

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 DATE

BCU COMPETITION COACHES' CONFERENCE

6-7 February 1993

Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham

Saturday

CHILDREN ARE NOT SMALL ADULTS?

Leading national experts will discuss:

The Physiological differences

Are they ready to compete?

A coaching parent's view

Creating the opportunities - the Champion Coaching Project

There will be opportunities for each discipline to consider

its development plan for youngsters,

and the coaches' contribution to it.

Sunday

AT THE SHARP END

Creating an environment where excellence can flourish

Working together

Evaluating Physiological Testing Data

All registered Competition Trainers or Coaches will be sent a booking form shortly. Others please send sae to BCU office

PRICES FOR 1993

Please note that the following prices apply from 1 January 1993:

STAR TESTS, SURF TESTS AND PLACID WATER TESTS

The 3-Star Test only will cost an additional £1 for **non-members**.

Otherwise, the price of Star Tests remain the same as for 1992, ie:

£2.50 (includes badge and certificate). Please see *Yearbook* for details of bulk purchase discount rates.

PROFICIENCY and ADVANCED PROFICIENCY TESTS

Proficiency Test prices remain at £5 members, £7 non-members.

LIFE SAVING TESTS

The Canoeing Safety Test remains at £2 Certificate, £2 Badge.

The Rescue Test and Resuscitation Test remains at £3.50 members, £5 non members.

REGISTRATION FEES

Registration fees remain the same at £7 Trainee Instructor, Instructor and Trainee Senior Instructor, and £10 for Senior Instructor Assessment.

Supervisors and Placid Water Teachers either join as Comprehensive members, or pay a registration fee of £6 for one year (renewable annually) or £18 for three years.

COURSES FOR QUALIFICATIONS

All courses leading to coaching qualifications - Supervisor, PW Teacher, TI, Instructor, SI Training/Assessment, Coach, and Competition awards - whether 'open' or 'closed' **must** be approved in advance by the organiser's RCO and agreed by the RCO of the region in which the course is to be staged, if this is different. Please send to BCU office for guidance notes.

THE INSTRUCTORS DAY AT PORTSMOUTH

by Dave Rawlinson

On the 11th October the Portsmouth and District Canoe Club (PDCC) hosted its second Instructors Day. The aim of this event was to provide a forum for TI's, Instructors and Trainee SI's to meet, chat and exchange ideas. The BCU's revalidation scheme for E2' and above means that they are well catered for. But we, at the PDCC, feel that there is a need for those Instructors below Examiner Grade 2 to be able to meet, swap ideas and share problems. This has been the primary aim of these Instructors Days.

This year's meeting followed the same format as the first one. In the morning there was a dry session with several guest speakers who spoke on topics relevant to this level of Instructor. In the afternoon we donned our canoeing gear and headed for Langstone Harbour.

The guest speakers were John Smith, Deputy Director of Woodmill Outdoor Pursuits Centre, and Mark Carter and Simon Blake of the BCU Lifeguards. Mark is the Chairman and Simon is the Assistant National Training Officer.

John's talk was entitled 'Coaching is fun'. It is important that all those involved in instructing and coaching find enjoyment in this aspect of the sport because without this our instructing will lose its sparkle and this will be transmitted to those we teach. John's advice is to follow the 'Three As'; Aims, Approach and Anticipation. It is essential that all those in teaching have personal AIMS which they can achieve while they are teaching. These aims may be the attainment of further coaching qualifications, such as the RLSS Award of Merit or developing the skills to teach disabled people. Whatever we choose, we should all be aiming for some goal to give us the personal satisfaction of achievement.

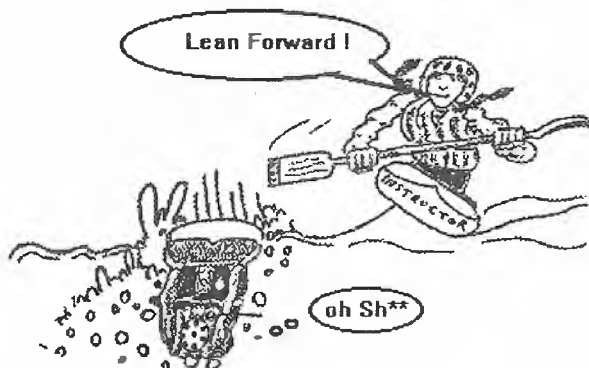
The second 'A' is our **APPROACH** to those we are teaching. We need to be sympathetic to those we teach, to work with them to bring the best out of them. This requires a flexible approach to the group, an approach which is able to change to adopt new ideas and to adapt the approach to meet the personality of the group.

The third 'A' is the ability to **ANTICIPATE** hazards. Coaching is only fun if it is safe so we need to think ahead, anticipate problems and ensure that we match our skills, and those of the group, with the environment in which we are teaching. Canoeing can never be 100% safe, but anticipation can reduce risks to the minimum. John also advised us to be honest with ourselves when things do go wrong because of the failure to follow the third 'A'. The Instructor/Coach must learn to be self critical and must also seek out criticism from other instructors.

