

3 Star Touring Canoe Training Notes

Technical Syllabus

The 3 Star paddler can consider themselves as an intermediate paddler rather than a beginner; they have demonstrated personal competence as a member of a group paddling in a variety of venues. These venues include open water in conditions of winds up to force 3, and/or ungraded rivers that have a discernible green flow.

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

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

At assessment it is expected that paddlers are able to perform all skills on both sides, in all environments.

It is required that boats are fitted with buoyancy (e.g. bulkheads/airbags).

Training should cover the outfitting of boats as required and how to deal with a faulty rudder.

A.1 Lifting, carrying, launching and landing

Training should aim to develop good lifting and carrying techniques. Paddlers should have 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 trailers, 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 in both environments.

Training should also cover how paddlers can minimise their impact on the environment.

A.2 Efficient forward paddling

Training will cover the key points of good forward paddling technique and help paddlers to understand the importance of engaging the larger muscle groups of the body, not just relying on the arms.

Paddlers should be coached in an effective range of forward paddling techniques including:

Cruising: Paddlers should gain an appreciation of how variation within a J-stroke affects its performance. They should be helped to develop an efficient and effective forward paddling stroke. The coach should make paddlers aware of the effect the length of a stroke has on its performance, as well as how corrections made using the gunnel, and without touching the gunnel affect outcome.

An awareness of how boat trim and edging can enhance this stroke is also crucial. The coach should also introduce and develop an awareness of switching.

Trim: Paddlers should develop an appreciation of wind speed and direction and how it affects the boat. They should understand how boat trim, paddling side, wind speed and direction affects performance. Paddlers should experience a range of techniques to enable them to adjust their trim and optimise their performance e.g. their seating position, carrying a load etc. This awareness should include experience of winds of up to force 3 as well as paddling a range of types of canoe and whilst paddling solo and tandem. Training could include the use of a triangular course, which may be of use when developing this awareness of trim. Trim should be a key underpinning point throughout training.

Knifed strokes: Training should develop both paddle finesse and an awareness of how to use the recovery phase of a stroke to help maintain boat control.

Acceleration: Paddlers should develop the ability to accelerate the canoe whilst on the move within 3-4 strokes. The need for a vertical paddle shaft should be appreciated as well as a short, sharp correction to keep the boat on course. For tandem paddlers the technique of switching should be introduced and developed.

A.3 Efficient reverse paddling, stopping and accelerating

Training will cover the key points of good reverse paddling technique and the importance of engaging the larger muscle groups of the body and not relying just on the arms.

Trim: Paddlers should be taught the importance of adjusting their trim when reverse paddling, to maintain steerage. This could be as simple as moving forward in the boat or moving the load.

Stopping and acceleration: Training will cover how to stop the canoe and then accelerate in reverse within 1-2 boat lengths. This is an essential skill should the paddler wish to descend rivers where they may need to check their speed and set the boat up for a reverse ferry glide. A vertical paddle shaft and effective cross-deck correction stroke play key roles in this manoeuvre.

A.4 Turning whilst on the move

At assessment the following moves must be performed on both the on and off sides of the boat:

Tight turns/open turns: Training will help the paddler develop an appreciation of how to carry or lose speed during a turn. They should understand the effect that speed, boat edging and hull shape will have on the shape of their turn. In addition training will help the paddler with their choice of appropriate strokes to assist in tightening a turn up or opening it out.

Areas that the paddler will need to be aware of and apply:

- Paddle blade covered, arm extension, elbow slightly bent. Blade placement and length of stroke.
- Turning the canoe using edge control and with different paddle positions e.g. vertical and horizontal shaft.

A.5 Moving sideways, both static and on the move

Training will look at ways that the paddler can move the canoe sideways both toward and away from the paddle. A balanced application of the stroke is required in order to avoid the canoe rolling or yawing. Training should cover a range of strokes including draw, sculling and pry strokes. The aim is for the paddler's upper body to be rotated toward the paddling side, with the blade deep for maximum efficiency.

Draw on the move/hanging draw: The aim is for the canoe, whilst moving forward, to be pulled sideways from its course without turning. This should be at least a boat's width for the draw stroke and 2-3 metres for a hanging draw. Forward paddling should be maintained after the draw stroke

Additionally, when on the move fine adjustments of blade angle and its position should be made by the paddler to maintain the sideways movement.

The boat should be moved sideways in both directions, for the paddlers off side, pry strokes, cross-deck draws or switching are all acceptable and training should cover this, with the paddler making the decision on which stroke is most suited to the occasion

A.6 Supporting

Training will help paddlers develop an understanding of a good brace position; loose hips, firm blade placement, and upper body movement back inside the boat.

Low recovery strokes, stationary and on the move and on both sides. The canoe should be off balance and the paddler should keep their actions within their 'safety box'.

Doubles crews should experiment with a combination of low brace and pry.

The ability to keep the boat moving via forward paddling and maintain balance while the canoe is on edge (solo only).

A.7 The ability to deal with environmental concerns (i.e. wind, current, wash hanging and trim)

Wash hanging: The ability to surf the bow wave of a lead boat. Training will aid paddlers to have an understanding of how wash hanging can help cover larger distances. Training will look at the tactics to be able to use this skill while journeying.

Trim: Training will help paddlers to develop an appreciation of wind speed and direction and how it affects their boat. Paddlers should leave with an understanding of how boat trim, paddling side, wind speed and direction affect performance. Training will help paddlers to experience a range of techniques to enable them to adjust their trim and optimise their performance e.g. their seating position, carrying a load etc. This awareness should include experience of winds of up to force 3 as well as the understanding that different types of canoes behave differently. During training both solo and tandem should be explored. A triangular course may be of use when developing this awareness of trim. Trim should be a key underpinning point throughout training.

