

CoDe

the magazine of the BCU Coaching Scheme

June 1992

No 45

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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- GEOFF SANDERS

TESTS AND AWARDS REVIEW

Working party report

The working party is grateful for the comments and submissions made by members. These follow the report in CoDe 43 of the general principles which had been proposed in the overall review of the tests and awards which is currently taking place. The review is particularly concerned with making our system acceptable for endorsement by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications.

We are still keen to hear your views, and all comments are welcome.

One expression of concern has been that the imposition of increased requirements for qualifications for the work place could have a detrimental affect on the volunteers. This will obviously need careful consideration.

The National Coaching Committee extended its March meeting to work on the review, and the working party itself has held a further meeting following that.

Areas of duplication have been identified, and rationalisation of pre-requisites, and courses, to avoid unnecessary repetition of training or competencies, is currently in hand.

The aim is to achieve a more easily understandable progression through the scheme, and logical transfer across the disciplines.

It is hoped to have reasonably detailed proposals available for debate at the Paddlers Conference in Cumbria at the end of October.

CANOE-ABILITY 1992

To reach those who are disabled

A Conference was held in Nottingham from 17-19 January which considered the BCU's policy and progress regarding the promotion of canoeing among people who are disabled.

Each region was asked to nominate two delegates to the Conference. One of their main tasks was during and following the workshop, to put together a development and action plan for their region.

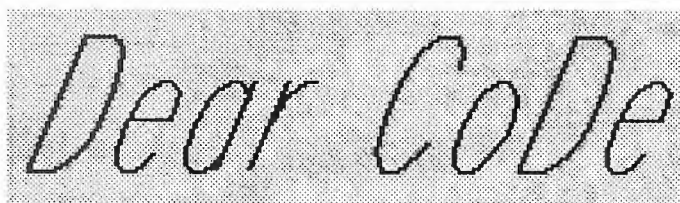
These plans have now all been submitted and approved, and the enabling funds lodged with the Regional Treasurers.

The Conference and the follow-up activities in the regions were made possible through a special grant of £5,000 from the government following the report Building on Ability.

The Conference reviewed: BCU policy and development; the identification of needs; equipment and resources; fund raising; competition - how to promote greater participation by those who are disabled in marathon and slalom in particular, and 'all abilities' canoe polo; and setting up action plans.

Copies of the report are available from the BCU office on receipt of a sae. The name(s) of the delegate(s) responsible for the action plan in your region, are included.

Please remember that the BCU membership list indicates those who are keen to help. The clubs list in the *BCU Yearbook* shows which accept members who are disabled, as does the list of Approved Centres.



Dear CoDe,

Revisions of Tests and Awards Schemes

I read, with interest, the reports and the 1 Star example, of proposals to modify the Tests and Awards Scheme. Writing as a BCU Supervisor, who is probably older than the average BCU Supervisor, at the low Star levels I feel that a departure from learning by rote is not to be encouraged.

In the past many of us will have learnt multiplication tables, spelling and foreign languages by rote. This is a pretty quick way of learning the basics of anything. The thinking part comes later when the modules are learnt and when reasoning is more developed. As anyone who regularly teaches canoeing to 10-11 year olds will know, co-ordination and reasoning is not always there, and physical development, of the individual, sometimes hinders as well.

While I do not find a demand for 4-5 Star work, I would point out that weight of numbers will probably show that 1-2 Star is the level that most canoeing takes place at. I urge all who are involved in these decisions to think carefully and remember that school education is, in some cases, reverting to the rote method of learning.

If changes are to be made I trust that the requirements will still remain specific, at the 1-2 Star levels, to be put together later (by the individual) on the slalom course.

KEITH HOOKER, Wokingham

Dear CoDe,

As an Instructor looking to go to Trainee Senior Instructor status I read your article on re-appraising the Star Tests and Awards with interest. I must say this can only be a good thing.

However, I do feel that 'dropping' the 4 and 5 Star is not such a good idea. People like to make personal achievements and have them recognised. This does not include instructional awards, it is a matter of their own skills, away from teaching.

The Star Tests can be followed up by Proficiency and Advanced Proficiency which helps to lead people towards the teaching area of Canoeing.

Using 'modules' is a good method of achieving a goal. Colleges and Universities have been doing it for a number of years. The Classic example is the BTEC certificate in continuing education. You must acquire 5 units within a given period of time to receive the certificate, but you can choose your units from a wide range of subjects. It would be nice to see this incorporated into the new scheme.

CLIVE PEARSON, Pershore

DoC comments: It should be noted that during 1991 only 55 x 4 Star and 17 x 5 Star tests were undertaken in the whole country. There would still be 2 grades above 3 Star - Proficiency and Advanced Proficiency. Whether we call them 4 and 5 Star, or Proficiency and Advanced Proficiency is still open to debate.

Dear CoDe

With reference to the revision of the Tests and Awards scheme, would it not be better to maintain one name for the tests ie 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 star. 1, 2, and 3 star remain as they are, 4 star replaces proficiency, 5 star replaces 4 star and 6 star replaces advanced proficiency. This way the void between proficiency and advanced proficiency is lessened as there is a natural progression.

We would end up with six star awards which follow a natural progression, rather than the suggested progression which still leaves a large void between proficiency and advanced proficiency.

I also feel that instead of being a recommendation it should be a prerequisite that SI assessment candidates attend a white water safety course. After all, as SIs they are qualified to operate on white water and the more aware and safer we make the instructor the safer we make the sport, which can only be good for all of us.

