

PLACID WATER STAR TESTS INTRODUCTORY NOTES



THE PLACID WATER STAR TESTS

"The Placid Water Star Tests are designed to provide a series of awards to recognise and encourage the development of a progression of canoe and kayak strokes and techniques to support PW touring and competition"

MANUAL HANDLING

21. All Canoeists need to raise their awareness of Manual Handling and that damage can occur to joints and muscles, particularly when they are moving or lifting people or any equipment related to the sport of Canoeing. This could, of course, include a body, especially when performing rescues. In addition, Risk Assessments of how to prevent harm and injury to paddlers should be undertaken as a matter of routine.

In Civil Law there is a Duty of Care towards your students and others who paddle. This includes, loss, harm, damage and injury. Coaches are charged with the care of paddlers, and as such, Coaches need to identify where there is a risk of the duty being neglected or abused.

The BCU has prepared an information leaflet which gives a brief outline of procedures to assess and evaluate Manual Handling operations. In addition, a one day Injury Prevention Course has been developed which should ensure that information in respect of lifting and carrying and all Manual Handling issues are being disseminated throughout the Coaching Service. (See Section 5)

TEST CERTIFICATE

1. These tests are for Placid Water Kayaks and Canoes (open cockpit craft designed for fast touring or racing). Open Canoe star tests (based on a progression of strokes and techniques necessary for white water touring) are described in leaflet CT.006 and Closed Cockpit Kayak star tests are described in leaflet CT.001.
2. The STAR TEST ENTRY FORM books are to be used by assessors. They are available free from the BCU Office at Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5AS, or from your National Association. Please make sure you indicate on the test entry form the type and level of test being undertaken by encircling the appropriate designation.
3. There is a poster which outlines the tests. This can be used on a school or club notice board.
4. CERTIFICATES and CLOTH BADGES will be issued, appropriate to the test taken, on payment by the candidate of the correct fee. There is NO FEE for a fail.
5. There are three ways of obtaining certificates and badges:
 - i) These can be purchased in advance by coaches holding the appropriate level of Coach award, from the BCU office at a reduced rate.
 - ii) The appropriate fee can be collected from each candidate and submitted, together with a list of FULL NAMES, GRADE OF TEST PASSED, and a SINGLE ADDRESS for the badges and certificates to be returned en bloc for presentation.
 - iii) The candidate can be issued with a Star Test Entry Form from the Star Test Entry Form Book which he or she forwards to the BCU office together with the appropriate fee. Details on how to operate the book of Entry Forms is printed on the cover. The BCU office does NOT require a file copy.
It is recommended that the candidates are given a Star Test Entry Form in every case to enable them, if they wish, to obtain a further badge or certificate. The coach need then only sign the form and mark the test passed, leaving the candidate(s) to complete name and address sections etc.
6. Candidates should be encouraged to apply for BCU Membership on the Star Test Entry Form. It is up to the assessor to give the candidate information about the fees. These are contained in the *BCU Members' Year Book*.

ASSESSING STANDARDS

7. In order to help achieve uniformity of assessing standards, sample questions and explanations of the requirements of the practical tests have been provided. **However**, assessors are expected to adopt a pragmatic approach in their assessment of candidates taking into account variation in paddlers style and physique.

CT/011/00/1



- 8. Candidates may attempt the test appropriate to their skill level. Where the lower level(s) of test have not been undertaken, however, the assessor should, at his or her discretion, ask for a demonstration of a cross-section of the techniques involved. **The candidate need purchase only the higher badge/certificate involved, however.**
- 9. Level 1 Coaches -Placid Water may test for 1 Star in the discipline related to their coaching qualification. Level 2 Coaches - Placid Water may examine 2 Star in the discipline related to their award, 1 Star Test in any other discipline for which they hold the 2 Star Test, and 2 Star in any other discipline for which they hold the 3 Star Test.
Level 3 Coaches - Placid Water and above may examine up to 3 Star in the discipline related to their award, 2 Star in any other discipline for which they hold the 3 Star Test, and any 1 Star. It is necessary to be a Level 3 Coach in the discipline concerned to test for 3 Star.

