

Coaching Development

CoDe

the magazine of the BCU Coaching Service

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BCU Coaching Office
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THE AIM OF THE BCU COACHING SERVICE 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.

CoDe is the official organ of the BCU Coaching Service. 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 in February, April, June, August, October, December.

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Please send them to: BCU, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5AS.

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Use F.E.A.R. to improve your skills

Here in the northeast area of the States, the instructional season has come to an end. This has left me with time to analyze and criticize my coaching skills. What worked, I wonder? What moments do I wish to erase from my memory? What are other coaches doing that I might be able to incorporate into my skill set? In retrospect, I recall that there was one common tip which I offered my students. Regardless of their skill level, I would always encourage them to take what they learned from the instructional and "go paddle". I would tell them to practice the new skills and ideally, to practice them with another person who could provide feedback. And of course, I would emphasize that the aim should not just be to practice, but to practice the proper technique. Feedback from an observer can be critical. Even if that person is a non-paddler, he/she can simply state what is observed.

In anticipation of the new season of students, I wondered if there was a way I could make this notion more tangible. After some contemplation, I decided that I should emphasize that BCU offers a basic foundation, with its roots in efficiency. Each student must take this knowledge and develop an individual stroke of their own. This is a process that never ends and is continually being refined to achieve proficiency. Next, I devised an acronym, as a tool that the students could walk away with and use when practicing on their own. The acronym I came up with is F.E.A.R.

F: Focus on a particular element of a task/skill

E: Experiment

A: Analyze

R: Rinse and Repeat

Focus: There are so many parts to a stroke and even more when you talk about blending. Rather than trying to improve the whole stroke at once simply take one part. (Nothing new here, this already is a popular coaching technique.) For example the start of a forward stroke, or even more refined, the shoulder position at the start of the stroke.

Experiment: The student should not repeatedly try to reproduce the overall model presented by the instructor, but experiment with the one element at a time. In the case of the shoulder position, there are several questions that students can ask themselves when experimenting. How can they

increase the length of their stroke with shoulders (both on side and off)? How does their body trim effect the shoulder position? How do things change when the boat is neutral verses on edge?

Analyze: What was the result of the experiment? How does the experiment differ from their normal technique? How do the results of the experiment change when attempted at the beginning of the day verses the end of the day when the paddler is tired?

Rinse and Repeat: Just like shampoo you need to rinse and repeat to be most effective. So let your experiments lead you to getting wet over and over again. After all, paddling is suppose to be fun. And remember, anytime you try something new it will feel awkward and ineffective at first. A proper decision, with regards to the results of the experiment, can not be made until the experiment has been attempted several times.

What I offer here certainly is not new. Like most acronyms it is simply the refinement of existing coaching techniques into a singular task. What might be new, however, is that this is not intended for the coach but for the students and in particular the students to use when there is no coach.

So next year I will experiment with this and hope my students walk away with F.E.A.R.

Chuck Pepe

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4 STAR KAYAK - May 5th

5 STAR KAYAK - March 2/3rd

L2 TRAINING KAYAK - March 23/24th / May 25/26th

L2 ASSESSMENT KAYAK - March 9th / May 11th

L3 TRAINING KAYAK - March 16th/17th

L3 ASSESSMENT KAYAK - feb 23/24th / June 15/16th

CANOE SAFETY TEST - May 5/6th

AQUATIC FIRST AID - April 7th / June 9th

WHITE WATER SAFETY and RESCUE - June 22/23rd

COACHING PROCESSES - May 18/19th

4 STAR CANOE - June 1st

5 STAR CANOE - Feb 16/17th

L2 TRAINING CANOE - March 9/10th / April 20/21st

L2 ASSESSMENT CANOE - March 10th / May 12th

L3 TRAINING CANOE - April 13/14th

L3 ASSESSMENT CANOE - April 6/7th / June 29/30th

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POLING: A GUIDED TOUR - By Tom Sibbald

This article has been edited and includes only the sections in bold print. The complete article can be found on the following websites www.beyondadventure.co.uk and www.lakesideymca.co.uk

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- Overview
- Balancing
- Pushing
- Steering
- Other flat water techniques
- Introducing poling upstream
- Strategies for poling upstream
- Introducing poling downstream (snubbing)
- Concluding thoughts

OVERVIEW

My early memories of poling are of experimentation, trial and error, and a fair amount of swimming. If having a go had worked for me, it must be OK. This was reflected in my teaching of poling where I usually would demonstrate some poling then hand over the pole and let my learner get on with it. This deep end learning obviously suited some but others wanted to be led through the learning process, and to learn from the experience I had gained, rather than repeat my mistakes.

The progression that follows results from:

1. Considering what I have learnt.
2. Ordering it so that skills are built up as they are needed.
3. Making helpful connections with a paddler's previous knowledge.
4. Accepting that developments are made in bite-sized pieces, at the speed of the learner.

The aim is to keep the learner motivated, neither bored nor scared. Progression is defined as developing by a succession or series of steps. Each step begins at a known point.

Some learners succeed by learning for themselves needing very little input. Many learners however feel over challenged and the resulting lack of success causes at best, a feeling that poling is a ridiculous idea fit only for straw hatted punters or Italians singing about ice cream. At worst, these learners take away their feeling of failure and apply it to other challenges they face, expecting to fail again.

Poling allows a whole new range of propulsion options, adding to the versatility of a canoe. Indeed, far from being a dumb idea, poling is as useful as chains to a car driving on snow, or a paddle to a sailing boat with no wind.

Poling is propelling the canoe using a pole predominantly through contact with the lake or river bottom. A standing position is common.

Poling is preferable when;

1. Direct contact with the lake or riverbed gives more control or propulsion than a paddle would, for example when there is shallow water or when moving against a strong current, wind or waves.
2. My knees are complaining and standing would make a pleasant change.

In order to pole successfully there are three skills that need to be mastered.

- Balancing- needed for standing up
- Pushing- which propels the boat
- Steering- to control boat position

There is no need to learn all of these at the same time.

Exploring these one by one gives a natural sense of progression. Beginning with balance will help the learner feel comfortable.

