

Racing

Racing Perform Award

Award Description

This award is designed to progress your skills in a racing canoe or kayak, giving you the confidence to race at higher levels and transfer your skills to crew boats.

Advanced Award Description

Your Racing Perform Award endorses your ability to apply your choices to an enjoyable racing experience and enables you to train for, and compete in, higher level marathon, sprint and ocean racing competitions. You will progress your ability in standing starts, wash hanging, forward paddling and manoeuvring, both individually and within a crew. You will develop your understanding of how to use portaging, the water and environmental conditions to best advantage, whilst demonstrating good decision making processes in a competitive environment. Your award should be seen as a sound basis for independently building the experience and expertise associated with Racing Excel 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 the correct 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? Is it due to increase or decrease? Is it going to change direction? How will this affect our training/racing session?

Racing also takes place on the sea and, if using such environments, we need to consider how might the profile of the coastline affect the forecast conditions?

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?

If we are on the sea, what is the height of the waves? How are these being generated? What time is high and low water?

Factor: Access and environment

What restrictions might there be on the water we are paddling on? Where will we access/egress the water? How would we direct support to us in an emergency situation? How can we reduce our impact on the environment and animals around us?

If we are on the sea, how might the coastline profile and conditions affect our decisions on where to launch and paddle?

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 at this level? 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 at this level 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 technology can we use to measure our performance?

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 will the appropriate drink and nutrition help our performance, recovery and general health?

How else will we prepare?

What techniques and methods can we use to ensure we are mentally and physically prepared in order to maximise our performance during a session/race? What training methods can we use to develop general and specific strength, power and robustness for our chosen event? Why is this preparation important?

Why is it important that we communicate this information with our coach or crew mates? Are we open to the knowledge and advice of our coaches? Do we have a race/training plan for this session? Is this a plan we can realistically stick to under pressure? How will we use training zones to develop correct energy systems for our events? How might we plan this?

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. The water 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 other 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: Are we using a managed or supervised venue? 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: 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? Can we carry out a dynamic risk assessment to measure if the environment is safe for our ability level? How can we adjust our plans if needed?

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? 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? How will we warm up before getting on the water?

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 our body to propel our craft forward, smoothly and efficiently? How can we set up and time our stroke to enable efficient connectivity and power transfer when training? How can we use our forward paddling stroke to maximise our full physical potential? How can we develop an efficient stroke/movement pattern for all speeds and intensities in training? What different strokes can we use? What can we concentrate on to begin to develop an efficient stroke when paddling in a crew boat? When changing speed, how will we maintain our forward paddling stroke within a race situation? What factors will we need to take into consideration when doing this?

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? How can we stay in control of our craft whilst applying full power from a standing start? What techniques can we use to stay in control of our craft in training? How can we transfer these techniques to a range of racing environments? How will we keep our craft stable whilst using connectivity and power transfer? How can we stay in balance and in control of our craft when portaging in a racing environment?

Skill: Working as part of a crew

We may need to know: What techniques can we use to steer the boat as part of a crew? How can we ensure we all work together to do this? How can we keep our stroke in rhythm with the rest of the crew? Are we able to paddle in a variety of positions in a crew boat?

Skill: Dealing with pressure

We may need to consider: What are the specific mental demands racing will put upon us when racing and training? Do we have techniques and tactics to cope with these? How will we maintain our focus when racing and training under pressure? How will we use our mental focus to deliver our best race plan?

Skill: Dealing with mishaps

We may need to know: Are we able to self-rescue in race conditions? 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? What can we do to overcome mishaps and continue racing/training?



5. Racing Rules, Techniques and Tactics

We should gain an understanding of the specific rules, techniques and tactics for racing to do well in competition. We will have racing plans in place and be clear on how we will use them.

Consideration: Rules and regulations

We may need to know: What are the rules and regulations for racing at this level and in this discipline? What other knowledge of the sport will help us when racing? How might we find this information?

Consideration: Racing plan

We may need to determine: How can we ensure that we utilise the plans we have put in place when racing? Is the plan we have for the race still achievable? Are we able to adapt our plans for the conditions on the day? How does our plan fit into our long term goals?

Consideration: Techniques and tactics

We may need to know: What techniques and tactics will help us to win at this level? What does wash hanging do to help us? How can we utilise this? How can our portaging skills help us gain advantage in a race? What tactics and techniques can we use to minimise the negative impact of adverse environmental conditions?

6. 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? How does our coach feel we did on the water? If we were working as 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?

Consider what we will take away: We could also think about things from a personal perspective. What skills would we like to focus on next time? How does this session fit in with, or affect, our long term goals? Where and how can we learn more about racing at national and international level and how might that help us? What do we need to develop further to win at this level?

7. 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.

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 on to the Racing Excel Award.

