

# Training & Subsidy Briefing for RCC Members

## Background

This note attempts to bring together some of the main options available to Regents Canoe Club (RCC) members to progress their skills as paddlers, peer paddlers and river leaders, and highlights RCC's subsidy policy for all its members.

## Training

Skills can be placed into 4 categories:

- Personal paddling
- Safety and rescue
- River leading
- Coaching

### **1. Personal Paddling**

There are a number of routes you can take to improve your personal paddling skills, depending on your area of interest. Many choose to continue to develop their white water river running skills, which is what this briefing addresses mostly. However you may also wish to take up new paddling disciplines, including: play boating, open canoeing, sea kayaking, slalom, polo, touring etc. Do have a look at the various providers which offer coaching in these areas, as they can make for a great weekend away doing something different (see links on RCC website).

For white water river running consider courses specifically for this, although there are areas of overlap in different paddlesport disciplines, and skills in one area will often enhance your skills in another. Courses may be from one day to many e.g. single days out with a privately booked coach just for you to 5-day Intermediate and Intermediate Whitewater Kayaking courses at Plas Y Brenin for a group.

The British Canoe Union (BCU) paddlesport star awards are also a good place to start. Syllabi are available at <http://www.bcu.org.uk/tests-and-awards/personal-performance-awards/paddlesport-start-i-1-to-3-star/>

The new BCU Star Awards system became effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2007. One and two star focus mainly on personal skills, but look more at interaction between boat, paddle, person and water. There is a change in focus in the star tests from three star upwards to include more safety aspects and group paddling / leadership as well as personal skills. The progression of the new star tests from three to four to five reflects more on the difficulty of the environment.

**One Star**: An introductory award that demonstrates an individual has basic boat control. It can be taken in any kind of paddlesport craft (e.g. sit on top, slalom, C2, polo boat, sea kayak, racing canoe etc). Most members who have completed the Introduction to White Water Kayaking (IWWK) course or paddled on the canal for several sessions should have the necessary skills to obtain this award.

**Two Star**: An improvement award that helps paddlers to develop fundamental paddlesport skills on flat water. The emphasis is on gaining a breadth of experience, creating the desired movement of the boat and developing an understanding into how the paddle, boat and water interact together with evidence of trips undertaken in the appropriate environment. Skills are assessed in a variety of craft and includes an assessed journey. Those who have completed the IWWK course with RCC should have kayak skills to the standard required for the two star award, but may need a refresher session and will also need coaching and practice in open canoes to reach the required standard.

**Three Star**: Successful performance at this level indicates that a candidate can consider themselves an intermediate paddler rather than a beginner. Three star is discipline specific with awards in Sea, Surf, Canoe, WW Kayak, Flat Water Kayak, and some of the competitive disciplines. The three star paddler will be a competent performer in sheltered to moderate water environments (up to Grade 2) and have the ability to paddle unsupervised, with similar standard paddlers on sheltered water. Skills at this level include breaking in / out, ferry gliding, side surfing small stoppers, plus some basic safety and rescue skills.

Training and assessment for one star and two star can be arranged by qualified coaches who are also members of RCC.

### **Rolling Clinics**

RCC hires out the pool over the winter season for members to practice rolling and bracing skills. Although we do not provide specific coaching at these sessions, there is usually someone on hand to offer tips and assistance.

In 2009 RCC also organized a rolling course to teach the foundation skills to members who have never rolled before. This may be repeated depending on demand.

A range of rolling courses are available from other providers, aimed at paddlers at different stages - from those who have never rolled before, to roll reconstruction, developing and consolidating your roll, white water rolling etc. Again see the RCC website for links to providers.

## **2. Safety & Rescue**

To paddle as part of a group, it is always wise to have basic first aid skills, and some knowledge of safety and rescue techniques.

Again, there are a huge range of courses available to provide you with general or more specific skills, but as a start, it's recommended you consider the following:

### **i. First Aid**

Many people often have basic first aid training – usually provided through their work place or similar. The skills learnt on this are very useful for running a river as part of a group, but you may also wish to consider the BCU Aquatic First Aid course (8hrs) or other 8-hour First Aid course with emphasis on water environments. This is also a pre-requisite for some BCU coaching and river leading courses.

### **ii. Foundation Safety and Rescue Training (FSRT - formerly called the Canoe Safety Test):** this course covers suitable approaches to maintain the safety of yourself and others, as well as skills to rescue others in difficulty. It is based in a sheltered water environment only and covers the use of the following equipment: towline or tow

system, throwline, sling, whistle and knife. The FSRT is a pre-requisite for the three star personal paddling award, and some of the coaching awards. RCC would recommend that all members consider attending the FSRT. Elements of the course are regularly taught at informal club sessions and everyone is encouraged to attend these to practice these skills.

