

3 Star White Water – Training Notes

At 3 Star the candidate is now classed as an intermediate paddler. They must be at home in their boat, both on flat water and moving water. Flat water can mean anything from a small lake to a more exposed area with waves and wind or a slow moving river. However the skills they have learnt to control their boat in this reasonably closed environment are now transferred to rivers with a reasonable flow and rapids up to grade 2. This is an open environment where ability to read the river, make appropriate decisions, select the correct skills and then carry them out becomes necessary.

Decisive actions and decision-making is important; doing nothing is not an option as they will drift into dangerous situations or put others into compromising situations. This element of working with others becomes important. They are not responsible for a group on the moving water, but they should be aware of their peer's and help them by discussing tactics and giving way as and when necessary. Coaching this important aspect will be an essential element combined with the hard skills in dealing with a moving river.

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

A.1 Lifting, carrying & launching

Training should aim to develop good lifting and carrying techniques amongst students. An understanding of why certain lifting and carrying techniques are more appropriate than others e.g. spine in line, slide and glide etc, as well as an awareness of the importance of sharing the load whenever possible should be developed. This training should also incorporate loading and unloading boats from trailer, roof racks and other common storage facilities. Students should be trained in launching and landing from a range of reasonable access/egress points e.g. pier, steps, high riverbank. This aspect is the progression from 2 Star.

A.2 Efficient forward paddling.

Students should understand the key points of good forward paddling technique and the importance of engaging the larger muscle groups of the body, not just relying on their arms. This is a consistent theme and should be built on from 2 Star. A relaxed but efficient style should be encouraged.

Acceleration; students should work on the ability to

- Accelerate from a stationary position
- Change pace at the appropriate moments

They should understand the importance of acceleration e.g. when paddling upstream, on leaving an eddy and powering through a shoot of water to get above the eddy.

Posture and use of correct muscle groups; students should understand its importance.

The ability to fully control the boat.

The students should experience paddling up simple rapids using good paddling technique and use of eddies and ferry glides to help their progress. The rapid needs to be appropriate e.g. deep enough so that a good clean paddle stroke can be applied. Clearly the trainer needs to be able to demo this first so they fully understand the likely problems.

A.3 Reverse over a fig of 8 course.

Accuracy as well as efficiency is the key. The ability to paddle a reverse figure of eight course requires the students to have developed a range of reverse paddling strokes and techniques. It is for this reason that it is included in the test. During training the students must have been introduced to a wide variety of strokes and techniques. Wind awareness and boat trim (particularly in short boats) will again play an important underpinning role in a skilful performance.

A.4 Moving sideways both static and on the move:

Sculling draw.

Students should understand why the body should be well rotated, the paddle shaft vertical and the blade deep in the water. Appropriate edging to help the boat move sideways should be understood. Obviously at this level, sideways movement should be efficient with little or no yawing and if it does, then the students should know how to correct this quickly.

Draw on the move.

At this level a continuous fluid movement should be evident.

Student should be encouraged to experiment introducing the stroke into the normal forward paddling cycle. This should be co-coordinated and smooth, with a clear movement of the boat sideways and yet the boat should continue moving forward on its new path with little loss of forward speed.

Hanging draw

Students should appreciate the role that the boats speed has on an effective side slip and how they can maintain this speed using fine adjustment of blade angle in combination with boat trim and edge.

All the above skills need to be performed on both sides.

A.5 Supporting, both static and on the move

Key here is a range of skills. Students need to understand why they would choose one skill over another and obviously be able to perform them on both sides. They should be off balance and the paddler should keep their actions within their 'safety box'. Again an understanding of this concept is important.

A.6 Rolling on flat water.

The ability to roll is key at 3 Star. However it is appreciated that this skill may be new, or have been learnt in a swimming pool and rarely done outside. Therefore helping students transfer this skill into an open water setting is important. They

certainly do not have to be perfect. However in the end to pass the test, they do need to be able to roll.

Practical skills: Moving water.