BALANCING

Selecting from the following exercises will help the learner improve balance.

1. From a wide kneeling position near the mid-point of the boat, rock the canoe keeping the body still. The legs create and absorb the movement.
2. Repeat exercise 1 holding the paddle out horizontal and at eye height. Focus on moving the boat whilst maintaining an upright, still body and paddle.
3. Stand up. Put your feet exactly where your knees were. Now gently shake out any tension in your muscles, and then rock the boat, keeping the body still. Look at a horizontal feature in the distance to help focus on being still. **Relaxed muscles react more quickly.** (If necessary, illustrate this by dropping a ball from eye height in front of the poler and getting them to catch it. Firstly ask the catcher to tense the arms at their side when doing the exercise; then repeat with arms relaxed.)
4. Repeat with the body rotated to one side.
5. Repeat this moving towards the back of the canoe.

Good balance helps poling.

PUSHING

1. Ask the learner to move the boat forwards, using the paddle in contact with the lake or riverbed; start with the blade in front of the body; next start with the blade level with the body, and then start with the blade behind the body. The learner should discover pushing is easier than pulling.
2. Repeat 1 with a short pole.
3. Establish the push zone. Move the boat using only one hand to operate the pole. The **push zone** is essential. It begins with the pole steep but not vertical, and contacting the lake or riverbed behind the body. It finishes as the pole skids away when the angle gets too low. In front of the push zone, pushing on the pole will produce lift and reduce balance. After the push zone pushing will cause the pole to skid away.
4. **Turn the body** sideways poling will feel more natural.
5. Power can be efficiently generated using body weight instead of muscle. Kneel or sit as tall as is possible, set the pole to the start of the push zone, lock your arms, sink down (sag or crumple) and feel the boat move forward. **Drop to drive.**
6. Return the pole to the beginning of the push zone by dragging it lightly back across the lake or riverbed. Feeling the bottom will help balance when standing. It will also help when searching for a pole placement on moving water.

STEERING Part A

This will be best felt and understood when the boat is in calm water. The effect on the boat can only be attributed to the action of the canoeist. There is no influence from wind or current.

1. In deep water with the paddle, using extreme changes in trim and a power stroke with **no** steering, find the seating position where the boat goes straightest. From the back, the boat should go straighter because the boat itself acts as a skeg, requiring less steering. Applying this to poling we can minimise the need to steer by poling, with the boat trimmed stern heavy.

A short journey will groove this understanding. **Good trim reduces the need for steering.** If a little steering is needed, introduce trailing the pole like a stern rudder far out behind the boat. Turning comes from the pole acting on the water **more than** the bottom.

Pause!! This is poling. Only when this simple lesson of steering

has sunk in should you continue.

Remember

- The push zone
- Turn the body
- Drop to drive
- Trim
- Relax

STEERING Part B

1. In deep water, with a paddle, steer the canoe by using a stern rudder. The aim is to alter the direction of travel to the left and the right without changing paddle sides. The boat should wiggle gently. Consider the actions of the hands: one hand pushes the other pulls. This can be done whilst stationary or moving.
2. With the boat stationary, in shallow water and the pole in the early part of the push zone move the back of the boat across the water in both directions. One hand should be pulling the other pushing.
3. Repeat this using the pole in the last part of the push zone.
4. When watching another person using this technique, you will observe a slight bend in the pole.
5. Now pole forwards, steering in the early phase of each push. Make the boat gently wiggle in both directions.
6. Repeat 5 gaining the steering at the end of the push zone. The pole remains in contact with the lakebed.
7. Repeat 5 with the pole at the end of the push zone or even further back. Steering is achieved using the pole in the water like a rudder.
8. In deep water, make sweep strokes with the pole (it will not contact the bottom). Concentrate on body rotation and making a long, slow movement. Remember to maintain long, slow body rotation.
9. Move to shallow water, plant the pole further out than normal and turn the canoe away and towards the pole by rotating the body. The pole stays planted in one place throughout.
10. Repeat 8. focussing on transferring that rotation through the feet in to the canoe.

Good steering uses a blend of steering at the early part of the push zone, at the end of the push zone and after it has finished with the pole trailing in the water. The steering energy created in the pole must be transmitted through the body to the boat.

A journey will groove these new techniques.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

For many of us, at the heart of canoeing is the enjoyment of the journey. The curiosity to discover what is around the next corner. The tranquility of mirrored reflections on glassy, smooth water. The challenge of paddling boiling torrents with smooth precision. The excitement of challenging ourselves against the unknown.

I spend considerable time gazing at maps, planning adventures. Maps inspire me to search out a dream. Along the way, I may well enjoy some or all of these aspects of the canoeist's journey. Use this article as a map to guide you on an adventure. We select different scales of maps dependent on how much prior detail we want to guide our adventures. Similarly use this article to match the way you learn. Some learners need only a simple framework and will enjoy wobbling swiftly through a few big bold poling steps, whilst others may enjoy the full guided tour to poling, taking time to savour each new skill.

However you use it, I hope this will inspire you to adventure. Exploring as you travel on your learning and canoeing journey. Acknowledgments

Thanks must go to Justin Major who has painstakingly translated my version of English into its present form. Also to Steve Macdonald who has offered technical advice and has been

an inspiration during my own canoeing adventure.

Remember this article has been edited. The complete article which also includes poling up and downstream, can be found on the following websites www.beyondadventure.co.uk and www.lakesideymca.co.uk

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Resistance Training to Gain Strength and Power.

Graham Campbell - Flatwater National Development Coach

Canoeing has flirted with resistance training for many years, with some paddlers and clubs committed to the concept of building muscle and power through use of a variety of weight training techniques, while other clubs have dismissed the land based training as ineffective and maybe even counterproductive for some paddlers.

On top of that variance of opinion, has been a justifiable unease about how much, if any, weight training can be done with junior paddlers.

Coach training in Racing has been reluctant to commit the sport to a BCU policy due to lack of expertise and the fear of giving bad advice, and we have tended in many cases to wait for puberty to have been and gone before feeling safe to build demanding programmes for athletes.

