



# Racing

## Racing Explore Award

### Award Description

This award is designed to help you have fun and feel confident in a racing canoe or kayak at the start of your journey into racing.

### Advanced Award Description

Your Racing Explore Award will give you the ability to apply your choices to an enjoyable racing experience, developing forward paddling technique and basic racing boat skills in both single and crew canoes and kayaks. You will create a proficient understanding of appropriate equipment usage and boat set up. Learning to train for, and compete in, entry-level marathon and sprint competitions. Your award should be seen as a sound basis for building the experience and knowledge associated with Racing Perform Award holders.

### Award Content

#### 1. Location

Racing takes place in a variety of water environments and conditions vary. In order to have an enjoyable training/racing session we need to have some key knowledge on our location. We take a variety of factors into consideration and can ask ourselves some questions to ensure appropriate decisions are made:

**Factor:** Weather – wind speed and direction have an impact on us as paddlers.

**What we might observe:** Which direction and how strong is the wind and how will this affect our training/racing session?

**Factor:** Water conditions



**We may need to know:** What are the current water levels? Are they due to increase or decrease? How will this affect our training/racing session?

**Factor:** Access and environment

What restrictions might there be on the water we are paddling on? Where will we access/egress the water? 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 kit and equipment and have the appropriate knowledge to use it. 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 boat options available and why might we choose one over the other? How might we set our boats up to get the best from our session? What type of paddle might we choose to gain boat control or power?

**What will we take?**

What additional equipment might be useful to carry with us? What safety kit would it be useful to have with us or available on the bank? What drink and nutrition might we need during and after our training session?

**How else will we prepare?**

Why is this preparation important? Do we have a race/training plan for this session? What is our warm up and warm down plans?



### 3. At the Water

Before we start our session we need to be confident in our ability to deal with the complications it might bring. Are the current water and weather conditions safe for our abilities? If not, how can we adjust our plans?

**Consideration:** Other users – some venues can be a very busy area. We may need to share the water with rowers and accompanying motor launches, swimmers, fisherman and paddlers, amongst others. To do this safely, an 'etiquette' amongst these users has developed to minimise conflict and help everyone enjoy the water.

**We may need to consider:** Who else is paddling with us? What is their current ability? If paddling in a crew boat, do we have joint, agreed race/training plans for the session? How can we use positioning in the crew boat to maximise each person's strengths?

**Consideration:** Getting to the water

**We may need to determine:** How are we going to get to the access point? What is the best way to carry, load and secure our craft to protect ourselves or others from injury and prevent unnecessary damage? How will we get our craft and additional equipment to the water?

**Consideration:** Safety and rescue

**We may need to know:** How can we protect ourselves from potential hazards? What damage to our health might repeated immersion in cold water cause and how can we help prevent this becoming an issue? What would we do if someone we are paddling with gets really cold or overheats? How might we do this?

### 4. Racing Skills

When training and racing we should be in control. Key skills to achieve that control include us staying relaxed and understanding the effects of posture, connectivity, power transfer and efficient forward paddling.



**Skill:** Forward paddling

**We may need to know:** How can we use the fundamentals of paddling to develop a continuous, all body action in our forward paddling? How efficient is our forward stroke? What can we adjust to improve our efficiency? What different strokes can we use? How can we use connectivity and power transfer to enhance our forward paddling? When changing speed, how will we maintain our forward paddling stroke? Can we experiment with our positioning, strokes and techniques to make us feel as one with our craft?

**Skill:** Steering and control

**We may need to consider:** What strokes can we use to steer our craft? How can we use these strokes to manoeuvre on the move, whilst minimising the impact on our forward speed? What techniques can we use to stay in control of our craft in training? How can we transfer these techniques to a racing environment? How will we keep our craft stable whilst using connectivity and power transfer? How can we stay in control of our craft whilst applying full power from a standing start?

**Skill:** Dealing with mishaps

**We may need to know:** Are we able to self-rescue? What recovery strokes and techniques can we use when we go off balance? How would we safely get ourselves back to shore or into the craft?

## 5. After our Training Session/Race

Every session is an opportunity for learning and improving. We can create a positive impact on our future experiences by performing a good post-session assessment. First, we must ensure we perform a good warm down.

**Discuss the experience:** How do we feel we did on the water? If we were working one of a crew, it is good to discuss how each individual feels the session has gone. How do we feel our contribution affected the overall team performance? What could we have done differently? What went well?



**Watching what others do:** It might be useful to spend some time watching others. How are they forward paddling? How are they using another boats' wash? Were they using connectivity and power transfer?

## 6. Future Development

Each day we spend training or racing further expands our skills and knowledge, creating a more enjoyable experience on the water. With no two sessions ever the same, we never stop learning. Where and how can we learn more about racing and how might that help us?

Continually evaluating the choices we make creates a natural evolution of decision making ability helping us to link training to racing. When we reach a certain point in this, it may be worth considering moving onto the Racing Perform Award or entering a local competition.