

CoDe is the official organ of the BCU Coaching Scheme. Members are free to express their views within its pages. Articles and comments therefore reflect the thoughts of the author and do not necessarily state the policy of the National Coaching Committee. CoDe is programmed for publication with Focus. Contributions, including pictures, are welcome. Please send them to: BCU, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5AS.

THE AIM OF THE BCU COACHING SCHEME IS:

To promote the sport and recreation of canoeing and to ensure that newcomers are introduced to canoeing in a safe and enjoyable way and that they and those already in the sport are assisted to progress to whatever level and in whichever discipline within canoeing suits them best.

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PLEASE RESERVE THE DATES

BCU COMPETITION COACHES' CONFERENCE

1-2 February 1992

Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham

*Full details will be sent to all
registered Trainers and Coaches,
or send sae to BCU Office*

BCU TOURING AND COACHING CONFERENCE

**31 Oct - 1 Nov 1992
YMCA LAKESIDE**

*Full details will be circulated to all
members in August*

come canoeing day

**Saturday 5 September
1992**

The 1992 Olympics finish in mid-August.

We anticipate that there will be
considerable interest in canoeing as a
result of the televising of the events.

Every individual Coaching Scheme member,
course and event organiser, local coaching
organiser, Club and Centre is asked therefore
to stage a 'Come and Try Canoeing' day in
their locality on Saturday 5 September 1992.

You will need a notice in your local paper,
on local radio and television. A charge can
be made to off-set the costs, and even make a
profit. This should be shared three ways: a
charity of the organiser's choice; the
organiser's own club or centre, and the BCU
Region. We will also be seeking publicity
nationally.

**The aim is to get 50,000 people paddling
on 'Come Canoeing' day.**

Please reserve the date. Full details to follow.



Dear CoDe

Dear CoDe,

Rather belatedly I feel impelled to put pen to paper reference *CoDe* No.40, Page 10, 'Should Wings be Outlawed'. Why should wings be banned on grounds of expense? After all, the boat that the average paddler can afford is not comparable with that of the top liner, with or without sponsorship. Frequency of updating boats, which is also beyond the average paddler, should similarly put a boat ban in line.

I don't follow the line of equating wings with telescopic sights on bows either. What is a wing? Just a paddle, albeit of different shape - hence a natural development for specialist use. More like a fibre-glass pole for the vaulter, or considering the different techniques required to paddle I'd liken it to the Fosbury Flop, Western Roll, Eastern Bolt Off. Developments in high jumping which were equally controversial as 'unfair' advantages over the scissors.

I have no personal axe to grind since I am long past being really competitive and I have enough conventional racing paddles to last the rest of my lifetime.

Now I'd like to raise a point regarding early statements in the article: Competitors and manufacturers 'testing' the rules. Surely it is for officials to see that rules are fairly adhered to.

When did you last, if ever, see a boat measured or weighed at a race meeting - even a National Championship. There is, I believe, an ICF weights regulation minimum for K1s and K2s. They are regularly turned out and used well under weight - unfair advantage.

My main concern is in the way that this is done. It is usually achieved by fitting a very minimum of buoyancy. This is potentially dangerous considering the youthfulness of some of the paddlers.

Someone of my acquaintance had a brand new boat swamped by motor boat wash in the Richmond L.D. The boat sank. Andy, aged 26, and a very strong swimmer, managed to save it only after a strenuous 10-15 minutes swim. The total buoyancy fitted was about 9" long x 21/2" wide vertical pillar between deck and hull. This, more for strength than buoyancy. I'll not mention the make, since they are all the same.

The mention of the weight limits around line 26 does not fit with the opening ethical points. It is I think an almost universally disregarded rule which has been to the detriment of our sport.

I really don't see how wings are unfair.

They are after all just paddles - blades on a lever; motivated by the human body.

As for the other, come back Espada - all is forgiven.

DAVE LOVE, Littlehampton

Editorial note: I was interested to learn on the news only this morning that the technologically improved javelin which was used to better Steve Backley's world record has been banned retrospectively, and his records restored!



Dear CoDe,

I am writing as the concerned wife of a white water canoeist (S.I.) husband who has many years experience.

The reason for my concern is the recent death of the BCU Director, Trevor Bailey. It has only been hours since I read of his death through your magazine (*CoDe* October 91) yet I feel compelled to put pen to paper to write of my distress and concern that your Director could have possibly prevented his tragic death by wearing a buoyancy aid.

My husband has spent many hours coaching and instructing and the first and most important starting point to any session has been the safety aspect and the importance of a well fitting buoyancy aid. I myself, have very little technical knowledge or experience of canoeing but I would like to think that whatever level of pursuit or conditions in which my husband was canoeing that he would value his life enough to put on his own buoyancy aid.

All the reports I have read written by Trevor Bailey, have always been from his own point of view as the 'bumbly' canoeist who was always willing to have a go. But surely, as Director of the BCU and all it stands for, was he unable to follow the recommendations and aims of the BCU?

I am shocked that such an incident has occurred. This I feel, will not affect Trevor Baileys beloved sport but certainly will damage the BCU whose motto could possibly well be "Do as I say, and not as I do".

I am not a member of the BCU, my husband is.

Therefore, on his behalf, and on behalf of many wives of canoeists and their families, I am sure, please print my letter in the next issue of *CoDe*, and let us have a voice on this tragic matter.

Mrs JANE HARTLEBURY, Chorley

A STATEMENT

concerning the death of Trevor Bailey, Director of the British Canoe Union

The Director of the British Canoe Union, Trevor Bailey, drowned at mid-day on Saturday 14 September 1991.

Trevor was swimming to the bank, a distance of some 50 metres, from a swamped double racing kayak on the 2,000m long, 120m wide, regatta lake at Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham. After about 10 metres, Trevor indicated he was in difficulties, and in spite of the strenuous rescue endeavours of his partner, he drowned.

The weather was mild, with an estimated force 3 wind blowing, and wavelets of 6-8" on the lake.