PRACTICAL NOTES

- 10. The Placid Water teaching progression involves the use of a range of boats which enable the paddler to develop good technique in a stable canoe or kayak before being introduced to the next stage - a faster more ambitious craft. The Placid Water Star Tests provide a range of awards for all paddlers at a Placid Water Club or Centre, competitors, tourists and coaches alike. To accommodate and encourage the many facets of Placid Water paddling it is important that individuals should be encouraged to progress through the range of boats as far as is appropriate to their paddling ability and ambition.
- 11. These tests are designed for performance in PW kayaks or canoes in moderate conditions. Allowance should be made if conditions are in excess of those stated.
- 12. Normally canoeists should be able to swim 50 metres in light clothing. Discretion may be exercised, however, in accordance with a coach's training and experience, where special circumstances exist.
- 13. The sample questions should be used as an example to demonstrate the level of question required for the test. The information needed to answer the questions is contained in *Canoeing the Fladbury Way* and the *BCU Canoeing Handbook*. Theory questions should relate to the paddlers experience: ie touring or competition.
- 14. Candidates can be awarded a Placid Water Star Test even if their disability stops them from completing part of the award. For full details please refer to the leaflet *CA011: Tests and Awards for Canoeists with Special Needs*.
- 15. The 'Kayak' Placid Water Star Tests are designed to be taken in a single kayak. They can, however, be taken in a double provided the candidates taking the test demonstrate the skills in both the front and rear seats of the kayak.
- 16. The 'Canoe' Placid Water Star Tests are designed to be taken in a double canoe as a pair. It is hoped, however, that assessors will be flexible in their approach if a candidate does not have a partner.

ENVIRONMENT

- 17. Canoeing is an exciting, adventurous, competitive and recreational activity from which much of the enjoyment and adventure comes from the natural environment around you. Every canoeist must remember to respect all wildlife and take care not to damage or destroy the environment by observing the Canoeist s Code of Conduct and the recommendations in the B CU leaflet *'Earning a Welcome'*.

POLLUTION WARNING

- 18. The test should be taken out of doors, but please note that some waterways are subject to serious pollution. Where there is reason to believe that the level of pollution is such as to render capsize drill potentially hazardous, alternative safer methods/locations (including swimming pools) may be used for those aspects of performance tests that require deliberate immersion.

DEFINITIONS

- 19. The term 'drive face' indicates the face of the blade that would pull against the water if the paddle were being used for normal forward propulsion. The other face of the blade is referred to as the 'back face'.
The 'on side' of the canoe is the side on which the paddle is normally placed. The 'off side' is the other side.

RECORDING OF PADDLING ACTIVITY

- 20. It is suggested that candidates are encouraged keep a log of their paddling activity. Personal paddling log books are useful for monitoring progress and can provide evidence of experience for coaching awards.



ONE STAR TEST - PLACID WATER KAYAK



Placid Water - One Star Test

AIM

To recognise and encourage the basic kayak skills for Placid Water.
To encourage enjoyable and safe paddling.

TYPE OF CRAFT

The test will usually be attempted in a stable touring kayak without a rudder. It can however be attempted in a ruddered boat (if so assessors will need to amend the content as appropriate).

VENUE

Sheltered water (not a swimming pool).

ASSESSOR

Level 1 Placid Water Coach or above

Level 2 Coach or above in alternative disciplines, who hold the Placid Water 2 Star Test or higher, may also assess this award.

THEORY

A question or two of a similar level should be asked under each heading

Equipment

Sample questions

What fittings should a PW kayak always have?

What should you wear before going on the water in Autumn?

How long should your paddle be?

Safety

Sample questions

What should you never do if you capsize a kayak?

Why should you not canoe alone?

Why should you keep a straight back when lifting a kayak?

Hypothermia / first aid

Sample questions

What could make a mild day seem cold to a canoeist?

Why is a waterproof cag or anorak important to a canoeist?

Environment and Access

Sample questions

Are All waterways open to the public?

If you found litter on the bank or shore, or floating in the water, what should you do?

What sort of things make a canoe trip on a quiet river or canal an enjoyable experience?

General

Sample questions

What are the main differences between a canoe and a kayak?

Who are the famous users of kayaks for hunting?

Who are the famous users of canoes?

PRACTICAL "A"

- 1 **Lifting and carrying the kayak.** The candidate must demonstrate good lifting and carrying principles using legs rather than the back. Assistance with lifting and carrying is encouraged.
- 2 **Launching and getting into the kayak.** The boat must be afloat. Balance must be maintained. The paddle must remain within reach or can be used to assist in embarking.
- 3 **Forward paddling over a 100m course** Candidates should show they are able to control the kayak in straight line without intermittent stopping. Some directional instability is allowed.