KEITH SYKES, LCO South Notts

Dear CoDe,

The interim comments of the working party which has been re-appraising the Tests and Awards Scheme are most interesting. (CoDe 43) I recall that at the time of the introduction of the Senior Instructor grade and the abolition of the Instructor qualification it was suggested by some of the Coaching Committee that the standard for SI was being based too much on personal performance and not sufficient consideration was being given to knowledge, teaching ability and experience.

Since those days we seem to have gone too much the other way in that there are now Teachers, Leaders, Trainee Instructors, Instructors, Trainee Senior Instructors, Senior Instructors, Examiners I/II, Coaches, Senior Coaches, and St Peter . . . Add to these the sub-divisions of specialists Slalom, Sprint, Surf, Marathon, Placid Water, White Water, Canadian, Kayak, Open Cockpit, and we have a really vast community of coaching personnel without a common basis.

Before anyone is permitted to hold an appointment of any standard in the BCU Coaching Scheme surely they should have three basic qualifications. 1. The ability to instruct all age groups; 2. Be fully aware of safety rules and precautions; 3. Hold Public First Aid and Life Saving Awards. Only when these have been obtained should a candidate be permitted to apply for examination for Leader/Instructor Awards.

This still leaves unanswered the problem of a standard of ability and the equality of testing for awards. Should we have a panel of assessors at national or regional level? Or should there be central testing with a continuous series of examinations? Surely it is wrong that some regions should gain a reputation for tough assessments, and others for easy ones. I admit that this may not be so today, but it certainly was so in the past. Indeed in the past I can remember two candidates I failed for proficiency one week came back the next for instructor training having obtained their proficiency under another SI.

It is good to know that the Working Party is sorting out some of the coaching problems starting with the basics. Even to ensuring that beginners are taught to guide their craft on directions in plain English, not coaching jargon.

Finally a thought for the other end of the coaching spectrum. There comes a time when older members of the Scheme - it has now been in existence for nearly 40 years - who have proved their worth and ability as Coaches and SIs, are beginning to feel *anno domini* in their physical ability. However, they still possess a vast knowledge and experience of all aspects of canoeing and a high standard of what is required in tests and awards. In spite of my comments in para 3 above, should we not perhaps add one more category, Consultant/Adviser, and not lose this increasing number of valuable, but no longer physically active, elder brethren?

JACK TRAVERS, Worcester

Dear CoDe,

Please may I add a few observations to your recent correspondence about first aid training?

- 1 First aid training in the coaching scheme is a good thing.
- 2 National standards for training and assessment in first aid are set by the Health and Safety Executive, not by the Red Cross or similar agencies, but their concern is with industrial and commercial safety, not canoeists.
- 3 The uniformed organisations (Red Cross, St Andrews, St Johns) can award certificates with national recognition because they are HSE approved and operate within their regulations.
- 4 So do some 400+ other training agencies, many of which would be only too pleased to offer training for canoeists. As they are also

HSE approved, their standards are exactly similar to those of the uniformed organisations.

- 5 Nationally recognised certificates offered by any HSE approved agency are very inflexible as far as their content is concerned. A certain amount of their content is relevant to canoeists, but a great deal is less so.
- 6 It should be quite possible to combine two things in a 'first aid for canoeists' award.
 - a a content entirely relevant to canoeists, but not simply adopting an existing award designed for a different purpose,
 - b consistent delivery and examination standards by using HSE approved agencies to deliver courses. Many of those on the list which is available from local HSE offices, such as the education authority I work for, will be only too pleased to do so, at a price ! You will almost certainly find that many of them have staff with the necessary first aid and medical knowledge and skill, who are canoeists as well.

PETER LEACH, East Lothian

Dear CoDe

Re: First Aid Qualifications

I am very disturbed to read some of the letters which appear in CoDe on this subject.

- a) Consider the comments by the Director of Coaching.

The DoC keeps stating that there is no recorded accident in which the incorrect application of First Aid is a contributory factor in the accident. Practically I would be most surprised if there were any records of incorrect First Aid being applied. After all, who is going to file the report ? One assumes the most qualified First Aider on the scene performed the First Aid and hence thinks they did it correctly. It is very unlikely that anyone less qualified would write to the Director of Coaching complaining about the First Aid treatment applied by a better First Aider ! Hence, who would have filed this "Incorrect Usage" report ?

- b) Consider Jim Lythgoe's letter (CoDe 44)

Jim maintains that a BCU Instructor has already had to demonstrate a working knowledge of Basic First Aid, as part of their assessment. I think the operative word in this context is BASIC. Compared to either the St Johns Ambulance First Aid course or the RLSS Standard Resuscitation course the standard set by the Canoe Safety Test, until two years ago, was pitiful. I would also like to point out that both the St Johns Ambulance and RLSS require that their certificates be retaken every three years. This isn't because they really like running courses and it's a good way

of raising cash. It's because from past experience they have found that first aiders don't often have to practise their trade and hence tend to forget how to !

As regards the Instructors who like collecting certificates and never actually paddle, I will treat that comment with the contempt it deserves. ALL the active instructors in Deben Canoe Club (5 at present) hold current first aid certificates and none of them think it was a waste of time. They tend to view it as their responsibility to the parents of the children they teach.

- c) Now let's consider David Roland's letter (CoDe 44)

His main point seems to be that he is quite capable of judging his own first aid performance without the need to resort to an examination. I find this concept "interesting"! However, I think the comments above cover this case as well. If first aid was used on a regular basis then maybe there would be a case for not requiring a refresher course. However, as with any other skills, if they are not used for a while, they are forgotten and take a while to come back. If someone has cut their finger and it takes you a bit longer to remember what to do then it probably doesn't matter. However, if someone has hit their head badly, stopped breathing and their heart has stopped, you can't afford to wait 5 minutes whilst you try and remember what to do. Seconds can make the difference between life and death. Being well practised is imperative to effective first aid !