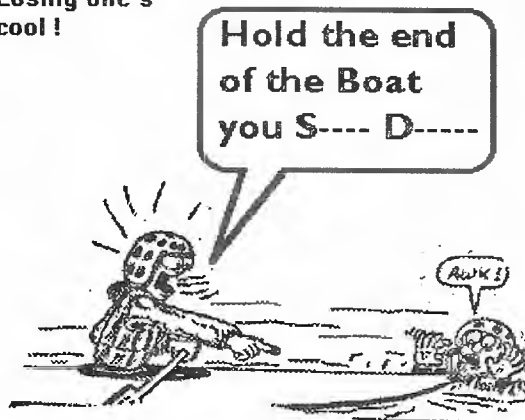
John will be the first to admit that there was nothing fundamentally new in his talk. But we are all apt to forget these basic rules and we need to have them continually drawn to our attention to ensure our interest in, and approach to, instructing is safe, sympathetic and, above all, FUN. In conclusion John illustrated some of the commonest mistakes that instructors make when being assessed at Woodmill. These included:

- not setting reasonable limits to the area in which the group practices
- trying to observe, analyse and correct strokes when the Instructor is on the wrong side of the pupil

Trying to Communicate with the Submerged



Losing one's cool!



- explanations which bear no resemblance to the demonstrations
- trying to communicate with the submerged!
- losing one's cool with the pupils

How many of us, even those qualified as instructors, are apt to make these mistakes when teaching?

Simon began the second talk by explaining the aims of the newly constituted BCU Lifeguards. As a specialist committee of the BCU, it is responsible for the management and administration of the canoe rescue services. This responsibility extends throughout the UK and the Lifeguards have links with kindred groups in Europe and the Far East. As a group in its own right, the Lifeguards are developing water rescue techniques and liaising with the other rescue services and allied organisations. One of its recent projects has been the development of a specialist Lifeguard buoyancy aid with Crewsaver. This is available to suitably qualified canoeists through the Lifeguards.

Simon then showed us what he carries in his Lifeguard buoyancy aid. The list was formidable and prompted the question of whether or not the aid would keep him afloat. He reassured us that this buoyancy aid was designed with extra buoyancy to ensure it met the required standards when loaded.

Mark then took over to discuss the controversial issue of awards and lifeguard training. This provoked much lively debate on the needs to revalidate and the difficulty some instructors have in finding the time to attend revalidation courses every few years. The idea of 'top up' courses and a modular form of instructor training received much interest. Mark was keen to stress that all the lifesaving/first aid courses are undergoing fundamental changes and courses specific to canoeing must be designed to fit in with these schemes. He also stressed that the Lifeguards were actively seeking opinions and feedback from the vast body of instructors so that the Lifeguards could present these opinions to the various authorities responsible for ratifying lifesaving first aid awards.

As with John's talk, Simon and Mark's presentation was warmly received and provoked much discussion which continued on through the lunch break.

The 'wet' session was held in Langstone Harbour, thanks to the Portsmouth Sailing and Outdoor Activities Centre, which allowed us full use of their facilities. We were split into three groups, each one run by an SI and two Instructors. A short practical session on rescues followed before we all rafted up to watch a simulated rescue involving the Coastguard helicopter. The wet session finished with each group carrying out an all-in rescue so that everyone received the obligatory ducking.

In total 39 instructors, of all grades, attended from a wide catchment area. All seemed to enjoy themselves and, most of all, they all felt that they had learnt something of value. Some old friends were re-united and some new friendships were formed. This, of course, was one of



the aims of the session. All this would not have happened without the very able assistance of John, Simon and Mark. Our thanks go to them all for giving up their time and energy to attend the meeting and to H.M.Coastguards and the Portsmouth Sailing and Outdoor Activities Centre for their assistance.

NOTICE BOARD

EXAMINER GRADING AND UPGRADING

Please remember that Senior Instructors seeking Examiner status, or upgrading from E1 to E2 must now send for an Examiners' Log (free) from the BCU office - see please.

The Log is self explanatory regarding the experience and procedures necessary.

Examiners who are E2 in one discipline and who become a Senior Instructor and wish to become E2 in another discipline, must satisfactorily assist on at least one Senior Instructor training course, and one Senior Instructor assessment to the required standard, in the new discipline, and be endorsed by the E2 concerned.

All the requirements and procedures are spelled out in the Log Book.

WILTSHIRE COACHING PANEL

The next meeting of the Wiltshire Coaching Panel will take place on 19 January 1993 at Potters Wick. Details from Doug Manning, 371 Ferndale Road, Swindon, Wilts SN2 1DE.

SEA KAYAKING LEADERSHIP and EXPEDITION SKILLS

Lester Matthews is running a series of evening classes from 7-9 pm, commencing Wednesday 6 January, in Birmingham, leading to expeditions in the summer at Anglesey Sea and Surf Centre. Details from Lester Matthews on 021 235 2407.

WANTED:

CANADIAN CANOEISTS

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Adventure Group organises activity holidays for people with visual impairment. In 1993 the Adventure is planning Canadian Canoe touring holidays for the first time. These holidays can only be run successfully if there are an equal number of sighted and visually impaired people. To run them safely we need sighted people with previous experience of Canadian Canoe touring. Two holidays are planned one on the canals in Northern England and one on a Grade I river in France.

