

International Canoe Federation Level 1- Online Assistant Canoe Sprint Coach Course

**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 and Canoeing South Africa.



Online Session in progress

Course date

This online level 1 course was held over 9 sessions split over a three-week period (8th April to 1st May 2021), with sessions of 60 to 90 minutes being held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings. Whilst predominantly an online course three practical elements were included to ensure a transfer of theory to actual coaching application.

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 and three practical tasks as well as 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 this they had to complete three practical assignments followed by a written exam comprising of 20 questions (a minimum of 16 correct responses was required in order to pass)

It was also recommended that all the Coaches 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.

Furthermore, it is expected that all the coaches be compliant with the regulations of Canoeing South Africa in terms of having the following in place:

- A current first aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation certificate,
- Proof of completion of the online Safeguarding Awareness certificate,
- Proof of the following Police clearance screenings:
 - The Sexual Offences register, Child Protection register and Standard criminal check.

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

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

Facilitator Comments

The course had a good spread of experienced coaches and coaches just starting out on their journey. This resulted in a good amount of engagement between everyone on the course, and especially valuable was the input from Richard Wade a high level swimming coach making the transition to kayaking, his involvement added another level of information to the course which I felt was very valuable for everyone.

Feedback at the end of the course indicated that the majority of the coaches expectations were met and that the information shared was worthwhile and could be used in their preparations and training sessions. One aspect which was identified for improvement was centred on providing an opportunity for the coaches to analyse the technique of paddlers out on the water and provide feedback and or corrective input to the athletes concerned. This is normally incorporated into the sessions that I run with coaches in person, and has been an element not touched on via the online experience and I will therefore be considering how to add elements of this to the virtual training platform, potentially through the use of video footage and analysis.



Coaches in action

The course was held on Zoom, with very few technical issues over the 9 sessions, and if a coach did have a session interrupted all relevant information from the session was shared afterwards reducing any impact on their learning experience.



Warming up and stretching

Sessions were limited to between sixty and ninety minutes to maintain the attendees focus and this was generally adhered to with some exceptions due to more involved discussions after the presentation. I do feel that allowing for this to happen is very beneficial as it gives the coaches the opportunity to share their viewpoints, experience and ideas.



Making good use of bodyweight

We were able to incorporate all the necessary practical elements, with each attendee having to submit two brief videos as well as present an abridged training program across all sections of the standard training periodisation periods.

Out of water preparation – May to July

Water preparation – Aug to Dec with Fish in the 1st week of Oct

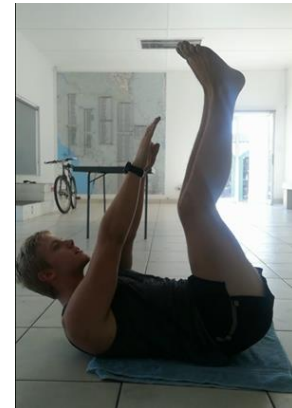
Race Season – Jan to April

Energy system chart

	Duration	Repeats	Rest	Heart Rate	Intensity/Speed	Lactate		Stress Index
Rec	Any	Any	any	<60%	<80% Threshold	1-2mM	Warm Up/Recovery	0
EN1	15-60min (longer)	3min-1hr	10-30sec	60-70%	80-95%	1-3mM	Aerobic Base	1
EN2	15-60min	60-45min	10-30sec	70-85%	95-103%	3-5mM	Anaerobic Threshold	2
EN3	8-30min	60-15min	30sec-2min	>85%	103-107%	4-10mM	MAX VO2	6
SP1	3-12	30-2.30	1:1 – 1:2	100%	90-95% of best 200m	10-20mM	Lactate Tolerance	8
SP2	2-6	15-60	1:2 – 1:8	100%	95-105% best 200m	10-20mM	Lactate Peak	10
SP3	1-4	3-12/15	>60sec	N/A	>105% best 200m	N/A	Alactate	4

Sharing of Information - From Swimming to Paddling

The training program design element of the practical component once again received the best feedback from the attendees with all of them really enjoying the process and learning a lot from each other during the sharing process.



In terms of understanding the theoretical aspects, I feel that by having the sessions split across three weeks this enabled the coaches to reflect on their learning as well as prepare properly for each session by reviewing the relevant chapter in the course manual prior to the online lecture.

The following videos were added to the homework of the coaches from the ICF online lecture series:

https://www.canoeicf.com/icf-performance-education-free-online-series?utm_campaign=PerformanceEducation

- Difference between women's and men's training methods,
- Choosing a paddle for young kayak athletes,
- How to train your athletes to paddle faster,
- Anti-doping Education - Keeping canoeing clean.

During our last session we once again included a discussion around the importance of developing a culture of collaboration amongst the coaches which stressed the vision of a shared goal (having South African paddlers achieving results on the world stage) and a willingness to work together towards this by sharing knowledge, recognising and respecting differences, and pushing each other to excel thereby raising the level of coaching from within our structures for the benefit of all our athletes.



As always 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 and I can confidently say that this goal was achieved.

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.