The Director was not wearing a buoyancy aid, but he was a mature person with sufficient experience to decide for himself what he felt was necessary in the circumstances. In the event he was proved wrong, but there were no obvious, or apparent, dangers involved, which would have led anyone else of similar persuasion, ability and experience to have concluded differently.

Whether racing or training it is common practice for racing paddlers not to wear buoyancy aids, and this was the first drowning of a canoeist from a racing kayak on still water since records began nearly thirty years ago.

Trevor appears to have succumbed to what has been termed 'sudden unexplained drowning syndrome'. To conclude from what has happened that he should have been wearing a buoyancy aid is to state that no one must ever, under any circumstances, swim out of their depth, and that is clearly a nonsense.

There was no question of entrapment in the canoe, or of hazardous conditions pertaining. It was a warm, sunny day, and the comparatively shallow lake had benefited from over 2 months of almost uninterrupted sunshine.

Whilst mourning the loss of a dedicated family man, with considerable input to the community, and to his role as leader of the national canoeing organisation, the BCU cannot accept that this was anything but an unusual happening, and does not consider that any changes need to be made to its rules, or to its existing safety guidelines. These firmly lay down recommendations for levels of buoyancy in the boat, and on the person, which are related to the level of experience of the individual, and the type of conditions in which he or she is operating.

This statement has been prepared by the National Coaching Committee of the British Canoe Union, to which responsibility for matters of safety has been delegated. The BCU reserves the right, however, to amend this opinion, should any of the enquiries still currently under way reveal any factor of significance which has not been taken into account.

Dear CoDe,

Just a short comment to make about the Coaching Scheme. I feel that the Coaching Scheme is wrong in the fact that you are not required to have a current First Aid certificate to be an Instructor. The only knowledge required is how to treat the stated injuries, given at the time of training or assessment.

So what happens when one of your party has a head injury (which as we know it does happen)? We move him, and before we know what is going on he is either unconscious, in a life and death situation, or even paralysed because he was moved incorrectly. You might well say it does not happen but believe you me it does.

More people are injured further by the inexperienced/untrained person. Now be honest with yourselves, would you really know what to do; how to move or even identify a fractured skull, compression on the brain, or just plain concussion? They are all different, yet they all have the potential and will kill if not dealt with correctly. It does not matter it is the head, spine, arm or even the leg, first aid has to be rendered to all injuries, and it can also kill.

If the only bit of first aid we know is what we have read, or have been taught on our instructor training courses, is it enough? I think not. As an instructor you have people's lives in your hands. They all expect you to know what to do, and that it is going to be correct, and more important it will be of some use, not harm.

A lot of fellow instructors I have talked with have all stated that they feel it should be made part of the assessment that you must hold a valid first aid certificate. Upon expiry, if it is not renewed, then your instructor certificate becomes invalid as well.

I hear you all saying how wrong I am. Who am I to say? Yes, you are all right - who am I to say that all instructors out there must hold a valid certificate, and tell us to become qualified? That's right - you would have to give up one evening a week for 12 weeks and on the 12th week have to sit an exam. It will also cost you, out of your own pocket, about £30, so why should you when you could be canoeing?

I do know one thing. We are the only national body which does not require a valid first aid certificate to keep the instructor qualification valid.

Ask yourself if a member of my party has an injury, have I the ability to deal with the situation? Only you can answer that. After all, at the end of the day only you have to live with your conscience - not me, or the BCU.

I feel that it should be altered. It won't make any difference to your canoeing, but it would make you a safer first aider in the unfortunate event that you come across, or a member of your party has, an injury.

So come on, BCU, change your rules, and make all your instructors feel, and be, safer. It does not matter whether you are a Supervisor or a Coach E4 - you all should have a valid certificate. You can get trained with the three main governing bodies: St John Ambulance, St Andrews Ambulance (Scotland only), British Red Cross.

FRANCIS ANGOVE, New Milton

DofC comments: At the recent BCU and SCA Coaching Conferences there was strong agreement that the holding of a current first aid certificate should be a requirement for the holding of a coaching award. Work has started on the introduction of a module suitable for canoeing. It is likely that the holding of a certificate (those acceptable to be defined) will be a requirement from 1993, as a feature of the adjustment to our system necessary for recognition by NCVQ.

Straw poles have been conducted from time to time, and it is invariably shown that the majority of canoeing instructors do actually hold a certificate anyway.

The Coaching Committee has considered the matter a number of times over the years, but has been reluctant to bring in yet another prerequisite. It should be noted that there has never (in 30 years) been a case reported where a BCU qualified instructor was believed to be inadequate in a first-aid situation - which does not, of course, mean that it might not happen.

THE NEW SURF SCHEME

by DENNIS BALL

(continued from the last edition)

A superficial glance at the *BCU Directory of Tests and Awards* will show the Surf scheme to be very similar in structure to the other disciplines. It was felt that the Coaching Scheme was already too large and complex, thus any addition should not add to the complexity. On closer reading, some obvious differences will emerge. These, and the reasons for them are now explained.

THE SURF GRADE TESTS

(The surf versions of the Star tests) (See *Directory*, pp41-51) Whereas inland and sea canoeing novices tend to start off on flat water, novice surfers don't - there is no such thing as 'flat' surf! Furthermore, whereas in inland and sea kayaking there is a 'journey' element, surfing also differs in this respect. This posed a problem when it came to the design of proficiency and star tests. The solution was to combine them into a single set of tests. The Surf Grade Tests. It should be noted that all the grade tests are pitched at a higher level than their equivalent Star tests, with the Grade 3 test being equal to 3 Star test *plus* proficiency, and the Grade 5 test being equal to 5 star test *plus* advanced proficiency.

It is important to note that all the Surf Grade tests require that basic strokes be demonstrated in their dynamic *applications* in surf. An enhanced level of theory testing is also evident at each grade.

Because of the fundamentally different control skills, characteristics, safety & rescue implications between Kayaks and skis, it was necessary to design different tests for the two disciplines.

