

4 Star Surf Leader Training Notes

Technical Syllabus

Training at 4 Star level should aim to equip the paddler with the skills to control their craft with purpose on the wave face. The paddler should be harnessing an understanding of the hydrology of a wave and positioning themselves relative to the shoulder. The provider should train the paddler to ride the wave on their terms, making decisions about the choice of manoeuvre and its timing. The paddler should be able to cope with varied conditions on beach break waves but would not be expected to ride exposed points or reefs.

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

A.1 Paddle out

Training should allow the paddler to understand the relevant information to collect in order to take up an accurate position ready to ride, having used the line of least resistance. Training should enable paddlers to chop the stern and pre-jump the waves when necessary. During training paddlers should experience positioning the boat left and right, alternating the paddling speed, and looking for an appropriate route. The aim is that paddlers should develop a measured strategy that is based on building up of sound surf knowledge.

A.2 Take off

Training should allow the paddler to develop their tactical understanding in terms of their wave selection, position in respect of the initial breaking section or wall, and the physical skill of accelerating their craft whilst maintaining good trim and posture. This will allow the choice of direction to be followed on good boat speed leading to an accurate initial turn. It is envisaged that the paddler's skills in this respect should be such that most waves deliberately paddled for are caught.

A.3 to A.6 Riding

This award is defined by the paddler's ability to ride a shouldering wave. The kayaking skills must be both appropriately chosen and timed in relation to the pattern of the wave being ridden. Proximity to the shoulder and the use of the power at the steepest part of the wave need to be understood practically. Training will need to focus initially in the posture of the paddler when maintaining balance in a sideways ride in broken water. This good forward posture, whilst controlling the hull angles, is the corner stone of the carving turn, the central skill in the Four Star. Provider should reinforce the use of the paddle as a pushing and triggering agent rather than its more usual use as a rudder at the stern of the craft employed in river paddling. The carving turn should clearly illustrate the relationship between the three key elements: forward trim, paddle in front of the hips, and the head and torso rotation, coupled with dynamic lean to the inside of the turn. Paddlers should gain

an understanding of future water, 'charc' and the role of fins and hull design in allowing different variations of a carving turn to be performed.

Once this turn is a reliable feature of the paddler's repertoire the provider can help the paddler to develop the run by combining a number of secondary but important skills. The central theme needing development at this stage is the decision-making and wave craft, so as to allow the craft to be ridden with the shoulder (or grain) or go back toward the shoulder (against the grain). Thus opening up the options for the boating skills of dropping and climbing, predominately performed with changes in trim and edge. Regains using hull speed and a carve turn set up and turns at the top of the wave, beginning with stalling the hull to allow the wave to 'catch-up' and developing toward carved sliding and slashed versions. The understanding of paddle independence should be emphasised by the provider and developed at Four Star standard.

Paddlers should be aiming to finish a ride on both a terminal green wave and broken water with a carve back toward the section of the wave which has been broken for the longest period of time therefore has lost more of its energy.

A.7 Rolling

The provider should encourage paddlers to practice righting themselves in the surf zone. The context needs to be developed to allow paddlers to have variations in parts of their roll i.e. feeling for pressure from the wave to bring them upright when caught in the wave. Rolls when knocked in or after failing in an attempt to pull off a specific manoeuvre should be practiced so as to limit the paddlers' chance to set-up

Part B – Rescue Skills

Training should be completed in safe, easy to manage situations beginning with flat water and only moving into more dynamic environments when appropriate in the rescues listed below.

B.1 Deep water rescue

The provider needs to make paddlers aware of the importance of safe lifting techniques.

The development of techniques, which allow the paddler to perform the whole exercise without assistance, should be practiced. Paddlers should experiment with a range of craft, allowing them to develop a range of solutions necessary when responsible as a leader. When training as a leader the paddler could possibly be based in shallow water with the group working in relatively shallow water in the reform. In this situation paddlers should understand how a safely executed proactive response to a capsize might stop the paddler having to exit the kayak.

B.2 Towing

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

B.3 Swimming

Paddlers should experience how to safely negotiate surf zones whilst swimming ashore. Training should provide guidance in active swimming strategies when in the various surf zones.

B.4 Shepherding

Paddlers should understand the rationale for the choice of the position to take up with a swimmer; inside and to the side of the swimmer (a position which eliminates any possibility of a collision or being surprised by a wave). Paddlers should be trained to maintain this position with visual and/or verbal contact with the swimmer, whilst paddling over the incoming waves. Providers should equip paddlers with the skills to quickly overcome any errors in terms of position and re-establish contact with the swimmer.

