



TESTS AND AWARDS FOR CANOEISTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

THE POLICY STATEMENT

The BCU supports the promotion of canoeing for people with special needs and encourages them to take the BCU tests of personal performance. The Union's policy is to avoid a separate system. Where a specific disability prevents a candidate from completing a particular part of a test, the ASSESSOR may still give the certificate, so long as she/he believes that the candidate has received appropriate coaching and is, therefore, performing to the best of their ability. In addition, the candidate should show that even though they cannot perform the skill, they understand the technique and its purpose. Approached this way, awards help give canoeists with special needs confidence and improved self esteem, and of most importance, credit for what they have achieved.

IMPLEMENTATION

Whilst most Coaching Service members are aware of the above policy, there are some who are not, and there are many who are unsure of its implementation. Hopefully, the following will assist the understanding of all members with regard to both policy and implementation.

Candidates who cannot perform a part of the test.

There are many reasons why the above may apply. A blind paddler will have some difficulty in directional paddling. A paddler with a physical disability may not have the strength or the balance to perform certain strokes, and so on.

Usually the objective for the ASSESSOR must be to establish, to their satisfaction, that the candidate can perform all parts of the requirements. Where it is apparent that a disability - sensory, physical or mental - is going to limit the candidate's ability to perform a part, or parts, of the test, then the assessor needs to be satisfied that the candidate:

'after proper and appropriate coaching is unable to complete a specific part of the test, but knows how the skill is performed and for what purpose'.

The candidate's involvement in an appropriate coaching programme, before an exception to a part of a test or award is given, is essential if the BCU policy is to have credibility.

With Special Resources Candidates can perform for the Test or Award.

There may be a number of reasons for applying the above. In particular certain difficulties have been overcome when paddlers have made adaptations to craft, seats and backrests or to paddles. In some cases this means using totally different styles of craft to those usually used, eg Rob Roy kayaks, or Caranoes. Such craft do not perform in the same way as the more usual kayaks used. A capsized in a Rob Roy does not permit for the following of the usual 'underwater drill' for example.

Some paddlers with physical disabilities get on very well with hand paddles instead of the conventional blades. Quite obviously the rules for paddle presentation for some strokes cannot apply with hand paddles.

Again, the assessor needs to be confident that in using such different equipment the paddler is performing to the best of his/her ability subject to appropriate coaching.

The Certificate

It has been decided by BCU Coaching UK that the Certificate for a test, given to someone who was unable to perform part or parts of the conditions, ***will not have any comments or other statement on the Certificate to indicate that they were unable to complete a part or parts of the test.***

However, the assessor should instruct such candidates in their responsibility to:

1. Not tackle any activity that their certificate might indicate they are capable of, but which they know their disability may impede.
2. Tell any activity leader of their disability if they believe the disability may impede their ability to take part in the activity appropriately and safely.

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Responsibility

The Leader

In some instances it is apparent that the holder of a test or qualification has a disability. In this case the leader of the activity is advised to discuss with the award holder the implications of his /her disability for the activity.

The Paddler

Some disabilities, which may or may not, have prevented the paddler from performing parts of the test, are often not apparent to the observer. These may be medical conditions such as Diabetes or Epilepsy. It is the responsibility of individual paddlers to disclose to the activity leader the implications of his/her whole condition relative to the activity they are undertaking.

Candidates with a Learning Difficulty

It is recognised that some paddlers with a learning difficulty may be able to perform the parts of a test or award within, or shortly after the coaching session. However they are likely to lose the skill, either because they have been learning a new skill or because in the period of time since learning the skill they have forgotten it.

For these persons it is acceptable for them to be assessed for the test or award on a 'modular' basis. That is, they may be tested after coaching each part of the test or award. It is advisable for the assessor to devise some form of record keeping system that allows for this. Once all parts of the test have been assessed the certificate is completed and awarded in the usual way.

In these circumstances the section on 'Responsibilities' should be studied, and either the paddler, or a parent or carer, assume the responsibility to inform the activity leader as appropriate.

BCU POLICY REGARDING THE AWARDING OF COACHING QUALIFICATIONS TO PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

In the situation where an individual wishes to obtain a coaching qualification who has a history of diabetes, the following criteria must be met:

1. That they undergo regular medical reviews, at least once a year, by a specialist medical consultant.
2. That the individual's diabetic condition is stabilised through diet, oral medication or insulin.
3. That the individual will request their General Practitioner or Consultant to confirm the status of his /her condition.
4. That any changes in medication, which in the opinion of their medical adviser could affect the stability of their condition, should lead to supported coaching situation, or a break in coaching for six months or until the medical advisor confirms that their condition is once more stabilised.
5. Similarly should any changes in circumstance arise, such as an operation or major injury or illness which causes instability in the individual's diabetic condition, then the same recommendations as at '4' should apply.
6. That the individual's coaching award is limited to three years to coincide with the return of the completed questionnaire updating the status of their condition. Whereupon the coaching office can arrange for a re-issue for a further three years in the event of nil change, or seek advice in the event of changed condition and make alternative arrangements such as reduce the period of the award or suspend the award.
7. That it remains the individual's personal responsibility to notify their National Association of any change in his/her circumstances.

In the case of an existing Coaching Service member who develops diabetes, then they are obliged to notify their National Association Coaching Office. They may be required to move to a supported coaching, or 'frozen' status, situation subject to the previously stated criteria coming into effect.