The Coaching Awards (Surf) (see *Directory*, pp79-84)

The basic entry level to the surf scheme is the same as the other disciplines; be a BCU Instructor. Other important points at trainee and assessment level should also be noted:

Trainee Senior Instructor

Successful trainee surf SIs enjoy a level of approval to formally take *sole* charge of a group that exceeds the freedoms afforded to trainees in the other disciplines, because of this Trainee Surf SIs are also subject to an element of scrutiny which exceeds that of the other disciplines in that the standards of ability, knowledge and judgement implicit in the Grade 3 test are fully demonstrated in both Kayak and ski. Experience has shown that a number of past trainees have stumbled at this hurdle. The Grade 3 surf test is not a 'baby' test by any means! It represents the point at which a paddler can demonstrate sound basic knowledge of the sport, good safety skills and awareness and, importantly, that they can demonstrate competent directional control of their craft by *dynamic application* of the basic strokes. ie; good wave reading and shoulder riding skills.

Senior Instructor assessment:

Less problems appear to have arisen at assessment level. Applicants seem to have a clearer understanding of what is required of them. A current problem however may be that sources of related surf 'theory' are still restricted at this time, and it is necessary to scour many other avenues to find the necessary info'. Another notable difference for Surf SIs is that the Surf Life Saving Association Bronze medallion is an acceptable award.

Other Implications

There has been some interesting discussion amongst members of the Sea Coaching Committee about using the Grade '2' Surf test (Kayak) as a measure of the necessary level of surf handling skills for SI sea assessment. If gained prior to assessment, more time could be spent on the important journeying elements. Under the present scheme Sea SIs can assess for the Grade 2 Surf test (Kayak) right now.

THE FUTURE

As the new surf scheme gets under way and is subjected to the trials of practical implementation and the scrutiny of more assessors and trainers (not to mention the trainees and assesseees!) No doubt we shall learn a lot more and shall find that a few cracks in the system will emerge in the process. I welcome this process. Through finding better ways and learning new things we add to the sum of our knowledge and move on, through discovering weaknesses we make changes and thus strengthen the system.

Much however will hinge on the scale of response to the scheme and the consequential impact it makes on the surf scene. Good quality, wide-spread teaching of the skills, safety factors, knowledge and awareness and consideration of the paddle-surfing community; by well trained and well informed instructors; to appreciable numbers of surfers is bound to have a positive impact. Particularly if the effect cascades down to even larger numbers of their friends.

I welcome constructive comments about the ethos, content and structure of this scheme, either by contacting me or better still, by writing to *CoDe* or *Canoe Focus*

NATIONAL COACHING COMMITTEE

Notes from the meeting of 9 November 91. A full copy of the minutes is available upon receipt of a sae at the BCU office.

Local liaison. It was noted that there was now full support for the programme of identification by LCOs of a person in each district of the country, willing to identify the available facilities, activity, providers, and seekers of help, and report back to the Region.

Conferences. The successful formula of the BCU Touring and Coaching Conference held in Devon, was noted. Janet Bradford, RCO, and her team, were thanked for their hard work.

It was agreed that the formula bore repetition, but that some alternative 'workshops' should be introduced each year, to avoid the Conferences getting 'stale'.

The SCA Coaching Conference had been held at Faskally, with a good attendance, and had looked at safety, the environment, and rafting.

Coach Award. Pete Midwood, Plas y Brenin, stated that the revised formula for the Coach Course, which concentrated on training only, identified areas of ability in which further work was desirable, and sought to pair the Trainee Coach with a suitable 'coach tutor' to pursue the full award, had proved very successful.

Keith Morris (RCO, Cumbria) reported that the 'modular' course running in the region, was also working out well.

Finance. DofC reported that the total tests undertaken were 1,000 up on the previous year, once the 'special deal' of 2,000 tests to an activity holiday company was accounted for. Income appeared to be about £3,500 short of target, due to the number of Star Tests for which the incorrect money was submitted, and a shortfall on expected growth in numbers taken.

Finance Committee had recommended an increase to £3. It was agreed that the amount this was expected to raise should be obtained through increases in other areas, and the Star Test fee should remain at £2.50. To be confirmed.

The Coaching Scheme's 'Project Fund' had not been accounted for in the two previous financial years, and any monies in it would have to be used to offset the over-spend in the last financial year, anyway. It was noted that about £2,500 was expected to be available in the current financial year.

Life Saving. Mark Carter, Chairman, BCU Lifeguards, spoke to some recommendations concerning requirements for First Aid, Resuscitation, and Life Saving Awards to be current - taken or re-validated within the last three years - if they were to be accepted by the Health and Safety Executive for swimming pool use. It was agreed that from April 1992 there should be a requirement for Life Saving Examiners to hold current awards. For the assessment of the Canoeing Safety Test, E1 Senior Instructors must also hold a current First Aid Certificate. Simulated External Chest Compression (ECC) to be included in the Canoeing Safety Test in line with RLSS and other equivalent tests. The Assistant Lifeguard Award to have a three-year validity only from April 1992, by which time it should be totally acceptable for canoeing session supervision in swimming pools. The Rescue Test (which is the same syllabus) to continue to be used for Coaching purposes with no set period on its validity for the time being.

Although there was reluctance to accept immediate changes due to the current 'period of stability' it was agreed that due to outside pressures the above needed to be implemented from 1 April 1992.

Staff ratios. It was agreed that staff ratio recommendations should be standard, regardless of level of award, or type of craft involved: 1:8 boats for initial training; 1:4 boats for white water grade II. The recommendation stands that the instructor should always be allowed to exercise discretion. (A copy of the full recommendation *Checklist for the Guidance of Relevant Authorities* is available upon receipt of a sae at the BCU office).

White water safety and rescue courses. Concern was expressed that some 'white water rescue' courses were focusing on technical aids and gadgets, and not emphasising the need for ability, knowledge and experience for the conditions, to avoid the need for rescue. If rescue was necessary, then basic principles, and use of throw lines and simple techniques should be practiced, with resort to ropes and karabiners as a last resort. It was noted that for canoes it would often be impossible to shift a jammed boat without leverage. RCOs to check the course content and qualifications of those offering 'white water safety and rescue courses' for inclusion in the Yearbook.

