



Kingston Kayak Club

Canoe Slalom Training Sessions

Coaching and Deployment Approach

1. Purpose

This document describes Kingston Kayak Club's approach to the safe organisation, supervision and delivery of its regular canoe slalom training sessions.

The sessions are designed to develop paddlers' canoe slalom skills through structured coaching, technical exercises and practical training.

Unlike the Club's informal canoe polo sessions, canoe slalom training is delivered under the direction of an appropriately qualified and experienced coach.

The sessions will accommodate a maximum of 12 booked participants, with normally no more than 6 paddlers undertaking coached activity at any one time.

This document should be read alongside the Club's relevant risk assessments, safeguarding arrangements, emergency procedures and venue operating requirements.

2. Classification of Activity

Paddle UK defines formal coaching as activity where there is a specific focus and responsibility for developing participants' skills and knowledge.

Kingston Kayak Club's canoe slalom training falls within this definition because:

- Sessions are organised and led by a qualified coach.
- Training is designed to develop technical paddling skills.
- Paddlers receive coaching, observation and feedback.
- Exercises are selected according to individual abilities and development needs.
- The coach retains responsibility for determining appropriate activities and managing their delivery.

The Club will therefore apply Paddle UK's Standards for Deployment requirements for formal coaching.

3. Overall Responsibility

Kingston Kayak Club, acting through its Committee and agreed safety framework, is the deployer for canoe slalom activity.

The Club is responsible for ensuring that:

- Appropriate risk assessments and operating procedures are maintained.
- Coaches meet the relevant qualification and currency requirements.
- Coaches are competent to deliver the planned activities.
- Suitable safeguarding and first-aid arrangements are available.
- Participant numbers and activities are appropriate to the environment.
- Venue requirements are met.

For each session, the Club will identify a suitably qualified and current **Lead Coach**.

The Lead Coach has responsibility for the organisation, coaching and safe conduct of the session.

4. Lead Coach

The Lead Coach must hold an appropriate recognised coaching qualification and satisfy Paddle UK's current deployment requirements for the environment and activities concerned.

This includes appropriate:

- Coaching qualification.
- Membership.
- Safeguarding training.
- First-aid certification.
- Continuous Professional Development.
- Practical competence in the relevant environment.

The Lead Coach must also possess sufficient canoe slalom knowledge and experience to deliver the planned training safely and effectively.

The Lead Coach is responsible for:

- Planning and adapting the training session.
- Assessing participant abilities.
- Selecting suitable coaching exercises.
- Setting and modifying slalom courses.
- Managing paddler numbers and training rotations.
- Providing technical instruction and feedback.
- Monitoring participant safety.
- Addressing unsafe behaviour.
- Suspending or stopping activities where necessary.

The Lead Coach may provide direct coaching while retaining appropriate oversight of the wider activity.

5. Participant Numbers and Training Capacity

The Club provides a maximum of **8 places per canoe slalom session**.

The Club recognises that the total number booked onto a session and the number actively participating in a coached exercise are different considerations.

The Lead Coach will manage the session so that:

- No more than six paddlers normally undertake active coached training at one time.
- Paddlers waiting for their turn remain in an agreed safe location.
- Training groups rotate as appropriate.
- The Lead Coach can maintain effective observation and supervision.
- Individual paddlers receive suitable instruction and feedback.
- The activity remains appropriate to the ability and experience of those participating.

The eight-paddler arrangement is the Club's normal operating model rather than an automatic guarantee that eight paddlers can safely undertake every activity.

The Lead Coach may reduce the number of active paddlers where the activity, participant ability or environmental conditions require it.

The maximum of 8 bookings is subject to the overall arrangements remaining safe and manageable.

6. Ratios and Deployment

British Canoeing Awarding Body's Environmental Definitions and Deployment Guidance provides suggested ratios for formal coaching activities.

For solo craft in Very Sheltered Water, the suggested coach-to-participant ratio is 1:8.

These ratios are guidance rather than absolute limits. Deployment decisions must consider the coach's experience, participant abilities, activities being undertaken and environmental conditions.

Where the venue is appropriately classified as Very Sheltered Water, the Club's normal arrangement of one qualified coach working with up to six active paddlers is within the suggested 1:8 ratio.

However, the Club does not regard this ratio alone as sufficient justification for a particular staffing arrangement.

The Lead Coach must also consider:

- The total number of participants attending.
- The number of paddlers actively training.
- The location and supervision of waiting paddlers.
- Participant competence and experience.
- The technical complexity of the exercises.
- Available space and the slalom course layout.
- Environmental conditions.
- Rescue and emergency arrangements.
- Any additional venue-specific requirements.

