

International Canoe Federation Level 2 Online Sprint Coaching Course

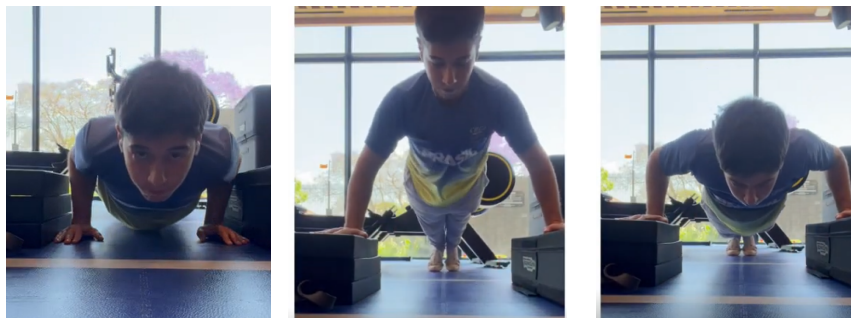
Presented by Gregory van Heerden, ICF Level 2 Accredited Course Facilitator

Acknowledgements

This course would not have been possible without the generous support of the International Canoe Federation.

Course Dates and background

The course was delivered over nine sessions between 22 September and 14 October 2025. Sessions were held via Zoom and ran for between 60 and 90 minutes. Although the programme was primarily online, four practical elements were included to ensure that coaches were able to apply theoretical knowledge within real coaching environments.



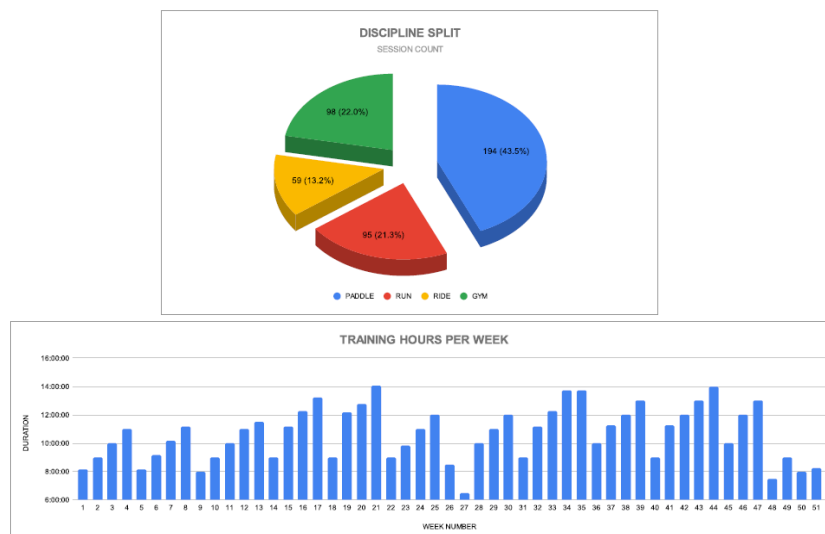
Getting strong

Course Outcomes and Measurement

The purpose of the Level 2 Course was to equip coaches with advanced knowledge and practical skills for coaching canoe/kayak athletes. The programme combined theoretical instruction with four practical assignments.

By the end of the course, coaches were able to:

- Compare their athletes' level with international standards.
- Construct annual training plans and individual session plans.
- Conduct training sessions safely and effectively.
- Demonstrate, teach, and correct kayak technique in suitable conditions.
- Produce on-water training sessions developing endurance, speed endurance, and speed.
- Plan and deliver strength training across phases of maximum force, strength endurance, and explosivity.
- Prepare athletes for high-level competition.



Planning is key

Practical Assessments:

1. Development of a coaching activity risk assessment.
2. Strength development: submission of a gym or bodyweight training video demonstrating progression across phases.
3. Technique: submission of a video demonstrating the teaching and correction of technique.
4. Submission of a periodised athlete training plan.

To achieve Level 2 accreditation, participants completed a written exam comprising 30 questions, with a minimum of 24 correct answers required to pass. All successful candidates received a Level 2 certificate from the International Canoe Federation.