If you are able to assist, or would like to know more please contact Guide Dogs Adventure Group, Hillfields, Burghfield, Reading RG7 3YG (0734 835555).

NEW PRICE FOR LOG BOOKS

Please note that Coaching Log Books are now £2 members, and £3 non-members.

SERVICES EQUIVALENTS

A number of enquiries have arisen concerning the recognition by the BCU of Services qualifications. The following applies:

ACU Instructor

The ACU Instructor is accepted as an alternative to the 3 Star Test and/or Proficiency for entry to Instructor training or Senior Instructor Training.

For exemption from the BCU Instructor award the ACU Instructor must apply in advance of the course to the Director of Coaching, supplying a log of relevant white water paddling and teaching experience, ask for any member seeking such an exemption. A current E2 examiner may be asked to make a recommendation.

Joint Services Instructor

The Joint Services Instructor is accepted as an alternative to BCU Instructor. On supplying a copy of the certificate, and paying a membership fee, the holder will be furnished with a BCU Instructor certificate.

The candidate is then eligible for direct entry to Senior Instructor training.

Exemption from Senior Instructor training is only available as detailed above.

Twy-Y-Felin Outdoor Centre

BCU Qualified Instructors required for 1993. Experienced in teaching both adults and children. Aged 25+ Clean driving licence. Good rates of pay.

Also required: Experienced and enthusiastic assistant instructors.

Contact:

Twy-Y-Felin
St Davids
Pembrokeshire
Dyfed
SA62 6QS

Tel: 0437 720391 Fax: 0437 721 838

Dear CoDe

Dear CoDe

With regards to David Wheatleys letter in October's edition.

It saddens me to see that once again we as a 'Union' are losing a member from our coaching team.

Everyone in the BCU has an important role to play, from the management and office staff who organise our day to day affairs, to the competition paddler who puts our sport on the map.

Once a novice is motivated by whatever reasons to take part, he or she would normally go through a training schedule with a member from coaching and in some cases may even go on to represent our country. By losing Davids membership and more importantly a member from coaching we are putting strain at the very root of our sport which in the long run effects us all, including the people in the BCU who get a salary.

I believe that if a job is to be done well then there needs to be some kind of incentive at the end of it. Incentives come in all shapes and forms but as this problem is a financial one then the incentive should also be financial. (Can I ask those of you who work what your incentive is at the end of the week).

If the BCU for instance said we will give a 5-10% discount for every member of coaching who introduces a novice to the BCU then not only would membership increase but the fall out rate of members from coaching would decrease.

Have a good long think about it because my membership, like thousands of others, is up for renewal. It makes sound business sense.

RALPH CALVERT, Tyne and Wear

DofC comments: The suggestion made by Ralph Calverton has merit. The unknown quantity is how many of those who would have joined anyway would be 'claimed' by an instructor, who would then receive the discount.

If we assume that a credit of £1.50 would be reasonable, and that Coaching Scheme members introduce about 2,000 new members per year anyway (that is a 'guesstimate') then we would be £3,500 short on budgeted membership income in the current year.

Allowing a margin of £15.50 from the comprehensive fee against the direct cost of servicing a member, the 'incentive' would need to lead to the recruitment of an additional 225 members just to break even - an increase of 11.3% - which is three times the growth rate of membership during the 1991-92 financial year.

This does not rule the idea out as a possibility, however, and the assumptions above are probably a 'worst case scenario'. The suggestion will be put forward for further consideration.

At a recent coaching panel meeting I was challenged with the view that if the membership fee was less for Instructors, more would join, and the BCU would be better off. The Basic membership fee was suggested as reasonable for this purpose.

Firstly, please remember that it is not the office staff who make the rules, it is the elected representatives, and the rule concerning the requirement for membership is long standing. An explanation of the principles involved was carried in the last issue of CoDe.

However, let's analyse the above suggestion. At present, some 4,000 members are Trainee Instructors or Instructors. The difference between the Comprehensive and Basic fee is £10. There would therefore be a shortfall in membership income during this current year of £40,000 if this suggestion was implemented.

To replace this income with additional trainees paying a basic membership fee would require the recruitment of an additional 7,619 members just to break even (allowing for the direct costs of servicing a member).

Unless we could guarantee that at least a further 7,619 trainees would enter the Scheme over and above the normal yearly average of 1,500, therefore, the Union would be worse off than even it is now. As stated previously, we are short of revenue in every area to fund potential development.

Furthermore, additional members require additional servicing, and the demand created by a further 7,619 instructors, whilst being very welcome, would push us over the limit for the capacity of the present staffing levels. If it required additional staff to cope with the demand, then even more members would need to be attracted in just to pay for it, without improving the financial situation.

The Union would be no further forward, therefore, apart from being numerically stronger, unless an increase of at least 600% could be guaranteed by the change. Is there a business person out there who would recommend the taking of such a risk?

Dear CoDe

Why are American Canoeing magazines better than ours? May I suggest:

- 1 Americans are much better at promoting themselves
- 2 American Canoeing Magazines PAY for ARTICLES - not a lot - but sufficient to encourage quality articles. Quality articles equal a better magazine = more readers - more members.

Canoeists are all very active people with wide interests and they do need an incentive to sit down and write an article - rather than doing other things.