Where the full group cannot be safely managed within the available arrangements, participant numbers, rotations or activities will be modified.

7. Session Organisation

Training will normally be organised around small-group coaching and individual technical development.

The Lead Coach may divide participants into groups according to:

- Experience and ability.
- Current skill development needs.
- Training objectives.
- Age and maturity.
- Confidence and competence.
- The complexity of the planned exercises.

The Lead Coach may structure the session using:

- Technical paddling exercises.
- Gate sequences.
- Individual gate practice.
- Timed training runs.
- Course analysis.
- Observation and feedback.
- Repetition of specific manoeuvres.
- Progressive development of slalom skills.

The Lead Coach will ensure that the movement of paddlers between these activities is managed safely.

8. Participant Competence

Canoe slalom training may involve paddlers with differing levels of experience and technical competence.

The Lead Coach will assess whether participants possess the necessary basic skills to undertake the planned activities.

This may include consideration of:

- Boat control and manoeuvring.
- Ability to respond to coaching instructions.
- Confidence in the training environment.
- Safe capsize and exit procedures.
- Appropriate use of equipment.
- Awareness of other paddlers.
- Ability to enter and leave the training area safely.

The Lead Coach will adapt exercises to the abilities of individual participants.

Where a paddler requires more fundamental instruction or direct supervision than the available coaching arrangements permit, the Lead Coach will modify the activity or make alternative arrangements.

9. Technical Coaching and Progression

The Lead Coach will determine the appropriate progression of technical activities.

More demanding skills will only be introduced where the coach is satisfied that:

- The paddler possesses sufficient underlying competence.
- The training environment is appropriate.
- Suitable observation and safety arrangements are in place.
- The activity is within the coach's own competence.
- The number of paddlers undertaking the exercise can be managed safely.

Progression may include increasing the technical complexity of gate sequences, introducing more demanding manoeuvres or raising the speed and intensity of training.

Paddlers will not be required to attempt activities beyond their reasonable competence.

10. Coaching Assistants and Additional Support

The Club may use experienced paddlers or coaching assistants to support the session.

Such individuals may assist with:

- Setting out and adjusting slalom gates.
- Supporting training organisation.
- Helping paddlers prepare equipment.
- Managing training rotations.
- Providing practical assistance within an agreed remit.
- Supporting less demanding activities under the Lead Coach's supervision.

The Lead Coach will assess the competence of each assistant and determine the activities they may undertake.

Assistants will not be treated as autonomous qualified coaches solely because they have significant paddling experience.

The Lead Coach retains overall responsibility and must remain available to advise or intervene.

Where an assistant undertakes formal coaching duties, appropriate supervision and deployment arrangements must be maintained.

11. Supervision and Line of Sight

The Lead Coach will maintain appropriate awareness of the training area and participating paddlers.

The Lead Coach does not need to continuously observe every paddler's individual actions, but must be able to provide appropriate supervision and intervention.

The Club's approach is that the Lead Coach:

- Maintains suitable observation of active training.
- Remains aware of participants waiting or rotating.
- Is readily accessible.
- Can communicate instructions effectively.
- Can identify and respond to developing hazards.
- Can stop or modify the activity where necessary.

Where the training layout or participant numbers prevent appropriate supervision, the Lead Coach will modify the arrangements.

Line of sight alone will not be regarded as sufficient where a particular paddler or activity requires more direct support.

12. Behaviour and Discipline

The Lead Coach is responsible for maintaining appropriate standards of behaviour throughout the session.

Participants must:

- Follow coaching and safety instructions.
- Behave responsibly.
- Show consideration for other paddlers.
- Respect the agreed training area and course arrangements.
- Avoid unnecessary interference with other participants.
- Remain within the areas designated by the Lead Coach.
- Stop an activity immediately when instructed.

The Lead Coach has authority to:

- Address inappropriate or unsafe behaviour.
- Issue instructions and warnings.
- Require a participant to modify an activity.
- Temporarily remove a participant from training.
- Exclude a participant from the remainder of a session where necessary for safety.
- Refer serious or repeated concerns to the Club Committee or Welfare Officer.

Where a junior participant is removed from an activity, appropriate supervision will be maintained until they can safely return or be handed over to their parent or responsible adult.

Formal disciplinary action beyond the session remains the responsibility of the Club Committee.

13. Safeguarding

The Club will maintain appropriate safeguarding arrangements for canoe slalom training.