Coaching Scheme Review

YOUR COMMENTS ARE WELCOMED

Whilst no changes to the Scheme could normally be implemented until January 1993, due to the current 3-year period of stability, the Coaching Committee, at its recent meeting, noted that suggested amendments had been received, and some anomalies identified. It may also be necessary to adjust the Scheme to comply with the requirements for recognition by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications once these are finally determined. A working party was therefore convened, with a wide brief, to review the current working of the Scheme and take into account any comments received from members.

Members should not become alarmed at the advent of the tests and awards review working party. The intention is that a thorough look should be taken at our system with two main purposes.

Firstly, there are issues such as revalidation, the requirement for a first aid certificate, and other matters which will have to be addressed if our qualifications are to receive the ratification of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications.

It is also still felt in many quarters that our whole system could be simplified. The working party does not, therefore, have a restricted brief. On the other hand, it is not the intention that anything should be changed unless there are very sound reasons for so doing.

A main task will also be to consider the scope of the current system in an endeavour to ensure that even longer periods of stability can be achieved in the future.

Your views on what, if anything, needs clarifying, adjusting, or re-thinking, in our current tests and awards system, are welcome. Please write to the Director of Coaching at the BCU office.

The time-table is:

Working party meets early January to consider comments received and programme for revision

Working party reports to March 1992 NCC

Work continues until final report to NCC in November 1992

Revisions announced through CoDe in December 1992

FEES FOR 1992

The following fees are applicable from 1 January 1992:

Star Tests, PW Tests, Life Saving Tests:	£2.50 (no change)
(for bulk rates please see p75-76 of <i>BCU Members' Yearbook</i>)	
Proficiency Tests (inc Advanced): Members	£5; non-mem £7
Instructor Training or Assessment, SI Training:	£7
Senior Instructor Assessment	£10
Supervisor, PW Teacher (non-members):	£6(1year)/£18(3yr)
Log Books	£1.50 members; £2 non-members

*For other fees, and prices of products, please see p 75-76 of *BCU Members Yearbook**

EXAMINER FORUMS

The following forums are taking place on the dates shown. All grade 2 Examiners must attend a forum every three years, as a minimum. It is hoped that grade 2 Examiners are sufficiently interested in the training and assessment process to want to attend every year, to exchange ideas, and contribute to the system.

Grade I examiners are welcome to the forums.

Cumbria	Sunday 12 January 1992
Devon and Cornwall	Saturday 25 January
Eastern	Saturday 18 January 1992
North East	Saturday 25 January 1992
North Wales	Sunday 19 January 1992
South East	Sunday 22 March 1992
Yorkshire & Humberside	Sunday 2 February 1992

For details please send sae to relevant RCO (via the BCU office if you don't have the address)

The autumn series of forums will be listed in the next issue.

ANOTHER LOOK AT SAFETY IN WHITE WATER CANOEING

By MIKE STOCK

Two areas of White Water Canoeing have changed in recent years, and some would say the changes have been quite radical, and more Paddlers are tackling harder and harder rivers. This has in part been due to the advent of the Polyethylene plastic canoe which has made these descents possible. At the same time there has been increased awareness of safety requirements through rescue courses, seminars, books and videos.

I still wonder however, if we in the Coaching Scheme are sometimes a little complacent about aspects of general safety concerning paddling white water, and if in fact we are getting a clear message across to our public. There is evidence, both from personal observation and letters that appear from time to time in the canoeing press, that what constitutes sensible, safe and reasonable behaviour is not always apparently understood or adhered to by some of our fellow paddlers.

Education is always important, and no less in the area of river safety than anywhere else. Paddlers are exposed to various educative influences, whether it be from friends, clubs or the Coaching Scheme, but is this enough?

A Personal Philosophy

My own personal philosophy towards white water canoeing has developed over a period of years, the paddling of many rivers both in the UK and abroad, and in the company of many different people. It has been tempered and fashioned by a number of experiences, both good and bad.

This has caused me to reflect on how knowledge and experience gathered over a number of years can be made readily available to those about to become involved in white water paddling, to impart those things that do not appear in any book, in a concise and clear format. The concept and perception I had was to look at the whole spectrum of white water canoeing, but contain a readily recognisable theme of what constitutes good white water practice with regard to awareness and safety, and the 'what if' constituent, but at the same time it would not have to take away any of the natural enjoyment of the sport.

The search was for an alternative way of increasing awareness through a suitably constructed course. Now I applaud the many new initiatives as regards rescue week-ends, and seminars where much good work takes place, but they provide the cure, or the way of putting things right when mistakes happen. My thoughts are that PREVENTION must always be better than trying to effect a cure.

Put another way, by using an educative process, working with the problems that are discussed at river rescue weekends, with a view that many problems can be anticipated, and because of this many potential accidents can be avoided by creating increased awareness and the teaching of what is good practice. This then is the PREVENTION while the rescue courses are the CURE.

Pilot Courses

The starting point was a pilot three day course that I ran with Paul Kilham in 1986 on the river Dart. We worked with proficiency standard paddlers, and the scheme was to expose them to the whole spectrum and philosophy of white water canoeing, and the good practices that should go with it.

Our aims at that time, were to investigate all the why's, when's and how's with the reasons, in one course. To combine the knowledge we had with all the theories and practicalities of white water, and to end up with a clear picture of what is good safe paddling and practice, as opposed to that which is indifferent or dangerous.

We had a good course, but got nowhere near our aims and objectives. The biggest failing was that we did not allow enough time to cover all the subjects and aspects we wanted to. It then dawned on us that to do justice to a course of this nature would require a week (or alternatively, create a series of modules).

From those original student we received some tremendous feed-back, together with a great deal of enthusiasm and participation. This convinced us that a week's residential course was the only way to find out how relevant and workable our concept was. The first full course took place in Scotland at October 1987. This was again a learning experience for everyone on the course, and as a result we resolved through the auspices of our local Education Authority it should become an annual course.

