



## **Operation and Procedures - Session Leaders**

### **Current designated Session Leaders and Areas of Operation are :-**

#### **Area 4 - Below Northam Bridge**

**(Two session leaders MUST be present)**

Enda Ryan

Fred Taylor

James Hinvès

Phil Pearse

#### **Area 3 - Northam Bridge**

Steve Rance

Leon Nicholson

James Hinvès

Steve Willis

Richard Kent

Richard Gilbert – Johns

Richard Elliott

Damon Grimsey

Jan Rance

#### **Area 2 - Woodmill to Railway Bridge**

**( and/or to Priory Hard depending on conditions)**

Adam Egeland

Richard Hewitt

Martine Huisman

Phil Amey

Jan Rance

Neil McLeod

Jo McLeod

Geoff Close

#### **Area 1 - Woodmill to The Swan at Mansbridge**

**( during daylight hours - all Leaders)**

**( during dark sessions - limited to the following )**

James Hinvès

Leon Nicholson

Steve Rance

Richard Gilbert – Johns

Damon Grimsey

Enda Ryan

Fred Taylor

Phil Pearse

Richard Kent

Steve Willis

### **Organisation of Sessions**

The Session Leaders noted above are listed in order of preference i.e. the person closest to the top of the list is the leader that takes responsibility for the session. They in turn will brief people that they believe are suitable to take responsibility for the groups who will ensure the safety of their group.



## 1.0 The Session Leader

Southampton Canoe club recognises that people's experience and understanding counts as much as having a paper qualification when leading sessions. To this end, there is a session leader system in place.

The Club committee via the Head Coach is to agree on a group of at least three members of suitable experience to manage this system and to decide where people can lead.

The role of a Session Leader is not that of a coach, and as such paddlers participating in lead sessions must:-

- a. be able to handle themselves in the conditions,
- b. be able to empty a boat and
- c. understand that it is not a coached session.

**NOTE - These sessions are NOT suitable for beginners and an appropriate level of ability would be BCU 1 star and be comfortable in the boat you are paddling.**

In a similar vane, the role of a session leader does not include club support at publicised races.

**NOTE ALSO - Explicit Junior sessions will be lead by an appropriately qualified BCU coach.** Adult sessions with junior participation can be lead by session leaders but informed parental permission must be sought.

All session leaders will understand the clubs ethos and set their sessions accordingly. **Any incidents or near misses shall be reported by the session leaders to the HEAD Coaching Officer and Chairman directly.**

Session Leaders who have not paid their club membership or are not current individual BCU members may **NOT** lead under any circumstances.

## 2.0 Session Control

The club paddles as a unit and whilst different leaders may lead groups of different ability the expectation is that all paddlers will stay within the limits set by the session leader.

## 3.0 Areas of Operation / Session Leader requirements -

The main operating area for club sessions is the River Itchen and this can be divided into 4no. distinct areas and then further divided into light and dark sessions.



**3.1 The First Area of operation** is from **Woodmill upriver to 'The Swan PH' at Mansbridge using the river/canal upstream of the Mill** - understanding that efforts will normally finish at just above 'The Swan' and that turning at the basin is required as this is the limit of navigation.

All leaders should be able to operate in this area in normal daylight hours, however, in dark sessions, it will be more appropriate to have a more experienced leader/s in charge or indeed split the group into smaller sections in order to manage smaller groups with another session leader more effectively. To operate in this area leaders still need to be able to show good judgement as to the persons in their group and their suitability to operate there. There is though very good bank access and it is fairly shallow at all times. The leaders will be able to utilise these if necessary.

**3.2 The Second Area of Operation** is from **Woodmill to the Railway Bridge ( and/or to Priory Hard depending on conditions )** - understanding that efforts will normally finish at the bridge or Priory Hard and that turning around the bridge is required. To operate in this area leaders need to be able to show good judgement as to the persons in their group and their suitability to operate there. There is good bank access and the leaders will be able to utilise this if necessary.

**3.3 The Third Area of operation** is from **Woodmill to Northam Bridge** - where the river opens out considerably and the amount of traffic is significantly increased. There are also fewer places to get out of the river. **Leaders must show the ability to cope with the conditions and set the correct effort to keep them out of trouble, especially when conditions are worsened by high winds and/or strong river flow.** An experienced BCU level 2 coach would operate at this level and must show very good group control and risk management strategies (the best management is not to be in that problem in the first place) and to have the force of character to enforce them.

**3.4 The Fourth area** is effectively limitless for training sessions, and would include **anywhere below Northam Bridge** - down to Itchen Bridge and Poo Jetty. **Two leaders are required to operate club sessions in this stretch of water, the intention being to provide a 'sanity check' against paddlers' abilities as well as tidal and weather conditions.**

### **3.5 DAYLIGHT SESSIONS -**

An Adult who paddles to the level of the BCU 2 star may lead another 2no. competent paddlers as far as from Woodmill ( up river ) down to Northam Bridge (down-river) **in good daylight summer conditions with little wind and/or strong tidal movements.**

### **3.6 LEADING IN THE DARK -**

All leaders who can lead to the Rail Bridge or Northam Bridge can lead to the Rail Bridge. The others can lead where the session is set. It is recommended that



unless conditions are ideal, dark sessions are limited to Northam Bridge, regardless of paddlers' abilities. However, it is also acknowledged that at low tide these permits may be extended to find water but as long as the overall conditions are not adverse i.e. not too much wind. This system envisages that the leader will be starting from Woodmill or upstream of Cobden Bridge. However, with the appropriate conditions and provision, there would be a case for starting outside this area e.g. at the Rail Bridge but staying close to assistance.

### **3.7 Paddling in Other Waters**

Session leaders wanting to run Club Trips or Club Sessions elsewhere must show their experience to be leading that session, i.e. an IOW crossing would be led by an experienced sea paddler with good knowledge of the tides etc. The Head Coaching Officer is the appropriate person to act as the committee's lead on this. A specific risk assessment would be required for such trips.

### **4.0 Definition of Club Sessions and Club Trips**

The club urges all members to follow the guidelines set out above during any training session in any stretch of water. However, it does recognise individuals' freedom to paddle outside the club boundaries at their own risk. Leaders must therefore operate under club procedures if any of the following criteria are true:

- Members 'put in' at Woodmill
- Club equipment is being used
- The event is publicised by the Club Secretary

### **5.0 Role of Session Leader**

- To select group leaders and brief them accordingly
- To outline purpose of session and any safety issues
- To check at end of session with group leaders that all are present and correct
- To know how to summon assistance and know the club's emergency plan

### **6.0 Role of Group Leader**

- To brief their group on the land, detailing the purpose of the session and any safety considerations.
- To take responsibility for the paddlers within their care understanding that the paddlers are capable of making their own decisions.
- To know how many paddlers are in their group and check that they are all there when leaving the water.
- To ensure that their group abides by the rules of the river and of the club.
- To know how to summon assistance and know the club's emergency plan.
- It is not necessary for the group leader to operate the stopwatch they may delegate this role, their key role is safety.