The Lead Coach must meet the safeguarding requirements applicable to their deployment.

Where children or young people participate, the Club will ensure that:

- Appropriate safeguarding procedures are followed.
- Coaching practices are consistent with the Club's safeguarding policy.
- Participants are treated fairly and respectfully.
- Appropriate supervision arrangements are maintained.
- Safeguarding concerns are reported through the Club's established procedures.

Individuals undertaking regulated activity must have the appropriate criminal record checks in accordance with Paddle UK's requirements and relevant legislation.

14. First Aid and Emergency Arrangements

Appropriate first-aid provision must be available throughout the session.

The Lead Coach must hold an appropriate current first-aid qualification in accordance with Paddle UK's coaching deployment requirements.

The session will operate within the Club's relevant emergency procedures.

These will address:

- Capsized paddlers requiring assistance.
- Injuries or illness.
- Difficulties with equipment.
- Collisions between paddlers.
- Safe removal of participants from the water.
- Contacting emergency services.
- Emergency access and evacuation.
- Reporting and recording incidents.

The Lead Coach will ensure that the session's emergency arrangements are appropriate to the venue, participants and activities.

Where an emergency occurs, immediate safety and welfare considerations will take priority over continuation of coaching.

15. Venue and Environmental Considerations

The Club will ensure that each session operates within the environmental limits appropriate to the Lead Coach's qualification and competence.

The environmental classification of the venue will be confirmed through the Club's risk assessment.

The Lead Coach will consider:

- Water and air temperature.
- Wind and weather conditions where applicable.
- Water conditions.
- Available training space.
- Safe access and egress.
- Other paddlers and water users.
- The positioning of slalom gates.
- The potential for entanglement or collisions.
- Visibility and lighting.
- Available rescue arrangements.

Where training is undertaken in a swimming pool, the relevant venue operator's safety requirements must also be met.

Where conditions change, the Lead Coach will reassess the planned activity and make appropriate adjustments.

16. Equipment and Training Area

The Club will ensure that the equipment used is suitable for canoe slalom training.

This will include consideration of:

- Slalom kayaks and canoes.
- Appropriate buoyancy aids and helmets where required by the risk assessment.
- Paddles and spraydecks.
- Slalom gates and associated suspension systems.
- The positioning of gates within the training area.
- Safe access and egress.
- The suitability and condition of Club equipment.

The Lead Coach will ensure that gates and training exercises are arranged to minimise unnecessary hazards.

Defective or unsuitable equipment must not be used.

17. Dynamic Management of Sessions

The Lead Coach may alter the session arrangements at any time.

This may include:

- Reducing the number of active paddlers.
- Changing the order of training rotations.
- Dividing participants into different ability groups.
- Simplifying or increasing the complexity of exercises.
- Repositioning slalom gates.
- Providing additional individual coaching.
- Requiring a paddler to rest.
- Stopping an unsafe activity.
- Suspending or cancelling the session.

Deployment decisions will be based on the actual circumstances of the session rather than simply the number of available bookings.

18. Key Operating Principles

Kingston Kayak Club will operate canoe slalom training according to the following principles:

1. Canoe slalom training is classified as formal coaching.
 2. Kingston Kayak Club remains the deployer and maintains the overall safety framework.
 3. A suitably qualified, current and competent Lead Coach will be responsible for each session.
 4. A maximum of 12 places will be available for booking.
 5. The normal active coached group will comprise no more than six paddlers.
 6. Training rotations will be organised to maintain appropriate supervision of all participants.
 7. Coaching activities will be matched to paddler ability and experience.
 8. Assistants may support sessions within their assessed competence and agreed remit.
 9. Appropriate first-aid, safeguarding and emergency arrangements will be maintained.
 10. The Lead Coach may modify or stop activity whenever necessary for safety.
 11. The applicable environmental classification and venue operating requirements will be observed.
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19. Document Governance

Deployer: Kingston Kayak Club Committee

Document Owner: Club Committee / Safety Officer

Approval: Club Committee

Review Frequency: Annually or following a significant change to activities, venues, guidance or safety arrangements.

Supporting Documents

- Paddle UK – Standards for Deployment Policy for Clubs and National Association Committees (January 2026).
- Paddle UK – Standards for Deployment Glossary and Useful Links.
- British Canoeing Awarding Body – Environmental Definitions and Deployment Guidance (April 2025).
- Kingston Kayak Club – Relevant Risk Assessments.
- Kingston Kayak Club – Safeguarding Policy.
- Kingston Kayak Club – Emergency Procedures.
- Applicable Venue Operating Requirements⁷