As the saying goes: "You don't get owt for nowt"

Good paddling (and writing)

PETE KNOWLES (White Water Nepal)

Dear Code,

I was prompted into action on reading the latest copy of CoDe to take out professional indemnity through the SCA - with Perkins Slade. This was just in the nick of time - on making enquiries with Perkins Slade I discovered that I had just two days to get my premium paid at the 'old' rate of £7.50. Had I missed the end of October deadline I would have been facing a premium hiked-up to £40.00 per annum! In all probability I would not have bothered - and would have continued to operate without the benefit of insurance cover - this may well be an option when the premium comes up for renewal.

I am mainly involved in recreational and sea paddling and fulfil an instructional role in our recently formed club - Stromness Kayak Club. I teach on a voluntary basis, in fact its worse than that - it even costs me to teach - SCA Membership, Club membership, petrol, time etc etc ..., and now insurance.

I am an RYA Senior Instructor also, and find it interesting to compare the two organisations on occasions - I am afraid that the RYA does a bit better than the BCU/SCA in many cases - ie membership rates and no necessity to be an RYA member to be a member of the coaching scheme. For instance, allocation of booklets and goods as a 'freebie' part of membership - currently equivalent to a £6.50 rebate on membership of £12.00 per annum; instructor indemnity at £10.00pa - admittedly more than the 'old' rate but significantly better than the 'new' rate.

Can I suggest that the BCU/SCA mount an aggressive campaign amongst the coaching fraternity to make them aware of the benefits and existence of a professional indemnity cover scheme and that the Union work with Perkins Slade - or who ever - and reinstate the membership indemnity scheme as a matter of some priority.

Sometimes people need to be helped to help themselves, with a good prod and a reasonable premium many more members of the coaching scheme may see the value of the indemnity scheme and be persuaded to join. May I suggest a future article running to 21/3 pages - 'Zen and the benefits of professional indemnity insurance?'

DAVE HOLDEN, Orkney

Editorial note: Unfortunately only 60+ members opted for the additional 'porofessional' indemnity. This is obviously not commercially viable for the insurers. Cover is still available through the National Coaching Foundation, however - see p6 of last CoDe - for £5 pa. Send name and £5 to BCU office.

Remember, your membership fee provides £2 million third party indemnity if you are instructing as a 'volunteer'. Additional insurance is only necessary if you are receiving 'income' (not just direct expenses) and are not protected by an employer's insurance.

KAYAK/CAMPING EXPEDITION STYLE

by Paul Howells

The best kayaking to be enjoyed is away from all civilization. The challenges are greater and the rewards higher when you consider the wild life and the countryside. The risks can also be greater - injury response time, health, food, equipment failure, weather, terrain etc./ All these factors call me to kayak remote rivers.

The skills of expedition kayaking can be broken down into a number of separate areas - kayaking technique, awareness, self preservation and skills in common with light-weight camping. An expedition kayaker will be more cautious about running into a big hole or long rapid, when the walk out is 100 miles, than it would be when it was only 100 yards. Losing a boat is obviously a bad thing close to the road - but if it happens 100 miles away, the despair of standing around cold and wet in the only belongings you have would be tremendous.

Preparation in all respects is the key ingredient, it is really interesting and amusing to observe other peoples' interpretation of light-weight tripping - struggling to pack kit into a kayak with not enough space, hoping that others will have enough room to carry the excess. If you are part of a supported trip with rafts or porters then excess equipment is not such a huge problem. Obviously unsupported you carry what you require. Logistics is one of the main factors that can ruin a trip, it is preferable to organise a small number of kayakers with whom you have paddled before, each responsible for personal gear but including some central planning to organise first aid, repair kit and food.

Based on these factors I will concentrate on the equipment and clothing required for kayak expedition in a cold climate using some of my personal experiences.

KAYAK - The size of the kayak is the first problem to evaluate

- 1) length and volume
- 2) shape and construction.

These can only be considered when you have knowledge of the type of water being paddled and how much equipment is required between the team.

A large problem faced by the kayaker is to carry his gear correctly packed to eliminate the possibility of getting it wet or worst still losing it and of course packed in such a way that items required often are easily accessible (usually just behind the seat). The modern Dry Bag is very reliable being tough and versatile being able to be utilised as a water carrier or pillow. Awareness of sharp objects inside and outside the Bag will ensure nothing is damaged or punctured.

CLOTHING - The clothing necessary will depend on the season and climate. You should cater for the worst conditions that can be reasonably expected. Which would you prefer - the joy of dry warm clothes or the misery of cold wet ones? Using my own experiences I found that Wet Suits are cold and uncomfortable but do offer protection in the event of a swim - Drysuits were tops for until Gortex Salopettes and Dry Cags were available. Wearing a Drysuit causes perspiration and overheating whereas Gortex Salopettes and Dry Cags offer a combination for all seasons being very comfortable, flexible for paddling, does not cause perspiration and you can even wear them at home.

The thermal underlayers are warm (even when wet) light and dry, these pile suits can be added to by thinner thermals depending on conditions. The pile suits enable you to warm up very quickly and also provides protection when swimming. Pile Socks or Neoprene Socks worn in walking boots offer a good combination, saving weight and bulk when walking into the river and paddling out. Lycra shorts can be worn on the river and dry quickly for wearing off the river. The idea being to wear as much as possible walking to the head of the river that you can use paddling out.