It is good therefore that the combination of the arrival in Racing of four foreign coaches with huge professional expertise, and a worldwide sporting reappraisal of the significance and desirability of resistance training in all its forms, has given us the support we need to recommend good practice to our coaches.

Why do we need to consider more Strength and Power?

Look at sporting competitors from a decade ago and compare them with those competing now and it is clear that even at junior level, they are bigger, stronger and faster than ever before. It is not just illegal aids that is producing this change, but a clear commitment to increasing use of resistance training to help improve performance. Our junior paddlers have lined up against foreign paddlers who look like men for many years, and our K4's have vainly chased their well muscled German, Russian and Hungarian counterparts from the vital first 10 strokes onwards. So, it was with wide international experience behind them that our new racing coaches unanimously identified lack of strength and power as our country's paddlers major weakness. We have set about remedying this weakness, by beginning the process of cultural change in our clubs to one where our paddlers can gain the strength to match their international counterparts. Our new Sports Science Officer has researched all available recent material from the medical world. On the basis of this new expertise it is felt that this can be a major contribution in moving towards more world class performances in future years.

So where do we start?

It is clear from current research that, contrary to many earlier suggestions, there is much we can crucially gain with our athletes in an entirely safe way, from well before puberty. Progressive overloading of muscles in pre-pubescent boys has produced significant strength gains when the intensity, volume, duration and training mode is manipulated to provide an optimal combination. However, as girls and prepubescent boys will also gain improvements, it is clear that much of this strength

improvement stems not from hormonal changes but from development of the nervous system – improved motor skill coordination, increased motor unit activation, and neurological adaptations.

The significance of these findings lie in the suggestion that we can beneficially start using resistance training much earlier with children of 10 or even younger. This will produce worthwhile strength and coordination gains of value to them in all sports and from a general health angle. It will also develop good habits and techniques, give athletes a winter programme that is possible on land helping keep their momentum in the sport over the winter.

From this base we can progress to use more traditional programmes using loose weights and machines at a much earlier part of the developmental process, and be in a position to take advantage of the testosterone boost in puberty enabling athletes to reach their genetic potential in strength - only possible if suitable strength training programmes are followed at that time. There will never again be that opportunity in a boy's life, and girls will find it very difficult or impossible to catch up what they have missed in their early teens.

A typical programme might well see the 10 year old paddlers doing a twice weekly programme of exercises for 20/30 minutes using body weight exercises, core stability work with Swiss and medicine balls, simple traditional weight exercises using a bar only or light dumbbells. At 12 they might have moved onto a more demanding and longer session with resistances where they can still achieve 15/20 repetitions and this can be periodised to prepare for competition. At 13/14/15, with the arrival of puberty, they are then in a position to use conditioning or muscle building sessions where the whole session may last 60 – 75 minutes, and will progressively overload a particular muscle group. 12 repetition sessions, at least twice per week, which will be at 70% of their maximum will encourage hypertrophy – the permanent building of more muscle, which with the boys is well supported by natural hormonal processes. This is new muscle which can then be worked on in lighter circuit sessions, and on the water to add endurance, speed endurance, and speed. However, by restricting the loads to this level any dangers to the developing body are not significant.

By the end of puberty at 16/17/18 according to the individual and onwards into senior ranks, with their body well developed, they can be working partly at lower reps and higher loads up to 100% single maximums using a variety of regimes aimed at racing specific needs, to tone up this new muscle for maximum power. The sessions may take up to 2 .5 hours.

So what about the safety angles in all this?

No evidence has been found in international research of skeletal damage in relation to resistance training. Resistance training is way down in the danger list for injury well below taking part in the sporting activities themselves.


If resistance training is not confused with maximal type exercises in competition power-lifting etc, then we have no problems for our young athletes.

"Based on sound research, it would be safe to say that a good-quality resistance training programme is an effective training method to complement the existing training regimes of young performers." Nick Grantham – Peak Performance.

As a coach new to using resistance training, or thinking of extending it to a younger age group, we would recommend that you prepare by attending a strength training module run by the BCU, when good practice can be underlined and you will be able to feel happy to justify what you are doing to parents, teachers, other coaches and your club. Contact Graham Campbell (Flatwater National Development Coach tel. 01386 870072 or Email) for course availability.

For further information see:

- > Peak Performance November 2001
- > Visit

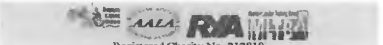


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Liability - Keeping things in Perspective

Fears about liability are becoming a real concern to paddlers and coaches and as such some individuals are already becoming wary of taking responsibility for others in any context, believing themselves to be immune from blame if they bury their heads in the sand and regard themselves as having made their own decisions to paddle in a peer environment, free of what they see as being the constraints of formal leadership and responsibility.

Some paddlers consider themselves best protected from liability by not becoming coaches. Some coaches believe themselves best served by 'taking days off' from being a coach when they wish not to be held responsible for the actions or injuries of others.

We are, however, faced with a dilemma. We all want and demand 'freedom'. We would all wish to paddle without the specter of blame or ultimate responsibility hanging over us. Indeed concerns over the situation are effecting paddler perspective on the leadership of others and the coaches perspective on when they do and don't carry responsibility for others and when, if at all, they can 'have a day off'.

Firstly we should acknowledge that some forms of canoeing have an inherent risk factor and unfortunately tragic accidents can occur at all levels of participation. Regrettably, when a tragedy does occur, the media tends to react out of all proportion to the actual very low incidence of fatalities within the sport. In consequence, incidents can become distorted beyond recognition, and the dividing line between freedom of action, and responsible provision, becomes difficult to define.

Numerous examples of this process can be cited, sometimes leading to increased litigation, media speculation and legislation.

Secondly we should appreciate that the difficulty for the BCU, as the Governing Body of paddlesport, and indeed for all coaches and paddlers, is to tread the border zone of taking reasonable precautions, yet retaining the adventurous nature of those aspects of the sport which carry an element of danger. Such reasonable precautions should reflect the individual 'duty of care' that we carry and ensure that a cost/benefits analysis assures that activities take place in an environment of calculated and acceptable risk. Best practice, reasonable behaviour and dynamic risk assessment applied to all paddling experiences will protect those taking part and those responsible for activities and ensure that we are never in a position where our actions can be challenged.