The week has now been planned to be progressive. Following are some of the subjects and aspects that we deal with. The aim is to cover them all comprehensively. Communications, Group Control, Running Rapids, Building Safety, Inspections, Route Finding, Reading White Water, Styles and Methods of Leading, Rescues, White Water Skills and Manoeuvres, Expedition Planning, Group and Personal Equipment, Expedition Simulation Games, How to use the River for Play and Teaching. What to Teach and Where to teach, Group Awareness and Dynamics.

Prevention or Cure?

To return to the theme of PREVENTION and CURE, we have evolved an interesting way of introducing students to river rescues, based on the belief that the best way of learning is by "doing it". We set one complete day aside for this, and it is based in the grounds of the Centre that we use. This starts with throw-line practice on the Sports field. A variety of different throw lines are used, normally no initial instruction is given, and chaos is very much evident. But it does quickly make the point that you have to learn how to use the throw line if it is to be an effective rescue tool. Basic coaching on stance, trajectory, and follow-through soon has everybody throwing reasonably accurately. So far we have found that even the most cack-handed student can be taught to throw in a short period of time.

This is then followed by a small evacuation exercise, where the students are placed in groups, given a 'victim' who has a simulated injury - normally a fracture or dislocation. They are asked to render initial first aid, and arrange for the evacuation, using only the equipment they have within the group. We have discovered that some very comfortable stretchers can be constructed with paddlers, buoyancy aids, and spare clothing.

Next we move to a small gorge in the Centre grounds. This is very steep, rocky and tree lined, and when the burn is 'up' has all the characteristics of a continuous grade 4-5 - all be it slightly scaled down, but realistic enough to encourage genuine role playing! Prior to the students arriving at the scene a series of staged incidents have been put in place. These are usually pins or entrapments with victims involved. Each incident is out of site of the next, and each group tackles each situation in turn, but they are not allowed to discuss the method of rescue they used with any of the other groups - and they are only allowed to use equipment they have within the group (equipment that they would have with them on the river).

The groups are given only a minimum briefing. They then learn by doing it. We think this 'workshop' type approach is relevant, because for many groups, especially peer groups, this is how it is going to happen on the river. By this, I mean a leader will emerge from the group. Sometimes it will be the best paddler, but not always. It might be the paddler with the best available skills, ie a climber turned paddler, or the best lateral thinker or problem solver. Group dynamics are very evident, as they would be in a live situation.

It has been our experience that groups work in different ways. Some are disjointed, all pulling in different directions. Some will want to debate the matters even before steps have been taken to stabilise the situation, and some will work well together.

The learning process continues with the de-brief, when the groups that have worked well look at ways in which they could have improved their performance; those that were a shambles: where they went wrong and why. So far it has been easy to get the students to see the relevance of tackling these incidents, and believing that this is what can and does happen in real life. It has created awareness, and in most students a desire to improve and practise their river rescue skills.

To summarise, river rescue courses and techniques must continue to be developed and updated, and will remain the CURE, but if the Coaching Scheme is to remain an Educating Force in this area of the sport, it should look at ways of increasing awareness, possibly along the lines I have indicated in this article. This would then become the PREVENTION aspect of the subject.

Paul Kilham and myself will be running another River Leading course in October 1991, and would like to hear from any other members of the Coaching Scheme who are intending, or have run, courses similar to ours, with a view to exchanging ideas and learning experiences.

THE THEORY OF LIFE, THE UNIVERSE AND EVERYTHING (INCLUDING THE BCU)

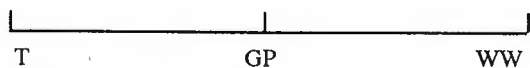
By SIMON DAWSON

In past years I have tried to write various articles in the canoeing press, hoping to stimulate debate and creative thought. I have been delighted with the generous reaction from the vast majority of readers who have responded to these attempts with extensive feedback. In many cases I have learnt more from the readers than they have from me. Only a small minority have accused me of a different motivation; the need to boost either my ego or the profits of Dawson Canoeing Systems. To them I apologise in advance for this next article. They will undoubtedly be even more upset by my presumption in trying to create a theory to describe the entire canoeing universe on four sheets of A4 paper.

Having spent the past three years working with the National Touring and Recreation Committee and the East Midlands Regional Committee, I have also been involved with coaching both within and outside the Coaching Scheme. At first the work of the various committees seemed separate, with each working at it's own tasks with it's own people. It slowly dawned on me that in fact the various committees and structures, and the activities they represent, could be fitted together into one single picture. By looking at this picture, and searching out the gaps or overlaps, it may be possible to see more clearly how we can fit the work of all the BCU's separate parts into a more cohesive and useful whole.

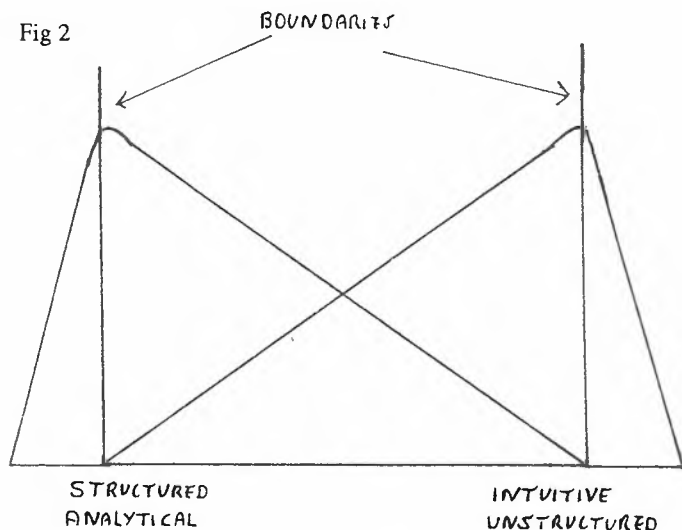
This article will start off by describing the diagram, and the way it can be used to classify types of canoeing activity. It will then go on to discuss what I think it shows about both the Coaching and Touring Committees, and the way they fit together. I am not a competitive canoeist, so I have not put that side of the sport into the picture, but if anybody wants to modify the theory to suit their ideas then be my guest.