I think a real life example might be useful at this point. A few weeks ago, two canoe instructors were swimming at the local swimming pool, when a member of the public suffered a major heart attack. The duty lifeguard blew the whistle to clear the pool and dived in to start the rescue. Between these two (both of whom hold a current St Johns Ambulance First Aid Certificate) and the pool staff there were SIX qualified first aiders in attendance. Unfortunately the gentleman concerned died on the way to hospital, but at least they all know that their actions gave him the best chance he could have had. As an Instructor in charge of a group, could you honestly say the same about your abilities and are you the best person to judge ? A few hours spent during the winter season, once every three years, could make the difference between life and death for a member of your group. Is it worth the trouble ?

TIM MIDWINTER, Suffolk

DoC Comments: I personally accept the thrust of Tim's arguments - but my role is to implement the decision of the membership as agreed through the National Coaching Committee, not to dictate !

However, if there were serious shortcomings in the way in which first aid was administered by instructors generally, I am sure that by now at least one letter of complaint would have been received from a justifiably irate parent !

Important Notice: CANOEING SAFETY TEST EXAMINER REQUIREMENTS

In CoDe 44 it was confirmed that grade I examiners must now hold a current First Aid Certificate in order to assess the Canoeing Safety Test, and that *simulated* external chest compression (ECC) must be included in the test.

Please note that following representations it has been agreed that it will be in order for those examiners who have tested the Canoeing Safety Test in the last two years to continue to do so.

Senior Instructors who are seeking E1 status have to satisfactorily assess a Canoeing Safety Test under supervision as well as two Proficiency tests. This does not present a problem for the trainee examiner as it is the supervising examiner who needs to be currently qualified to assess the test. Once the E1 status is gained, however, a current first aid certificate is required by those assessing the Canoeing Safety Test. It is not a necessity for new examiners who wish to assess for Proficiency only.

When E1 status is confirmed, in order to independently examine for the Canoeing Safety Test, the Examiner must register

with the National Training Officer of the BCU Lifeguards. The requirements to register are: be a BCU grade I examiner and hold a current first aid certificate (St John's, Red Cross, St Andrews, or equivalent, together with a BCU Lifeguards or RLSS Resuscitation Test if the basic first aid award only is held).

Please note that the First Aid at Work Certificate is the highest public sector first aid certificate currently available, includes a sufficient level of resuscitation, and is fully acceptable.

The BCU Lifeguards Aquatic First Aid Certificate (8-hour module) will shortly be available. This will also include the necessary level of resuscitation, and will be the primary recommendation.

Lifesaving equivalents

Acceptable alternatives to the Canoeing Safety Test and the Rescue Test are RLSS Lifesaving III (not RLSS level II as stated on p57 of the Directory) for the Canoeing Safety Test; and RLSS Bronze Medallion for the Rescue Test.

Dear CoDe

To continue the important buoyancy aid debate, I would like to reply to two points raised in previous issues of 'CoDe'.

Firstly the statement from the BCU regarding the drowning of Trevor Bailey. "Trevor appears to have succumbed to... 'sudden unexplained drowning syndrome'. To conclude... that he should have been wearing a buoyancy aid is to state that no-one must ever, in any circumstances, swim out of their depth and that is clearly a non-sense".

I think faulty logic is used here. When you choose to swim out of your depth you start from a safe point and normally would swim only so far that you can return to land easily. If the water turns out to be colder than anticipated, or you begin to feel tired, you take that into account and shorten your bathing session accordingly.

If you are forced to take a swim after a capsize, different conditions apply. You have no choice about the time or distance of the swim. You may already be tired, suffering lactic acid build-up in the muscles. You may be overheated or unduly cold. On a day trip you may have eaten recently. Previous capsize or hard paddling all have their effects. To compare bathing with a forced swim (in clothes) after a capsize is not reasonable. Having seen a strong, fit 18 years old who was a competent swimmer, suddenly stop swimming and go soundlessly to the bottom on a glorious, warm August day in the deep pool above Symonds Yat rapid, I can only say one thing - wear a buoyancy aid.

The young man in this case was saved by very prompt action by the SI and a group member. He told us afterwards that the cold water had caused him to cramp up in both legs and he could not find the breath or strength or call out or keep his head above water. I accept that during the rigours of sprint competition, buoyancy aids can impede performance and may need to be dispensed with - but good supervision and safety cover would be part of any event.

If you are in a situation when immediate rescue may not be on hand - wear your buoyancy aid.

To take up the other point of buoyancy aids restricting breathing when swimming, it's probably restricting it during paddling too. People come in many shapes and sizes, so if you paddle fairly regularly get your own buoyancy aid that fits and doesn't restrict your breathing. There are many kinds of buoyancy aid that restrict my breathing, or other movements vital to good paddling or swimming. I don't wear those kinds. I think that buoyancy aids that tighten with chest-level straps under the arms must reduce the chances of your chest cavity expanding fully and are particularly inappropriate for adult females, but I wouldn't say 'ban them' - they may suit somebody. It is well worth trying many different buoyancy aids (the canoe exhibition is ideal for this) to find one that doesn't restrict you. Having gone to some trouble to get a buoyancy aid that suits me I find it a great help when in the water and it doesn't restrict my swimming. Do remember, however that you may need to use a different swimming style when wearing a buoyancy aid - crawl becomes very different and I find that if I turn on my back and use 'breast stroke' legs I can swim much further and leaves hands free to hold boat/paddle or catch a throwline.

I was initiated and trained in canoeing by a group that always wear buoyancy aids: correctly fitted, bottom strap done up, zip done up (if these criteria are not met, it's not a buoyancy aid). It is not inconvenient. It is not a hindrance. It is not wimpish.