BANK CLOTHING - Lightweight trainers or sandals, pile socks, pile suit that you are able to sleep in, lycra shorts from paddling gear, good jacket and thermal 'T' shirt. If water proofs are necessary use your paddling kit. A warm hat is a good comfort and heat retainer especially at night. Two sets of clothing would be more than adequate with forward planning.

WASHING KIT - Concentrated soap and toothpaste, Pertex towels - one face, one bath (only taking up the space of a face cloth), razor although personally I do not bother when away. I consider that washing hands before preparing/eating food etc much more beneficial for keeping healthy and fit. All the washing kit could be packed into a soap container and kept with daily essentials.

SLEEPING EQUIPMENT - Sleeping Bags need to be lightweight and easily compressed. The decision being 'down or synthetic' the first being small to pack and offering more insulation for weight, but difficult to dry or clean and totally useless when wet. Personally I would not want to sleep in a wet bag no matter what it was made of. Having said this it is possible to keep a bag dry.

Sleep Mats - the mini cell mats are light and make good sit mats, also can be packed in the kayak acting as a back restraint. The self inflating mats are far less bulky, having superb insulation and comfort but do not like sharp stones and sparks from fires.

TENT OR BIVI - Tents offer you the freedom, comfort and privacy for a good nights rest, but they are heavier and bulky compared to the Gortex Bivi Bag. Tents are also more difficult to erect on small beaches etc. I now use a Gortex Bivi Bag in combination with a tarpaulin. They both roll small, are light and can be stuffed anywhere. The disadvantage being the bag on its own can be restrictive and uncomfortable in heavy rain or snow, with the bag just over your face - this is where the tarpaulin comes in as a shelter to break the bad weather.

COOKING EQUIPMENT - The amount and type of cooking equipment taken will depend on the nature of the trip, type of food to be cooked and quantity of people. Lets take an example of 4-6 people, 3 pots including lids will normally suffice with the lids being utilised as plates or a frying pan. Each person normally carries a spoon/cup/bowl. It is better to carry all the pots in one bag so as not to dirty the other kit in the boat.

A stove is a necessity on most kayak trips unless on a true wilderness trip when open fires are preferred, eliminating the need of carrying the fuel, the storing and purchasing of such fuel. (But I am sure you would really miss the stove when the only wood to be found is wet). There is a good old saying "Indians make small fire - keep warm, white man make big fire - keep warm getting wood". Open fires are very reliable being good for warmth and providing a convivial atmosphere. Using individual fires for heating each pit is more efficient than a fire large enough for all pots.

FOOD - Normally the heaviest and most bulky items to carry for a trip. Expedition cooking is far more simple today using the dehydrated and concentrated foods, which also enables you to carry enough food for a couple of weeks without too much sense of deprivation at meal times. (The odd can or two of meat or fish is a welcome addition). A typical days intake would be: Breakfast - porridge/muesli, tea. Lunch - Mars/Marathon/nuts and fruit. Dinner - Curry/goulash/tuna with rice/potatoes/del. with rice pudding, tea or chocolate.

The Royal Mars Bar is best - (its the last - and has to be cut into six to share around).

You should find out the staple diet in the country or area you are visiting, if there is a shortage or abundance of food this will alter the logistics by 50% largely affecting the food dumps. Also make sure you have enough food to see you through the trip with a couple of days to spare in case of unforeseen problems. The average human consumes an average 2lbs per day.

Water is probably the most important but normally in abundance if kayaking, just ensure that you sterilise properly either with steritabs, iodine or boiling for 20 minutes. A water bottle of 1 litre size will last a days paddling, with some lemon/orange flavouring makes a nice treat.

PERSONAL ITEMS - Head torch, book, diary, boiled sweets, candle, insect repellent, are all good items to take along to help while away the evening.

TEAM ITEMS TO BE SHARED - A good repair kit between 6 people is essential, personally it would contain a small more grip, screw-driver, spare bolts to suit boats used. Tape, epoxy resin, neoprene cement, evostick, para cord, cycle repair kit (for dry bags and seals). This can all be fitted into a small BDH container and kept in the full plate footrest.

A comprehensive First Aid Kit. Cooking utensils also to be shared.

Most paddlers like to carry a camera these days. I carry an SLR with a 28-70 lens in the boat with a water proof camera attached to my buoyancy aid.

In summary, all the equipment has to be fitted into your kayak, try to keep items in the very Bow and Stern, heavier items as near the centre of the boat as possible. It is important that the kayak is trimmed level bow to stern and left to right. You should be able to fit all items required in to four or five Dry Bags and weighing no more than 15Kgs. You should be able to survive with this for a 2 week self contained trip.

SWAMPED BY ABILITY? *by Ann Hart*

Kick yourselves if you thought you were not good enough to go to the Paddlers Conference. I have just returned from my first conference and full of enthusiasm am putting pen to paper to encourage you to go next time.

This year's conference was accommodated at the YMCA Outdoor Pursuits Centre fantastically situated on the shore of Lake Windermere. It was organised by their Water Sports Coordinator who is also the BCU Regional Coaching Officer.

