

**Lee Pooley 00:00:13**

Hi everyone and welcome to the Coaching podcast. My name is Lee Pooley, I'm the Director of Coaching and Qualifications, and today we are joined by Adam and Anthony so welcome and thanks very much for giving up some of your time to talk around stand up paddleboard and, in particular, this podcast is all based around height management. But before we get going, both of you are experienced within the podcast but not everyone may have heard of the first one that you did with me. Can you give a brief introduction of your background and stand up paddleboard? Is that alright? If we go with Adam first.

**Adam Burns 00:00:51**

Yeah, no worries. Yes, so Adam based up in Perth in Scotland and been paddleboarding for last seven or eight years and pretty happy in most environments, love being in most environments, but specifically white water and am a coach educator provider for British Canoeing Awarding Body for everything white water SUP.

**Lee Pooley 00:01:13**

Thanks. Adam. And Anthony, what about yourself?

**Anthony Ing 00:01:16**

Yes, so my name is Anthony Ing. I've been sort of pioneering the development of white water paddleboarding for ever since I can remember it being a thing, so just developing some of the awards and some of how it now looks to the future of it for Paddle UK and doing things like this. It's really exciting.

**Lee Pooley 00:01:35**

Brilliant, okay, well great to have you both on here and as I said before we are going to be talking around height management now, obviously, this is all very new to me in terms of when we were working together as a team to create qualifications and awards height management was mentioned a lot and also within the personal

performance awards, so Adam what is height management in terms of standard paddleboard? What does it mean?

**Adam Burns 00:02:00**

To put a context on it, then the height management is about reducing our chance of falling off the board. Yeah, so it's that ability to without using the words manage and height, the ability to go up down as appropriate, to lower chance of falling off the board and if we are falling off the board and we're falling closer to water lowering chances of losing equipment and also lowering chances of hurting ourselves.

So, the idea being primarily about where our position on the board is and whether that is us stood up very straight, whether that is us slightly lowering our body down into bit more of a wider stance, whether that is dropping a knee, dropping two knees or dropping both knees and potentially even sitting onto our feet and that in short is the wider image of it. What position are we on the board to allow us to have the least amount of chance of falling and hurting ourselves while also doing the best we can and having the most fun we can within the sport.

**Lee Pooley 00:03:00**

Brilliant, and Adam you obviously you mentioned different stances, so from quite low-down ones to the board all the way to standing up. So that's included in all of when we talk about height management, it's not just about standing on your two feet and just lowering your centre of gravity, you're talking about actually altering your position to drop to a knee, etc.

**Adam Burns 00:03:23**

Yeah, massively it's everything from this slightly changing our height when we're stood to being all the way sat on our feet and giving us that most chance of stability when we're going down rapids, yeah.

**Lee Pooley 00:03:32**

Okay, cool, so that's what height management is but Anthony why is it important in stand up paddleboard and why is it important that we talk about it and why is it important that people do it when they're stand up paddleboarding?

**Anthony Ing 00:03:47**

I think we can all agree that especially on white water paddleboarding is one of the easiest sports to make look very ugly, you know you can stand all the time until you fall all day long and I think to start off with that was the question of why is even a thing, I think the development of height management and being able to do that is an incredible safety tool, you know it's an incredible way that actually, we can get someone very good very quick if they can monitor their own height appropriately to their own ability. And if they can start taking that on themselves and have ownership of that for the students to be able to have our ownership of their own safety and their own development in that height. So, if they've never gone down a summit before they might do it on their knees and then when they start to get success, they might then be able to get themselves up to one knee one foot up to standing. So, I guess the main importance for me is being able to keep them safe in the environment and then they can take ownership of that depending on their own ability and that so for me, it's definitely the safety awareness of it.

**Lee Pooley 00:05:00**

And in terms of just to give me some context is when? and I know it's different for everyone, but when would you start to be thinking about altering your height?