CT/011/00/1



- 4 **Stopping** This should be demonstrated in both directions. Opposite motion should be in evidence within four strokes.
- 5 **Rotate 360 degrees on the spot.** Turning the boat both clockwise and anti-clockwise using a combination of forward sweeps and reverse sweeps. The 'spot' can move, allowance should be made for the type of craft used by the candidate.
- 6 **Reverse paddle** Candidate should be able to demonstrate a reasonably accurate reverse paddle for 25 metres (by looking over their shoulder to where they are heading while they paddle)
- 7 **Paddle a figure of 8 course.** The candidate should paddle a prescribed figure-of-8 course using a combination of forward strokes and sweeps to demonstrate a basic level of steering control.
- 8 **Return to bank and disembark.** Candidates should control their approach to the bank and control their get out (avoiding damage to the boat or bank).

Demonstrate Satisfactory Beginnings in:

This section of the test is to establish with the candidates that there are more skills to learn thereby providing a lead in to the next test. Candidates are expected to make an attempt at the following skills but they do not affect the outcome of the assessment

- 1 **Moving sideways.** Some body rotation towards the paddling side should be in evidence. Blade to be well immersed. Paddle shaft probably not upright at this stage. Recovery of the blade through the air or sliced in the water is acceptable. Clear evidence of sideways movement should be in evidence but some bow or stern swing is acceptable.
- 2 **Preventing a capsiz.** Low recovery strokes should be demonstrated on both sides.
- 3 **Ruddering.** With forward movement of the kayak the paddle should be placed to one side of the craft with the blade almost covered. The kayak should be steered very slightly right and left.

Journeying

Provide evidence of a journey of 2 km.

TWO STAR TEST - PLACID WATER KAYAK

AIM

To recognise and encourage the improvement of basic skills required for Placid Water Kayak
To encourage enjoyable and safe paddling
Also to provide the level of personal skills required in kayak for a level 1 Coach (Placid Water Teacher)

TYPE OF CRAFT

A touring kayak or fast touring kayak with a rudder

VENUE

Sheltered water, (not a swimming pool).

ASSESSOR

Level 2 Placid Water Coach or higher. Level 2 Coach or above in an alternative discipline who holds the PW Kayak 3 Star Test.

THEORY

Equipment

Sample questions

What is an asymmetric paddle blade?

What is the advantage of an asymmetric paddle blade?

Why is a racing boat faster than a touring or short white water boat?



Safety

Sample questions

Why can it be dangerous to canoe on open water before you are sufficiently experienced?

Why are weirs dangerous?

What is Leptospirosis, and what precautions can you take against it?

Hypothermia / first aid

What (in simple terms) is meant by hypothermia ?

How is hypothermia avoided?

Why should you cover cuts and grazes with a waterproof dressing?

Environment

Sample questions

What is the best wildlife encounter you have had while canoeing?

What is the principle you should apply when you leave a picnic or camp site?

Access

Sample questions

Can you paddle your kayak on just any river or canal?

What would you do if someone told you you had no right to be canoeing where you are?

General

Sample questions

Name three different types of canoeing competition?

What is meant by 'white water' canoeing?

PRACTICAL "A"

- 1 **Launching** Candidate should demonstrate getting into the kayak without help. Assistance with lifting and carrying should be encouraged.
- 2 **Efficient forward paddling** Candidate should paddle around 200 metres at a cruising pace showing good posture and reotation. Any steering must be achieved by using the rudder.
- 3 **Reverse paddling** Candidates should demonstrate reasonably accurate reverse paddling to a prescribed point over a distance of approximately 25 metres, making use of the rudder.
- 4 **Moving sideways.** Candidate should paddle the boat sideways, keeping the boat under control (roughly parallel to the direction of movement).
- 5 **Preventing a capsize.** The candidate should show:
An effective low recovery stroke on both sides
Sculling when stationary to maintain balance (known as flattening out) by holding the paddle in the low brace position, and using the back of the blade, smoothly scull for support (non-controlling hand side only).
- 6 **Ruddering.** The candidat should be able to paddle a figure of eight course or equivalent using the boats rudder and mainly forward paddling strokes.
- 7 **Turning.** The candidate should demonstrate paddling the kayak up to a turning buoy, turning round the buoy and then paddle away. For example a low brace turn, should start with a sweep stroke on the oppo- site side and moving the rudder over followed by a low brace with the back of the blade on the water.
- 8 **Disembarking** The candidate should be in control of the approach to the bank and their exit.
- 9 **Securing** Using recognised knot(s) candidates should be able to demonstrate the ability to tie securely their kayak onto a roof rack or trailer.