A.8 Beyond the paddle - sailing, poling and ropes

Sailing: Training will cover how to utilise the wind and improvise downwind sailing rigs.

Poles (open canoes only): Training will aid the paddlers in their use of the pole in either shallow or deep water to propel the canoe over 25m, as well as turning to the left and right.

Ropes: Training will help paddlers in when and how to use ropes.

Examples:

- Headlands.
- Up or down moving water.
- Rafting boats together.
- Tethering the canoe to the bank or storage rack.

A.9 Securing

Training will help the paddlers develop a number of methods to secure boats; this securing may be temporary such as a pier, jetty, riverbank, or shoreline, as well as for storage or transport (boat racks, roof racks and trailers). Any system is acceptable, but if rope is used it must be an efficient recognised knot.

Part B – Rescue Skills

The emphasis for paddlers is that they can be an effective member of a group. This includes being able to look after themselves and others (at assessment paddlers to act as the rescuer, and be rescued).

B.1 Deep-water rescue

Training should ensure that paddlers leave with the ability to perform a safe, timely, and appropriate deep-water rescue of a capsized paddler in the same type of craft, using appropriate dialogue with the person whilst maintaining control of the rescue.

In performing any rescue paddlers should be aware of the importance of safe lifting techniques and how to best use the person in the water to assist in their own rescue.

B.2 Towing

Training should cover the skills that will enable the paddler to perform a push or pull contact tow.

The paddler will also need to demonstrate a simple tow using a towline/tow system and demonstrate an emergency release. The paddler must be aware of the inherent dangers of towing.

Therefore, training should cover these areas both practically and theoretically.

Paddlers must be able to move a 'tired paddler' across a short distance of approximately 50m on flat or very gently moving water.

B.3 Capsize, swim and self-rescue

Training should ensure that the paddler is confident capsizing and then swimming with boat 25m to shore.

Training will cover the following areas:

- Swimming back to shore with craft and paddle.
- Climbing back in with assistance.
- Climbing back on and reach the bank to empty and recover.

Part C – Safety, Leadership & Group Skills

During the assessment the paddlers should show they have the ability to contribute to a successful trip/tour. These skills will be blended throughout the assessment. Training will include the following areas:

C.1 Personal risk management

Training will cover the practical application of the theory from Part D.

Training will help the paddlers with identifying hazards and choosing suitable lines.

C.2 Awareness of others

Awareness is important here; both of what is happening to the individual paddler and to others around them. Paddlers do not need to be responsible for others but they should work together and help each other through communication and physically moving out of the way to allow others to perform manoeuvres. Paddlers need to understand their duty of care.

C.3 Paddling as part of a led group

Paddlers should gain an understanding of their role within the group while on the water.

Training will include the following areas:

- Communication: how the group are going to keep in touch with everyone. This is specifically important when dealing with an incident.
- Line of sight.
- Avoidance: how the group are going to avoid issues. This could include areas such as safety equipment, communication strategies, areas that are paddled, weather etc.
- Positioning within the group: where group members need to position themselves so they can be of help in the following incidents: getting in and out of the water, during an incident, travelling down the river, going around a headland.

Part D – Theory

The emphasis of the assessment is that the paddler can show the required knowledge of an intermediate paddler. This should be blended throughout the assessment. Training will be in the following areas:

D.1 Equipment

Paddlers should gain knowledge and experience of using a range of equipment. They should know how and why equipment has evolved and how best to use it.

Sample subject areas:

- Choice of different types of paddle.
- Spare equipment required.
- Towing systems.

D.2 Safety

Paddlers should develop a sound safety framework with use of practical, dynamic risk assessments.

Sample subject areas:

- Choice of clothing.
- Water features on river and open.

D.3 Weather

Paddlers should be able to understand and interpret weather forecast information from a variety of sources.

Sample subject areas:

- Where to gain up-to-date weather information.
- Important elements of a forecast for touring.

D.4 Wellbeing, health and first aid

Paddlers should understand the factors that contribute to hypothermia and have strategies to avoid it. They should be able to deal with the most likely paddlesport injuries.

Sample subject areas:

- Prevention, signs and treatment of hypothermia and hyperthermia.
- Importance of first aid for touring.
- Choice of first aid courses.

D.5 Access

Training should promote an awareness of the range of access issues throughout the UK and where additional information can be found.

Sample subject areas:

- Current access situation around the UK.
- Paddlers' rights & responsibilities.

D.6 Environment

An appreciation of the environment we paddle in should be a key underpinning principle for paddlers. Paddlers should be aware of their environmental impact and be proactive in minimising this.

Sample subject areas:

- The paddlers' role in protecting the environment.
- Leave No Trace principles.

D.7 Planning

Paddlers should know what questions to ask and how to go about organising a day out.

Sample subject areas:

- Where to find information on touring trips available.
- Using and interpreting guidebooks.

D.8 Group awareness

Paddlers should become a productive member of a paddling group and understand different roles within a group of paddlers on the water.

Sample subject areas:

- Navigation along rivers and canals.
- Communication within a group paddling.

D.9 General knowledge

Paddlers should develop a wide general knowledge of all aspects of the sport.

Sample subject areas:

- Understanding of looking after equipment.
- Spares required.
- Other aspects of the sport.

D.10 Navigation

Paddlers should be able to use a map and compass to identify obvious features and identify their position and escape routes overland.

Sample subject areas:

- Use of maps and compass.
- Understanding of water features/hazards and weather on their journey.

D.11 Etiquette

Paddlers should be encouraged to promote a positive image for paddlesports with other river users and local residents.

Sample subject areas:

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

D.12 Personal paddling skills

Paddlers should have knowledge of the personal paddling skills in Part A.

Sample subject areas:

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