**Anthony Ing 00:05:11**

I think that's what's really cool because to start off with that might be before you even get anywhere near the moving water, you know you might still be in the flat, calm pool at the side of the river and you might go I'm gonna drop all the way on to my knees and I'm gonna do the whole movement on my knees, oh now it's flat coming out, I'm gonna stand on this bit and then in the end, it's slowly ends up that you might do the turn into the flow on one knee one foot maybe and then that then goes to oh actually now I'm gonna do it standing but in the actual flow or in the actual graded SUP section, I'm gonna be able to drop to one knee. So I think that being able to use them heights effectively means that depending on your ability does really depend on where and what you would end up doing out there? I think for someone just getting into the sport, it's then a really good tool that you don't just use in the white water environment, any moderate environment, you get a gust of wind on the lake and you

drop a knee, you do three or four strokes and you pop back up again. It's such a cool thing to be able to use in loads of environments and to then get more success on the board.

**Lee Pooley 00:06:22**

Yeah, and Adam, you know, different sized boards, does that make a difference? Are certain boards more prone to having to adjust your height more often, does that make a difference?

**Adam Burns 00:06:33**

Yeah, it can do I mean I think back at what Ant said like, we're talking about a white water environment primarily here, but it's totally appropriate in every environment. It's great teaching people this on a first time being on a board all the way to people who are paddleboarding every day. It's something that can always be taught and something that can always be developed. I definitely had an element of as people develop skills, I might well put them on a smaller board, a thinner board or a shorter board to develop that. In terms of whether it does make a difference not as a general thing, then I guess it's the rarity of the board related to the paddler. So, you know if a board is smaller compared to a paddler then maybe someone else that might need to drop their height more, if it's shorter then there might be more chance of us going through a rapid and being slowed down and washed off the board. So, we might choose to take a knee more often and if we're slower again, this might be something that we choose to take a knee more often, but it's really the relation of the paddler to the board if that makes sense.

**Lee Pooley 07:34**

Yeah, absolutely. So, as we've heard and I've witnessed it because I spent some time with you both up in the Lake District at the River Eden and you're both highly experienced coaches, not just within SUP, that's what we are specifically talking about today. So, this is for both of you, how would you introduce height management so, you know, from a coach's perspective, how do you introduce height management to new, novice paddlers in a white water context? How would you do that? So, Anthony if you give us some examples and Adam then please come in.

**Anthony Ing 00:08:10**

Yeah, for me, I don't do it on white water, I do it on flat or even as a warm-up. I do it on the side, I do it when there's no other when the board is even having an effect, you know, getting them to be able to, on the bank, go from two knees as a low kneel like we've spoke about, bum sort of on your feet up to a high kneel so bringing one foot up so one foot one knee and then being able to stand on that and looking at the relationship between that and where your paddle is, how you can get drive off the paddle to create stability in that, now if you can do that on the bank and everyone can start to realize how effective it can be, when you get on the water, whether that's on flat water or on the flow, it's just already there. You're then just playing with the new development of oh now I've got something moving underneath me, but you've already sorted all the like you're not trying to balance through it while you're doing it. So for me, it's a warm-up activity and I do it quite, especially with my long-term students that once someone's got it that is what we do as a warm up, we'll get on and do a little bit as a warm-up and then on the flat water do it a bit and then on the first rapid, do a bit height management, even if they're at the top level and you know they're going to be standing most of the time, it's a really good thing to get your body engaged with the board before going on to the big stuff.

**Lee Pooley 00:09:34**

Brilliant, okay, Adam, you got any other top tips you can share?

**Adam Burns 00:09:40**

Yeah, no worries, I guess I would back up everything Ant said, I'm definitely all about getting people on the land doing it, I'm definitely all about getting people doing it on the first couple times they're on a session. I like to link it in and quite a lot with getting people to think about moving around the board as well. So it could be a case of moving around the board on our knees and then we're moving around the board with the high knee and we're moving around the board on our feet and linking that back kind of to the centre line of the board as well and getting people to stand that kind of the close to the centre line and they are and sometimes we'll get them more stability, but mostly just being aware of their distance from the centre line with the either foot or knee and other bits it's really worth playing around with is getting people thinking

about using brace strokes as well. So, as people building their kind of confidence up, having that brace stroke there as the ability to support themselves if they need to and that can really be something else that plays into it quite nicely and then driving that as people get more confident into forward strokes as well to kind of support that kind of active paddle as well and the other thing which a little bit completely different but has worked really well with people is stupid songs, especially on flat bits of the river between rapids is doing things like the macarena and the time warp and stuff like this where people don't necessarily realize they're doing it but we're having a bit of a laugh, we're playing around and at the same time we just happened to be managing our height into different positions as well. And then the last little bit is surf waves are great for this work. You can find kind of a bit of a surf wave that's not too big, not too hard and getting people to kind of be staying on that and going into all those different positions but in a point where they are having to react to the board, but actually it's a pretty stable position, is a really good place to be playing with it as well and I found that's really helped people a lot.