Mike, Mike and I set off with mixed feelings on the last Friday of October. We joined the flow of traffic moving up the M6. We made the breakout at Junction 36, found an eating place and, suitably refreshed, made our way to Lakeside. There we were welcomed and shown around. We studied the lists of activities available over the weekend, drank coffee, watched videos and got to know a few people. My room mates all turned out to be more experienced paddlers than me, but were happy to encourage me and each other. Even the girl who had done a Grade VI in Italy was sympathetic to my tale of woe about being able to roll my kayak in a swimming pool but not on a river.

Saturday morning was absolutely glorious and over an excellent breakfast I watched the mist slowly rolling off the lake and the sleeping swans gradually uncurling their long necks from under their wings. Then I crept off for an illicit paddle in a 'borrowed' Canadian on the totally smooth and silent lake. As I glided into the bay there was a panorama of snow capped peaks and three hot air balloons slowly rising in the distance.

Back to the conference. We assembled, were welcomed, instructed that at conferences we were expected to confer and dispatched to our choices. I had opted for Basic White Water Rescue Techniques. Many had opted for Advanced White Water Rescue Techniques. We initially met together and our versatile Focus Editor, Kevin, who had drawn the leadership of that group, tried to talk his way out of it. The valid point was made that the key issue was SAFETY rather than rescue.

What followed could well be a key stage in my canoeing experience adding a reality to what so many of us know in our heads. We assembled at a simple white water location on the Brathay and discussed possible incidents that could occur if one was taking a group down. Then our leader set up an incident by lodging his kayak against a boulder and sat there with snow melt water pouring over him while we conferred about how we would rescue him. He kept smiling while we split into two groups, came up with ideas and then got back together again.

He was rescued and the scenario was repeated. I did afterwards wonder if he was warmer under the water in his dry suit than we were on the bank. Then after some throw bag 'dos and don'ts' it was back to the centre for lunch.

The afternoon was a real wrench. I was very tempted by the great variety of Canadian Canoes with some beautifully crafted paddles that had turned up and were available for us to try out. However I had opted for a Grade I-II river trip in a Kayak and felt it was vital to my Grade II-III trip on Sunday. I also wanted to paddle Rydal Water as we have a large painting of it at home. That was thwarted because as we were so slow getting away that we only did a short stretch of the Rothay starting below the lake. It was a pleasant, narrow, tree lined river with some lovely views. It didn't require much paddling and some good conversation was had. It finished by a small weir and as another group arrived at the same time even the more cautious of us were obliged to join in the game of how many can get on a wave at once, at once, or give that play spot a miss.

Inevitably I was late back and only heard the end of Geoff Good's address to the Coaching Scheme AGM. Anyway what I heard sounded and for some reason that escapes me it will in future be an Annual Conference of Delegates! Then someone called Jerry gave a very astute presentation on the proposed changes/modularisation of the requirements for the various types and level of Instructor within the Coaching Scheme. Allowance will be made for the diversity of the sport and magical NVQ's will be complied with. Good floor discussion followed and I just felt increasingly amazed at what volunteers do for us.

The conference dinner was an informal but excellent buffet and we were all free to be ourselves. After dinner there were two illustrated talks. One was sharing the Barcelona Olympic experience and that was followed by Circumnavigation of Wales by Carol (Canoe Focus, August). The licensed bar was well supported for what remained of the evening.

The next morning was bright and fair despite the weather forecast. It had rained all night and it was the first day of the end of the fishing season - that is the rivers were open. In Nottingham we have white water sites and lots of rivers and canals to paddle anytime but no white water rivers. I don't think I really had any notion of the scale of water these little streams could produce round a bend or under a tree. But I was aware that I couldn't be in better company to find out. I was paddling with the local access officer surrounded by people with every latest rescue skill at their disposal and with SAFETY the uppermost thought in their minds (thank you Kevin). There were beautiful stretches of river between the various drops and perhaps that or the company spared me the battle with the awful 'feeling' that descends on me in the car park at Holme Pierrepont (Yes, up to now I suffer there more before than after). This trip finished at a place called Spark Bridge. The drop seemed to be about the same as the total of the Holme Pierrepont course: it came in three stages and there was no access to inspect it. I don't think I would have gone down if I had seen it. Come to that I didn't see very much going down. If there was any space in the eddies at the bottom I missed them so I never even got to look up to the great heights from which the whole group descended safely. It left a buzz and a real sense of achievement.

Then back for lunch, closing speeches and a reminder of the need to get involved in the access campaign, particularly writing to or preferably seeing our MPs. Armed with confidence from the morning we set off for the afternoon paddle on a short stretch of the Leven that had access that day. It was to be another special occasion. There had been some promise of four and five star skills with this trip. The majority of the group, some for very valid reasons, decided they really wanted assessing at this level. They were left to perform at the first mega wave. The remaining four of us, once Chris had ascertained that we could follow his line, then had the glorious freedom of this amazing short stretch of river without our sense of attainment being swamped by contrast with the ability of others. We chose lines, descended various drops, avoided boulders and found eddies and made breakouts getting enjoyment and a real feel for the river. It was with great reluctance that with dusk approaching we left the water. However we were just in time to cadge a lift back to base for the last time.