You may be an excellent swimmer but any small incident: a bump on the head, cold shock to the breathing control centre of the brain, cramp, tiredness could send you silently to the bottom - if you are not wearing a buoyancy aid. Never forget that swimming in clothes in open water is a very very different thing from being able to swim well in a pool. Even in summer, rivers from mountains or deep water can be very cold. Lakes develop a layer of warm water on the surface which may only be about 18 inches deep and much colder water is trapped underneath it.

Wearing a buoyancy aid not only helps to keep you afloat, it helps to stop your head and chest being plunged into the colder deeper layer when you capsize and helps to hold head and chest higher in the water, keeping them in the warmer water and preventing cold shock or hypothermia.

Apart from wearing your buoyancy aid; when you are instructing - you always make sure all of your group have on correctly fitting buoyancy aids, done up properly... don't you? To know someone who drowned is awful. To be responsible for the drowning is unbearable. To be drowned. There is a sure way of greatly reducing the chance of drowning - a buoyancy aid. Wear one. Always.

HELEN MULLINEUX, Charlton

DofC comments: Recent research has shown that the body temperature on immersion, and the other factors mentioned by Helen - lactic build-up and so on - are not significant. The overall effect of immersion - the rate at which body heat is dispelled, the closing down of periphery blood vessels, the factor of hydrostatic squeeze, are the overwhelming features.

There is also a great deal of evidence in existence concerning 'sudden death of a swimmer'. The incident described by Helen seems to fit the pattern, but immersion in cold water (below 15C) is not necessarily a factor. Deaths have occurred in swimming pools. The exact physiological causes have not yet, however, been identified. The opinion I have been given is that it is something that can happen to anybody, at any time. When set against the millions of swimming hours in a given year, however, it is, of course, a remote occurrence, and we face much greater risks in our daily lives.

Several incidents of 'sudden death of a swimmer' have occurred within 3 metres of the bank. The contention that over-riding concern about the wearing of buoyancy aids in simple conditions is tantamount to saying one should never venture out of one's depth is not, therefore, in my submission, illogical.

As stated previously, the BCU strongly recommends the wearing of buoyancy aids by all novices, and for white water canoeing at all times. I personally prefer always to wear a buoyancy aid, and will continue to be a strong advocate of the BCU's policy. It must, however, remain the freedom of choice of the individual who is sufficiently experienced, to make his or her own decision.

We know that there are situations to which one can succumb in white water from which there is no protection, nor rescue. Several such drownings have occurred recently. Should we therefore not ban white water canoeing altogether? Or do we leave it to individual paddlers to weigh up the risks and decide for themselves whether or not they wish to accept them?

The senior racing and marathon racing fraternity traditionally do not wear buoyancy aids, either in training or competition - although common sense is used both for competitions which involve open or difficult water, and for isolated training where a high level of risk is involved. It must be repeated that whatever the 'white water' fraternity of paddlers think of this, the fact of the matter is that Trevor's death was the first on still water from a racing kayak of which we have record. There has been one drowning only in BCU ranking competition during the past 20 years - an undeclared epileptic - and it is more than 15 years since a paddler drowned in training - on a swollen Thames after he had been warned of the dangers.

Dear CoDe

Having just attended a skills update evening organised for all coaching scheme members in the South Nottingham area by the LCO (Keith Sykes). I would like to share the ideas and experiences of the evening with you.

The idea of the evening was for the participants to review and update their personnel and instructing skills. As many of us work in isolation in our clubs, schools and work place, therefore don't have anyone actively coaching us.

The session was run by the Midlands region RCO (Graham Wardle) and was held at a local canoe school. Current Trends of Nottingham (facilities and equipment were provided free of charge as a contribution to the coaching scheme. "Thanks CT's").

On arriving it was pleasing to see that five of the thirteen taking part were ladies. (A great show for us ladies keep it up!).

The evening began with a brief introduction to local canoeing celebrities and handy contacts. The aim and format of the session was then explained.

Next the water session showed us how to break down singular and compound strokes looking at the body, boat and blades (the three B's). Exercises and group activities the aid, the wanted results, common problems and improve fun/variety were suggested and tried. Historic stroke techniques were updated, discussed and agreed to have been improved. The session was complemented by the use of a video camera. This highlighted the difference between "What we thought we were doing" and "What we were actually doing". It was very enlightening and extremely useful for pointers to work on.

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'EXPEDITION' AWARDS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ?

To be . . . or not to be . . . ?

GEOFF SANDERS REQUESTS YOUR ADVICE

NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 study at least 2 of 6 activities. OUTDOOR & ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES are one of the options - and thus canoeing can feature.

"Pupils should:

- a) be taught the effects of exercise, fitness training, nutrition and climatic conditions on the body through the activity(ies) undertaken;
- b) be taught more complex techniques and safety procedures appropriate to the activity(ies) undertaken, how to use the appropriate specialist equipment, clothing and materials and how to adapt their skills to different types of weather and terrain;
- c) be given the opportunity to plan, prepare and undertake safely a journey encompassing one or more activities in an unfamiliar environment; and
- d) be given opportunities to develop their own ideas by creating challenges for others."