PRACTICAL "B"

None

Demonstrate satisfactory beginnings in:

This section of the test is to establish with the candidates that there are more skills to learn thereby providing a lead in to the next test. Candidates are expected to make an attempt at the following skills but they do not affect the outcome of the assessment

- 1 **Edging** The candidate to demonstrate tilting the boat on the move away from the direction of the turn to assist steering.

Journeying

Provide evidence of a journey or race of 6 km.



THREE STAR TEST - PLACID WATER KAYAK



Placid Water - Three Star Test



AIM

To encourage and recognise the competent use of paddling skills in a Placid Water kayak.
To support responsible, enjoyable and safe paddling
Also to provide the level of personal skills required in kayak for a Level 2 Coach

TYPE OF CRAFT

A touring kayak or fast touring kayak with a rudder

VENUE

Sheltered water, (not a swimming pool) but see paragraph 18 of the Introductory Notes.

ASSESSOR

Level 3 Placid Water Coach or above.

THEORY

Equipment

Sample questions:

What are the main materials from which kayaks are made today?
What are the advantages/ disadvantages of zip and non zip spraydecks?

Safety

Sample questions:

What are the dangers of crossing a large lake or estuary?
What is the International River Grading System?
When should you be cautious of using a towline?
What should you carry on a trip in winter, and how do you keep it dry?

Hypothermia/first aid

Sample questions

What signs are there that someone is becoming hypothermic?
How do you treat someone with immersion hypothermia?
Do you have a first aid qualification? If not, do you know where first aid courses are run in your area?

Access

Sample questions:

What is an 'access agreement'?
What sort of behaviour is most likely to upset an access agreement?
What is meant by 'a navigation'?
What is the access situation at your regular paddling/training venue?

Environment

Sample questions:

What is Blue-Green algae?
What is the most distressing/disturbing wildlife encounter you have had whilst canoeing?
Who would you contact if you came across signs of serious pollution - eg oil, sewage, foul smells, dead fish and birds?

Planning

Sample questions:

What equipment would you need for a day tour?
What would you need to take to a race?
What preparation would you need to make before setting off to race or go touring?

CT/011/00/1

General

Sample questions:

Name a sprint regatta course.

What is the Placid Water progression?

How does the fetch and the slope of the beach affect the waves on the shoreline of a large lake?

Group awareness

Sample questions:

What should the group do if one of its members capsizes?

What is the best way to get an exhausted paddler back to base?

PRACTICAL "A"

1. **Lifting carrying and launching** Demonstrate lifting and portaging techniques and be able to launch safely and efficiently from any reasonable launching point. Help with lifting should be encouraged.
2. **Efficient forward paddling** The candidate should demonstrate the elements of good paddling technique. A committed catch, good rotation, leg drive, upright comfortable posture at a fast cruising pace whilst maintaining accurate control of the kayak. Common sense should be applied when judging paddling technique taking into account variation in physique and personal style.
3. **Reverse paddling** Accurate backward paddling making use of the rudder to steer a route prescribed by the assessor
4. **Turning whilst on the move** The candidate should demonstrate paddling the Kayak up to a turning buoy, turning around the buoy, and then paddle away. The candidate should edge their craft to assist the turn (tilting the boat away from the direction of the turn to help the manoeuvre). The turn should be initiated by a forward sweep stroke on one side and followed by the first part of a reverse sweep stroke on the other or bow rudder
5. **Moving sideways** (Static and on the move) Move the canoe sideways in both directions by means of sculling draw, draw on the move and hanging draw.
Sculling draw . Body well rotated. Paddle shaft vertical, blade deep in the water. An effective sideways movement must be in evidence without the kayak turning.
Draw on the move. The kayak, whilst moving forward, is to be pulled sideways from its course without turning (as if to avoid an obstacle) using a draw stroke.
6. **Supporting** Candidate should be able to demonstrate flattening out as well as low and high recovery strokes on the move.
In **sculling for support** the paddle should be kept low, to keep the boat on balance with confident commitment to the stroke.
Recovery strokes high or low should be demonstrated on the move and be followed by continued forward paddling.
7. **Securing** Secure the kayak to trailer, canoe rack or roof rack using a rope. Any practical system is acceptable but must use an efficient, recognised knot.
8. **Rescue a capsized canoeist from deep water** The candidate should carry out an efficient and controlled deep water rescue. Help from the person in the water is permissible.

