

## Club coaching curriculum timeframe

This document is a timeline or flight path of where paddlers could/should be as they progress at club level. However, each paddler's journey is personal to them and is affected by multiple factors, age, maturity (both mental & physical) and volume of sessions completed. Some may progress faster and slow their improvement later and others may take longer as they start earlier in the maturity cycle. It really is only a guide and as long as our paddlers are happy and exposed to good coaching and good competition, they will progress.

Therefore, it is the **coach's** responsibility to enable their learners/athletes to develop the skills required, so they need to have a framework of training to show/teach the paddlers these skills. We also **MUST** correct bad practice and be able to recognise why things are going wrong.

**Beginners group. Within the first two months they should be able to do the following:**

- Be able to swim with boat & paddles in light clothing prerequisite –
- Get in & out of a kayak un-aided in the **correct** way.
- Paddle a kayak sitting up – no laying down, legs together.
- Paddle forwards and backwards correctly (to a stop).
- Paddle and steer at the same time.
- Enter the landing stage without hitting or missing it.
- Not crash into each other.
- Follow instructions from their coach.
- Be able to put the boat in the water safely.
- Choose the correct paddles and know if they are upside down.
- Steer confidently in the direction planned and take avoiding action of others/obstacles.
- Assess the conditions to wear the appropriate clothing.

The above is dependent on the volume of sessions attended. Once a week and the above may well take longer, as too would a winter starter.

**Intermediate group handicap 60+ to 40** (*the handicap system is in the BC Racing handbook and is one second per minute stagger – i.e. the men's world champion would complete a certain course in 4 minutes, therefore is a 0 handicap, a 2 handicap would take +2seconds every minute, so completes the same course in 4minutes and 8seconds and so forth.*) **or high 30s. This can be from 2/3 months of starting and usually lasts a year – summer start, first winter and then back onto the water.**

**Your athlete must (should) be able to:**

- Turn up in plenty of time! This seems to get worse in teenage years.
- Recognise and set up their boat, including having their own wingnut and toggle.
- Be able to safely carry it to the water's edge.
- Be able to empty a boat out if capsized and get back in from a bank/beach etc.
- Hold their boat in a line with other paddlers/Never be behind other paddlers "*behind the line*"
- Steer a straight course without crashing or causing others to crash.
- Understand and act upon the difference between Up and Down stream.
- Be able to cope with washes, both stability and steering wise.
- Have experience of wash hanging.
- Be able to count strokes.
- Be able to accelerate their boat from standstill.
- Learn to try hard/work until it hurts.
- Experience crew boats:
  - Be able to move their own seat - keep in time.

### **Handicap 40 to 30 (possibly faster)**

**20 + handicap group. As above plus:** do it independently

**Your athlete must be able to:**

- Be aware of and execute warm up routines.
- Understand paddling technique and how-to self-check for errors.
- Ask questions of their coach to progress their learning.
- Move around a wash-hanging group without crashing/falling off.
- Understand and execute racing turns.
- Demonstrate the ability to cross a moving river/know when to cross etc.
- Understand race tactics.
- Be able to count strokes within a minute to gauge effort.
- Build mental strength and emotional resilience.
- Have the ability to focus, and plan ahead.
- Eat, sleep, train and organise themselves to maximise outcomes.

**10 + handicap group. As above plus** do it consistently and to a higher standard

**Your athletes must be able to:**

- Understand and execute nutrition and hydration.
- Understand their own strengths & weaknesses & build upon & mitigate against these.
- Try "flat out" each session more than once, and for the whole effort.
- Try race plans and tactics – race faster boats (give them a go – wash hang etc.).
- Survive being the slowest in the group.

- Practise dominating the group.
- Practise winning the hard and the easy way.
- Go head to head with a faster competitor.
- Give upcoming athletes their help.
- Build their mental strength by making their life harder/start behind/on the outside/taking a worse wash etc.

**0-10 handicap group. As above plus** do it constantly and to a higher standard

**Your athlete must be able to:** articulate what they want to achieve - train hard – be honest with themselves about their performance and progression.