Nearly 20 years ago the British Schools Canoeing Association introduced a series of **EXPEDITION AWARDS** in order to encourage young people in school and youth groups to undertake purposeful journeys by canoe after appropriate training had taken place and full preparations had been made. It was felt that touring by water represents the 'basic' appeal of the canoe and that with careful . . . **TRAINING + PLANNING** excellent opportunities are provided for . . . **DISCOVERY + ADVENTURE**

There were to be three essential parts to each of the Awards:

1. **Attainment of Necessary Canoeing Skills** - to be measured by existing BCU tests, which were to be gained before the Award expeditions took place. (See requirement 'b' above)
2. **Preparations** - (See requirements 'a' and 'c' above)
Planning of journeys with reference to guides, maps and access position.
Expeditions to have built-in purpose (eg compiling a detailed itinerary, observations on geographical; biological or historical features, environmental considerations . . . thus providing good opportunities for cross-curricular work) in order to emphasise the exploratory nature of the journeys.
Importance of sound training: youngsters must be able to cope with conditions they encounter.
General preparations, eg provision and checking of equipment, reading up about journey, safety and leadership arrangements.
3. **The Expedition** and its recording (and opportunity for requirement 'd' above)

Three levels of award were established:

ADVENTURE AWARD (Bronze). The demands for this award were deliberately kept low, which might make it also suitable for those attending courses and for youngsters under 16. It was necessary to complete 20 journey hours (each logged journey to be at least one hour's duration) plus an expedition of at least 10 miles.

EXPLORER AWARD (Silver) may be taken as a first award - 40 journey hours (each at least 2 hours duration) on wider range of waters plus an overnight two day expedition of at least 20 miles.

VOYAGEUR AWARD (Gold) was intended for the experienced and proficient canoe traveller who already held the Explorer Award. The candidate was required to plan, prepare for and complete a five day canoe-camping expedition using at least three different camp sites and to submit a project undertaken on the journey, presented in the form of a pictorial and written account.

Log books were provided for the first two awards in which candidates recorded all journeys made and all qualifying tests taken. It was a requirement for all awards that at some stage of the expedition each candidate should act as a leader of the party when it was on the water.

So much for the bare bones of the Award scheme as it was devised. Although well received when first introduced it remains in name only at the present time! Hence the need for this consultation.

Is This An Appropriate Time To Amend And Resurrect?

Perhaps it would be helpful to schools and youngsters now that these is to be a P.E. National Curriculum. It could possibly enable useful partnerships to be forged between schools and local canoe clubs/local coaching panels. (Note that the concept of any British Canoe Youth Expedition Awards would be quite different to that of the BCU and Strand Touring Awards, where the completion of mileage is the sole criterion).

What Would Be The Appropriate Tests Of Canoeing Skills For The Different Awards?

The original requirements listed the BCU Elementary Canoeing Test or one star test for the Adventure Award, an appropriate Proficiency Test for the Explorer Award and an additional Proficiency Test or BCU Life Saving Test for the Voyageur Award.

A Curriculum Guide

British Canoe Youth are planning a mail shot to all schools in October of this year. This will mention the availability on request of a package 'BCY Education through Canoeing: A Curriculum Guide'. If we are to revise these awards we need to do so this summer so that they can form a part of the package.

We would very much welcome your thoughts on the matter and would be most grateful if you could drop a line, as soon as possible, please, to Geoff Sanders, 4 Barston Lane, Solihull, West Midlands. B91 2SS or you can try (!) and phone him on 021 705 2391.

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A debrief to conclude the session ended up as an open forum for debate, where specific problems and forthcoming events were contributed.

It was unanimously agreed that the evening was a large success and of great benefit to all who attended. South Notts is hoping to hold another skills update evening at the end of the summer. Why don't you, your club or LCO arrange a skills update session.

I feel the service we offer as instructors should be the best we can make it. Which means; open minded, up to date, safe, educational but most of all fun. A skills update session is a great way to achieve it.

COLETTE RAWLINSON, Nottingham

LONDON AND SOUTH EAST REGION

White Water Training - 7-8 August 1992

The event is open to any canoeist in the London and South East region. The weekend is structured to provide water levels that novices and experts can both enjoy. Experienced white water instructors are available for leading novice groups if required. You don't have to be a BCU member to take part. The weekend costs £10, which is greatly discounted on the normal price. There are rescue sessions and a fun inflatable race on Sunday. All in all, the weekend is fun for all the family, and not to be missed.

Entries to: Michael Wynne, 55 Mayford Road, Lordswood, Chatham, Kent ME5 8OZ.

Immersion and drowning

Immersion injuries and drowning are medical conditions which can affect any person who, deliberately or accidentally, goes into water. They account for most deaths in water and for many of those occurring soon after rescue.

Immersion injuries are due to the physical characteristics of water and its effects on the human body. The important characteristics of water are density, thermal capacity and thermal conductivity. These three govern how immersion affects our heart, circulation and metabolism.

We will start by removing the effects of heat loss from the equation and just consider the effects of water density. Suppose we are going to put a man into a swimming pool containing water at body temperature (37 degrees Centigrade). He will neither gain nor lose heat. Before entering the water much of his five litre blood volume will have collected in the veins in his legs as a result of gravity. Water's density is approximately the same as that of the swimmer's body. In water he is weightless and the hydrostatic effect of water around legs pushes the blood pooled in the veins back into the trunk - especially into the heart.

Hydrostatic pressure

The more blood the heart contains, the greater the cardiac output. Cardiac output is the volume of blood the heart pumps around the body; usually six litres per minute. Starling's law governs the relationship between heart volume and cardiac output.

This important relationship provides the reason for laying down people who have fainted or who are shocked and keeping their lower limbs horizontal.

This drains the blood from the veins in the legs and back to the heart, increasing cardiac output. Blood supply to vital organs such as the brain is thus improved.

The increase in the return of venous blood from the legs to the heart during immersion also causes the hydrostatic pressure inside the heart chambers and major blood vessels to increase. Effectively, there is now too much blood in circulation.

On land, about one litre of blood in the body was not being used - it just collected in the legs. When the swimmer is in the water this blood returns to the heart. The heart senses the surplus and gets rid of it in a way familiar to any swimmer - by increasing urine production by the kidneys. This process continues until cardiac output and pressures inside the circulation return to normal.