This should be conducted on a section of moving water of grade 1 to 2. Students need to be led down a sections of grade 2 and they should be able to make easy eddies as directed by the leader. However on a sections of grade 1 water they should perform the following skills

A.7 Breaking in and out

Students should experience the ability to choose a suitable technique to get into and out of eddies successfully, with effective use of speed, angle, edge, trim, timing, dynamic balance and good body rotation. With regard to body rotation looking for 'future water' when turning should be understood and evident. Eddies on both sides of the river should be used.

A.8 Ferry gliding

Working on forward (upstream) ferry glides only. The students should experiment crossing a consistent grade 2 flow without any major loss of height, maintaining the ferry angle and making adjustments in ferry angles as required i.e. to cross eddy lines.

Students require considerable training on moving water so that they can develop the skills needed to cope with this 'open environment'. Training in a range of circumstances will be necessary.

Note - that reverse or downstream ferry gliding is not part of the test, but it would be worth introducing it so that the students can practise the skills learnt when facing upstream. It can really help with kinaesthetic awareness, an aspect that needs to be evident in all moving water paddling.

Part B – Rescue Skills

B.1 Deep-water rescue

Students should train in an effective rescue of another paddler, returning them into their kayak in deep water is required. This will be worked on flat or very gently moving water. The type of rescue is not important here but manual handling is important and students should understand why it is better to request help from the paddler in the water if at all possible. However a range of techniques should be explored so that the students can select the most appropriate for them at the time. Boats should always be fitted with 'full' buoyancy so as to help alleviate manual handling issues.

B.2 Towing

Students should be introduced to contact tows so that a tired paddler can be moved to a safe environment.

A simple technique is all that is required. E.g. The tired paddler can simply hold the bow of the rescuer, but must keep their boat parallel and the rescuer pushes them a short distance.

This could be done off the stern but normally better off the bow, as the rescuer can see and talk to the 'tired' paddler. Training should look at the advantages of the use of a sling. A large sling is necessary and it must only be put over one arm so that a release is quickly and easily achieved. A towline should not be allowed due to possible dangers of its use on moving water and the candidate should be aware of the problems and why it is not to be used. Awareness of a safe environment is key here. Just paddling the casualty to the bank may not be appropriate if it is tree covered for instance. Drifting downstream to an appropriate spot might be a better strategy.

B.3 Eskimo Rescue

Students should work on an efficient and safe means of approaching a capsized paddler. They must be aware of the need not to crush the hand of the victim against the side of the boat and yet be able to quickly and accurately move in to help from approx 5m away. Both styles of presentation bow and paddle should be used and practised.

B.4 Throw line

Training should include a lot of practice at throwing lines to rescue a swimmer 10m from the bank.

- The line should reach the swimmer first time
- should be performed in a time limit of 1 minute from opening the bag
- A dynamic and safe stance should be evident when the swimmer takes hold of the line
- A suitable stance should be taken (Legs flexed, feet well spread and ready to take the load) though direct belays if available could also be used.

Part C – Safety, Leadership & Group Skills

C.1 Personal risk management

C.2 Awareness of others

Training needs to ensure that students have the experience and judgement required to safely operate as a group, on grade 1 water. They should practise the ability in identifying hazards and choosing suitable lines. They should understand the use of suitable equipment for a days journey and they must demonstrate good river etiquette i.e. not hogging eddies or pulling out directly into the path of a descending paddler.

Students should understand and be aware of the importance of what is happening to them and others around them. They do not need to be responsible for others but they should work together and help each other through communication techniques and physically moving out of the way to allow others to perform manoeuvres e.g. breaking out.

C.3 Paddle a section of grade 2 water as part of a led group

A range of water conditions is important. Students should experience paddling on canals, lakes, smooth gentle rivers as well as rivers up to grade 2. They should also understand the importance of map work and strategies for keeping together in a range of conditions.

Part D Theory:

Students should be at least familiar with answers to the sample questions outlined in the Assessors notes.