Thirdly we should all ensure that we have appropriate third party liability insurance cover –

As a BCU member and while membership is current the BCU ensures that you have this cover in place. Current cover provides all members resident in the UK (excludes North America & Southern Ireland) with Civil liability cover to a limit of indemnity of £5,000,000. Civil liability includes Public liability (damage to third party property or persons), Product liability (goods supplied), errors & omissions (advice given or not given), member to member liability, trespass, libel, slander and all other matters under civil law.

Best Practice, Reasonable Behaviours and Risk Assessment.

The fact of the matter is that we as paddlers cannot be above the Law and as far as we can tell, at this time, the law would establish blame or other wise on the basis of 'duty of care' and whether this was discharged appropriately. The Law would currently establish this by firstly establishing with whom that duty lay, taking a measure of the experience and knowledge of all those involved irrespective of whether they are qualified or not, paid or unpaid. While formal leaders are considered to have a higher duty of care we are therefore who we are and as such we cannot abdicate responsibility for others.

While such comment may cause many paddlers and coaches even greater concern we should all be conscious and comforted by the fact that duty of care responsibilities are based upon 'reasonable' common sense behaviors and 'Best Practice' and that to be seen to be at blame requires that you need to be proven negligent. As paddlers and coaches our training should

provide us with the judgment and skills required to effectively discharge our duties – as long as we act reasonably and in everyone's best interests, apply best practice and apply the precepts of risk assessment to everything that we do we will always be safe from being considered negligent.

In the UK, all ADULTS who participate in adventurous activities and WHO ARE AWARE OF THE HAZARDS THEY MAY FACE, are considered in law to be liable for their own actions. In other words, they can always say "I'm not doing that!" and are unlikely to successfully sue a leader if they are involved in an accident unless criminal negligence can be proved. There is a grey area where people of vastly different experience are involved. In other words if a complete novice decides to paddle a hazardous rapid a court might deem that he or she lacked the experience to appreciate the real nature of the hazards involved. If a vastly more experienced paddler were present, the court might rightly decide that he or she had a DUTY OF CARE to advise the other paddler not to run the rapid. This would apply whether the more experienced paddler was qualified or unqualified and paid or unpaid. However, formal leaders are deemed to have an enhanced duty of care.

Consideration of some of the defining principles of liability and negligence may help bring some perspective to our understanding of how the courts (Civil or Criminal) might view or establish liability and or responsibility.

1. Duty Of Care

"The duty which rests upon an individual or organisation to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of any person involved in any activity for which that individual or organisation is responsible"

In the eyes of the law we all have a duty of care to our neighbours – a neighbour simply being anyone whom we may come into contact with and whom if you thought about it might be injured by your negligent acts and or omissions. In order to have been seen to discharge our duty of care we must have been seen to behave as a 'reasonable person' would have, taking into account their specific skill, knowledge and experience. For a person to be found liable, they have to have been in breach of their 'Duty of Care' to the injured person(s) and the damage must result from that breach of duty of care.

As Paddlers we owe a duty of care to others who are closely and directly affected by our actions.

We all, irrespective of experience or qualification, carry a duty of care to our neighbour, however, our individual duty of care will depend on our experience and knowledge. Clearly in circumstances where we might be deemed to have the greater degree of experience and knowledge we would be seen to carry an enhanced duty to our neighbours and indeed in a formal leadership situation we would be seen to carry an enhanced duty of care and a **responsibility** to ensure an appropriate **standard of care** for those in our charge.

2. Responsibility

The principles of duty of care mean that responsibility for injury or harm to others may, in the eyes of the Civil and Criminal Court, be seen as being in hands of the person or individual most experienced as opposed to most qualified.

Therefore within a situation where a level 3/4 coach was perceived by the group to be the leader they may not carry full responsibility if another member of the group was deemed to be more experienced and better placed to make judgement as to the safety of the group.

Joining a group or being a part of a group as a peer paddler and group member although a qualified coach, with the premise that you might 'take a day off' as a coach could be mis-leading if in fact you are the most experienced paddler on the trip.

Accepting a place on a trip as an experienced paddler and or coach thinking that you do so only for your own enjoyment and satisfaction and that responsibility for the trip remains with the designated leader does not necessarily remove your responsibility and 'Duty of Care', if in fact you are deemed to be the most experienced paddler present.

3. Standard Of Care

The crucial part of all this is what that standard of care will be ?

In the context of a group (two or more), the standard of care owed to other(s) will be higher for the more experienced member.

A practical example of this might be that whereas you might not routinely check your experienced partners boat for buoyancy and or your experienced partners personal paddling equipment, you would be expected to do so for an unknown novice / intermediate paddler joining a trip or activity for the first time.

Other factors that should be considered before deciding on standard of care issues should be; your perceived and or actual formal position within the group you are paddling with, the nature of the trip or activity being undertaken (a responsible adult would be expected to be aware of any associated risks and potential for injury), the foreseeability of an accident. Again, as before, greater experience and formal status places greater emphasis on the standard of care you are expected to deliver.

As stated all ADULTS who participate in adventurous activities are considered in law to be liable for their own actions as long as they ARE AWARE OF THE HAZARDS THEY MAY FACE. With this in mind it is important, if it would be deemed as being part of our individual duty of care, to make sure that paddlers not having the experience to make informed decisions are placed in a position of being able to do so by being informed and consulted. Should an incident occur during an activity thus managed it would then be possible for the principle of law that states – 'a willing person cannot be injured' to be recognised.

4. A Willing Person Cannot be injured.

Another defence linked to participation as a BCU paddler is 'Volenti - non fit injura' -

A willing man cannot be injured - passed as a defence by the occupiers Liability Act (1957) Amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) to remove occupiers and Landowners liability for anyone injured as a consequence of a the natural features of the landscape.