If the swimmer remains immersed in water for long enough to lose a large volume of urine, when removed from the water, total blood volume will be much lower than before immersion. On standing up, blood will again pool in the legs. Suddenly the blood volume in the heart will be reduced. Blood pressure and cardiac output will fall. Blood flow to vital organs including the brain and heart will also decrease.

The effects of immersion are increased still more if the water is cold. Of course all seas are colder than body temperature, but some are much colder. Water conducts heat 25 times more efficiently than air and can hold a thousand times more heat. Heat loss during immersion - without proper insulation - is therefore very rapid.

The body responds to heat loss by constricting blood vessels, diverting blood away from the limbs and back to the trunk. The constriction of veins in limbs exaggerates the effect of immersion on limb venous blood return and hence cardiac output, blood pressure and urine production.

Increased resistance

Cold also causes constriction of arteries, the blood vessels which carry blood away from the heart. When they are constricted the heart has to pump harder to overcome the increased resistance to flow.

As a result the heart needs a greater oxygen supply because it is doing more work. If the heart does not receive this oxygen it can fail or stop completely. This is why cardiac deaths and other heart problems are much more common in winter than in summer.

Now, both immersion and cold reduce the amount of blood in the limbs - particularly the legs - and increase the blood volume in the trunk. When the casualty is rescued, blood pools in the legs and causes blood pressure and cardiac output to fall below normal. In severe cases the result is shock which can be fatal.

This is the reason why during the Fastnet Race a few years ago so many sailors died. In fact, only those who went into the water died. All those who stayed on their damaged yachts survived.

by Dr Peter Willmshurst

Medical Adviser to the British Sub-Aqua Club

In some cases the casualties were alive in the water when the helicopter winchman reached them. They were able to talk and often to help get the harness on. However, as soon as they were lifted clear of the water, blood drained into their dangling legs.

Casualties went into chock, dying before they could be hauled into the helicopter. For this reason helicopters now winch people up in a harness in the horizontal position with their legs at the same level as the heart.

Post-immersion shock is responsible for many of the deaths that occur soon after rescue.

Other fatalities are said to be 'rewarming deaths' associated with hypothermia. However, it is not really clear whether there is any truth in the belief that rewarming deaths result from cold blood returning from the limbs to the core as the body warms up causing the heat to stop.

It seems to me more probable that low blood volume - when blood vessels dilate as warming occurs - is the culprit.

Rapid Heat Loss

Hypothermia is said to occur when body temperature falls below 35 degrees Centigrade. Its onset is very rapid in people immersed in water because of rapid heat loss.

If body core temperature falls sufficiently the heart will stop. But, in water, most people die long before this stage. As body temperature drops, co-ordination becomes impaired, making swimming difficult, and loss of consciousness follows. Drowning occurs before the body temperature has fallen significantly.

Cold can produce some other interesting effects on the heart's rhythm. Sometimes cold makes the heart beat dangerously fast, although slowing is more common. If someone jumps or falls into very cold water, nerve receptors in the skin detect the temperature change, causing the heart to slow.

If the cold shock is sufficiently great the heart may stop. This may only last a few seconds but the heart might not restart before the individual becomes unconscious; drowning usually follows.

This is a condition quite common among people who dive into glacial lakes in places like Switzerland or swimmers who fall into Arctic waters. It is called hydrocution and its effect on the heart can be similar to electrocution.

People can drown while wearing a life jacket. Good life jackets provide support, but most do not prevent waves washing over the head - especially at high wave frequencies.

In rough weather a casualty tends to pass through the wave rather than over it. Even conscious individuals have difficulty maintaining a breathing pattern which prevents water inhalation when the waves come at intervals of less than one every two or three seconds. In these circumstances breathing becomes tiring and exhaustion occurs.

Once a casualty inhales some water and starts to cough, it is difficult to protect the airway.

In 20-25 per cent of cases, the lungs of drowning victims contain little or no water. Laryngeal spasm leads to hypoxia and death.

The effects of drowning are very different to heart attacks which cause people to drop down in the street. In drowning, breathing usually ceases long before cardiac activity. In cardiac arrest, the primary problem is stoppage of the heart. In half of drowning or near drowning casualties, an electrical test of the heart (an electrocardiogram) shows reasonable electrical activity.

Resuscitation

In drowning it may be difficult to feel a pulse because of shock. Because the heart beats longer in drowning, the brain receives a blood supply for longer than in cardiac arrest. In addition, the brain of a drowning person is cooled rapidly (at a rate of about 1 deg.C/minute). To a large extent cooling protects the brain from the damage that occurs when its oxygen supply is cut off. As a result there are cases of victims of near-drowning who escaped brain damage after more than 40 minutes without air.

Signs of brain death also do not apply to hypothermic casualties. Therefore, when resuscitating a near-drowning victim, resuscitation should be attempted even if the casualty has been under water a long time.

You should not give up until the body temperature is back to normal. This means, if possible, do not give up hope of resuscitation until a doctor tells you it is useless to continue.

DOES THE COACHING SCHEME MATCH THE NEEDS OF TODAY'S CANOEISTS ?

asks Grant Scamell

Simon Dawson's recent articles on the structure of the Coaching scheme have recently opened up further the debate on what direction we need to take in future. Having studied his proposals re: white water instructors/coaches, I have to agree that they make a lot of sense. I would however, like to take this opportunity to analyse the present structure of the Coaching scheme and discuss how this matches the requirements of today's canoeist.