**The coach must explain/educate and give opportunities for the following**

**Speed work:** is about improving your speed not winning the effort, therefore DON'T speed up before the go - you must slow back down before the next "go". You are practising accelerating your boat – it's hard – a rolling start or speeding up at "5 to go" isn't what these sessions are about. Winning is not the goal, learning to go fast is. You must practise keeping the paddle in the water and not hitting the water or pulling a half-submerged blade. Your rate should increase as a response to the boat going faster, and not because you are stabbing or short stroking.

**Lactic tolerance sessions:** the idea is to suffer! To get your body in the window of working in oxygen deprivation, therefore you cannot do one effort on, one off, or one effort every set and achieve the stated aims. The idea is that you will get slower and slower and your arms turn to rock and your legs to jelly, only then can your body (and brain) learn better to cope or process/recover quicker.

**Endurance work:** the idea is to go as fast as you can for the set distance (increasing your cardiovascular fitness), NOT to race the start, slow down and burn the end. You can take leads and wash hang to keep the speed/effort high but not just to cruise and burn off to win. These are good opportunities to go head to head off the washes, try different race paces, counting your strokes against the watch so you can know your paddle rate at a given speed and be able to transfer this to a regatta course.

**Group wash hanging:** depending on your situation don't always take the easy wash. You will not always be the fastest person in the race (even if you are the eventual winner), practice being in the 5<sup>th</sup>, find rolling waves at the back, go around the outside of bends, climb waves efficiently and make sure you are relaxing more than those around you – compare your paddle rate to theirs and slow it down. If you are the weaker member of the group don't just stop when you are coming off the group, look for the next rolling hill, come wide of the group.

**Chase races:** these are essential to practise chasing down groups after a portage/turn etc. Learn how to move around the waves and not just over them; learn how to run down a wave either gaining speed or conserving energy; feel what it's like on the side wash of someone catching others and see how easy or hard it gets as they go downhill whilst you are not. Learn to move in and out on the wash, when to cross over, how the washes interact with the bank, shallows and other obstacles, learn to read the signs, the light and dark of the waves. DO NOT just paddle up the middle of the river in flat water to win.

**Crew Boats (Mixed):** if you can learn to run a mixed K2, it definitely improves your K1 also. They can be uncomfortable; the other paddler might not do what you want but they are brilliant at teaching both paddlers how best to run that particular boat. The washes are bigger, they can be harder to move around a group and it's all good experience.

**Weights:** being stronger doesn't make you faster, being able to transfer that strength into your paddling might! Try to replicate as much as possible your overall paddle movements and the muscles used and don't concentrate on one set of muscles, you are a whole system not one muscle. For instance, why would you bench press with a different width grip to your paddles? Don't forget or neglect your stabilisers! Use free weights over a machine – most importantly be safe! Only do exercises that are going to benefit your paddling.

**Rest:** the idea of training is to push yourself to your limits (and over) and recover and repeat. If you don't try hard, you'll only improve slowly to a limited amount. However, rest and recovery are the parts which allow the improvements. You must train to your physical limit, eat well, remain hydrated and sleep properly. Especially in the crucial teenage years when you experience maximum growth but also must balance training with school exams.

**Mental training:** most people's bodies are limited by their head. You must train the brain as much as the body, positive thoughts and mindset aid improvements. However, do not lie to yourself, be honest and critical about your performance, not you as a person.

Practise makes permanent (not perfect), practise giving up in training makes it easier to repeat in a race. Practise winning and the same applies. If you know you are weak in the head find ways to change your mindset. Winning in K2, or just ask for help.

Learn to relive the day's session/race. Ask yourself what went well, what went wrong and what would you do differently next time? You must learn to recall what was going on so that you learn to concentrate in the moment.

**Goal setting:** you should have an aim. It might be short term or long term, but you need to aim towards something. Discuss with your coach how to get there, build a plan (it'll change) and check your progress against your targets, even if you don't write it down sharing it means you take responsibility and ownership and moves you one small step closer.

**Enjoy yourself:** what is your motivation? Find out what it is you enjoy and keep checking you are enjoying it. There are going to be days you hate but they should be easily outweighed by the good days. If they aren't you need to change something.