- iii. White Water Safety & Rescue (WWSR) is for paddlers operating in moderate to advanced white water environment and is a pre-requisite for the four star river leading award. It is a two-day course and offers comprehensive training on safety and rescue elements, as well as knots, karabiners, and how to use a quick release chest harness. If you intend to lead on rivers of grade 2 or above, you should consider this course. RCC would recommend this course for all members who regularly paddle on white water at grade 2 and above.
- iv. Advanced White Water Safety & Rescue is for paddlers operating in advanced waters (e.g. grades 3-4). The training is a pre-requisite for the five star river leading award. It develops the techniques learnt at WWS&R and their application in an advanced environment, and introduces the concept of the 'team approach' to provide structure in an emergency situation.

### **3. River Leading**

Experienced RCC members are regularly on hand to provide advice and support to those wanting to lead on rivers. RCC is keen to encourage members to take responsibility and become river leaders, so do make it known if you are interested in getting involved. Once you have some key skills in this area, river reading and leading can best be developed by plenty of supervised practice.

Should you wish to consolidate your river leading skills, and gain an award to confirm the standard reached, you should consider the BCU's four and five star awards:

**Four Star Leader:** This discipline specific test is designed to indicate that the candidate has the skill level to safely paddle sections of moderate water (grade 2/3) as part of a led group, and has the all round paddling ability, safety, rescue and basic leadership required to undertake trips on sheltered- moderate water with a group of similar standard paddlers in a self-sufficient manner. Training takes place over 2 days followed by a 2-day assessment.

Prerequisites include:

- 8 hour first aid course
- 12 river trips in at least four different locations (6 on Grade 3 as member of a group and 6 on grade 2/3 as assistant leader)
- BCU white water safety & rescue training course
- At least two days formal training in personal skills, leadership etc

See: <http://www.bcu.org.uk/tests-and-awards/leader-i-guide-i-helm-qualifications/paddlesport-four-star-leader/>

**Five Star Leader:** A paddler at this level has the personal, leadership and safety skills required to lead groups (in formal and informal settings) in discipline specific advanced environments (grade 4 water and above). Training takes place over 3 days followed by a 2-day assessment at a later date.

Prerequisites include:

- 16 hours first aid course
- BCU four star

- Advanced White Water Safety and Rescue
- 30 varied river trips on advanced white water in 3 different geographical areas
- At least 3 days training in personal skill, leadership, incident management, safety and rescue

See: <http://www.bcu.org.uk/tests-and-awards/leader-i-guide-i-helm-qualifications/paddlesport-five-star-leader/>

#### **4. Coaching**

At RCC, we encourage all members to help out with the courses offered each year. Members often find this a really rewarding experience, and a great confidence booster! Even those newest to the sport (and who have recently learnt skills themselves) can offer valuable tips and assistance to new paddlers. Usually 2 or 3 IWWK courses are offered each summer, as well as specific skills training sessions. Again, assisting with these are great ways to consolidate your own skills, but also offer an opportunity to learn and share new coaching skills and techniques with other coaches. There are a number of qualified coaches in the club who will be eager to share their skills.

It is recommended that you help out on these sessions for at least a season to see if coaching is your 'thing'. If it is, and you'd like to formalize your skills (which isn't necessary – many of our great coaches haven't formalized their coaching skills yet), you can sign up for the BCU's coaching awards scheme. This starts at Level 1 coach – which provides the skills for coaching on flat water and goes up to qualifications held by the top coaches in the country most of whom work in the outdoor industry and coach paddlesport for a living.

Details of the BCU coaching scheme and what is required at each level in the way of training etc is available at: <http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/coaching/bcu-qualification-courses>

#### **Subsidy**

RCC members are reminded that they can apply for subsidy for training courses, up to a maximum of 40%. You can apply to the committee for this money if you feel your new found skills will benefit the club as a whole and you're an active RCC member. The committee will consider the information you supply about the course, how you intend to use it to benefit the club, any previous funding given to you, and what RCC funds are available.

This is a great opportunity for you to use the support of the club to develop your skills and be able to give something back to members. If you wish to apply for a Training Subsidy for specific course, then please complete the attached form – ask any committee member if you need assistance. The form is also available on the RCC website at <http://www.regentscanoeclub.co.uk/notices.htm>

If there is interest from sufficient numbers of members in any one area of Training, then we can attempt to arrange a course for the group with a suitable provider.