. Paddlers should be surfing the wave rather than being surfed.

A.3 Paddle out

Paddlers should be helped to understand and spot areas that are easy to paddle out in, and should show stop/go strategies within their chosen route. Paddlers would be expected to work on the use of differing boat speeds, changes of direction and an ability to move forwards and hold position without being pushed towards the beach. Training should include energy saving and effective methods for dealing with broken waves.

A.4 Positioning and wave selection

Training should allow paddlers to show the basic understanding of positioning the craft, so as to be able to pick a wave on which to paddle. Paddlers should understand the clear decision to not attempt to catch waves from a poor position. They should be trained to actively select waves and should be able to verbalize the type of waves that they are looking for.

A.5 Take off

Paddlers should be coached in the difference between ‘maintenance’ and ‘sprinting’ paddling styles. They should learn how to take off in a chosen direction dictated by their interpretation of the wave.

A.6 Riding

Paddlers should experience moving their boat along the face of the wave in both left and right directions, using a forwards dynamic body position, and accurate rail engagement. They should also look at linking left and right runs into an S transition, using appropriate body position, edge control, rudders and prys.

Paddlers should work at controlling the boat in a sideways position in broken water, moving forwards and backwards along the pile. They should learn and practice the limitations and strategies for exiting a wave.

A.7 Turns

Paddlers should initiate turns by a combination of body position and rail and blade engagement. Training should help paddlers to understand the principles of future water, and the differences between edge and lean should be identified by practical application. Paddlers at this level should be coached in the central role of upper body and to understand the importance of paddle independence although may not be displaying these behaviors.

A.8 Rudder and prys

Coaches should train the paddler in the basic understanding, and application of ruddering and prying. The training should discuss and display strategies for the type of rudder required in different situations. This would by definition include highlighting their appropriate use, mainly at slow speeds shown in turns at the bottom of the wave and S transitions towards the beach, but also in their use to maintain direction on a diagonal ride across the wave face.

A.9 Supporting

The paddler should be allowed to develop, through a variety of progressive exercises, the low braced support position. This would illustrate active edge management, elbows above the paddle shaft and an active posture, to help make the paddler more independent of the paddle blade.

A.10 Rolling

Training should cover the skills required to roll in the surf. Although a roll on both sides isn't required for the purposes of the award, the coach should convey the application of the rolling skill to the paddler, so they can see the value of spending time consolidating a solid rolling skill set.

A.11 Securing

Training should be given on the effective securing of craft to trailers or roof racks. Particular attention should be paid to some of the factors to consider when securing boats of composite construction.

Part B – Rescue Skills

B.1 Capsize and return to shore

Training should allow the paddler to understand safe actions to take in a moving water environment. Appropriate decisions immediately on capsizing and in the time until shallow water is reached are essential knowledge for the coach to impart.

B.2 Stern carries and tows

Paddlers should be given the opportunity to explore carries and tows, both from the position of rescuer and swimmer. These sessions should aim to equip paddlers with the skills to know what to do if they find themselves needing to be towed or carried.

B.3 Capsize and recovery

Paddlers should be shown a number of techniques for righting or remounting a capsized craft, these would include using the hands to push off the bottom in shallow conditions, progressing to paddle pushes in deeper water. The application of the recovery strokes and the skill of rolling could also be applied. A quick and safe technique for remounting sit-on-tops or wave skis in deep water should be practiced if these craft are used.

Part C – Safety, Leadership & Group Skills

C.1 Personal risk management

Coaches should provide paddlers with a clear illustration of how a surf environment is managed through etiquette, and an awareness of their own limitations and their craft's limitations. The identification of wave sizes, types of waves and hazards inherent on beaches will form part of a dynamic risk assessment that the coach should go through with paddlers.

C.2 Awareness of others

Paddlers should experience being able to fully look after themselves as part of a led group. They would learn to show through their actions, knowledge of the management issues facing the leader in a group situation and illustrate the ability to take responsibility for those actions in moments of pressure. They should be conversant with self-rescue strategies appropriate to the environment.

C.3 Paddle as part of a led group

Part D – Theory

Paddlers should be given background theory as appropriate throughout the training and be shown a list of information resources covering the following aspects of the discipline.

D.1 Equipment

Coaches should equip the paddlers with the knowledge and experience of using a range of equipment including the most up to date examples. Coaches should also provide paddlers with an understanding of how and why modern equipment has evolved, including the fundamentals of craft design and other surfing equipment, pertinent to the surf environment. This will enable paddlers to make accurate choices on equipment suitability in the future.

D.2 Tides, weather and bathymetry

Training should develop an understanding of tides, weather, and information relevant to surf. This will include swell generation, and the identification of a number of forecast sources. Paddlers should be able to identify the bathymetry required to generate waves appropriate to the remit of the award.

D.3 Etiquette

Training should include surf etiquette, with the paddlers having a clear understanding of the drop in rule.

D.4 Safety

Paddlers should be helped to develop a sound safety understanding, along with knowledge of and the ability to carry out basic risk assessments in order to keep themselves and their paddling partners safe in the future.

D.5 Wellbeing, health and first aid

Training should promote the development of safe judgement to ensure paddlers can deal with the most likely injuries that may occur as part of surf paddlesport activities (shoulder, head and neck). Long-term issues such as Surfer's Ear should be discussed.

D.6 Environmental awareness

Coaches should engender an appreciation of the environment we paddle in as a key underpinning principle for its many participants. Gaining maximum enjoyment from this natural environment and understanding ways in which the surfing community can protect it in simple ways should be understood.

This would be particularly relevant to water quality, pollution, and over-crowding on our beaches.

D.7 Planning and group awareness

Paddlers should be encouraged to be a productive member of a paddling group. They should understand what questions to ask and how to go about organising a day out. They should also understand the different roles within a group of paddlers on the water.

D.8 General knowledge

The coach should make paddlers aware of the very diverse nature of paddlesport and the rich history that canoeing has within the UK and beyond.