The principle in law of 'volenti non fit injuria' means that where an adult participates voluntarily in an activity which involves

known and obvious hazards, then he or she is unlikely to succeed in a claim for recompense against those leading the activity, if the injury sustained is a result of falling victim to a known and obvious danger, e.g Canoeist pinned against a rock in white water.

This principle may have some bearing when groups of "friends" within the club are participating in canoeing ventures, which might only loosely be defined as "club activities". It is not known how a court might view a given set of circumstances, but in such instances it would seem unlikely that an adult complainant with personal experience compatible with the journey or venture being undertaken would succeed in a claim either against the individual presumed to be the leader, or the club's officials, where injury or death results from a "canoeing" cause. There could obviously be a case to answer if the accident arose from some other circumstance.

It is perhaps important here to reflect on the issues of 'duty of care' and 'standard of care' - It is 'reasonable' to expect that those with experience and knowledge of an activity or venture should be seen to share information about a planned activity or venture in order that a less experienced individual considering taking part could actually do so having made up their own mind after being in a position to balance their own experience against a risk and benefits analysis of the highlighted trip or venture. Certainly being in a position, after the event, to indicate that important information was given and acknowledged by the injured party could reduce liability under the principle of Contributory Negligence.

5. Contributory Negligence

Contributory Negligence is another factor that can reduce the liability. This concept is fairly simple - A novice forgetting essential supplies or equipment despite being informed that they were required. A paddler in a peer group situation deciding to run a rapid despite advice that would suggest they make an individual decision to portage. Any negligence by the group leader or the individual recognised as carrying responsibility may then be reduced depending on the circumstances.

6. The Chain of Causation

The Chain of Causation means that loss or injury has been caused by the act or omission in question rather than by something else. In a negligence case, the negligent act must have caused the injury. If there is some other factor, such as another person (or the person who was injured), which caused the injury then the chain of causation between the alleged negligent act and the injury is broken and the person who committed the alleged negligent act will not be responsible for the injury.

7. Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is nothing more than a careful explanation of what in your work could cause harm to people, so that you weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm and keep people safe. Identifying the risks and hazards of an activity enables you to take precautions and put measures in place to make the risks and hazards acceptable.

The Five Steps to Risk Assessment. - For many of us, particularly those in a formal leadership role or position of responsibility risk assessment conjures up written risk assessments of each and every activity we may take part in, along with each and every venue where activity may take place. While now a necessary part of life and providing

opportunities to establish a cost/benefits analysis of activity we should acknowledge that such risk assessments are general and may not reflect the dynamic nature of the paddling environment.

We should also reflect that individual duty of care also suggests that we each have a duty to undertake a risk assessment of everything we do and that we should also take account of the variables that exist within an adventure sport – in a peer group situation, particularly, we should not feel that this may require a formal 5 steps to risk assessment approach of every trip we may undertake. It does suggest however that we should be aware that the safety of an individual or a group is dependant, to a large degree, on self discipline, knowledge and the skills of the individual person(s). The 'Dynamic Risk Assessment' is therefore the final link in a full risk assessment process. It takes place within circumstances that are unforeseeable and or are changing constantly (i.e. a white water river environment). It is this final assessment which we rely upon to allow us to carry on our paddling activities safely and to make careful considered judgements. The dynamic approach is a continuous thought process.

Ref – 5 Steps to Risk Assessment HSE

Assessing risk at the wet end – Code 96 Dec 2000

Conclusions

Reflecting on and having a clearer understanding of the above principles should hopefully provide some clarity of thought and perspective to the matter of liability and the effect upon us as coaches. Certainly from my point of view, while there is no doubt that society has become more safety conscious and more apt to seek to establish blame and recompense, my responsibilities as a coach are the same now as they have always been.

BCU Insurance cover is in place however, to protect me from any claim relating to paddlesport activity as outlined earlier. While I consider this a major comfort and a significant benefit of membership, knowing it is in place does not place me in a position whereby I can ignore my duty in law to others. Indeed it would be a matter of pride that whatever the outcome of a claim for negligence might be that I could stand behind my actions as having been in the best interest of all concerned.

Settling the personal conflict within myself that initially saw my personal freedoms and experiences being challenged, and having a greater understanding of liability and duty of care issues enables me to ensure that my behaviour, actions and judgments as a coach reflects my responsibilities and the best interests of everyone including myself.

Mike Devlin - BCU UK Coaching Service with thanks to the articles written in the BMC 'Summit' Magazine

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Office Matters

Coaching Processes Course Review – Bob Timms

The Coaching Processes Course is currently undergoing a review. I know that these words will bring to some a sense of dread and to others fury, that yet another thing is being messed about with. Please relax and put your anxieties away. The review I talk of is a minor review dealing mainly with the organisation and quality control of the delivery of the course. There will be very few changes to the content and syllabus that will be noticeable.

From its outset in 1995, the C.P. course has been one of the most enjoyed courses within the coaching scheme. The main aim of the review is to ensure that it stays that way. It would be easy to sit back on our laurels and toast it's success, but in a short time the course could become stale. The process of the review will focus the attention of Course Directors to examine what they do and why they do it and this in itself will refresh the delivery & content of the course. Clearer guidelines about becoming a Director and the staffing of the courses are also being examined. Already the review has thrown up some areas, which we have already acted upon, but more of those later.

The review has 4 stages:

1. Consultation
2. Analysis
3. Directors workshop and update
4. Ratification of proposed developments

The consultation period is nearing its end. During this time a number of Coaches who have previously attended the course have been interviewed by telephone through a standard set of questions. Another set have received the same questionnaire in written form. The Course Directors have had the opportunity to pass their comments on and now, through the reading of this, you also can contribute any comments you have directly to me via the e-mail address below if you have not already been so.

This information will then be analysed and used to justify any possible developments or changes to the course. These will then be presented to the course Directors and the Level 5 Coach Development Panel. The format for this will be a 'Shareware' day where course Directors will have a chance demonstrate to one another how they run their version of the course and to discuss any proposed developments. These will be taken forward to the Level 5 Panel meeting the following day and finally on to the UK Coaching Management Committee for ratification later in the year. Finally a new set of guidelines will be created and these distributed to course directors.