### **Lee Pooley 00:11:27**

Yeah, and that learning through play is such an important aspect isn't it that people are able to explore through on activities. Yeah.

This is something that you know you've already both of you have amplified quite clearly that actually it doesn't matter what level of SUP paddler you are, whether you're highly experience or novice, that actually height management is crucially important. What type of progressive exercises could you recommend for a paddler to practice and where they should practice so some development exercises that maybe you could share with people so they actually when they're out paddling not always with a coach, how can they develop and what progressive exercises could you prescribe?

### **Adam Burns 00:12:17**

I would say first of all doing it on multiple different bits of kit. If you've got access to multiple different boards, then that's a really good thing to be playing with just because it's that kind of variedness as well, it's giving the ability to do it on the board that you're on but also finding where there might be little weaknesses because

actually we're doing it in different places, doing on different things, progressing it in different bits of white water going okay, cool, there's a rapid that we know we're really comfortable with it then let's try and challenge ourselves a little bit and let's think about going up and down x amount of times and on that the same as you might eddy hop down a rapid, we could actually height drop down a rapid as well and that's something that works really well as well and I think the other thing is knowing that everyone's progression, everyone's body is slightly different and knowing that if we're doing something is not feeling like it's quite working or it's not feeling like it's quite comfortable then finding adaptations and playing with adaptations to make that work better for yourself and the final progression one which I would say, which is definitely still a big area progression for myself and I'm sure for many people, is just because you can do it on one side doesn't mean you can do it. So, get bilateral and get good on both sides.

**Lee Pooley 00:13:30**

Brilliant. Anthony, what's your thoughts?

**Anthony Ing 00:13:32**

I think a lot of people have flat water local. I think a lot of people that even if you're a white water paddler, you spend quite a lot of time going out and especially in that progression stage, you know there's a lot of flat water paddlers out there that if they developed this there would mean when they then have that trip that then you get the bit of moving water you've already sorted it out. So, for me, it's definitely getting people to be able to monitor height without using their hands. So they use their paddle to create that stability. So, a flat water technique of just paddling along and then as your paddling, every single time you go to change a height using the blade to initiate that move so blade goes to the front we pull on the blade and then we drop into the next high. We put on the blade and we drop down again. Then we use the blade to create that stability on coming up, if you've managed to do that and you've done it on flat water, then that's a very easy sort of progression. Then when you get onto the moving stuff do it going down a section of moving water and then the progression from that is doing it whilst doing say an eddy turn, doing it in and out. So you're getting super dynamic, as you're coming into an eddy being able to tap a little knee on the board, do your turn, pop back up again. It's super cool to watch when

you start to see it. Actually, it all comes down to at the start being able to do it really slow, being able to do it with your hands, put your hands on the board, move a knee down carry on paddling, put your hands on the board, go to two knees and that developing that all the way into then doing these really cool eddy turns in a really dynamic environment. So, I definitely work it from almost nothing even in the lounge at home, if you can't, if you think I don't even know if I can do that, stand up while you're watching that telly, drop yourself onto your knees and go one knee one foot and then go for your stands, just get yourself that your body can start understanding the movement.

**Lee Pooley 00:15:24**

And, there's an element there, of you're almost talking about strength in certain areas of the body, isn't it? So, you talk about, doing it in front of the telly. Is there any other particular exercises, new types of core strengths that people could improve on because stand up paddleboarding is actually the core's active all the time isn't it, especially when there's movement of water. Is there anything other people could do in terms of exercises that would help them in this area?

