

MEGA Stand UP Paddleboard GUIDANCE

This guidance has been produced to support British Canoeing Awarding Body (BCAB) Stand Up Paddleboard Instructors, Coaches and Leaders in using MEGA Stand Up Paddleboards, also known as GIANT Stand Up Paddleboards.

This advice must not be taken in isolation but used as additional to the Stand Up Paddleboard qualification held and the associated BCAB SUP guidance.



Risk assessment:

- Due to the nature of this activity, we would encourage for Centres/Providers to consider having a specific risk assessment for MEGA SUP sessions. This is due to the hazards and risks associated being unique to the craft and may not be covered in a generic paddlesport or paddleboard risk assessment.

Manual Handling:

- Due to the size of the MEGA SUP appropriate manual handling should be adopted, sharing the load equally around a flat board makes it easier to lift, but due to its width and length the route to and from the launch point needs to be clear to avoid slips and trips.
- Helping those who are in the water back onto the board needs some consideration due to the height of the MEGA SUP, avoid pulling anyone by the arms, but instead use the buoyancy aid shoulder straps and team up, using two participants to help and support a person out of the water and onto the board.
- Mega SUPS can flip - Have a tried and tested plan, to both ensure the safety and control of all of the group whilst in the water and ability to right the board if needed



Helmets:

- Consider those participating and the activities that may be played. If there is a risk of impacts to the head, falling onto the board or into the water then we would recommend that helmets are worn.

Paddle management:

- Injuries are most likely to occur as a result of getting hit by a paddle. Consider using canoe paddles or shortened SUP paddles.
- Before and during the MEGA SUP session reinforce that all participants keep their hand on the paddle grip at all times as this can reduce the reach of the paddler. If contact is made with someone's face it is usually the back of the hand rather than a solid paddle grip making contact.
- Emphasis to participants to take care with their paddle and that both the blade end as well as paddle grip can cause injury to others if not careful.

Management of participants on the board:

- Ensure that there are no leashes on the MEGA SUP, to avoid injury and entanglement
- Before any participant gets to their feet ensure the MEGA SUP is in deep water
- Consider the distribution of weight evenly on the board by managing different sized people carefully. If adults are on the same MEGA SUP as children, move the adults to the back of the board or remain on their knees.
- Getting everyone on the board and starting the session can be one of the most challenging parts to the session. Start everyone on their knees, provide some 'top tips' on how the board can be controlled as well as reinforce paddle management.
- Consider the most appropriate position for leading a MEGA SUP session, this may be from a safety boat, a separate stand-up paddleboard or on the MEGA SUP itself. Group management and control at times can be easier from the MEGA SUP itself, but if certain games or activities are being used being slightly removed on a separate board or safety boat can allow a greater degree of agility and manoeuvrability.

Environment:

- Be aware of the wind, a MEGA SUP can act as one big sail
- Avoid anyone standing on the MEGA SUP in shallow water



Games/Activities:

- Before any games or jumping in, ensure the MEGA SUP is stationary to avoid the board going over the top of someone and them becoming stuck underneath.
- Consider anchoring/tying off the MEGA SUP before starting any games, this avoids the board drifting and allows focus on group management
- Avoid the use of games that include going under the board
- Consider if appropriate removing paddles completely before playing games
- Games that involve just a couple of people moving around the board at a time can be great for building confidence and understanding of the board
- For extra challenge and teamwork have some participants able to see but not paddle and some others able to paddle but not see.
- If you're working with young people think about making up a story that they can act out with you, maybe it includes waves, surfing, scrubbing the decking or even walking the plank.
- Regularly carry out a head count during the session as well as during activities where participants are in and out the water