One of the courses greatest strengths lies in it being non-discipline specific. It is one of few opportunities for coaches to mix with those from other disciplines whilst focusing on the common theme – 'Coaching'. It is not sea kayaking, canoeing, playboating, slalom, or river running, etc. that we coach, but people. Of course some technical knowledge of a subject is necessary, but it is understanding how people learn and how to pass your knowledge on, that is central to good coaching.

It has been mentioned regularly in the past that a lot of people have been denied access to this unique course because of the requirement to be a coaching scheme member. The first success of the review is to remove this barrier:

C.P. courses are now open to anybody

Being a non paddler will not prevent you from participating in a course, but it is recommended that anyone in this situation should contact the course director before booking on as some courses

are more practically boat based than others.

Another change arising from the early stages of the review is that some people have found difficulty in attending or organising courses for groups. The problem being that it was difficult to get a list of directors. In the next issue of Code you will find a list of all current C.P. Course directors with contact details and notes on their availability to deliver courses. I hope this goes along way to address these problems.

If anyone wishes to contribute to the current review or is experiencing difficulty in organising a course, please contact me

Please note:

PADDLEPOWER AND THE STAR AWARDS

Coaches please note that the Level 3 award of Paddlepower One is recognised by the BCU as equivalent to the One Star Award.

This can therefore be accepted for paddlers going for Two Star awards and for paddlers taking youth organisation badges such as the Scouts organisation. If you would like more information on Paddlepower contact Youth Programme at BCU Tele 0115 982 1100 email youth@bcu.org.uk

Star Test Pass Slip Update. - Details having changed on these forms, If you are using pass-slips which were issued before the end of October this year, PLEASE send for some new ones. Membership details have changed. Issuing old forms involves delay and returns to candidates. Please make sure that the candidates put their addresses on their pass-slips. If they don't then we don't know where to send the certificates !!.

Wanted:

The Coaching Service would like to recruit additional Quality Assurance officers to assist in the Quality Assurance of its Coach Education Programme. Candidates should be A4 level assors with a wide experience of running courses at all levels. QA Officers are asked to be in a position to undertake 10 QA visits a year for which they will be paid a per visit fee. Training and supervision will be provided. Interested parties to write with CV to: The UK Director OF Coaching, BCU Coaching Service, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, NG2 5AS.



BOURNEMOUTH BOROUGH COUNCIL EDUCATIONAL DIRECTORATE Hengistbury Head Outdoor Education and Field Studies Centre

This busy day centre requires an outdoor education instructor for the school holidays. The person appointed must be qualified to **BCU Level 2 coach (kayak)** standard and show proven ability of working with a variety of young people.
They will require a valid first aid certificate and ability to drive a minibus.

**For an informal discussion about this post please
contact The Centre Manager
On 01202 425173**

RCO: Ian Scott 07961 815038

Dates Spring 2002: Regional Forum & Course
Next Forum: March 2002 - Slenningford Mill
(date to be confirmed).

The theme will be coaching on moving water.

Yorkshire Coaching Panel Meeting

19th March All coaches welcome
get involved & have your say.

Venue: 7.30 pm Buckles Inn
(on A64 between the A1(M) and York)

Southern Region

RCO: Steve Finch 01198 755 318

Dates Spring 2002: Regional Forum & Course

16 March Regional Update Forum
Venue: TBA Organiser: Steve Finch

12 Oct Regional Update Forum
Venue: TBA Organiser: Steve Finch

Other Regional Course's

23 March Assessor Training Day

27th Oct Assessor Training Day

Also planned:

Coaching Processes / Disabled Awareness
Date & Venue TBA

For details of all these dates please contact:
**Steve Finch, Regional Coaching Organiser. 87
Hexham Road, Reading. RG2 7UA. Email:
stevefinch@bcuinternet.com**

SOUTH BUCKS LOCAL PANEL

**Coach Update & AGM - THURSDAY 18 APRIL
2002**

Different strokes for different boats? - an evening workshop on star test standards for long and short boats followed by the panel AGM.

Venue: Longridge SBC, Marlow. Contact Andy
Maxted, LCO tel: 07966 491026 email:
morven@ukonline.co.uk

Wessex

RCO: Gordon Summers 01935 518505

Dates Spring 2002: Regional Forum & Course

9th March Assessor Training / BCU Aquatic First Aid
10th March Regional Update Forum

Venue Milldown School, Blandford, Dorset.
Organiser: Steve Paice 01929 400779
39 The Oval, Lulworth Camp, Wareham

Further local update days are being planned for Wiltshire, Bristol, South Somerset and Dorset
Dates to be confirmed - watch CoDe regional page, SWBCU Newsletter and website for more details.

New LCO wanted:

Gloucestershire area - apply to Gordon Summers

West Midlands

RCO: Phil Ascough 01527 861426

Dates for 2002

16th –17th March 2002

Coaching Development Forum:

Sat Regional Coaching Update Forum

Sun Aquatic First Aid / Canoe Safety Test / Paddle Power Workshop / Bell Boat Helm

23rd-24th March

Regional Coaching Weekend

Canoe Safety Test / Level 1 Coach – Canoe & Kayak / Level 2 Coach Training – Canoe / Kayak

14th Sept Junior Paddlefest

19th Oct Regional Coaching Update Forum

20th Oct Level 2 Coach Assessment – Canoe / Kayak

For more details call Phil Ascough 01527 861426

London & South East

RCO London: Gareth Moss - 020 8940 5550

RCO South East: Andy Hall – 01903 767503

Dates Spring 2002: Regional Forum & Course

10th March Regional Update Forum

Venue: The Adur Centre

Organiser: Andy Hall 01903 767503

December Update Feedback

Thanks to all those who attended "the festive bash of the season" otherwise known as the coaches forum at Thames Young Mariners on Saturday 1st December. It was a fairly cosy affair in the hall followed by a number of enlightening workshops. A number of interesting issues were raised during the day - which may possibly spur someone into writing into CoDe - but one that sticks out to me was the journeying remit of the Level 2 Coach. Most L2 Coaches both kayak and canoe were shocked to learn from me that they can only lead groups a distance of 2km from A to B or 1km to a point and back again.