To sum up, I would say brilliant water, brilliant weather and great people. There is so much to be learned just from paddling along side others; their attitudes, equipment, techniques and experience. I can't wait for next year's Paddlers Conference and in the meantime I feel encouraged to get on with my contribution to helping others learn about and enjoy canoeing.

TEACHING

by John Smith

During the times I have assisted on Instructor assessments I have noticed common errors in the candidates teaching techniques. I submit therefore a few observations concerning "teaching do's and don'ts" many of which occur constantly.

The session usually begins with a group of students being assigned to each candidate, who then give a pre-paddle chat lasting in duration from five minutes to nearly an hour! There is then a need to look at what information is both relevant and essential and then to give this information clearly and concisely to the group. Bearing in mind their single aim is to get on the water (*understandably).

For example. The following could be regarded as essential for a pre paddle chat.

(Assuming the boats, personal gear and swimming ability etc have all been checked).

- 1 The sitting position in the boat. (Demonstrate with a student)
- 2 The spraydeck, how and where it fits, the release strap (once reassuringly referred to as the "PANIC" strap!) and how it is removed.
- 3 The capsize drill: Upside down, lean forward, pull strap, swim to the nearest end of boat (with paddle if close) hold toggle.

A few minutes are then taken to look at the paddle, the grip and the wrist action. I once observed a ten minute "mid-wrist roll" lecture on the aerofoil qualities of a paddle blade. I don't think the session ever reached take off speed!!

This is usually followed by a short demonstration of how to enter the kayak often with 70% of the group in a position where they are neither able to hear or see. It is absolutely essential to get the attention of the whole group and have them positioned in a suitable place. During the next few chaotic minutes miraculously the group are afloat. In most cases a "limit" is set for the students to operate in and the instructor was first on the water.

The spraydecks (which have usually managed to become entangled and twisted as if on purpose!) are then fitted with release strap exposed. This is a period when many of the group are caught heading off into the distance, snaring themselves in bushes or already practising the capsize drill there is a real need for the instructor to have his forward and rear view eyes in full functioning mode! Once the group has been reassembled and the limits reaffirmed the instructor now begins to iron out some of the basic problems.

After a few minutes a call to "raft up" is given and sometime later after much advice and assistance has been offered (by almost everyone in the group) the instructor is now in a position to impart his/her knowledge. The students are usually less than attentive and the candidate has to muster every known ploy for keeping the interest level up. Below are listed some of the more common mistakes made during the teaching of a specific skill.

- 1 Explanations using complicated and confusing language.
- 2 A gross attack of verbal diarrhoea feeding in excessive information.
- 3 Over use of the four most common words in an instructors repertoire like "this" and "that", "here" and "there". (Sometimes the only four words in an instructors repertoire!)
- 4 Demonstrations which bear no resemblance to the explanation.
- 5 Demonstrations performed discreetly on the side of the kayak furthest away from the group.
- 6 An inability to project the voice/talking whilst facing the opposite direction to the group.
- 7 Performing "mystery moves" with the paddle which draw the attention of the group away from what is actually being said.
- 8 An inability to recall the fundamental points of each stroke in a clear and understandable language offered in some form of progression.
- 9 Not gathering the group together or placing/fixing the raft to/in a position where it won't constantly drift away whilst instruction is being given.

After a specific skill has been explained and demonstrated the instructor dismissed the group, simultaneously everybody is suddenly fired into action with a frenzied display of paddle movement that has everyone "bobbing and weaving" to avoid the paddle blades which move through the

air like a swarm of angry wasps. (Breaking off one at a time from the ends of the raft is at least one way of avoiding multiple head injuries)

Those who manage to escape without injury paddle furiously off as far away as possible in order to avoid any further physical pain. It's once again a rally sweaty job trying to round up the group when a well defined area to work in would have helped to prevent a mass escape!

The instructor now begins the arduous and difficult task of correcting the multitude of mistakes picked up during the initial stages of training. Again it would appear many of the instructors have bionic vision and are thus able to spot and correct faults on the side furthest away from them. Occasionally the merest hint of encouragement is given (usually whispered in case anybody may be listening). Sometimes the practices go well beyond the limit of endurance and interest, a handful of games that make the learning situation more enjoyable are always a welcomed break from a more formal approach.

During the practice one of the students manages a capsize, the instructor frantically rushes off toward the offending character screaming inaudible instructions. (I have observed instructors who even try to give information when the person is still under the water!) On reaching the capsized canoeist the instructor attempts to return the now very waterlogged and quite bewildered student into the boat. In the process the student is given charge of both sets of paddles and the arduous task of getting him/her into the boat begins, in the mean time however the rest of the group have started up a game of their own. This game usually involves trying to drown as many of the group as possible before the instructor, who by now, with his/her sole thoughts on the person in the water (who incidentally has let go of both sets of paddles!) realises what has happened. Finally order is restored.

A rescue situation above all other situations needs to be organised with clear and concise communication. First of all preventing the situation from getting worse by organising the rest of the group to raft up or to stop at a specific place. The rescue itself should take place quickly and efficiently using a well structured plan.