B.5 Carries

Paddlers should experiment with stern and bow carries, varying the degree to which the swimmer is supported when picking up a swimmer on their boat in the surf zone. Providers should note that experience of different craft in this respect is important.

Part C – Leadership and Group Skills

This award contains an assessed element on leadership; training should cover theoretical areas such as beach bathymetry to allow paddlers to choose safe beaches on which to build a safe working framework for their group.

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

Paddlers should be conversant with the CLAP principle and be shown how to apply it in the surf context.

C.2 Appropriate leadership strategies, judgement and decision making

How to manage a series of developing decisions should be investigated, paddlers should be encouraged to analyse each decision they make, to see it through to a worst case scenario, and be able to see how one decision can limit their next one. Leadership styles and the merits of each type should be discussed.

C.3 Safety awareness and risk management

Moving and handling techniques: paddlers should be trained to use and understand appropriate lifting and carrying techniques by sharing the load, spine in line, slide and glide.

Safe paddling: paddlers should be trained to use and understand risk assessment, group management, judgement and safe paddling techniques for surf up to three feet in height.

Paddlers should develop 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

Training should endeavour to allow paddlers to experience leading groups in surf up to three feet in height. Paddlers should be made aware of the principles of good safety and leadership, as well as the selection of appropriate leadership strategies. Training should allow paddlers to gain experience in identifying hazards, outlining a safety framework, which will also have contingencies if incidents occur during the session, clear signals and eye contact.

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

Paddlers should be trained to deal with incidents that are appropriate to the environment. Flat-water venues should be used to concentrate on the foundation rescue skills required at this level, with some simple scenarios tried in the surf environment.

Providers should make paddlers aware of the signals and protocols used by lifeguards on UK guarded beaches. A session discussing leader/lifeguard relationships, and how to summon assistance from lifeguards if required should be covered.

C.6 Provide guidance through top tips and handy hints

A selection of simple hints and tips that the paddler could use with their group should be discussed. This is not meant to encourage a full coaching session, but should encourage the paddler to make things easier for themselves by up-skilling their group. For example, telling the group which way to lean when the wave breaks, would make it easier for the paddler.

Part D – Theory

Training should cover the priority knowledge relevant to a paddler at this level. Providers may expand on this detail if they feel the paddlers are receptive.

Training will develop the skills required to interpret the bathymetry of a beach, anticipating wave profiles to be found through a rising tide. Paddlers should be helped to develop accuracy in macro and micro forecasting, along with an understanding of the principles of synoptic chart interpretation. Paddlers should become fully conversant with all of the rights of way in surf, both in theory and practice.

D.1 Surf specific rescue equipment

Paddlers should gain knowledge and experience of using a range of equipment including the most up-to-date, specific surf kayak design. Training should also cover the particular design factors that govern speed and manoeuvrability. Paddlers should develop an understanding of how and why modern equipment has evolved and which use each piece of equipment best serves. Ideally paddlers will experience finned and flat hull surfboats, as well as access to tow lines long enough for surf situations.

D.2 Tides, weather and bathymetry

Training should develop an understanding of long-range multi-source forecasts, combined with beach selection and site choice at the beach based on shape. Training should cover tide and phase in detail.

D.3 Etiquette

Training should deal with the understanding and practical implications of the right of way, dropping in, converging shoulders, the line-up and other surf zone users.

D.4 Planning, group awareness and the safety framework

The aim of the training course is to allow the paddlers to become aware of the dangers and problems associated with paddling in dynamic situations. Paddlers should be exposed to simple solutions for common problems that they may encounter whilst paddling in a moving water environment. This should include undertaking dynamic risk assessments for them and the group they are paddling with. Paddlers should develop an understanding of the need to have a framework with which to plan a safe surfing session using specific verbal instructions, signals, equipment, problem solving and positioning.

D.5 Wellbeing, health and first aid

Linked with sound safe judgement providers should ensure paddlers can deal with the most likely injuries that may occur as part of paddlesport activities on this type of water. This training should complement any other first aid training where it exists.

This could include basic 'first aid', dislocation of a shoulder, facial cuts, rubbing sores on the neck and hands

D.6 Environment

An appreciation of the environment we paddle in is a key underpinning principle for many in paddlesport. Paddlers should be helped to understand how to gain maximum enjoyment from this natural environment and how to protect it, including understanding sources to establish water quality, care of beach fauna and flora, and dune destruction

D.7 General knowledge

Paddlers with this award would be expected to have a broader understanding of paddlesport. This knowledge will allow them to impart options to other paddlers looking for other options in the sport i.e. racing or competing. Training should also develop a broad understanding of historical contexts.