

# International Canoe Federation Level 1 Assistant Canoe Sprint Coach Course

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**Presented by Gregory van Heerden ICF Level 1 accredited course  
Facilitator**

## *Acknowledgements*

The implementation of this course would not have been possible without the generous help and support of the following:

- The International Canoe Federation, Kwazulu Natal Canoe Union and Canoeing South Africa.
- Shongweni and Umzinyathi Canoe Club



*Coaches attending the course at Shongweni*

## *Course date*

This level 1 course was held from the 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and comprised of two full days (08h00-17h00) of lectures and practical.

### *Course Outcomes and measurement*

The purpose of the Level 1 course was to provide the coaches with the basic knowledge and skills needed to coach beginners in canoe/kayak. The course comprised of theory, practical and an “apprenticeship”.

On the completion of the course the coaches were able to:

- Provide a safe environment for paddling to take place
- Plan and conduct beginner lessons
- Plan and conduct a basic training session
- Teach balance, the basic technique of kayak paddling and steering
- Conduct basic physical conditioning training
- Prepare athletes for domestic level competition

In order to assess the coaches knowledge and their practical ability to apply the knowledge learnt they had to complete a practical test and written exam comprising of 20 questions (a minimum of 16 correct responses was required in order to pass) and a practical test in which they had to correctly carry out a beginners lessons.

Going forward all Coaches will need to keep a personal log of their coaching activities to document their “apprenticeship” activities as this proof will be needed as one of the requirements of entry onto the Level 2 course.

It was also highly recommended that all coaches receive regular first aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation training.

All the successful candidates shall receive a “Level 1 Assistant Canoe Sprint Coach” certificate from the ICF/CAC.



*Venue: Umzinyathi Canoe Club, Shongweni Dam*

## *Course content*

The following content was covered in the course:

- Introduction to Canoeing, a short history of Canoeing, the definition, discipline descriptions and Canoe Sprint description
- Equipment; Boats, parts of the boats, paddles and accessories, handling of equipment
- Safety and Rescue; equipment, personal safety, injuries, methods of rescue
- The technique of canoeing; launching, balance, strokes of canoeing, basic paddling technique, steering
- Physical conditioning; endurance development and strength development
- Training and basic training methods; Why training is necessary, training loads, frequency and duration, long distance, fartlek, interval and complex training.
- Role of the coach; teaching skills and communication, coaching tools, methods and teaching beginners.
- Introducing racing; race course, racing rules, the goals and principles of racing

With the Practical component covering:

- The application of the above theory incorporating program design, equipment, safety and rescue, technique, and teaching a beginner.



*Lectures underway*

## Attendance

The course was attended by 18 KwaZulu Natal Coaches. The group consisted of 28% Female and 72% male, with 22% of attendees being black.

Attendee details:

Full Name	Gender	Date of Birth
Gavin Dundas-Starr	M	21-05-69
Callam Davis	M	08-09-00
Josh Giddings	M	11-12-00
Donna Hutton	F	30-06-98
Kim Pople	F	26-06-72
Max Howard	M	30-05-00
Chris Hornby	M	13-05-75
Tayla Isaac	F	01-10-03
Sbonelo Khwela	M	02-01-88
David Ngcobo	M	01-07-84
Ant Stott	M	27-06-78
Jacques van Rooyen	M	03-11-74
Raymond Radebe	M	07-09-97
Banetse Nkhoesa	M	06-10-93
Simon Dube	M	06-06-83
Melissa van Rooyen	F	31-01-79
Ian Griffiths	M	06-05-83
Kim Peek	F	27-08-64



*Examination time*

### *Facilitator Comments*

My general assessment of the feedback from the course has indicated that the expectations of the coaches were met, which is very positive.



Due to the load of the theory during the course and the potential of this to cause disengagement by those attending, I included into the lecture program several adult learning (experiential learning) activities, which were focused on key aspects of the theory. I found that these group activities served to increase the energy and participation of the coaches whilst setting up repeated learning loops to help foster their experience and knowledge retention.



Over the two days we were able to cover all the necessary theory while still spending enough time on practically applying what had been talked about.

We did however spend a little additional time on the theory and application of training program design as this was an area in which the coaches expressed a desire to explore in more detail. This request has been very common at all the Level 1's I have facilitated and I would propose that Canoeing South Africa should consider hosting some short courses for coach development covering physiology, training program design and periodisation, off the water conditioning and mental preparation of athletes. This would provide learning and self-improvement opportunities for the coaches, as well as vital knowledge bridges between the ICF coaching Levels.



I strive to ensure that on completion of the course that the coaches leave competent and able to transfer the necessary skills that beginners would need (balance, technique etc.) in the correct way, as well as being able to set up basic training programs that can be implemented to train their athletes towards competing in provincial competitions. I can confidently say that this goal was achieved in terms of teaching beginners, however, I feel that the level of training program design, in the time available, provided only for a basic understanding of training at a club level, and not necessarily for results at a National level.



In terms of understanding the theoretical aspects, the coaches present on this course showed an excellent ability to comprehend and internalise the amount of information presented in time for their exam, with all coaches achieving the required 80% pass mark.

Even with the 100% pass rate I still observed how the coaches who do not have English as their first language battled a lot more to grasp aspects of the theory, as well as with the questions in the test. I propose that we consider translating the tests into Zulu and Xhosa to assist in this regard.

Canoeing South Africa should also consider the running of a CPR, water safety and first aid course for the coaches as this is critical for ensuring the safety of the paddlers training under them, coupled to this could be the consideration to make it mandatory for all certified coaches to have a current CPR and first aid certificate, whilst those coaching children should have the necessary Police clearance in order to run training sessions.



A strong theme that came out over the two days and which clearly underpinned the interactions between all the coaches was one of COLLABORATION - The need to share knowledge, recognise and respect differences, and a willingness to work together towards nurturing the depth of talent from club level upwards. I hope that we can build on this momentum going forward for the benefit of our paddlers as well as to use this positivity to facilitate the continued interaction and learning between the coaches thereby raising the level of coaching from within our structures.

In summary I believe the course objectives were met and the experience was worthwhile for all involved. I would like to thank all those responsible for providing the opportunity for this knowledge sharing experience to take place, and look forward to seeing how the coaches progress, find fulfilment in their roles and make canoeing a fun, safe and challenging experience for those with whom they interact.

