



## Advice To Coaches on: FOUR STAR TEST SEA KAYAK

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A resource for BCU Coaches....



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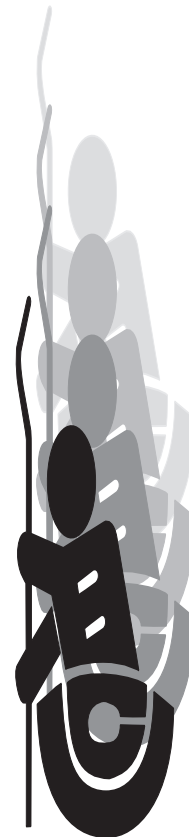
## FOUR STAR TEST SEA KAYAK

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# FOUR STAR TEST

## SEA KAYAK



### AIM

The purpose of this test is to ensure that the candidate has sufficient knowledge and skill to enable him or her to take a kayak safely to sea in moderate conditions under a competent leader.

Holding the 4 Star Test is a requirement for attending a training course for the qualification of Level 3 Coach - Sea.

### PRE-REQUISITES

BCU 3-Star test. Where a candidate does not hold this test a cross-section of the requirements of the 1-3 Star tests should be incorporated at the assessor's discretion.

The candidate must have taken part in at least three one day expeditions at sea. To rate as a qualifying expedition, the journey must have been on open water (i.e. where it is **possible** to be three miles from land in any direction).

The journey may, however, be inshore close to a simple coastline not involving overfalls, tidal races, difficult landings or open crossings. Winds not exceeding Force 4. Not more than one trip shall be carried out on an estuary. The journey must have involved four hours travelling, with a lunch break in which the candidate was self-sufficient for food and drink. At least one journey must be on an entirely different stretch of coast to the other two.

### ASSESSMENT AND VENUE

The test must be taken at sea, under moderate conditions (wind or sea state 2-4) ideally during a day trip. Allowance will be made by the assessor if conditions are rough, but the kayak skills must be performed in a competent manner. For reasons of safety three kayakers will participate. The test will not be taken in a flat calm.

### ASSESSOR

Level 3 Sea Coach or higher, who is an A1\* Sea Assessor.



5. **Drawing the kayak sideways in both directions.** Top arm high, blade deep. The boat must keep a straight line sideways through the water in both directions.
6. **High and low recovery strokes.** To be performed on both sides. For high braces the water must reach the paddler's waist, with a strong pull and associated hip flick to recover.
7. **Paddle brace.** High and low on the left and right. Where wave conditions are not suitable the candidate must paddle hard forwards then glide with the blade flat on the surface at right angles to the kayak.  
For a high brace, the water must reach the paddler's waist at the onset of the stroke.
8. **Stern Rudder.** The paddle blade should be placed in the water upright, well back to the stern. Candidate should be able to keep the kayak running straight, downwind on small waves, with the paddle kept on one side of the boat.
9. **Landing** Bring the kayak into a beach forwards, sideways and backwards (forwards only if kayak is fitted with rudder). This is controlled, not a 'surf' landing. Holding position in order to allow for the waves.
10. **Capsize and rescue.** Perform capsize drill, followed by a deep water rescue with partners. Take charge of a rescue and then act as a capsized victim. Any sign at all of fear or panic, and failure to retain the kayak during the drill will automatically result in failure of the test. The capsize must be 'accidental' with spray deck in place - either whilst paddling or in an attempted recovery stroke or sculling for support.
11. **Handling waves.** Demonstrate an ability to paddle into a head sea, with a following sea and in a beam sea.
12. **Negotiate moderate surf.** Demonstrate an ability to handle moderate surf (maximum 1m/ 3ft ) in order to safely commence a journey or achieve a landing.
13. **Knots.** Tie the following knots: Bowline, Figure of eight, Round turn and two half hitches, Clove hitch and demonstrate and explain their uses.

### Journeying

1. Provide evidence of having taken part in at least 3 one-day expeditions at sea as stated under *Pre-requisites*.



### THEORY

The candidate should be able to answer questions on the following:

#### Equipment

Show a good knowledge of kayak, paddle and personal equipment.

#### Safety

Be aware of: Safety precautions applying particularly to the kayak at sea

The general effects of tide, current and wind

National Coastguard organization and rescue services

Local waters and conditions

Potential hazards, (especially busy estuaries and water ways)

Basic collision regulations and sound signals

#### Hypothermia / First Aid

Show a good understanding of immersion hypothermia, its causes and symptoms. Be able to deal with basic first aid incidents - eg a cut forehead or hand - or hold a first aid certificate.

