

4 Star Surf Leader Assessment Notes

Technical Syllabus

A 4 Star paddler has the ability to control their craft with purpose on the wave face. They have an understanding of the hydrology of a wave and position themselves relative to the shoulder. They should be able to ride the wave on their terms displaying accurate choices of manoeuvre at appropriate times.

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

A.1 Paddle out

Paddlers should be able to accurately get themselves into a position ready to ride, having used the line of least resistance. Chopping the stern and pre-jumping the waves should be done when necessary. Evidence of positioning the boat left and right, alternating the paddling speed, and looking for an appropriate route, would all be displayed. Paddlers should demonstrate a measured strategy that is based on sound surf knowledge.

A.2 Take off

Paddlers should display competent take offs, which could include faded, straight, and regains. However, the type employed should be appropriate to the conditions and this understanding is more important than a tick box of take offs. It is expected that take offs would be economical in terms of paddle strokes used. Paddlers should use a balance of maintenance and sprinting paddling styles when appropriate. It is envisaged that the paddler's wave selection should be such that most waves deliberately paddled for are caught.

A.3 to A.6 Riding

Paddlers should display green wave turns utilising accurate rudders, particularly a full carving bottom turn linked to a turn at the top of the wave. All manoeuvres should be initiated through accurate body posture, and a high level of paddle independence should be evident. Moves should be linked to be pertinent to the shoulder, with accurate timing of cutbacks and stalls displayed. Height gain and loss should be evident from the beach and turns at the top of the wave should have variety dependant on riding conditions.

The ability to control the craft in the white water, moving up and down the pile pertinent to the craft, should be displayed. The finish of a ride should be a deliberate action, commonly a carving turn against the grain to take the boat up and over the broken wave. The understanding of paddle independence should be demonstrated and developed at Four Star.

The ride should encompass a range of skills, but the most important aspect at this level is appropriateness of manoeuvre selection. At this level it is essential that both providers and paddlers

move away from a criterion-based system to encourage individuality and fluidity within individual paddler's riding.

A.7 Rolling

Paddlers should be able to perform a roll in the surf. Capsizes should be in both sideways orientations, from nose engagements riding and back loops whilst paddling out.

Part B – Rescue Skills

Paddlers should be able to control and organise the rescues listed below:

B.1 Deep water rescue

Paddlers should show an awareness of the importance of safe lifting techniques. At this level paddlers will need to show techniques that allow them to perform the whole manoeuvre without assistance. Paddlers should also be able to provide shallow water assistance to capsized paddlers.

B.2 Towing

Paddlers should demonstrate a number of different ways to tow a kayak. They should show understanding of the importance of a releasable system and the inherent dangers of towing, particularly with reference to moving water.

B.3 Swimming

Paddlers should know how to safely negotiate surf zones whilst swimming ashore.

B.4 Shepherding

Paddlers should demonstrate shepherding of a capsize into shallow water, without being picked up by a wave and in full view of the casualty

B.5 Carries

Paddlers should understand the practical and safety issues when picking up a swimmer on their boat in the surf zone.

Part C – Leadership and Group Skills

Paddlers should be able to identify differing waves, wave environments and their characteristics; they should be able to make basic beach assessments with safety considerations in mind. It is expected that they would be able to manage rescues in the surf within the confines of the remit, and would have an understanding of and the ability to assess a situation and deploy the appropriate rescue option.

Paddlers should be capable of looking after themselves with no input or support from the provider, within the confines of the remit.

Paddlers should be independent; able to make sound judgements about themselves and the environment and also have the judgement to lead novices in small surf.

C.1 Skilful application of leadership principles (e.g. C.L.A.P.)

Paddlers should demonstrate a clear understanding of the CLAP principle

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

Paddlers should make accurate decisions and deploy appropriate leadership styles, based on the needs of their group and environmental considerations.

C.3 Safety awareness and risk management

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

C.4 Exercise appropriate group control and management and show concern for the general welfare of other group members

Paddlers should have experience of leading groups in surf up to three feet in height. They should show awareness of the principles of good safety and leadership, and be able to select appropriate leadership strategies.

Paddlers will also be required to show experience in identifying hazards, outline a safety framework which will also have contingencies if incidents occur during the session. Clear signals and eye contact are essential.

C.5 Demonstrate the capability to manage a range of incidents

Paddlers should be given a range of scenarios to deal with, these should include a flat water rescue and a scenario suitable to the surf conditions on the day.

C.6 Provide guidance through top tips and handy hints

Paddlers would be expected to make things easier for themselves by helping their groups with a few tips to improve their abilities in the surf. The paddler is not expected to deliver a coaching session, merely provide a couple of hints and tips that could make the group easier to manage.

Part D – Theory

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

D.1 Surf specific and rescue equipment

Paddlers should understand how and why modern equipment has evolved and which use each piece of equipment best serves. They should be conversant with specific surf kayak design, particularly the design factors that govern speed and manoeuvrability.

Providers should note that if the paddler is not in a finned or flat hull surf boat one could be used in an attempt to prove breadth of ability.

D.2 Tides, weather and bathymetry

The paddler's understanding of long-range multi-source forecasts, combined with beach selection and site choice at the beach based on shape, tide and phase may be assessed through written, verbal and practical tests.

D.3 Etiquette

Providers should test the paddler's understanding of rights of way, dropping in, converging shoulders, line-up and other users both practically and theoretically.

D.4 Planning, group awareness and the safety framework

Paddlers should be aware of the dangers and problems associated with paddling on moving water. They should have simple solutions to common problems that they may encounter whilst paddling in a moving water environment. This should include undertaking dynamic risk assessments for themselves and the group they are paddling with. They should understand the need to plan to construct a safe surfing session using verbal instructions, signals, contingencies and positioning

D.5 Wellbeing, health and first aid

Linked with sound safe judgement, paddlers should be able to deal with the most likely injuries that may occur as part of paddlesport activities on this type of water. This could include basic 'first aid', dislocation of a shoulder, facial cuts, or rubbing sores on the neck and hands.

D.6 Environment

Paddlers should have knowledge of the environment they paddle in, know how to gain maximum enjoyment from this natural environment and how to protect it.

Paddlers should have an understanding of subjects such as water quality, care of beach fauna and flora, and dune destruction

D.7 General knowledge

Paddlers should have a good understanding of the types of kayaking in which they are involved, and know something about the range of activities that the sport incorporates. This should be combined 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.