

Canoeing sessions

SAFETY

- 1) All guests and staff **must** wear approved bouyancy aids and helmets whilst on the river. Bouyancy aids or life jackets brought along to sessions must be of an approved type if they going to be worn on Country Wide Weekend run trips.
- 2) All guests must always be accompanied on the water by a qualified member of staff. No guest however competent may be on the water in a boat without an instructor actually afloat.
- 3) At the end of some sessions guests may jump in the river off the river bank. In this case bouyancy aids and helmets must be worn. Spray decks to be removed. Providing no guest boats are on the water then this activity may be monitored by a qualified life saver from the bank or by an instructor afloat in a kayak. Thought should be given to how guests jump and to the direction if others are in the water.
- 4) If staff wish to go canoeing they must be accompanied by a qualified instructor and have gained permission from Ruth or Mike beforehand.

Group Session

Groups will meet at the river for kayak sessions.

Introduce yourself and run through the programme with everyone.

- 1) Provide each guest with wetsuit, wetsuit booties/socks/plimsolls. cag if appropriate, bouyancy aid, spray deck and hat. Explain that decks are being issued at the start for later use. Guests do not fit decks initially onto boats only for a game. **Ensure that short people have the deck lifted and tucked in so that it does not hang down in front on the ground where it might be tripped on.**
- 2) **Check that all bouyancy aids and hats are correctly fastened.**

River side instruction

- 4) Issue paddles. Run through basic paddle grip and forward/backwards paddling.
- 5) Explain purpose of spraydeck and the reasons for not attaching it to the boat in the first instance for novices. Explain the fact that it will be used later on the session when instruction will be given. Explain simply without frightening your guests!
- 6) Run though a dry capsized drill. Explain carefully the main points to ensure an easy and swift exit from the kayak. Remember to demonstrate clearly. Show what an up-turned boat looks like, end toggles flotation etc. Make this demonstration the last thing you do before going afloat. It must be clear and concise. Reassure nervous guests as to the simplicity of exiting an upturned kayak.
- 7) Explain a raft just before launching so that the entire group can be rafted efficiently on the water. One instructor on the water before launching the group.

River Procedure

Remember to address the whole group all the time. Position yourself accordingly near the centre of the raft. Explain the sequence of events briefly and what you hope to achieve in the session. Start with basic paddling, make it simple. The level of instruction required will vary from group to group age and ability.

Ensure that the two instructors work as a team on the water. Brief each other before a session on your intentions. Work together but decide who is in overall charge if equally qualified!

Aim to get a balance between the hard teach and fun on the river. Group's ability and interest will vary. A good balance is essential for an enjoyable and memorable trip.

Seal-Launches

We often add a seal launch to the trip for fun and a break not to mention giving the opportunity to stretch your legs! Gather the group efficiently on the river-bank. Do not wander unnecessarily onto farmers fields. Keep tight control whilst on the bank. Explain again the importance of the spraydeck and the procedure for its removal. The capsize-drill may need to be run through again. Reassure guests that they will be alright. Offer yourself as a companion for the rafted seal-launch. Demonstrate if necessary. Be particularly wary of nervous guests. The launch is not compulsory, gentle encouragement is better than an order.

Canoe Polo

Remind guests about hands, heads and sharp ends of boats. The rules and essentials of the game. Split teams as fairly as possible. The whole group should be participating. Always pass the ball to the weaker team members so that everyone is involved and having a good time. Watch for capsizes all the time and react quickly. The games should stop while anyone has capsized and only resume when everybody is back in their boats. Instructors should move around and not run away from play. Place yourself where players have a chance to score.

General

Above all on the river you will need to be alert and ready to change plans quickly according to the groups requirements. Watch for capsizes all the time and help the weaker paddlers. Keep your group together and working as a team.

All Instructors

Please check all kit on issuing, bouyancy aids, helmets, decks.

Check for correct and safe fitting of end loops/toggles.

Remember to check boats, often this is overlooked, pay attention to bouyancy blocks.

Check cockpit combing and fit protection as necessary during loading/unloading of boats.

Please attend to any defect and draw to Mike/Ruth's attention.

All instructors/staff should be competent to:

- 1) Instruct in basic canoe/kayak skills.
- 2) Handle emergency situations {capsize, cold, anxiety}.
- 3) Be able to organise and control the group on or off the water.
- 4) Delegate duties to assistants were applicable.
- 5) Show over-riding concern for the welfare of guests at all times.
- 6) Be able to give guests an enjoyable and memorable trip.

Our aim is to give our guests an enjoyable and safe introduction to the sport of canoeing, to provide a friendly atmosphere and the right degree of control so that guests will have the confidence and opportunity to progress at their own rate.

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