#### Access

Be aware of our basic freedom to paddle on the sea, but also of the need not to bring the sport into disrepute through irresponsible behaviour.

Be aware that some harbour authorities have the right to charge canoeists, and do so.

#### Environment

Be aware of the policy set out in the BCU leaflet '*Earning a Welcome*' and show appreciation of the need to avoid obvious disturbance to wildlife such as playing 'hide and seek' around rock pools.

#### Planning

Be able to determine from a chart:

Depths and drying heights

Simple recognition of hazards - i.e. tide races, overfalls

Basic recognition of main buoyage

Simple tidal predictions by the tidal constant method

Demonstrate an ability to use a simple compass to follow an escape route.



## Weather

Be aware of the sources of weather forecasts and the effect of the weather on the sea environment.

## General

The candidate should have a good understanding of the types of canoeing in which they are involved, and know something about the range of activities which the sport incorporates, together with an awareness of one or more of the competitive forms of canoeing which have World Championships or Olympic status, and Britain's performance in them.

## Group awareness

Show group awareness and self-control consistent with a 4 Star standard journey on the sea.

The candidate should be able to align a map, work out the distance between two points, and identify any particular features which would indicate position, comprehend compass 'variation', and have an understanding of how to use a transit when paddling on open water.

## CANDIDATE'S KAYAK AND EQUIPMENT

Each candidate will present him or herself suitably equipped, for the test. Borrowed equipment will be judged as though it was the candidate's own.

**The following items, which must be both suitable and serviceable, must be presented for inspection:**

1. **\*Kayak and paddle.** Kayaks must be provided with end grabs suitable for carrying out rescues without trapping the hand. Safety lines and/or painters (if fitted) must be taut and not capable of becoming loose accidentally, or fouling the cockpit area. Fitted buoyancy must be securely fixed and fill all available space apart from cockpit in suitably customised 'general purpose' kayaks. Sealed bulkheads are regarded as sufficient in themselves for sea kayaks.
2. **Personal clothing.** Personal clothing should be appropriate to the expected conditions, and should include windproof and water-proof outer garments.
3. **Buoyancy aid, appropriate headgear and spray deck.** A buoyancy aid of minimum 50N inherent buoyancy should be worn. A lifejacket may be substituted, in which case the candidate should know under what conditions it should be inflated, and should demonstrate its inflation and deflation. A brightly coloured helmet or woolly or other hat is recommended. The spray deck must be fitted with an efficient release strap.



4. **Simple first aid kit and repair kit.** The first aid kit should be appropriate to the level of first aid knowledge required under the *Theory* section. The repair kit should be appropriate to the type of kayak used.
  5. **Spare clothing.** Adequate spare clothing should be carried. The clothing should be applicable to the prevailing conditions and suitable for use in a bivvy bag to prevent hypothermia.
  6. **Packed lunch.** A packed lunch and equipment for providing a hot drink (may be a vacuum flask) should be carried.
  7. **Emergency equipment for personal use.** This should include: simple compass; emergency food; whistle; exposure (bivvy) bag of minimum size 1.8m x 0.9m (6' by 3'); torch; matches or lighter; flares or other suitable means of pinpointing position if in the water.
  8. **Waterproof kit bag(s).** Spare equipment must be stored in appropriately secured, waterproof kit carriers and must remain dry even after a capsize.
- \* The award may be taken in any kayak, provided it is suitably fitted out and the candidate can meet the requirements of the test.

## PRACTICAL ON FLAT WATER

1. **Rolling.** Where the kayak is of appropriate design the candidate should be able to demonstrate a roll. It is permissible to allow the candidate to set him or herself up before capsizing. A roll on one side only is required. Provided the rest of the candidate's performance is sound, an inability to roll is not a fail factor in itself.

## PRACTICAL ON OPEN WATER

1. **Launching** The candidate should demonstrate launching techniques appropriate for the conditions
2. **Efficient paddling technique, forwards and backwards.** The assessor will look for: correct dynamic seating position; correct entry and exit of the blade; ability to keep the boat straight; sufficient power in the stroke to paddle against wind or current; trunk rotation; correct width of paddle grip.
3. **Turning the kayak 360 degrees.** In both directions by using alternate forward and reverse sweep strokes. Paddle blade just covered, reaching out to full arm extension, elbow slightly bent. Paddle drawing well into the stern with the forward arm pushing across the body. Body turning to place the paddle in the water at the stern of the kayak. If the kayak is fitted with a rudder, it must be turned again in both directions, this time steering with the rudder only.
4. **Emergency stops.** Forwards and backwards. Reverse direction should be in evidence within 4 strokes.