PRACTICAL "B"

1. **Capsize with spraydeck.** A confident exit, first releasing the deck and then holding onto the kayak and swimming it to the bank.
2. **Wash Hanging** Candidate should demonstrate the use of stern or side wash.

Journeying

2 training runs of at least 10 km and one divisional marathon race / regatta or 3 trips of at least 10 km



FOUR STAR TEST - PLACID WATER KAYAK



Placid Water - Four Star Test



AIM

To encourage and recognise competent paddling in Placid Water kayak in a wide range of conditions
To support enjoyable and responsible paddling
Also to provide the level of personal skills required in kayak for level 3 Placid Water Coach award

TYPE OF CRAFT

A touring kayak or fast touring kayak with a rudder

ASSESSMENT and VENUE

The test should be taken on a course which ideally includes moving and open or exposed water. It seeks to test the competency of the candidate in conditions likely to be encountered at a sprint regatta, marathon, tour or touring trial on moving water (which could include weir shoots) and on open or exposed water.

ASSESSOR

Level 3 Placid Water Coach or above.who is an A1 Assessor

THEORY

Equipment

Show a good knowledge of kayak, paddle and personal equipment.

Safety

Be aware of the potential dangers in a wide variety of conditions

Hypothermia / first aid

Show a good understanding of immersion hypothermia, its causes and symptoms. Be able to deal with basic first aid incidents eg a cut forehead or hand. - or hold a first aid certificate.

Access and Environment

Be aware of the difficulties of paddling on British waters, and how to gain information on access to rivers and lakes. Be aware of the problems of canoeing on private waters and how great sensitivity needs to be shown when launching and landing i.e. residents, landowners, farmers, fishermen and other river users.

Planning

Show an ability to plan a trip or enter an A to B race

General

Be aware of the sources of weather forecasts and the effect of the weather on the water environment.

Group awareness

Group awareness and self control should be consistent with the demands of the water on which the test is based

PRACTICAL - MOVING WATER

1. **Forward paddling.** Throughout the test the candidate should demonstrate the elements of good paddling technique. A committed catch, good rotation, leg drive, upright comfortable posture at a fast cruising pace whilst maintaining accurate control of the kayak. Common sense should be applied when judging paddling technique taking into account variation in physique and personal style.
2. **Launching** The candidate should be able to demonstrate launching from a wide variety of situations including in flowing water and from a beach or lakeside. Candidates should use common sense in selecting the most sheltered part of the beach. Care should be taken of the rudder.
3. **Breaking-in and out.** The candidate should demonstrate a confident manoeuvre making full use of the waters flow. The assessors should use common sense in assessing the move, taking into account the type of boat used and the river conditions.
4. **Ferry glide, forward and reverse.** The candidate should demonstrate that by angling the boat to match the flow of the river they can manoeuvre their boat from side to side without any movement up or downstream.
5. **Demonstrate use of the water (upstream and downstream).** The candidate should demonstrate the use of the slack water and eddies when paddling upstream and make use of the swiftest flowing water when paddling down.

CT/011/00/1



6. **Demonstrate paddling into and with waves.** When paddling with the waves the candidate should use them rather than trying to fight them. Where possible enter the blade over the wave in front. Paddling head on into waves should be avoided where possible. Where the waves are not directly astern the candidate should demonstrate the ability to relax and go with the flow.
7. **Demonstrate turning using wind or waves.** The candidate should be able to make their turn when the ends of the boat are clear of the waves.
8. **Demonstrate dealing with beam wind or waves.** The type of boat used should determine how the candidate deals with beam waves. Racing craft should be allowed to ride over the waves (keeping the boat upright) whereas flat bottom boats will follow the shape of the wave. Support strokes should be effected into the wave.
9. **Support strokes.** The candidate should be able to demonstrate the ability to produce appropriate support strokes as necessary during the assessment.
10. **Getting out.** The candidate should be able to demonstrate getting out correctly at any suitable egress point. Including flowing water or a beach or lakeside.

Journeying

The candidate must give evidence of having taken part in three journeys / activities from the following. The three journeys / activities must include at least two of the categories:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| BCU Marathon Race | BCU Sprint Regatta |
| A Touring Trial | BCU Placid Water Tour |
| Club tour (minimum 4 hours paddling time - about 20k distance) | |