

Stand up Paddleboard

SUP White Water Award

Award Description

This award is designed to introduce and progress your ability for an enjoyable and safe day out on white water on a Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP).

Extended Award Description

Your Stand Up Paddleboard White Water Award will give you the ability to apply your choices to a successful day on rivers of up to grade 2 and support you in the understanding and use of the fundamentals in SUP white water paddling. You should be confident when looking at the factors which affect our decisions on where and when to go out and create a proficient use of skills and equipment to be in control throughout our day on the river. You will expand your knowledge of dealing with mishaps; our own or those of others, so you are a competent member of the team.

Note: British Canoeing Awarding Body does not endorse that Stand Up Paddleboards are used on weirs. Arrangements should be planned to get out well above any weir and getting on the water should be well below the construction.

Award Content

1. Location

To have an enjoyable day out on the river, we need to make some key decisions to ensure we choose the right river at the right time.

Key factors influencing our decisions include the water levels, the grade of water, the weather, our fellow paddlers and features of the location we choose. We can take each of these factors into consideration and ask ourselves some questions to ensure the correct decisions are made:

Factor: River conditions

We may need to know: What is the current water level? Is this level safe for our ability? What could affect this? What is the local water table doing? Is the river likely to rise or fall as we are paddling? Are there any tributaries that could affect the river we are paddling? How might we find out this information? What is the grade of the water we are going to be paddling on? Does the grade change at any point? Is this the correct grade for our ability? How can we find information on water grades? What features would we expect to see on Grade 2 or 3 water? Are there any hazards along our way that we need to be aware of?

Factor: Weather conditions

We may need to know: What is the forecast for the day? How will this impact our paddle? Will the forecast change our clothing decisions? Will the forecast impact on the safety precautions we take?

Factor: Access and environment

We may need to determine: What restrictions might there be on the water we are paddling on? Where will we access/egress the water? What environmental factors might affect this decision? How would we direct support to us in an emergency situation? How can we reduce our impact on the environment and animals around us?

2. **Getting Ready**

Before getting to the water, we must choose suitable clothing and equipment. Key points we may consider are:

What will we wear?

What are the clothing options available to us? Why might we choose one over another? Are we confident in the use of our chosen personal safety equipment?

What will we use?

What are the different equipment and board options available and why might we choose one over the other? How might different design/type impact our paddling?

Note: Due to the inherent high risk, any leash system on a white water environment is not advised.

What will we take?

What additional equipment might be useful to carry on the river with us? What safety kit would be useful to have with us?

3. At the Water

Before we set out on our journey, we need to be confident in our ability to deal with the complications it might bring. A river is usually a shared space; we must also be aware of other users and consider how we will safely get on the water.

Consideration: Other users - we sometimes paddle in busy areas. We may need to share the water with swimmers, kayakers and anglers, amongst others. To do this safely, an 'etiquette' amongst these users has developed to minimise conflict and help everyone enjoy the environment. It is also important to know something about the others we are paddling with.

We may need to consider: Who else is in the area? Are we using a managed or supervised venue? What is the etiquette here? Where can we park and change considerably to other users? Who else is paddling with us? What is their current ability? Are we aware of their motivations?

Consideration: Safety and rescue

We may need to know: How can we protect ourselves and others from any potential hazards? What damage to our health might repeated immersion in cold water cause? How can we help prevent this becoming an issue? What would we do if someone we are paddling with gets really cold or overheats? What potential injuries might we need to treat? How might we do this? What additional safety equipment might be useful to carry and have access to?

Consideration: Getting to the water

We may need to determine: How are we going to get to the access point and do we need to organise a shuttle? What is the best way to carry, load and secure our SUP to protect ourselves or others from injury and prevent unnecessary damage? How will we get our SUP and additional equipment to the water? Are the water and weather as expected? What river factors do we need to take into consideration before we get on?

4. SUP Skills

SUP white water paddling is a dynamic activity taking place in an ever-changing environment. We need to be able to manoeuvre our craft proactively around the river. Key features of being in control include us maintaining control of our body alignment through all height changes. We need to be able to drive and control our SUP by maintaining the tripod when bi laterally paddling.

Skill: Nose drive

We may need to consider: How can we keep the nose of the SUP in check whilst accelerating through features? What techniques might we use to help us with this? How can we gain momentum whilst on the move and from a stationary stance?

Skill: Crossing flow

We may need to consider: When might we need to stop or cross flows? What types of flow might we need to cross? How can our speed, angle, edge, timing

and use of posture impact the outcome? How can we look to future water to make our crossing successful? Which foot should we be leading with?

Skill: Maintaining direction

We may need to consider: What factors will we need to consider to keep our SUP tracking? How will we effectively use linked strokes and foot rotations to maintain direction? How can we use the water to help us maintain direction?

Skill: Changing direction

We may need to consider: Which river features can we use to assist us in changing direction? How will we spot and use them? Which strokes might we use to change direction? How else can we aid a change of direction?

Skill: Running the river

We may need to consider: How can we best choose our route down river and identify features that we want to use that aid us? What features do we need to avoid? How can we use our forward paddling to drive our SUP effectively to where we want to be?

Skill: Dealing with mishaps

We may need to consider: What is our strategy to get back on course and in control? What can we do to prevent getting pushed over? Do we get down before we fall down? How would we safely remount our SUP or get others back to shore or back onto their SUP? How would we rescue someone who has become unconscious? How would we retrieve loose kit, equipment or boats? What factors might affect our decisions on how we retrieve these?

5. After the Session

Every SUP white water session is an opportunity for learning and improving. We can use every session to aid us in our development by reflecting on our session.

Look around: Have conditions changed whilst we were out on the water? Was that expected? Did anything else occur which was not expected whilst on our session? How did we deal with that?

Watching what others do: How was our session in relation to others? Why did we/they have good lines down the river? Are we able to relate their skills to ours?

Consider what you will take away: What have we learnt today? What can we focus on next time?

6. Future Development

Each day we spend SUP paddling we further expand our skills and knowledge. In SUP steady, gradual development is encouraged 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 and skills. When we reach a certain point, it may be worth considering moving onto the SUP Paddle Surf Award.