

## **Foreword**

This guide is not intended to be a hard-and-fast 'line in the sand' for when you can/cannot join the club on certain trips. The club recognises that in order to progress skills, paddlers will need to occasionally join trips that they do not meet all of the requirements for. Before this happens, they should have completed all the requirements of the previous level. Equally, just because a skill/course/prerequisite is in a higher level, that doesn't mean a paddler can't complete it early. For example, PSRT is a great course that benefits all paddlers, whatever their level.

If something in the document doesn't make sense, or external factors prevent you from completing it, talk to a coach.

## **Intro Course – Paddle Discover**

Paddlers who have completed the SCC Intro Course should have all the skills from the Paddle Discover award. They will need to develop these skills to the point that they can be executed while thinking about other things. These skills are the core building blocks for paddling.

Coaches and leaders will engage with paddlers on these skills, but it is expected that paddlers will be proactive in understanding their progress against them.

Below is a summary of the skills we expect paddlers to develop after the intro course

### **Before getting on the water**

- **Getting ready – SCC Facilities**

Paddlers know where and how kit is stored. They remove kit, and put kit back after using it, helping others where necessary.

Paddlers are aware of safeguarding requirements in changing rooms.

- **Getting Ready – What to wear**

Paddlers know what clothing options are available, how the activity will affect their clothing choice. Paddlers know how to fit safety equipment

- **Getting Ready – What to use**

Paddlers know what craft are available for them. They can articulate the benefits of one craft over another. Paddlers know which paddle to use, and what size craft they use.

Paddlers are aware of how to adjust the fittings in their kayak to enable a correct sitting position

- **Choosing the Venue – Type of water**

Paddlers can assess different types of water, and how they affect the session. They are aware of restrictions on access, and hazards present on river

- **Choosing the Venue – Weather**

Paddlers are aware that weather conditions affect paddling. They know how to check this

- **Choosing the Venue – Access**

Paddlers use the most appropriate access points, minimising damage to the bank.

Proper manual handling is used for moving craft.

- **What to do in an emergency (capsize and swim)**

Paddlers can demonstrate and talk through a capsize and swim. The capsize should be unrushed and all steps followed; it should include the self-rescue of equipment. Initial capsize may be without a spraydeck, but it is important that paddlers become comfortable with wearing one and capsizing with one.

Paddlers know what to do if someone else capsizes

### **On the water:**

- **Knowledge Points – Other Users**

Paddlers are aware of other river users, and look to minimise disturbance to them

- **Knowledge Points – Paddling**

Paddlers have appropriate hand position on their paddles and can paddle forward in a straight line. In the event of an unintentional turn, they can rectify this. They have an appreciation of where strength comes from during paddling.

Paddlers can demonstrate an effective

- Sweep stroke
- Stopping Stroke
- Backwards paddle
- Side stroke

## Paddler Development Plan

- Stern Rudder
- Low Brace
- **Knowledge Points – Water**  
Paddlers are aware of how the water flow impacts how they need to manoeuvre their craft

## Grade 1/2 – Paddle UK Whitewater Award

At this point, paddlers have been practising the strokes and techniques learnt on the Intro Course. They can be applied in the appropriate ways, and the appropriate times. Paddlers still occasionally need reminding of some concepts. Paddling forward in a straight line is no longer an issue. As a general guide, paddlers are looking to purchase a few 'quality of life' improvements. Neoprene Socks, good thermals, etc.

Paddlers have practised their paddling on the weirs in Salisbury and have attended a few Salisbury Loop paddles to practise longer-form paddles.

Paddlers can identify the qualified coaches and leaders in the club. They appreciate their experience and listen to their instructions. Where a coach or leader has to give the same instruction multiple times, paddlers recognise this indicates an area for development and actively work to improve.

Below is a summary of the skills we expect paddlers to have as an effective Grade 2 paddler. All of the previous skill requirements are still extant.

### **Before getting on the water**

- **Getting ready – Location**

Paddlers know how to check the current water level for the trip they are attending. They appreciate that the local water table can cause the river to rise or fall during the day. They know how to check the grade of the river they are paddling and can articulate what level is correct for their own ability. They can make hazard assessments based on information sources and can describe the types of features expected on Grade 1 and Grade 2 rivers.

- **Getting Ready – What to use**

Paddlers know how different craft designs (hull, fins, trim) impact their paddling.

- **Getting Ready – What to take**

Paddlers know what additional equipment would be useful to carry on the river. They can articulate what further equipment would be useful to have on the bank.

- **What to do in an emergency**

Paddlers appreciate the dangers posed by repeated immersion in cold water. They can demonstrate effective management of these risks. They understand the requirement for a first aid qualification, and know where to find a first aid kit.

- **Getting to the water**

Paddlers know how to organise a shuttle and which kit can be left at the get-on and which kit needs to be at the get-off. They know how to load and offload craft to/from vehicles safely and know how to secure craft to a vehicle.

- **Maturity**

Paddlers have a high emotional maturity. Whitewater kayaking is an extreme sport which requires a degree of mental and physical strength. Paddlers are able to react positively to setbacks, and in a stressful situation can remain calm and listen to instructions. Paddlers keep the coaches and leaders apprised of their current concerns and issues, not suffering in silence.

### **On the water:**

- **Knowledge Points – Paddling**

Paddlers can demonstrate an effective:

- Ferry glide
- Break In

- Break Out
- S Turn
- **Knowledge Points – Skills**

Paddlers can control where they want to be in the river. They can move slower than, faster than, or at the same speed as, the flow. They can change direction in the flow. Paddlers can maintain direction in the flow. They can choose a route down the river, and then execute that plan.