Risk Assessment

Date: 25 September 2025

Assessors Name: John Cato Review Date: 31/03/2026

Description of assessment: Centurion Canoe Club facility

Location Details: Rietvlei Dam (-25.8733, 28.2656)

		Impact				
		Insignificant (1)	Minor (2)	Significant (3)	Major (4)	Severe (5)
Probability	Almost Certain (5)	5	10	15	20	25
	Likely (4)	4	8	12	16	20
	Moderate (3)	3	6	9	12	15
	Unlikely (2)	2	4	6	8	10
	Rarely (1)	1	2	3	4	5

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	Probability	Impact	Risk Level	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Hippos in dam	Paddlers. Attacked by hippo	3	3	9	Hippo sightings are reported to all members informing them of which areas to avoid. Safe zones on the dam are demarcated by Buoys. Permissible times identified for safe paddling (after sunrise & before sunset). Educating all novices and new members of the above rules for safeguarding paddlers.	Develop Disaster Management Plan (DMP).	Chairperson / Vice chairperson / Safety Officer / Novice coach / All members	Next AGM	No

Keeping athletes safe

Course Content

The course covered the following content:

- Coaching philosophy
- Role of the coach
- Duty of care and safety
- Characteristics required for success
- Talent identification
- Physiology
- Nutrition principles
- Skill acquisition
- Hydrodynamics
- Technique
- Psychology, goals, and motivation
- Training plan development and periodisation
- Training methods, intensity, and supplementary sports



Mobility and Core

Attendance

The course was attended by 14 coaches from across South Africa:

- Ian Black
- Richard Allen
- Lauren Allot
- Ommund Sivertsen
- Daniel McLachlan
- Helen Jansen van Vuuren
- John Cato
- Kayla Szalay
- Johan Grabe
- Brandon van der Walt
- Berven Titus
- Duncan Boyd
- Nicole Birkett
- Andrew Birkett

All coaches successfully completed the course.



Correcting technique

Facilitator Comments

The course benefited from a diverse and experienced group of coaches representing multiple clubs and disciplines, including Olympic sprint, marathon, ocean racing, swimming, and lifesaving. This range of backgrounds contributed to a rich exchange of perspectives and strengthened the collaborative nature of the programme. While the curriculum included substantial theoretical content, the strength of the course emerged from the way knowledge is brought to life through discussion and shared experience. The theory provided the foundation and common language for learning, while the conversations between coaches allowed that learning to deepen, broaden, and become practically meaningful. My role was simply to provide the structure and space for these exchanges, ensuring that the theoretical elements supported and enriched the collective development of everyone involved.



The phases of strength training in practice

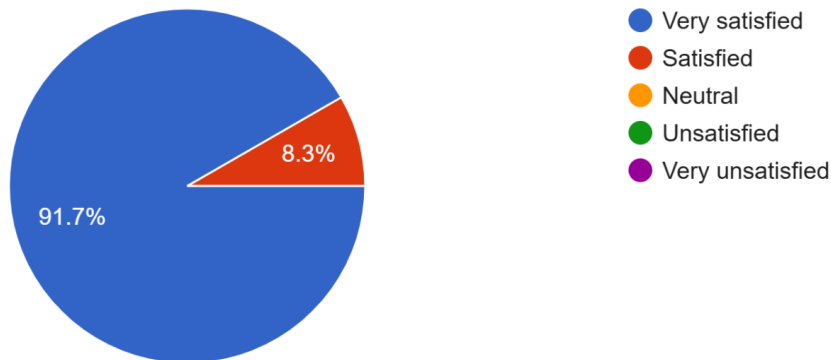
Delivered via Zoom, the course ran smoothly across all nine sessions. Recorded sessions were made available for those unable to attend a session. Sessions were kept within the 60–90 minute timeframe, with occasional extensions when discussion became particularly useful or insightful. Despite being online, the practical elements were successfully incorporated, with coaches submitting their training videos and risk assessments.

Throughout the programme, coaches demonstrated a strong understanding of the theoretical content and showed clear evidence of applying this knowledge within their practical tasks. The practical elements were particularly valuable in demonstrating how coaches translated concepts into real-world practice with their athletes.

