



Rafting

Flat Water Raft Racing Award

Award Description

This award is designed to introduce you to the raft racing specific skills which create an enjoyable and safe experience on the water.

Extended Award Description

Your Flat Water Raft Racing Award will give you the ability to enjoy raft training and racing in a flat water environment. You will explore the factors which create a safe experience on the water, developing your skills in raft movement control, pace and stroke technique to effectively apply in a team environment. You will understand the correct use and set up of equipment and, through experience, expand your knowledge of official race rules and race tactics. Your award should be seen as a sound basis for independently building the experience and expertise associated with Stadium Rafting Racing Award holders.

Award Content

1. Location

When heading to the water we should have an understanding of our rafting location and how we will access it. Some factors we may consider are:

Factor: Water and weather conditions.

We may need to determine: What are the current water levels? What is the weather forecast for the time we are on the water? How might the wind speed and direction affect us? What is the water quality and how could this affect the team wellbeing? What precautions can be taken to stay healthy on and around the water?

Factor: Venue Rules and Restrictions



We may need to know: Are there any specific rules or restrictions for this venue? Who else will be on the water? What is the etiquette around fellow water users? Where are we allowed to access the water?

Factor: Access

We may need to know: Best lifting techniques and if any aids are available to help us get the raft on and off the water. How can we work as a team to get safely in and out of the boat?

2. Getting Ready

Before getting to the water we must choose suitable kit and equipment and have the correct knowledge to use it. Key points we may consider are:

What will we wear?

What are the clothing options available to us as rafters? How might external factors affect which clothing we choose? Are we confident in the use of our chosen personal safety equipment?

What will we use?

What are the different equipment options available and why might we choose one over the other? How do we use our equipment? What do we do if there is a problem with it?

Have a think about what additional equipment might be useful to have access to on the bank.

How else can we prepare?

What muscles will we be using and how can we warm them up before going on the water? What warm up techniques can we use when we get on the water? Why is it important that we do this? What equipment might we need to aid our warm up? Do individual people in the group have different warm up needs and how can they be met? What can we do mentally, as individuals and as a group, to prepare for our time on the water?



3. Working as a Team

Being part of a team brings additional considerations into play. We must be able to stay safe as individuals as well as having the ability to assist our team mates. An understanding of how each team member influences the overall performance of the raft is important.

Consideration: The team makeup

What we might observe: What is the size and demographics of the team?
How might this affect us when we train?

Consideration: Team Positioning

We may need to determine: How best to use the positioning of individuals to balance the raft? How can we use body positioning to balance the raft? How do people's experience levels affect where they are most effective? How does the raft look in the water?

Consideration: Safety and rescue

We may need to know: How we can save ourselves and others from the water? What dangers might be associated with helping to save others? How do we perform a flip and re-flip drill as a team or individual? What equipment would we need for this exercise?

4. Raft Racing Skills

When rafting we should be in control. Key skills to achieve that control include us staying relaxed, understanding how to move the raft, using a variety of strokes and knowing how to use pacing effectively.

Skill: Paddling in a straight line

We may need to know: Which strokes can we use to achieve this? What are the benefits and disadvantages of these strokes? How can the team work together to make them effective?

Skill: Steering the raft



We may need to know: Which strokes can we use to steer the raft? How can we use these strokes to spin or zig-zag the raft? How can we combine different strokes to achieve this? Who will determine which strokes we are using and when?

Skill: Pacing

We may need to know: What are the benefits or disadvantages of a faster or slower stroke? When would we change the pace? Who determines the pace? What are the effects, benefits and disadvantages of usage of power up and power down?

5. Racing Rules

Rules for raft racing are set by the International Rafting Federation. We should gain an understanding of these rules as we prepare to take part in competition. The ideal way to gain this is through experience on the water of both head to head and flat water slalom racing.

We may need to know: How we can get involved in competition? Where can we find information about British Rafting and the International Rafting Federation? What are the rules for different racing types and how does the scoring system work? What tactics might we use in races and what penalties may be incurred?

6. After the Rafting Session

Every rafting session is an opportunity for learning and improving. We can create a positive impact on our future experiences by performing a good post-rafting assessment.

Discuss the experience: As we are working as a team it is good to discuss how each individual feels the session has gone. What could we have done differently? What went well? Were other teams on the water; can we learn from them? How did our choice of equipment and team position affect the experience?



Consider what we will take away: We could also think about things from a personal perspective. What skills would we like to focus on next time? How do we feel our contribution affected the overall team performance?

7. Future Development

Each rafting session further expands our skills and knowledge, creating a more enjoyable experience on the water. With no two experiences ever the same, we never stop learning.

Continually evaluating the choices we make creates a natural evolution of decision making ability. When we reach a certain point in this, it may be worth considering moving onto the Stadium Raft Racing Award or River Raft Racing Award.