Fig 1



One axis of the diagram in figure 1 describes the type of boat in use. One end of the axis is "Touring", the use of long, directionally stable boats for racing or fast journeying. At the other end is "White Water", with the shorter more manoeuvrable boats. In the middle I have put a General Purpose category, boats that are reasonably fast and easy to steer on flat water, but with an acceptable WW performance. I will talk more about these categories later in the article.

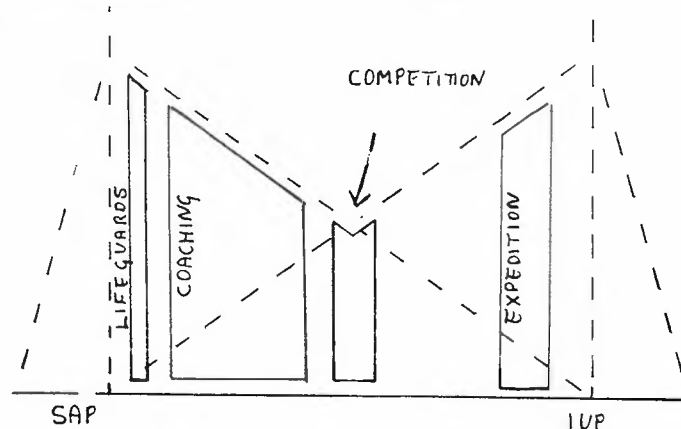
Fig 2



For the other axis, I want to describe the character or personality of the canoeist in the boat (figure 2). To the left is the Structured and Analytical Personality (SAP) with the Intuitive and Unstructured Personality (IUP) to the right.

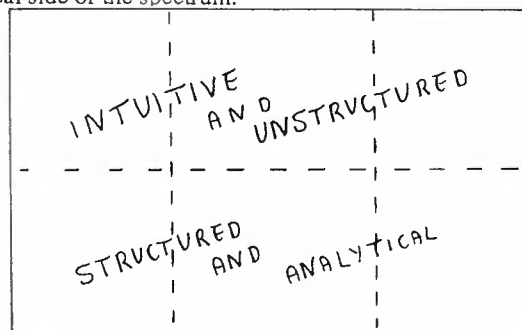
The SAP does things logically and sensibly. He can be relied upon to read the instructions when assembling an MFI shelf unit. The less logical IUP would have ten screws left over. But if the task was to become a jazz musician then the IUP might have slight advantage over the SAP, who would not get beyond page five of "Teach yourself the piano". The SAP is more likely to be in a club or structured group environment with planned activities, whilst the IUP might prefer smaller informal groups of close friends. There are no values in this judgement. Neither side is better or worse than the other. But it may help if we can match the activities they carry out to the type of person they are.

In the diagram shown most people would be somewhere in the middle, with a useful mix of both personality characteristics, but with one predominating. Only a few would be at the extremes of one end or the other. The two vertical lines are the boundaries of useful existence. Within those lines people have sufficient balance of personality to make a valuable contribution to life or canoeing. Those outside are so structured and inflexible, or so informal and laid back, as to be impossible to live with. In this diagram therefore, the BCU Lifeguards would be near the left border, but inside, whilst train spotters and stamp collectors are outside (figure 2A).



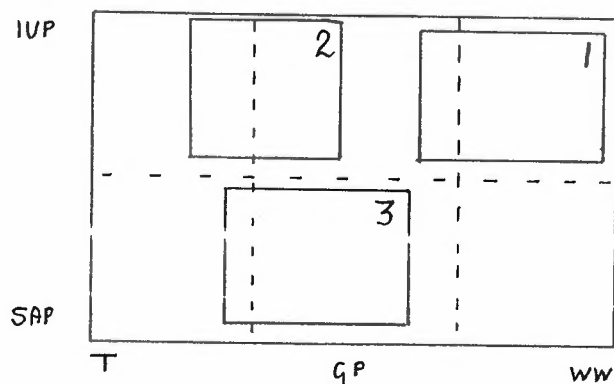
In the middle we have the competitive champions, slalomists like Richard Fox or Shaun Pearce, who exactly balance the structured meticulous planning of their training with an intuitive feel for the boats performance during competition. Expedition paddlers like Dave Mamby and Mike Hewlett are on the right of the diagram. Whilst some would debate over how near Dave is to the boundary, those who have actually experienced his coaching would put him clearly inside it.

I have lectured on this topic to a number of Coaching Scheme groups, and I was relieved to see that the majority of members put Coaching Scheme activity where I would also put it, a fairly wide spread of activity, but definitely to the left of centre, in the structured and analytical side of the spectrum.

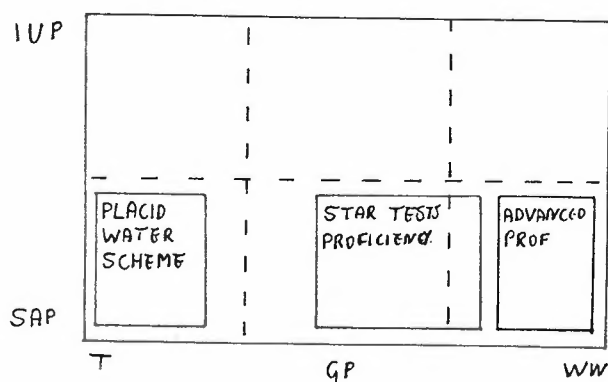


Having defined the two axes, it is possible to put them together into one diagram (figure 3). It is now fairly simple to describe any canoeing activity, and place it on the diagram by defining the type of

boat and the style or personality of the paddlers. For example it is possible to describe the sort of paddling carried out in each country (figure 4).