**Anthony Ing 00:15:52**

I think with paddleboarding as a whole any core exercises, any yoga, any pilates, that there's a lot of people that come that go I just can't do that movement that wouldn't, you know like we were saying, everyone is different and that everyone's capabilities are different but finding different ways of moving your body. It might not be you're gonna do exactly the same that I do it or Adam does it or you know actually it's just a case of working out what strengths do I have? Oh, actually my leg muscles are quite strong compared to my core. So, let's use more of my legs to gain the height, you know, let's use more legs when I drop down, oh actually, no, actually I've got good core but my legs, they're not great. Okay, as I drop let's lower my hips and you only start to realise these sort of things when you start to play with them, when you start to, but definitely I think balancing techniques, pilates, yoga, all of that stuff does masses for SUP, I think for a SUP paddler definitely for me.

**Lee Pooley 00:16:48**

What about yourself Adam, what's your thoughts? If people are struggling in this particular area, is there anything that you would be advising people to do in their own time?

**Adam Burns 00:16:58**

Yeah, so I think playing with having a space where you might just put a towel on the floor which is representing your board and practising within that space of the board that is a towel of getting up and down. Spending time stood on that space or even deflated board or an inflated board in your living room and practising doing it there. I think playing quite a lot with knee exercises are a really big one. So, for me personally, I've got a left knee that's quite dodgy and so actually doing squats, lunges, kind of balancing on that one leg and doing more exercises trying to support that knee has become really important because otherwise I'm finding myself relying on my other leg very much and at that point that leg's getting very tired and then I'm just becoming a lot weaker throughout the day. So, I think identify that and kind of Ant's said about it like identifying those areas where actually we're feeling maybe we're not as strong, knowing that we've got other bits to back up that strength but also just trying to develop that with any other exercises we could naturally do, but I definitely found kind of squats and lunges have made quite a big difference to developing my strength up and that's definitely allowing me to do more, more comfortably.

**Lee Pooley 00:18:13**

Yeah, no, that's fantastic, I always knew that both you would be giving some fantastic thoughts around how a coach leader can introduce these all the way from land-based to stuff from home, to also some progressive exercises and I think anyone that's listening to this and thinking about I need to work on this particular area, there's some great ideas that you've provided so that's great, thank you. Before I allow you to go, what's the next six months in the SUP world look like for you? Adam, what are you doing for the next six months in terms of stuff, any plans any trips, anything you've got up your sleeve?

**Adam Burns 00:18:51**

So, in about a month's time, I still can't pronounce to save my life, but I'll be going to Slovenia for the Soca.

**Lee Pooley 00:18:58**

Yep.

**Adam Burns 00:18:59**

So, we're going there for four or five days which will be super ace and apart from that I'm hoping to get a couple more kind of one day 'get a river done in the day' type of thing, so hoping to do the Spay and the Tweed at some point in a day each, over the next six months so looking forward to that.

**Lee Pooley 00:19:16**

Yeah, lovely, well I've paddled the Soca quite often but in a kayak and it's an absolute gem of a river and yeah, you'll enjoy that immensely. It's a fantastic place and I would recommend going to Bovec because there's a great ice cream shop there.

**Adam Burns 00:19:33**

Nice.

**Lee Pooley 00:19:33**

Yeah.

**Anthony Ing 00:19:34**

Very good.

**Lee Pooley 00:19:35**

Yeah, it's a very good one. What about yourself Anthony? What have you got planned?

**Anthony Ing 00:19:39**

Well, it seems to keep raining so at the moment all of the water, you know I want to hit the local run, the Ogwen, I want to get the Ogwen that I can do a top to bottom

standing, that's on my list and luckily we keep getting water so that's brilliant. I'm gonna go push the limits. I've got a couple of cool trips in the pipeline. I want to go get on some glacier melt and some steep stuff. So, I'm definitely going to be popping up to Norway this season and seeing what can physically be done on one of these things and we keep pushing it every year and we keep getting results, so it's time to go a bit bigger I think so, yeah, that's gonna be my main one.

**Lee Pooley 00:20:15**

Brilliant, okay well thank you very much both of you for your time. I hope you have a great time in Norway and at the Socas so thanks very much and take care.

**End.**