The present Coaching Scheme has evolved over the past thirty years and now provides a highly comprehensive range of courses catering for the flat water paddler up to the advanced white water paddler. I therefore see no problem with the variety of courses that the present system offers. I feel however, that although we have an abundance of good quality Instructors and Senior Instructors catering from the beginner to intermediate level paddler, we do lack paddlers who are "qualified" to run and assess advanced white water courses. At present, in order to assess Five Star and Advanced Proficiency Tests it is necessary to be a BCU Coach. If we analyse the 'Road to Coach' under the present Coaching Scheme, the following courses need to be attended and attained.

BCU 3 star course pre-requisite to Instructor Training
Instructor Training weekend
Canoe Safety Test
Instructor Assessment
Proficiency
Senior Instructor Training weekend
Rescue Test
Senior Instructor Assessment

To obtain E1 status:

2 x Proficiency courses
1 x Canoe Safety Test

To obtain E2 status:

1 x Instructor Training weekend
1 x Instructor Assessment
1 x Senior Instructors Training weekend
1 x Senior Instructor Assessment weekend

Pre requisites of Coach award:

Alternative Proficiency
Advanced Proficiency
Coach Training course
Coach assessment

The above represents the minimum number of courses a canoeist is likely to attend before gaining Coach status. For those of us involved in outdoor education on a professional basis this list does not seem too daunting, and explains why almost everybody attending the recent Coach courses has been involved directly in the outdoor education business. (Of the six canoeists who attended the Coach course I was on in October 1990, which included Simon Dawson, five were directly involved in outdoor education).

Looking at this structure and reflecting on Simon Dawson's observations on different canoeing personalities, it is easy to see that we are very unlikely to be able to encourage more canoeists to reach Coach status unless they are involved in canoeing in more than just a recreational way. This in effect means that we are at present not benefiting from the wealth of skill and experience of our competition and expedition type paddlers.

How can we therefore structure our Coaching Scheme to encourage the competition slalomist/WWR/expedition paddler to join the Coaching Scheme and develop the necessary teaching skills to become a 'Coach', and what would be the pre-requisites of such a system?

I feel one of the fundamental problems with the present system is that it uses a building-block approach to further advancement. Does however, a Coach need to have first been an Instructor, a Senior Instructor and an Examiner?

What abilities does a coach really need ?

In order to answer this we need to look at the way a Coach interacts with those he is teaching, compared to the way an Instructor/Senior Instructor interacts with their group.

A Coach by definition tends to work with very small groups of canoeists in higher grade water, and would usually be teaching fairly advanced paddlers. The emphasis therefore is likely to be not on introducing new skills, but on refining existing skills. He would probably base his coaching on a cycle of 'observation - analysis - goal setting - trials observation and analysis - feed back - revised goals'. Because his group is much smaller he has more time to work on an individual basis and take a more holistic approach to his coaching and may well use such techniques as the 'inner game'.

An Instructor/Senior Instructor however, is more likely to be introducing canoeists to new skills, as well as re-enforcing skills previously learnt. He is therefore more likely to use an 'IDEAS' style of teaching. He will also probably be working with larger groups and therefore does not have the time to adopt a 'holistic' approach to his instructing.

It is quite probable that an Instructor/Senior Instructor may when operating with limited numbers, be in a position to offer 'coaching'. A Coach, however, when working at Advanced Proficiency/Five Star standard can only 'coach', since both the environment and the quality of the candidates requires such an approach.

If we therefore accept that coaching skills are different from instructing skills would it be possible to set up a coaching structure that allows experienced paddlers to specialise in white water coaching only, or would their lack of experience in teaching the basics fundamentally effect their ability to teach more advanced canoeing.

Before I joined the Coaching Scheme in April 1984, I used to be a keen slalomist and white water paddler. I also did a little slalom coaching and was fortunate enough to coach several canoeists who managed to get into the Premier Division (K1 Men). I will admit I knew nothing about breaking down basic strokes, but I did know something about good slalom technique. And this is really my point. Teaching white water canoeing is much more about reading the river, boat position, timing and linking strokes than it is about breaking down basic strokes. I would therefore suggest that it is quite possible to set up a coaching scheme that allows for experienced paddlers to specialise in white water coaching.

I would therefore like to put forward the following structure for discussion:

Award	Pre-requisites	Can Assess
Instructor Training	3 Star	Nil
Instructor Assessment	TI, Canoeing Safety Test, 1st Aid Cert	1 & 2 Star
SI Training	Instructor, Proficiency	As above
SI Assessment	SI Training, Rescue Test, 1st Aid Cert	1,2,3 Star, Proficiency, Canoeing Safety Test
White Water Instructor	Advanced Proficiency/4 Star/Rescue Test/ 1st Aid Cert/White Water coaching weekend	4 Star Award
White Water Coach	White Water Instructor/5 Star Attended advanced Prof & 5 Star courses/ Be recommended by 2 WW Coaches	5 Star/ Advanced Proficiency

Up to SI Assessment the only difference between this and the present system is that no relaxation would be allowed regarding the requirement to be an Instructor before becoming a Trainee SI. This would free course organisers to concentrate at TSI on the 'difference' between an Instructor and a Senior Instructor, ie emphasis on white water canoeing and the teaching of Three Star, Proficiency and Canoeing Safety Test skills. The assessment itself would include a thorough assessment of a candidate's ability to teach at Proficiency level and run canoeing Safety Test courses.

Once the award had been gained, the SI would be able to immediately assess the Proficiency and Canoeing Safety Test. It would therefore be equivalent to the present SI E1 status.

The above system simplifies the existing scheme, allows for better use of time on the TSI weekend, and provides a facility for experienced paddlers to join the Coaching Scheme and specialise in white water coaching.

It is similar enough to the old system to allow the present range of qualifications to be matched against it: A SI with an Advanced Proficiency would be a White Water Instructor under the new system, and a BCU Coach would be equivalent to a White Water Coach.