American kayak paddling is area 1. Mostly big white water touring, but with many paddlers learning from friends or by instinct rather than on a course. Much German paddling is the same. In northern Europe and Denmark a lot of paddling is in area 2. Informal and unstructured touring, but on the simpler and flatter rivers and lakes. I think it can be argued that in countries with easy access to good touring water, most activity is IUP. The only interesting exception is North American Open Canoe paddling, (area 3), which is definitely SAP. Could it be that Bill Mason's evocative but strongly analytical books like "The Path of the Paddle" have created this activity in his image.



In figure 5 I have drawn the same diagram, but with Coaching Scheme activity inserted; the Placid Water scheme, Star tests and Proficiency, and Advanced Proficiency and WW Safety training. What is immediately obvious is that this activity only fills one half of the diagram. All the thousands of paddlers in the top of the diagram are not currently serviced by a BCU activity that matches their needs.

At present it is common to divide canoeing activity solely by type of boat. The Placid Water scheme can look after flat water work, whilst the star tests and proficiency fill all the gaps in GP and WW work. The diagram is divided vertically. But I think that character differences are more fundamental than boat types, and that we should address those first. We should divide the diagram horizontally. The Coaching Scheme can take the bottom half, and continue as before providing a range of coaching and awards in the structured and analytical way that it is doing now. But it is up to the Touring and Recreational Committee to work in the top half, providing a matching range of services, over the entire range of boat types, but in a more informal manner. Both Committees must accept that they do not control the whole picture, and they need to work closely with each other to co-ordinate their activities. The paddler is then free to choose one style or the other (or most probably a bit of both) and the BCU provides a service suitable for all.

THE TOURING AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

It is not the fault of the Coaching Scheme that for many years one half of British paddlers were not properly catered for by the BCU. Those with a SAP personality got themselves organised and created a

Coaching Scheme which worked well for their needs. It was the IUP types who failed to get themselves organised, probably because they would rather go canoeing instead. It is only recently that the T & RC has begun to sort itself out and develop a programme and policy for this sort of paddler.

If the Coaching Scheme works by providing activities at every level where paddlers can meet, learn about the sport, and enjoy themselves within a structured atmosphere, then it is the job of the T & RC to provide exactly the same service but in a more informal way. The fundamental difference is in what the participant is expected to do. In a Coaching Scheme session the participant will probably be expected to take part in the activities as organised, and talk to and interact with the instructor and other course members. In a T & RC event I think the element of voluntary choice is different. The participants can turn up and do what they want. If they talk to and paddle with others, then fine. But if they want to stay in their own small group, that is equally OK. There is no pressure. They go at their own speed. Again there are no values in this difference. No one approach is "best". All that counts is that the many different types of paddler find the approach that suits their particular needs.

I have carefully used the word informal in this particular description, and not the word unstructured. Although T & RC activities must give the appearance of being informal, there is a need for a well organised and efficient underlying structure to co-ordinate and develop it all. At present this is in its infancy, with a small group of people spreading the work and trying to encourage others to run tours and events. But the pattern is slowly building up, and eventually there will be a fixed pattern of events which people will automatically and easily run year after year, just as they now easily drop into the experienced routine of running a slalom or an AI weekend.

Within each type of canoeing activity there is a need for both national and local events. Local events have the obvious benefit of promoting the sport regularly, efficiently and cheaply within a club or region. But the need for national events is very strong. The participants can get a chance to expand their horizons and meet new faces, whilst the organisers can meet their friends and opposite numbers from other regions to compare notes and get new ideas.

In the GP/WW area the network of national and local events is already very strong. The Mike Jones rally and others such as the De Tour and the Pan Galactic rally have already started the work. Local and regional tours are also common. The problem is more difficult on higher grade white water. Tours are not possible in Britain, so the WW Rodeo Network has been created to let such paddlers meet, socialise and paddle together regularly each year. These weekends have been incredibly valuable. In order to promote high grade canoe touring we have to go abroad. The annual Corsica rally provides the T & RC's unstructured equivalent to the Coaching Scheme's Advanced Proficiency Training, whilst we are also working on a regular summer Alpine meet to support paddlers who cannot get away at Easter.

It is in the flat water touring area that canoeing is weakest in Britain, and consequently the T & RC's activities here are also less advanced. This is a pity, as it is in the area of low grade informal touring that the potential for expanding British Canoeing lies.

The first need is for good national tours, to bring together everybody involved in this field, and let them talk and exchange ideas in a canoe rather than in a committee room. Is it possible to work with the Open Canoe Association or the Canoe Camping Club to run such an event? We have tried to run trips abroad to join in with French and Dutch organised tours, and this can be tried again. But it is the local flat water tours that are most important to the BCU.

If every T & RC event is matched by a Coaching activity, then the local flat water tour is the introductory equivalent to the pool session or one star. Not everybody wants to get wet or to learn the intricacies of the sweep stroke. A lot of people simply want to get into a boat and go paddling. It is important that we give them the choice. It is perfectly possible to put novices into open canoes or the correct sort of kayak, give them a paddle, and let them simply go off in a group with a guide. They do not HAVE to be formally taught. Many prefer the intuitive approach, and informal canoe courses often have a lower drop out rate than the standard star test. Of all the priorities of the T & RC, I think that ensuring that in every region in Britain that new paddlers are given the proper informed choice between a structured

or informal start to their paddling career is the most important one we have. In the Coaching Scheme we must accept that the methods we have developed are not always relevant to every type of paddler.

THE COACHING COMMITTEE

The T & RC has a lot of work facing it to fill up all the gaps in the diagram. For the Coaching Scheme the gaps are already filled with activities. Nevertheless there are certain points which I think that the diagram can be used to show.

Boat shapes and paddling techniques.

