

4 Star Surf – Assessor Notes

Aim

A four 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.

Assessment over 2 days, leading on both days. Candidates are expected to demonstrate appropriate paddling ability to full fill their leadership role. Different assessors each day, assessor is not part of the lead group.

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

A.1 Paddle out

Candidates would be expected to 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. It should be a measured strategy that is based on sound surf knowledge.

A.2 Take off

Candidates 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. Candidates should use a balance of maintenance and sprinting paddling styles when appropriate, and it is envisaged that their wave selection should be such that most waves deliberately paddled for are caught.

A.3 to A. 6 Riding

Candidates 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 would 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 illustrated and developed at four star.

The ride should encompass a range of skills, but the most important thing at this level is appropriateness of manoeuvre selection. At this level it is essential that both coaches and candidates move away from a criterion-based system to encourage individuality and fluidity within individual paddlers riding.

Part B – Rescue Skills

Be able to control and organise the rescues listed below:

B.1 Deep water rescue.

Be aware of the importance of safe lifting techniques. At this level the candidates will need to show techniques which allow them to perform the whole manoeuvre without assistance. Shallow water assistance to capsized paddlers.

B.2 Towing.

Demonstrate a number of different ways to tow a kayak. Understand the importance of a releasable system and the inherent dangers of towing particularly with reference to moving water.

B.3 Swimming

Know how to safely negotiate surf zones whilst swimming ashore.

B.4 Rolling

Candidates would have a roll in the surf, capsizes would be in both sideways orientations, from nose engagements riding and back loops whilst paddling out.

B.5 Shepherding

Shepherding of a capsized into shallow water without being picked up by a wave and in full view of the casualty

B.6 Carries.

Understand the practical and safety issues when picking up a swimmer on the rescuers boat in the surf zone.

Part C – Leadership and Group Skills

Candidates 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 would be expected that they manage rescues in the surf within the confines of the remit and would have an understanding and ability to assess a situation and deploy the appropriate rescue option.

Candidates should be capable of looking after themselves with no input or support from a coach required within the confines of the remit.

They should be independent paddlers able to make sound judgements about themselves and the environment and also have the judgment to lead novices in small surf.

C.1 Risk Management

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

C.2 Group control and communication

Have experience of leading groups in surf up to three feet in height. Be aware of the principles of good safety and leadership, as well as selecting appropriate leadership strategies.

They 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.

Part D – Theory

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

D.1 Surf specific and rescue equipment

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 maneuverability.

If the candidate 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 and bathymetry

Long range multi source forecasts, combined with beach selection and site choice at the beach based on shape, tide and phase will be assessed in both written, verbal and practically

D.3 Etiquette

Understanding of rights of way, dropping in, converging shoulders, line-up and other users should be tested practically and theoretically.

D.4 Planning, Group Awareness and the Safety framework

Candidates should be aware of the dangers and problems associated with paddling on moving water. 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 them and the group they are paddling with. Understand the need to plan to construct a safe surfing session using verbal instructions, signals, contingencies and positioning

D.5 Hypothermia/first aid

Linked with sound safe judgement candidates 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, rubbing sores on the neck and hands

D.6 Environment

Candidates should possess the knowledge of the environment we paddle in, know how to gain maximum enjoyment from this natural environment and how to protect it. Including subjects such as water quality, care of beach fauna and flora, dune destruction

D.7 General

Have a good understanding of the types of kayaking in which they are involved, and know something about the range of activities which the sport incorporates, together 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.