What about Examiner gradings ?

So far we have only talked about the coaching qualifications. How would we set up the examiner grading system? I feel one of the areas that the present system is weak on is the examiner grading system.

Award	Pre-Requisites	Can Assess
Examiner Grade A.	Instructor/Senior Instructor/Attend an examiners' training course *S/it in on courses until recommended by two Grade A examiners.	Instructors/SIs
Examiner Grade B.	WW Coach, sit in on WWI & WW Coach until recommended by two Grade B examiners/ Have attended an examiners' training course.	WWI/WW Coach

Again this is similar to the existing system except the present E1 and E3 grades have been built into the coaching awards themselves. The Grade A examiner is therefore equivalent to the existing E2, and the Grade B examiner is equivalent to the present E4 examiner.

The examiners' training course could be run by experienced Grade A or Grade B examiners (E's under the present system) since the topics covered would be generic to both awards: Course, administration, planning and programming, teaching and leadership analysis, and briefing and debriefing skills.

Although it is necessary to have attended an examiners' training course to become a Grade B examiner, it would not be necessary to be Grade A examiner first. If however, someone wished to assess at both I/SI and WWI/WW Coach level, they would need to hold both examiner grades.

What I have tried to develop is a system which meets the needs of canoeing today, and which hopefully encourages competition and expedition paddlers into the Coaching Scheme. I have explained in some detail why I feel it is possible to structure a Coaching Scheme which operates by level, rather than a step by step approach. I would like to thank Simon for his contributions to the debate and look forward to receiving some feedback on the above from all you avid CoDe readers.

DofC comments: We are grateful to Grant and to all who take the time and trouble to consider and comment, and his article was fed into the Working Party's deliberations. Could I make a couple of observations, however.

Simplification. I am not clear as to how the introduction of an additional level of qualification, *simplifies* matters. Particularly as there would surely be confusion as to how the white water on which a Senior Instructor operates, differs from that of the White Water Instructor.

At present the experienced white water paddler, with reasonable informal coaching experience, is accepted directly into the Scheme at Senior Instructor training level.

It is easy to make something look simpler if you ignore the other sectors of the sport - sea canoeing, placid water, surf, and canoe !

We will have to address the issue of formally training examiners when we consider the requirements for recognition by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications, and we needed to do so, anyway. However, under Grant's system we have Instructors as well as Senior Instructors assessing Instructors. Examiners have to attend a course and then still have to serve an 'apprenticeship' system and be recommended, which is the present requirement.

MINI OLYMPICS

Canoeing will feature for the first time in the Mini Olympics (the UK based games for people who are disabled) to be held in Hull from Tuesday 8 - Thursday 10 September. Full details (large sae please) from J F J Thomas, 23 Mansfields, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3NH.

... ANOTHER REMINDER

FEES FOR 1992

INSTRUCTOR TRAINING/ASSESSMENT, SI TRAINING: £7.00

Please note also that a REGISTRATION FEE is payable for the first INSTRUCTOR TRAINING COURSE and the first SENIOR INSTRUCTOR TRAINING COURSE . No fee is payable for a second course at the same level in a different discipline.

SENIOR INSTRUCTOR ASSESSMENT - £10.

Please remember: STAR TESTS, PW TESTS are **£2.50.**

(for bulk rates see p91-92 of your *BCU Members' Yearbook*).

CANOEING SAFETY TEST: £2.00 certificate, £2.00 badge.

PROFICIENCY TESTS: Members £5; non-members £7.

RESCUE TEST / RESUSCITATION TEST: Members £3.50; non-members £5.

SUPERVISOR, PW TEACHER (non members): £6 (1 year); £18 (3 years).

Log Books: £1.50 members; £2.00 non-members.

Please remember - all prices are shown on p91-92 of your BCU Members' Yearbook.

1992 PADDLERS CONFERENCE

Incorporating the BCU National Coaching Conference

Friday 30 October - Sunday 1 November

Based at Lakeside - on the shores of Windermere

FAMILY FRIENDLY - CHOICE OF ACCOMMODATION

costing from £15

Whitewater tours (grades I-III) - Canoe Orienteering - Night paddling (overnight !) - Lake Tours - Open Canoe Workshops: sailing, catamarans, poling, slalom, kites; Mini-marathon / time trials; Sea trips; Voyageur 24' Canoe Racing; Illustrated talks; Conference dinner; Coaching Scheme agm.

Licensed bar; Family / children's non-Conference activities :obstacle course, zip wire, rock climbing, abseiling, archery

Send sae to Keith Morris, Lakeside YMCA, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 8BD for full information.

ASSESSORS FOR DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD

Assessors for Duke of Edinburgh Award Expeditions need to register, or risk losing their status. Please send outline of your involvement, together with sae, for registration, to Stuart Briggs, Arnwood, 213 Newton Rd, Burton on Trent, Staffs.

NEW NATIONAL COACH FOR PLACID WATER

Richard Ward has taken over from David Train as the National Coach for Placid Water Canoeing. Richard is concentrating on updating resource material for Trainer and Coach courses, as well as seeking to rejuvenate enthusiasm for the Placid Water teaching progression, following a Conference of Regional delegates earlier in the year.

RACING COACH

A course for those wishing to obtain the Racing Coach qualification is to be held at Nottingham Kayak Club from 10-11 October 1992. Sae for details from George Oliver, 10 Wordsworth Rd, West Bridgford, Notts.

NATIONAL COACHING FOUNDATION

For information on courses for coaches (note small 'c') please call the Hotline from 1300-1700 Monday to Friday on **0800 590381** or send sae to NCF, 4 College Close, Beckett Park, Leeds LS6 3QH.