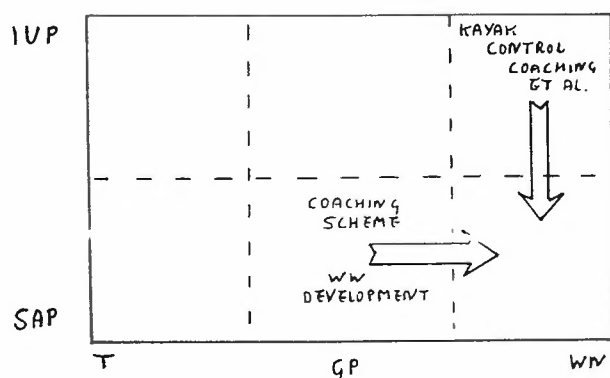
I talked earlier about General Purpose kayaks. A GP boat is designed for both flat and white water. Being about four metres long it is reasonably fast on flat water, and it is fairly directionally stable so it is easy to teach novices to go in a straight line. Nevertheless it has a quite reasonable white water performance. A good example of a GP boat would be the old fibre-glass KW7.

There are no GP boats currently available roto-moulded. Even fairly long boats like the Mirage and Europa are WW boats. They have a lot of rocker and a rounded bottom, so they are slower, directionally unstable, and difficult for novices.

The interesting fact is that the star tests we teach were designed to work in GP boats. We are now in the situation where we are teaching novices on flat water, in WW boats, with a paddling style designed for general purpose craft. I think we need to realise that there are different types of boat, and that we are going to have to start teaching different paddling techniques for different classes of kayak. (You may find this point hard to agree with. All that I ask is that before dismissing it you actually try paddling a KW7 or similar, and compare it with a modern boat over the range of star test paddle strokes, to see which boat performs best)>

For the early star tests, and for teaching in centres and schools, there is no need for a change in technique. What we need to do is drop the white water kayaks and go back to using GP type boats more suited to the flat water/white water mix. There are no boats currently available in plastic, so start talking to the manufacturers.

Once onto white water the problem is different. The boats are fine, there has been a massive development in design over the last five years. But during that time we were looking at WW Rescue, or sorting out the SI training course and NVQs, rather than developing paddling styles. We now need to look carefully at exactly how we should be paddling these new shapes of kayak. Diagram 6 shows this situation.



There are two approaches into the structured WW area we are looking at. The horizontal arrow shows much of the present coaching scheme work, developing the existing analytical approach, mainly the teaching of paddle strokes, and modifying it for boats designed for white water. The vertical arrow shows the other way, going out to experienced paddlers who have developed their skills intuitively, and learning ideas from them to put into a cohesive coaching structure. This is my approach with Kayak Control Coaching, but there are other coaches doing very similar work all over the country. There is a difference in results. The Coaching Scheme approach tends to be analytical, time based and left brained, whilst the other way is more concerned with movement through space and right brain processes. But again there are no values to this. No one way is better. The important thing is to create debate and combine the best parts from each side into a structured and sensible whole.

The Coach Award

Going on from this I think it is interesting to look at the debate over the Coach award that is currently going on. What is the role of the Coach?

It is commonly accepted that the coach is responsible for running the coaching scheme and maintaining it's standards, and also for the more advanced white water training. The problem with this was that the majority of applicants for the coach course were therefore keen white water paddlers. This is fine when the sport is fairly small and simple. But now that the sport has grown more specialised and complicated I am not sure that one man can combine both jobs. Perhaps we should split the advanced WW training from the overall coaching supervision.

The first step is to create an advanced WW instructor, who teaches and assesses the Advanced Proficiency. This ties in neatly with the Instructor and his star tests and the SI with the Proficiency. There is a clearly understood role for each, and fairly clear boundaries.

The job of the AWWI is to study White Water kayaks and teach White Water kayaking. This is the time to finally realise that recreational WW kayaking is now a specialisation in it's own right. We can no longer learn how to Bow Rudder from a slalomist. The boats are different in performance. The aims of competition and recreation are also different. We need our own experts to study paddlers of our own types of boat in accordance with our own recreational values, and then to pass on those skills effectively and appropriately.

But if the AWWI, like the other instructors, is an expert on one small area of the sport, we then need the Coach to tie it all together. The Coach can come from any background, flat or white water, informal or structured. Perhaps he may not even be an active paddler but enjoying a leisurely retirement. The coach does however know about people. The one question my Coach Training Course did not answer was "What is a Coach?" I would now answer

An instructor is an expert on canoeing, and knows a bit about people. A coach is an expert on people and knows a bit about canoeing.

It is the job of the coach to assess what people need, and then guide them towards the right activity. The coach needs to monitor what goes on in his or her area of influence, be it a region, club or centre, and ensure that the balance is maintained, and that activities are available to suit all personality types. The coach needs to know how people learn, and how to ensure that paddlers are taught in a way appropriate for them. The Coach, like many instructors, will work in both the Touring and Coaching Committee areas, but both instructors and coaches will need to know how to change the style of the coaching to suit the aims of the event.

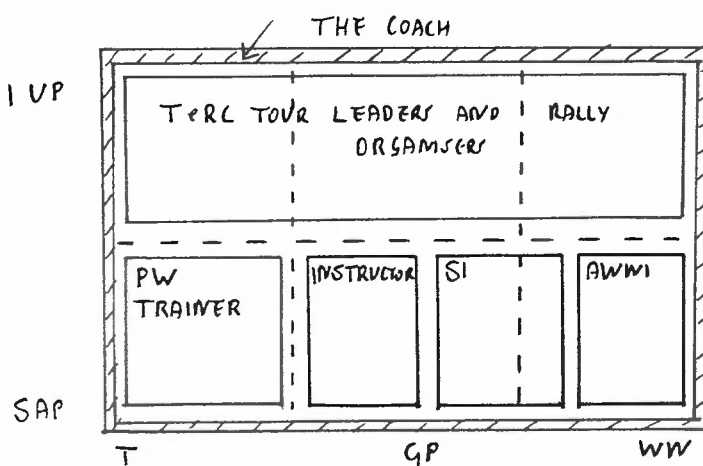


Figure 7 shows this on one final diagram. The AWWI has a very important role to play, getting deeply involved in a small specialist area. We need to encourage this. But if he is so closely involved with one small area can he maintain the overall picture? Can he see the wood from the trees? I think we should split this job off from the role of the coach, which is stand back and maintain the whole balanced picture.