

Wild Water Racing

Wild Water Racing Perform Award

Award Description

This award is designed to further develop your skills and ability to apply appropriate decisions on moving water.

Extended Award Description

Your Wild Water Racing Perform Award endorses your ability to apply your choices to an enjoyable and safe training session on grade 1-2 water. You will develop an understanding of 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 the training session on moving water. You will expand your knowledge of dealing with challenges; your own or those of others, and work on developing your physical conditioning to paddle in harmony with the water and teamwork to achieve your peak racing performance. Your award should be seen as a sound basis for independently building the experience and expertise associated with Wild Water Racing Excel Award holders.

Award Content

1. Location

In order to have an enjoyable training session we need to make some key decisions on our location.

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: Weather – wind speed and direction has a big impact on us as paddlers.

What we might observe: Which direction and how strong is the wind? Is it due to increase or decrease? Is it going to change direction? Are there enough daylight hours left for us to achieve our aims?

Factor: Water conditions

We may need to know: What is the current water level? Have the levels affected the grade of water? Are the levels expected to change during our run? Are there any hazards? How can we minimise the risk from these? Will they change the line we take? Has the venue got flow? How is this being generated? What time is high and low water? Will the flow increase or decrease? What potential dangers do we need to consider when choosing a location? Which types of water have the least potential issues for us? What is the current water quality? Do we know where to access local knowledge and information on the water we are using?

Factor: Access and environment

What restrictions might there be on the water we are paddling on? Has the venue got a pontoon or other man-made surface? Where will we access/egress the water? What environmental factors might affect this decision? How far are we going to be from paths and roadsides? 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 kit and equipment suitable to our location 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? 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 is the likelihood of the water conditions causing damage to our craft or equipment? Are our craft and equipment in a suitable condition to cope with these demands?

What will we take?

What additional equipment might be useful to carry on the river 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 for our training session?

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. 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 – some venues can be a very busy area. We may need to share the water with rowers and accompanying motor launches, swimmers, fishermen 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 in the area? Are we using a managed or supervised venue? What is the etiquette here? How might this affect us? Who else is paddling with us? What is their current ability? Are we able, as individuals and as a group, to cope with the expected water and conditions? Do we have clear aims and focuses as a group? Are there any challenging areas of the paddle we need to consider and plan for?



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?

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?

Consideration: Getting to the water

We may need to determine: How are we going to get to the access point?

Where can we park? Do we need to set up a shuttle? What information might we need to confirm with our shuttle driver? 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? Is the weather and flow as expected? What signs do we need to look for to determine this? How can we adjust our plans if needed?

4. **Wild Water Racing Skills**

When paddling a wild water racing kayak or canoe we should be in control. Key features of being in control include us staying relaxed, balanced and understanding the application of the fundamentals; including posture, connectivity, power transfer and feel.

Skill: Reading white water

We may need to know: What river features do we need to observe on the water we are paddling on? What causes these features to form? How might these various features impact on our paddle? How would we pick our line down a rapid? What features might create a risk on our line? What are these risks? How can features assist us on maintaining a racing line or steering? How can we use bank features to assist navigation when an entry line or shoot is difficult to see? How can we best set up our boat in advance to navigate a water feature or racing line? Can we identify any navigational must do's to ensure safe passage or quick lines?



Skill: Forward paddling

We may need to consider: What are the advantages of effective forward paddling in racing? What effects will accelerating the boat have on handling on moving water? Why do we need to be moving faster than the water when racing? How does identifying appropriate negotiation of rapids assist our session? What muscles can we engage to create more effective forward paddling in a kayak? What muscles can we engage to create more effective forward paddling in a canoe?

Skill: Steering and using features

We may need to consider: What different techniques and tactics can we use to steer our boat? How best can we use edge to turn the boat whilst maintaining stability and speed? How can we make sure our boat tracks as straight as possible when steering or negotiating a rapid feature?

Skill: Using the wash

We may need to know: What advantages are there to using the wash from another boat? Where can we position ourselves to gain the best advantage from the wash? What skills can we use to match the pace of the lead boat? How do we cross from one side wash to another? What observations can we make on water patterns to help us? What techniques and tactics can we employ to maintain the use of wash from other boats?

Skill: Dealing with mishaps

We may need to know: What recovery strokes and techniques can we use when we go off balance? How would we safely get ourselves or others back to shore or into the craft? How would we deal with loose kit? How would we swim safely in white water? How would we get our craft back to shore in the event of capsize? Are we confident to roll in moving water? How would we rescue and retrieve another paddler and their equipment? When would we decide to chase another person's boat and paddle?

5. After the Training/Racing Session

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

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: It might be useful to spend some time watching others. How are they forward paddling on the river? How do they negotiate difficult rapids?

Consider what you will take away: What analysis performance tools might help with reflection and future planning? What have we learnt today? What can we focus on next time?

6. Future Development

Each day we spend in a wild water racing craft further expands our skills and knowledge, creating a more enjoyable experience on the water. With no two moving water sessions 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 on to the Wild Water Racing Excel Award.