Exmoor Canoe Club – Since 2004.

Generic Risk Assessment – Wimbleball Lake Sessions - updated on 23/02/2024 by Dan Barnett
For Juniors and Adult Sessions
Approved by level 2 + Coach: Darren Sherwood 10/8/2020

Operating procedure:

As minimum, one level 1 + coach with experience of paddling at Wimbleball must be present on site during any session. Their role will be to coordinate activities, agree activity plans with Paddle Sport Instructors and other competent leaders, deliver activities and lead on dealing with any accidents or situations - in accordance with this approved risk assessment.

Risk Assessment:

Hazard	Those at Risk	Risk Control	Notes and additional control measures
General control and supervision of group	All participants	Ratio of 1:8 coach and supporting competent adult or Paddle Sport Instructor to participants. Maximum group size of 24. BC Level 1 Coach with good experience of Wimbleball Lake and suitable craft and rescue skill level can lead sessions within the remit of this risk assessment.	
Slips and trips	All participants	Assess site conditions on each session and make participants aware of any unobvious hazards - with reference specifically to slipways, banks, moorings, bracken, brambles, roots, equipment. Old trainers or water shoes to be worn at all times (no flip flop type shoes or bare feet). Participants instructed to keep paddles and other equipment tidy and/or in boats when not in use.	Coaches/Leaders to enforce need for good behaviour in managing risk.
Cuts and grazes	All participants	Coaches/Leaders to brief groups about likely causes, for example brambles, and their avoidance. Old trainers or water shoes to be worn at all times (no flip flop type shoes or bare feet)	See also slips and trips.
Manual handling injury	All participants	Participants to be instructed in safe handling techniques - how to carry kayaks and canoes. How to manoeuvre boats full of water. Coaches/Leaders to demonstrate correct techniques for removal of boats from trailers lifting from the ground.	Refer to BC guidance.

Trailer or Storage Rack related injury	All participants	Participants to be made aware of risks specific to trailer – tipping, tripping, crush injury, head or other injury from falling boats, brake release. Coaches/Leaders to clearly instruct and demonstrate system for unloading/loading and assign roles to individuals where appropriate. Helmets to be worn at Coaches/Leaders discretion. Juniors should always be supervised when moving boats and equipment.	Coaches/Leaders to be aware of physical issues such as dyspraxia in group.
Entrapment in boat	All participants	Kayaks: Boats to be outfitted before paddling, especially footrest adjustment. Participants to be briefed to ensure feet are not behind footrests and laces are inside shoes or ideally avoided to avoid any risk of entanglement with foot rests. **Leaders to check at each session.** Capsize practice to be encouraged after demonstration. Spray decks not to be used until calm wet exit observed followed by instructor-observed unexpected capsize. Open Canoes: Paddlers to be briefed about capsize and seating arrangements; no legs under thwarts or yokes.	
Submersion	All participants	All participants to wear approved buoyancy aid and be instructed in correct fitting and checking. **BAs to be checked by instructor or competent person at each session.**	
Cold water shock	All participants	Introductory sessions to be conducted on inland water in summer months. Staff to encourage immersion through capsize drills and games during these sessions, and to carefully observe individual reactions.	
Unconsciousness	All participants	First Aid qualified staff to accompany every group.	
Head injuries	All participants	Participants to wear approved helmet appropriate to the activity. Coaches/Leaders to be clear about risks of games and capsize drills on flat water if helmets are not being worn.	
Hypothermia, hyperthermia, sunburn	All participants	All participants to be adequately clothed and equipped for the activity and conditions. Instructors trained to recognise the signs, symptoms and causes of the onset of hypothermia, hyperthermia and sunburn as appropriate. First Aid qualified Coaches/Leaders to accompany (or be present) with every group. Journeying groups to carry appropriate preventative equipment – spare clothing, emergency shelters, hot drink kit / extra water, suncream.	Coaches/Leaders to brief groups at their discretion – ie not novices on a taster session.
Other water users	All participants	Participants to be briefed about other water users, their activities and action upon encountering them. For other water craft, right of way should be established and good distances observed.	Coaches/Leaders should not hesitate to move a group from a busy area.

Water borne infection	All participants	Coaches/Leaders to assess water quality. Participants to be briefed to not drink the water, and to wash hands if possible before eating. Cuts and grazes to be covered with waterproof plaster. Instructors to be aware of leptospirosis and its symptoms.	
Adverse weather	All participants	Coaches/Leaders to check weather forecast on the day before each session and on the day. Participants to have appropriate equipment and clothing for the weather and water temperature. Sessions should be cancelled in the event of wind conditions greater than Beaufort Level 5. With wind over 12mph (Beaufort level 3) activity may need to be restricted to the shore line depending upon wind direction and forecast.	Coaches/Leaders to plan sessions flexibly.
Existing medical conditions	Those concerned	Ensure that medical forms are completed for each participant and available to Coaches/Leaders. If there is a serious medical condition a doctor's letter agreeing to participation should also be sought. If anaphylactic reactions are to be expected adrenalin pens are to be carried by Coaches/Leaders and Coaches/Leaders trained in using the device. Any personal medication to be carried by staff and Coaches/Leaders trained to recognise signs / symptoms of relevant conditions and how to react should they happen, including the administration of prescription medicines.	
Use of paddle sport instructors	Groups being supported by PSIs	PSI to take out groups in very sheltered water situations only. At Wimbleball this will include shore side (within 50m) activity within sight and shouting distance of a qualified coach and first aider, and in good conditions trips to other side of the lake within view of the get on (good communication plan must be agreed with PSI for this e.g. VHF radio). Exact plan to be agreed between PSI and supervising coach at each session adapting to the weather, group competency and kit being used. Sessions to be limited to 45 minutes.	
Seal launch and bank slide	All participants	A suitable location with soft shale should be chosen to protect boats and participants. Use a diagonal boat carry route and ensure no persons stand below where an accidental sliding boat could hit them. Assist any paddler who is struggling to carry their boat. Allow one slide at a time, held in place until ready by an instructor. Once in the water participants should move well out of the way before another is allowed to go. Use a short run of only 10 m or less for new or less confident paddlers. At least one competent person should be in the water to help deal with capsizes.	