Paddlers should be competent at t-rescue and paddle presentation rescues – both as rescuer and rescuee. Paddlers are working towards a flatwater roll. They can demonstrate a low and high brace, and give reasons to use both. Once a roll is achieved, moving water rolls are occasionally attempted. A capsize/swim should become the last action after an attempted roll or failed rescue.
- **Knowledge Points – SUP**

Paddlers know how to manage height with respect to the features of the river. They understand when leashes are and are not appropriate, can select the appropriate leashes, and can confidently release themselves from a leash.
- **Knowledge Points – Swimming**

Paddlers can demonstrate effective defensive and offensive swimming. They can capsize and exit their boat in moving water. They have an awareness of where they are in the river and any imminent obstacles they might encounter post exit.
- **Knowledge Points – Paddling as a group**

Paddlers understand, obey, and relay river signals. They have an awareness of group dynamics and group safety and actively work to aid the leader in this. They also have an awareness of how different paddlers and different craft in the group use the water differently, and ensure sufficient space. Paddling off a great distance from the group, and not looking back when at the front, is not acceptable.

### **Attending Trips**

Paddlers have waterproof storage for their kit, that means it can go into a car without getting it wet. Paddlers are aware of the effort required to run club trips, and volunteer for small jobs, like rolling the kit trolleys back in, or squeegeeing the changing room floors. Where paddlers can drive, they are looking to purchase roof racks. Paddlers are active in sorting which vehicle they are travelling in and who is in that vehicle. Paddlers are aware of safeguarding requirements in cars. They help sorting kit and making sure it is packed into one of the vehicles. They are on time with all appropriate paddling kit.

### **Grade 3 – Paddle UK Moderate Whitewater Award**

At this stage, paddlers should be well practiced in attending club trips. They are self-sufficient in arranging kit and boat transport, can make independent assessment of their abilities before getting on water, and have an excellent foundation in whitewater technique. On Grade 1 and 2 they are seeking challenges, wanting to be pushed and working to improve. On Grade 3 water, they need to focus and occasionally make mistakes. These mistakes will **always** (if needed) result in a brace/roll attempt and will usually result in a recovery. Whitewater swims are very much the exception.

Paddlers are looking to complete externally recognised courses, such as PSRT, WWSR, Paddlesport Leader, Touring Leader.

All previous requirements are extant.

#### **Before getting on the water**

- **Getting ready – Location**

Paddlers can make hazard assessments based on information sources and can describe the types of features expected on Grade 3 rivers and Grade 4 features.

- **Getting Ready – What to use**

Paddlers can identify different pieces of safety equipment and can explain how they are used.

- **Getting Ready – What to take**

Paddlers no longer need assistance when getting ready for a trip. They have all of the personal equipment needed for the trip they are attending. This includes thermals, shoes and kit bags.

- **Getting Ready – Fitness**

Paddlers have the appropriate level of fitness for the duration of trip they are attending. They are able to complete the river trip, and are aware of the need to help keep drivers awake and alert on the return journey.

#### **On the water:**

- **Knowledge Points – Paddling**

Paddlers can demonstrate all skills from previous levels in the new water environment. Paddlers are aware of different river-running tactics. They can describe the benefits of eddy-hopping, and when it would be useful.

On the river, paddlers can identify river obstacles to avoid, and can choose their own line down a feature.

Paddlers can work as part of a team to create a successful session. They offer useful insights using their own experiences and knowledge.

- **Knowledge Points - Rolling**

Paddlers successfully roll on moving water 90% of the time. A brace is prioritised over a roll. Whitewater swims can and do occur when pushing their limits. They are not common, and are as a result of contact with dangerous features such as trees, undercuts, large stoppers etc.

- **Knowledge Points – Awareness**

Paddlers have situational awareness. They monitor their own performance and wellbeing, with help from the trip leader, to stay relaxed and in control. They have excellent observation and communication skills and use these to work as a team. Given the appropriate information, paddlers can make independent decisions surrounding their paddling, including when paddling a feature is not appropriate for them.

- **Knowledge Points – SUP**

Paddlers understand that swims are likely, they are very confident in the water, and communicate to others their plans and recovery requirements. Dynamic height management becomes essential for bigger features.

**Off the water**

Paddlers are contributing to the effort required to run club trips, they are offering to book dinner reservations, transport kayaks, or have qualifications that enable club activities (First Aid, PSRT, WWSR, Leader etc.).

## **Grade 4/5 – Paddle UK Advanced Whitewater Award**

Paddlers are an exemplar role model for other club members. Their paddling on lower grade rivers is near-faultless, and they demonstrate relaxed confidence in everything they do. When paddling higher grade rivers, they work effectively as part of a team. As a general guide, they own all of their own kit and are self sufficient away from the club. They have extensive experience of whitewater rivers, paddling a wide variety of rivers with different flows, volumes, and gradients. Paddlers have a WWSR qualification, and in some cases will have AWWSR. They carry their own safety equipment. They have other formal qualifications that demonstrate their experience and ability.

Paddlers can call upon a high level of situational awareness. They monitor their own performance and wellbeing to stay in control. They have excellent observation and communication skills and use these to work as a team.

Paddlers can rapidly make decisions to respond to new information and changes in the environment. They know where they are on a river, and can use navigational aids.

Paddlers can rescue a swimmer, boat, and kit. Where necessary, they set safety to aid them in this task.

Paddlers perform post-trip reviews without input from a coach. They evaluate their own performance and generate high quality takeaways that can be shared with others.

## **References**

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