I don't like/agree with it - I was merely informing them. This will restrict their coaching within their clubs. There is a 6km journeying element at 2Star - should L3 Coaches be called upon if the 2Star paddler cannot get 2 other friends to undertake it independently?

Now that these coaches are aware of the restriction they can't very easily ignore it - whereas previously they were blissfully ignorant. Has this restriction always been in place for the original "Instructor" when the award first came out? If it wasn't originally there, then we are taking away what Instructors used to be able to do. I feel that open canoeing is all about journeying and limiting it to 2km is very unhelpful.

The Coaching Directory (section 6/13) Level 2 Coach Training part states: "This is not an expedition award, and journeys or trips should reflect the demands of the One or Two Star Award. It is envisaged that most journeys would start and finish at the same place. The candidate should be expecting to lead trips, of an absolute maximum of two km, and it must be within the Stated Terms of Reference."

Happy New Year to anyone reading and I hope to meet with you on the water or maybe in it - who knows?

Gareth Moss RCO for London

Northern Region

RCO: Ken Hughes 07890 139908

Dates Spring 2002: Regional Forum & Course

16 March Regional Update Forum Venue: Northumberland College
Organiser: Ken Hughes, RCO

East Midlands

RCO: Chris Cartwright – 01629 55833

Congratulations to Chris Cartwright on his election as RCO for East Midlands. He has met with his LCO team twice and they have agreed the regional program below.

Regional Programme Dates for 2002

16th June Regional Update Forum

Venue: Nene White Water Centre (NWWC)

Organiser: Chris Cartwright, RCO

Regional Courses:

28 April Assessor Training, LOPC

Contact:

Angie Hampton 0116 268 1426

4-5 May Regional Coaching weekend, Derby Area

Canoe Safety Test / Level 1 Coach

(Canoe & Kayak) / Level 2 Coach

Training (Canoe / Kayak)

Contact: Chris Cartwright, RCO

12 May Bell Boat Helm, Nene WWC

Contact: Tony Bloor 01604 632 446

18/19 May Pre requisites weekend

Contact: Chris Cartwright, RCO

15 June Derbyshire Youth Games

Contact: Pete Coddington 01629

585861

22-23 June Coaching Processes Course, LOPC

Contact: Angie Hampton 0116 268

1426

Coach Update evenings:

7 May Moving Water Skills- Nene WW Centre

Contact: Tony Bloor 01604 632446

North Notts Evening Update series

Sandhills AB

1st Monday of the month

Contact: Steve Hunt 0115 976 4090

South Notts Evening Coaching series

3rd Wednesday of the month

Contact: Ann Collins 0115 952

6906

And finally... Welcome to new LCO:

Christine Wilson (North Derbyshire) – 01433 621149

Devon & Cornwall

RCO: Andy Barclay 01872 324402

The series of local panel meetings, set up by RCO Andy Barclay, is now complete – the new LCO's for Devon & Cornwall are:

Welcome to new LCO's:

Grace Jones (East Cornwall) 01579 384226

Paul Parkinson (West Cornwall) 01209 842360

Mark Agnew (South Devon) 01548 550675

Glyn Brackenbury (North Devon) 01237 475992

Ceri Williams (Exeter – job share) 01395 264936

Mick Jennings (Exeter – job share) 0870 7572345

Along with existing LCO:

Pete Whitfield (Plymouth) 01752 698798

Devon & Cornwall now has a full complement of LCO's

Finally I would also like to take this chance to thank Steve Standing the LCO for Exeter who is stepping down.



Dear Code.....

Dear Code

Re: Martin Barry and "Grooving in"

I was interested to read of Motor Engrams defined as "the directions required to reproduce living versions of movements stored in memory and act as packets of pre-set muscle instructions to reproduce particular movements." Martin suggests that "One can replace thousands of conscious signals using engram memory to control movements and make it unnecessary to constantly monitor all kinaesthetic feedback." He also suggested that motor engrams "may be more psychologically orientated and scientific than we may wish for while coaching." While I feel there is something in what he wrote I think it deserves some constructive criticism.

Firstly if we used such Motor Engrams we would be severely limited in our capacity to adapt. We would become limited to those activities, which we had practised; we would be unable to progress to more difficult water. While we practise and "groove in" a technique we are constantly monitoring the kinaesthetic feedback and making adjustments.

Secondly I am not sure that this "grooving in" is psychologically orientated, but physiologically orientated. Most of us will be familiar of the transition we made from a ham-fisted learner driver, crashing the gears, to the more fluid driver who hardly thinks about the hand-eye coordination required to drive a vehicle. This transition is not limited to motor activities, examples can be found in purely mental activities, for example calendar calculating. (Calculating the day of the week for a given date, a task that some people with learning disabilities can do seemingly without a second thought.) A graduate student called Langdon was paid to learn one of the methods for doing calendar calculations. Despite prodigious efforts by Langdon, he could not match the speed of others for a long time. Suddenly he discovered he could match others for speed. Somehow, his brain had automated the complex calculations with such effectiveness that calendar calculating was second nature. [1] To borrow a concept from neuro-linguistic programming the transition had been made from "conscious incompetence" to "unconscious competence".

It is thought that repeated practise will selectively strengthen synaptic connections in the anatomy and other sets of connections become less likely to be used. [2] Hence we tend to have characteristic patterns of movement, whether walking or paddling. It is important to recognise that "grooving in" does have its place in our coaching toolbox; but we must also encourage exploration and the discovery of what works for each individual. In that area we must be sensitive to kinaesthetic feedback and thus make continuous adjustments to our movements.

Paul Gibson

[1] B. Rimland (1978) 'Savant capabilities of autistic children and their cognitive implications', in G. Serban (ed.) *Cognitive Deficits in the Development of Mental Illness*, New York: Brunner/Mazel.

[2] G. Edelman (1992) *Bright Air, Brilliant Fire*, London, Penguin Books.