For example:

- 1 Patient holds end of upturned kayak (With paddle if within reach)
- 2 Transfer patient to bow of rescue boat. (Get eye contact with, and reassure the patient)
- 3 Patient holds bow of kayak over shoulder in order not to get a mouthful of boat in the event of a collision.
- 4 Instructor takes bow of upturned kayak and begins "x" rescue.
- 5 The boat is emptied, turned the right way up and placed into the water carefully without decapitating the patient.
Reassurance is given constantly.
- 6 The stern of the boat is then given to the patient who is then told to move up between the two boats hanging, over the paddle.
- 7 Supporting the body weight by leaning back into the water the patient lifts legs into the kayak followed by the rest of the body.
- 8 Help is given to replace the spraydeck.

At last a game is suggested in order to rekindle the spirits of a once enthusiastic bunch. Some rules are quickly thought up, a smile can now actually be detected on the faces of one or two of the group. The game begins and all is well for a while. However, after a few minutes several youngsters begin to act as though they have had an injection of barbiturates and begin to go completely O.T.T. Although games are fun there is even more need to clarify rules and limits and quickly curb over excitable behaviour which can easily lead to yet more fatalities. Of all the activities carried out in a session games certainly are potentially the most dangerous.

To expand briefly on our methods of teaching canoeing one has to say that although a well structured formal approach may work for some groups, for others a much more informal approach is required. Many would-be instructors are locked into a single way of doing things and appear unable or unwilling to realise that the ability to be flexible is of the utmost importance. It is also necessary to quickly assess both the ability and the maturity of the group and to then decide upon a teaching approach considering again the type of language, the concepts that are expected to be understood and the amount of information fed in at any one time. Obviously the ability to relate to and motivate many individuals in a variety of situations is vital. We must always take care to match the ability and experience of any group to the environment to which we are taking them.

Participating in the training and assessing of others, I am constantly reminded of the need to look at my own style of teaching with its strengths and weaknesses and to assess what is good practice and what is not.

COACH AND ATHLETE

['Coach and Athlete' is a clip-and-copy guide featuring information of value to both the coach and the sports performer. Permission to reproduce and circulate this guide is granted by the NCF for non-profit, educational purposes]

TYPES OF MUSCLE ACTION



All muscles act by contraction: that is, the muscle fibres contract in order to exert a force. However, this does not always mean that the muscle itself contracts or shortens overall – that depends on the load that the muscle is opposing.

Concentric contraction

In this type of contraction the muscle actively shortens and thickens: the two end attachments move closer together, causing the angle at the joint to decrease. For example, when performing the weight-training exercise known as the "curl", the bar is brought from the thigh position to the chest by flexing the elbow joint. The flexors of the elbow will shorten as they develop tension and move the bar. Muscles behaving in this way are said to be working concentrically.

Eccentric contraction

This is the opposite of concentric contraction. During an eccentric action the muscle lengthens as it develops tension. The points of attachment are drawn apart, while keeping a load under control. The flexors which contracted concentrically to raise the bar in the previous example, will be subject to eccentric contraction as they control the lowering of the bar from the chest back down to the thigh position.

Isometric contraction

Iso = same metric = length. When a muscle contracts isometrically, it develops tension, but there is no resulting movement, because the tension in the muscle exactly balances the opposing force. Such contraction is very common, and can be observed when an attempt is made to shift an immovable object. Isometric contractions can occur at certain stages of

sports such as wrestling when a wrestler is attempting to hold on and resist the opponent's move. An isometric contraction is often called a "static contraction". Quite often muscles which are working as stabilizers are operating isometrically.

Isokinetic contraction

Iso = same kinetic = motion. This is a term that has appeared as a result of the introduction of specialized weight-training apparatus. When a muscle group contracts and produces movement, it is found that the tension it develops as it moves through its full range is not constant. This is due to a combination of physiological and mechanical factors, and means that the muscle is only working at maximum force for a part of its range.

As overload is an essential component of muscle-strengthening work, exercises were sought which would make a muscle group work at maximum tension throughout its range, and a variety of devices have been contrived which automatically adjust the resistance so that there are no "easy parts" in an exercise. Isokinetic contraction over the full range of movement depends entirely upon this varying resistance, and never occurs naturally.

Range of movement

It is sometimes convenient to be able to refer to just part of a total range of movement. By convention the whole range of movement is divided into thirds: the inner, or fully contracted, range; the middle range; and the outer, or extended, range.

Analysis of muscular action

In coaching it is often useful to be able to analyse the muscle work used in the basic technique of a particular event.

By identifying the principal muscle groups that are involved, you will be in a better position to devise conditioning programmes specifically for that sport. Avoid making the process of analysis very detailed and complicated, as this is neither necessary nor appropriate. You only need to establish which major muscle groups are involved.

A systematic approach is helpful. First identify the major joint systems that are being used, and decide what movements are occurring – drawing simple stick figures can help. Having determined what the movements are, look in a table of muscles to see which are involved.

Usually the muscles are listed according to their location in the body, and information is given about their exact position and actions, so it should be fairly easy to identify those which are producing the movement. Remember that muscles work in groups to stabilize and neutralize unwanted secondary movements caused by the prime and assistant movers. Apart from conditioning the prime movers, it is also necessary to strengthen the other muscles which are actively involved in the group.



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