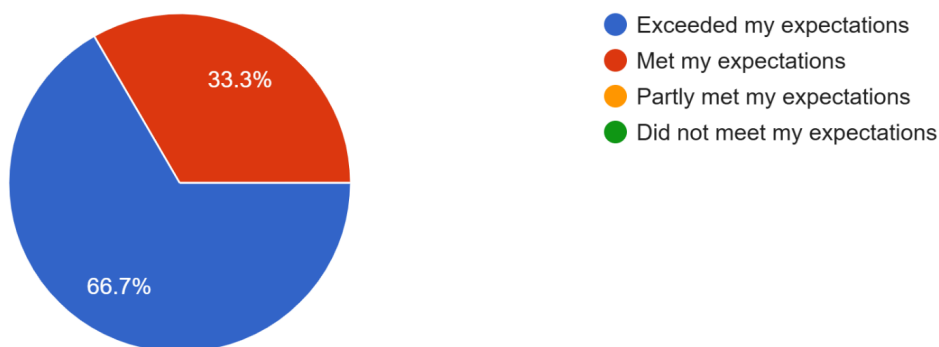
My aim throughout was to support coaches in developing the confidence and competence required to positively influence their athletes' development. Based on their engagement and the quality of the work submitted, I am confident that this aim was achieved.

Participant Feedback

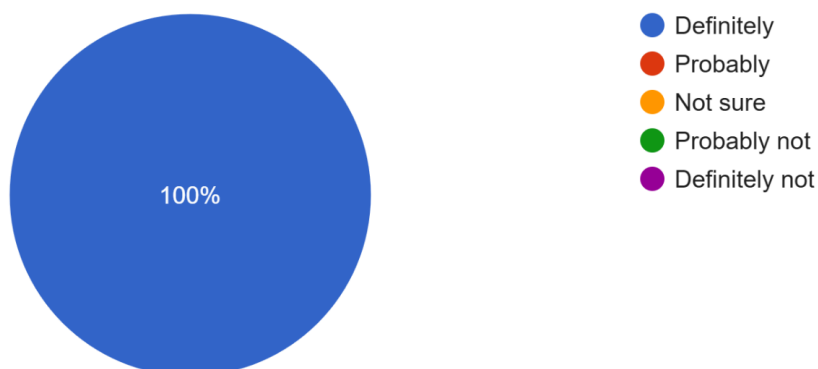
Feedback from participants was exceptionally positive, highlighting both the relevance of the content and the quality of delivery. All participants reported being either satisfied or very satisfied with the programme.



Notably, 33% said the course exceeded their expectations, while the remainder confirmed it met expectations.



All participants stated that they would definitely recommend the course to others, reinforcing its value to the coaching community.



Open-ended feedback suggested that the most impactful elements of the course were:

1. Interactive Approach

Coaches valued the opportunity to engage in high-level conversations, share perspectives, and learn from one another.

2. Facilitator Support

Participants highlighted the clarity of explanations and the practical examples used to illustrate key concepts. One coach noted: *“The way the instructor explained things and gave us a chance to also answer questions.”*

3. Technical Content and Application

Improved understanding of training plan development, block periodisation, and the structuring of training phases were frequently mentioned as key takeaways.

Areas for future enhancement included:

- **More detailed technical video analysis**, focusing on subtle technique faults and appropriate corrective cues and drills.
- **Additional content on athlete development**, particularly differences in maturation between boys and girls, and gender-specific considerations for strength training.

Selected Participant Comments

- *“A positive yet challenging experience. Excellent facilitation and everyone had a platform to share their experiences.”*
- *“The course was brilliant. I loved Greg’s interactive approach—refreshing and engaging.”*
- *“A powerful experience that strengthened my confidence, skills, and passion for coaching.”*
- *“I absolutely loved doing this course. It was comprehensive, engaging, and full of real learning.”*

Conclusion

The course successfully met its objectives and provided a valuable and collaborative learning experience for all involved. I extend my sincere thanks to every coach who contributed to this shared learning environment and I look forward to seeing their continued development and the positive impact they will have on the athletes they support.