Dear Code

Right Boat – Wrong Award?

It is with great pleasure that I can now write to code and tell readers of a wonderful weekend touring in an Open Canoe a group of friends an (Mid November) I had on the River Wye just two weeks ago. From Newbridge via Builth and on down to Glasbury. 24 glorious miles of Autumn colours, sun shining, buzzards overhead and class 2/3 white water to ourselves – even the anglers were friendly - it was marred by only a short stretch of a little over two miles which was jammed packed with kayakers taking their 4 star awards (3 groups), a Level 2 and a Level 3 Coach Training plus a Coach 3 Assessment.

I knew most of the Coaches running these courses, and everyone I asked the usual question, where did you start – where are you going. It was all the same 2.5 mile trip. When I suggested they were missing so much, and why didn't they look at the longer distances, it wasn't the reply I expected – which of course used to be "There's too much in the syllabus to fit a longer trip in", which is the answer I used to get (It's not an honest answer either, you can cover most of the syllabus on a well planned river trip at this level). The answer I got instead was "They can't paddle that distance in those boats" And of course it was true, they were all paddling very short Rodeo style boats which are great at the job they are designed for, but are totally inefficient for touring.

A week later staring out of the window watching a level two coach training on a canal, the on the water topic was **efficient forward paddling**, read the syllabus "Posture upright" (2 star) No chance! Sit upright in those boats and paddle forward the nose dives. The whole group could make those boats do all sorts of tricks, but paddle 500m showing good speed and control.....I'm not even going to ask where they keep their safety/touring kit they are supposed to carry while coaching.

So just what is happening – we are teaching coaches to coach something they can't demonstrate in the boats they are using, we are asking them to lead groups on river trips (10km for 3 star – 20 km for 4 star) distances which are a real struggle in the boats that aren't designed to travel.

Isn't it about time we included a pre requisite **Turn up with a boat that can do the job - Or did I get it right first time?** **Right Boat – Wrong Award.**

Of course I am aware here that I could be shooting myself in the foot, and I may have to share the full length of more rivers with kayakers in the future. But then I did in the past.

Colin Broadway, Coach

Dear Code

I am writing to respond to Martin Barry's article in December's code.

Before people start rushing out and changing their approach to coaching they should recognise the limitations of his suggestions and the dated nature of the information and references that he used substantiate the claims. Current thinking based on biomechanical analysis of beginners and experts performing physical tasks is that the concept of "grooving in" is somewhat of a misnomer! The analysis of joint angles of experts performing a variety of physical tasks shows significantly more variation than beginners. Also with practice the amount of variation increases. The thinking behind this is quite simple. The expert is able to make subtle adjustments and is able to compensate for information the body receives during the task; for changes in environmental conditions; for changes within the body. The beginner on the other hand does not have the ability to read this feedback and make the compensations needed. Therefore once their movements are initiated the planned movement is carried out regardless.

The human body is an ever-changing being, it responds constantly to changes in environment and the rhythms of the body and the mind. This means that no matter how "grooved in" we think a movement is, no two performances are ever exactly the same. If we try to apply the concept of "grooving in" to canoeing as Martin does, even an expert slalom paddler, given the constantly changing conditions of the river could not possibly reproduce the same move twice. The permutations and combinations involved are infinite.

If we accept that it is not possible to produce "grooved in" moves, even at an expert level, then how should this affect the way we coach?

Rather than forcing students into situations where repetition is the method of teaching, perhaps we should think about introducing as much variety of practice as possible. Thus allowing them to evolve into the correct technique. Obviously the techniques we are seeking students to acquire require that some sort of a model is presented so that they have something to base their practise on. However this should not require repetition to the point of boredom in search of the ultimate stroke! If we as coaches use variety in practise this equips the student with the ability to adjust their technique to achieve their desired outcomes. In this way the skill being learned becomes automatic. In the same way that changing gear becomes when driving.

I am surprised that Martin, a level 5 coach should promote this method of coaching without any health warnings. Every coaching course I have attended in the past 5 years has acknowledged developments in the field of coaching psychology. Even though not all have been perfect, the attempt has been made to move on. I may be parochial but many of my coaching colleagues in Wales do sing this song and preach the message. Cymru am Byth!

However despite the fact that I disagree with what Martin has put forward I welcome the chance for a good old-fashioned debate without a pint in hand! For further reading I recommend checking out work by Williams, David's and Williams (1999), another a good read is Hardy, Jones and Gould (1999) *Understanding Psychological Preparation for Sport*.

Bob Keep

BCU COACHING SUPPLIES

The BCU Coaching Service offers a range of supplies to help you to develop your teaching skills and to aid you with your personal coaching development. The **BCU Coaching Logbook** is full of useful information, provides a log for your experiences and courses and keeps a record of your development up the coaching ladder. It is a necessity for all coaches. Our **Canoeing Handbook** is a very popular instruction manual and also makes a very welcome gift to paddlers of all ages. This book provides information on teaching, leading and the history of canoe sport.

"**Canoeing for Disabled People**" is the sister publication to the BCU Canoeing Handbook and is a very handy tool for the less able-bodied paddlers and those who wish to help them to develop in paddling.

The **Paddlepower Deliverer's Pack** is a 'must' for coaches who wish to help develop the paddling skills of younger paddlers, the pack gives helpful information on the best ways to carry this scheme. **Activity Cards** are a supplemental aid to Paddlepower which contain instructions for making learning and development fun by playing games.

Our **Posters** are colourful, double sided A3 size and have pictures of the star test award badges for Canoe on one side and Kayak on the other. **Crib Cards** are a set of 12 plastic cards outlining the main elements of the basic strokes. There are two books for Open Canoe, Single or Tandem, and one for Kayak. Please indicate which one you require when ordering. Star Test Marking Sheets are a similar format as the Crib Cards and are wipe-clean marking sheets for you to keep track when coaching. These are available for Canoe and Kayak, so please indicate which one you require when ordering.

Please write enclosing cheque/ access/visa/Mastercard
No etc

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NG2 5AS**



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