

Stand up Paddleboard

SUP Paddle Surf Award

Award Description

This award is designed to advance the skills you have acquired in a variety of environments by applying appropriate decision making skills to an enjoyable, exciting and safe day out stand up paddleboarding, allowing you to gain access to your first wave riding experiences on a stand up paddleboard (SUP).

Extended Award Description

Your Paddle Surf Award will give you the ability to apply your choices to an enjoyable day in surf. As an SUP Surfer, you will effectively launch and manage your SUP, negotiating surf, up to chest height, standing, catching, riding and exiting a wave. You will look at the factors which affect our decisions on where and when to go out and develop a deeper understanding of our surroundings; the external and environmental factors which affect our location. Your experience will ensure a proficient use of skills and equipment to be in control throughout your day and expanding your knowledge on dealing with mishaps.

Award Content

1. **Location**

In order to have an enjoyable day out surfing we need to make some key decisions to ensure we are in the right place at the right time.

Key factors influencing our decisions include swell and wave height, weather, the tide 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: Swell and wave height - we need swell, this generates the waves we are going to surf. Choosing the right beach for the swell that has been generated is an important skill.

We may need to know: How is swell generated? How can we find out what swell is affecting the section of coastline that we are using? From what position do we measure wave height? What are the common terms for measuring wave height? How big are the waves here? Where are the waves peaking? How are the waves breaking and how might that affect our surf session?

Factor: Weather conditions

We may need to determine: Which direction and how strong is the wind? Is it due to increase or decrease? Is it going to change direction? How will the forecast wind speed impact on the beaches that we can choose from? Do we have local knowledge of the area we are surfing? How will we find this information?

Factor: Tide

We may need to know: What time is low and high water? Are there any seasonal variations which may affect the tides? How will these factors impact on the beaches we can choose from?

Factor: Location features

We may need to know: How will the shape or profile of the beach affect the shape of the waves formed? Are these conditions suitable to our ability and equipment?

Factor: Other factors

We may need to know: What restrictions might there be on the water we are paddling on? How would we know? Are there any lifeguards in the area? How can we reduce our impact on the environment and animals around us? What is the current water quality? Are there any rip currents we need to be aware of?

What support is available in case of emergency and how would we direct it to us?

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 surfers? Why might we choose one over the other? How might external factors affect which clothing we choose? How can what we wear protect us from potential hazards? What types of Personal Flotation Device (PFD) might we choose from and why? What are the implications of wearing a PFD in waves? 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 will what we are surfing affect this decision? What are the features of our board? How might different features of our board impact our paddling? What types of leash can we choose from and why might we choose one over the other? How might the size of our board impact our paddling? How might the length, size and material of our paddle impact our paddling? What are the pros and cons of using an inflatable SUP (ISUP)? Why might we choose a composite board if we were competing? What advantages might a traditional style board have? How does the volume of board affect its stability and performance? How do we use our equipment? What do we do if there is a problem with it? What additional equipment might we take?

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. We must also be aware of other users and consider how we will safely get on the water.

Consideration: Other users - the surf zone can be a very busy area. We may need to share the waves with swimmers and kite boarders, amongst others. To do this safely, an 'etiquette' amongst these users has developed to minimise conflict and help everyone enjoy the surf zone.

We may need to observe: Who else is in the area? Are we using a managed or supervised venue? What is the etiquette? Where might we find that out? Where can we park and change considerately to other users? Who else is paddling with us? What is their current ability? Have we an agreed aim and motivation for the trip? What techniques can we use to avoid each other whilst on the water? How might our group size, abilities and the prevailing conditions influence this?

Consideration: Safety and rescue

We may need to know: How can we protect ourselves and others from any potential hazards? What additional equipment might be useful to carry and have access to? What would we do if someone we are paddling with gets really cold or overheats? How would we safely get ourselves back to shore? How could we use our board to rescue and retrieve an unconscious casualty? What potential injuries might we need to treat? How might we do this? Have we informed anyone where we are going and when to expect us back? Should we buddy up with a fellow paddler?

Consideration: Getting to the water

We may need to determine: 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?

4. SUP Skills

When SUP surfing we should be in control. Key features of being in control include us staying relaxed and having a range of skills and knowledge to get us safely into the surf, travelling along and exiting a wave.

Consideration: The surf zone is broken up into different 'zones'; broken waves, green waves, the secondary surf zone, rips or 'out back'.

What we might observe: Can we identify these places at the beach that we've decided on? Where are the other water users? If we're surfing with other people, how can we keep an eye out for each other and still get some waves?

Skill: Paddling out through the surf

We may need to consider: What different strokes and tactics might we use to get out through the surf line? How would we use these to help us move forward, change direction and hold our position? How would we increase our paddling speed to go through white water and why would we do this? What methods would we use to get through a broken wave? What techniques would we use to avoid a wall of broken water?

Skill: Catching a wave

We may need to know: How can we anticipate wave patterns? How can we anticipate a closeout wave? How can we anticipate which way a wave is going to break? Why would we choose a certain wave? What would we do if we change our mind on the wave we are going to catch? How can we best position ourselves to catch a wave? What wave characteristics might influence our choices on position and direction? How can we adapt our speed, style and position on the board to help us catch the wave? Can we use timing to help us to catch our wave? What tactics would we use to avoid other paddlers?

Skill: Riding the wave

We may need to consider: What actions might we take as we drop down the wave face? What tactics and techniques would we use to ensure we still have momentum at the bottom of the wave? How might rocking the board onto its inside rail help us? What tactics and techniques can we use to create a good first bottom turn?

Skill: Body, paddle and foot positioning

We may need to know: How can we engage different parts of our body to influence our turns? How can we use timing, paddle movement and strokes to influence our turns? What body positions can we use to get the most from each

wave? What other factors could come into play to extend our ride and enjoyment? What paddle strokes can we use at each point to be as efficient as possible? How can we use the paddle to enhance our progression through the waves and in manoeuvres? How does our foot positioning and movement influence our movement and steering?

Skill: Finishing our ride - all rides will come to an end but we can choose how to finish our ride. Exiting a wave in control will conserve energy and allow us to spend longer surfing.

We may need to consider: How can we read the wave in order to exit standing up? How will we retain our board speed when exiting the wave? How are we going to get through the surf in the most efficient manner to conserve energy? How would we decide when to stop and rest?

Skill: Dealing with mishaps

We may need to consider: What different techniques might we use to get back to shore if we come off our board? Do we have the ability to get back to shore safely? What are the possible implications of falling off our board in shallow water? How can we protect ourselves from our board and others when falling off? How do we rescue an unconscious casualty? What techniques can we use to deal with confusion when we fall off? How can we prepare ourselves for wave patterns when we fall off our board? What techniques will we use to recover from mishaps? How would we retrieve a lost paddle? How would we deal with our leash breaking?

5. After the Session

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

Look around: When we're back on shore we can look back at the beach and the waves. Has anything changed whilst we've been out? If so, how and why? Looking at the shape of the uncovered sand we can try to match this up with the characteristics of the waves we experienced.

Watching what others do: It might be useful to spend some time watching any other SUP surfers. Where are they positioning themselves relative to the waves? How are they getting out back? Do they seem to be catching waves more effectively than we were? Can we see why? Think back to our waves. Can we identify why those that felt good differed from those that didn't?

Consider what you will take away: What have we learnt today? What can we focus on next time? Can we use video analysis to assess and develop our skills?

6. **Future Development**

Each day we spend paddling further expands our skills and knowledge, creating a more enjoyable experience on the water. With no two surf experiences ever the same, we never stop learning. Continually evaluating the choices we make creates a natural evolution of decision making ability.