

Paddle Power Sports Hall Regatta

A new concept by the BCU, the PaddlePower Sportshall Regatta is designed to get young people into paddlesport, without the need of any paddle-specific equipment. This is an exciting new development that forms a part of the Canoe England Schools Competition Framework. It is designed to develop canoe specific skills with equipment that the majority of schools will have access to, and challenge young people in preparation to experience canoeing on water.

This has recently been trialled at The Westgate School, Winchester with over 150 nine and ten year olds taking part.

The concept is simple – complete a series of challenges using everyday school equipment, in teams, and score each one, to get a winning team. Activities develop co-ordination, teamwork and some canoe specific skills.

At The Westgate School, Head of PE, Rob Wylie (Ex GB Slalom & Wildwater Racing team member) had 40 Year 10 Sports Leaders to lead the activities. Over 2 afternoons, the year 5 pupils were put through their paces, working in groups of 6-8. The stations included: 'Rescue throw' – practising an underarm throw over the head of a swimmer using a beanbag; 'Canoe Polo pass' – using a chest pass and aiming at a target; 'Crew boat Stagers' – getting pupils used to working in partnership as in a C2 or K2. Pupils also had the use of Canoe England Southern region's Kayakpro ergos and tried to get as far as possible in 30 seconds. The activities all try to replicate either paddling specific movements, such as the rescue pass, or develop paddling specific motions – Seated rotations used to encourage pupils to develop a kayaking rhythm. The feedback from the pupils taking part was very positive – they enjoyed all the activities, the challenge of them and the different activities that they participated in.

The afternoons were a great success – both for our year 10 students who lead the activities, but also to inspire the year 5's and introduce them to canoe sport. With the right follow up activity, and the development of school-club links, this is a perfect way to increase awareness of our sport.

