

# Southern Sandstone Leader's Award - Syllabus and Technical Notes

## 1. Knowledge

- a) Keep up to date with current practices e.g. reading magazines, talking to climbers/group leaders.
- b) Have an understanding of the various sub-sports within climbing.
- c) Be aware of the need for warming up and how to avoid injuries.
- d) Be familiar with the equipment available.

## 2. Personal Climbing

- a) Be able to climb confidently using a basic 3 point of contact style, with good use of holds & balance.
- b) Be able to climb/abseil to a participant who may need assistance, as a last resort.

## 3. First Aid

- a) All supervisors should hold a current first aid qualification.

## 4. Preparation

- a) Find out the ability/age of your group, this may affect the choice of venue/location.
- b) Have knowledge of the chosen venue/location, preferably by climbing/abseiling there before taking the group.
- c) Check if there are any access difficulties. For example, parking of vehicles, crossing private land.
- d) Prepare an equipment list by checking what is needed For example, types of sling for belays such as long static slings.
- e) Obtain parents' permission to undertake activity.
- f) Appoint a Home Contact and ensure all details of participants are available.
- g) Be aware of the nearest first aid provision.

## 5. Equipment.

- a) Have a knowledge of equipment available and be able to select the appropriate gear for the group and activity involved.
- b) Understand the importance of equipment being the correct size.
- c) Be aware of types of equipment considered no longer appropriate for personal or group use.
- d) Be able to maintain and care for all equipment and know how to store it correctly.
- e) Be able to recognise when equipment is worn out or is too old and should not be used.
- f) Be aware that equipment failure and misuse are the main cause of accidents.
- g) Have a logbook system for recording age and usage of equipment.
- h) Understand the correct use of the following equipment :-
  - climbing helmets
  - sit harness
  - body harness
  - karabiners
  - belay devices
  - dynamic kernmantel rope
  - static kernmantel rope
  - tape slings
  - accessory cords
  - carpet edge protectors

## 6. Anchors

Demonstrate an ability to choose suitable and sound anchors at the crag. At this level this will involve the use of trees, stakes bolts and occasional other man made anchor points only – **climbing protection such as nuts, camming devices etc. are expressly outside the scope of the Sandstone Award and must not be used under any circumstances by Sandstone leaders.**

Demonstrate an ability to set up anchors so as to:

- a) position the belay karabiner directly above the line of the climb;
- b) utilise multiple anchor points and equalise tension;
- c) optimise the finishing point of the climb;
- d) minimise erosion and rope drag.

## 7. Ropework.

Understand the correct use of, and be able to tie and demonstrate to others, the following knots:

- Figure of Eight (including on the bight and re-threaded)
- Italian Hitch
- Englishman's Knot (Double Stopper Knot)
- Overhand knot
- Clove hitch
- Bowline
- Tape knot

NB: The Larks Foot is not as weak as once thought, but its strength varies widely depending on the way it is loaded, so it is not recommended. This is also a good way to avoid lengthy conversations about the appropriate use of Larks Foots.

## 8. Belaying

Be able to:

- a) Set up both top and bottom rope systems.
- b) Be able to belay in a safe manner using a variety of belay devices.
- c) Understand the advantages and disadvantages of **directly** tying the harness onto the rope or **indirectly** using a figure of 8 on the bight and a Karabiner.
- d) Appreciate the advantages and disadvantages of indirect and direct belays.
- e) Be able to teach belaying to groups in a methodical and clear manner.
- f) Be able to supervise groups belaying themselves, understand that it may be necessary for the leader to hold the dead rope as a precaution.
- g) Understand how to use ground anchors for the belayer and how to improvise if these are not available.
- h) Ensure that the descent from the crag is safe and controlled. (lower off only when access to the top would be dangerous to participants)

## 9. Safety

- a) Understand the importance of never allowing the group leader to place themselves in a dangerous situation, for instance leaders should ensure they are safe when at the top of a crag.
- b) Be able to select a venue and equipment appropriate to the group.
- c) Wear a safety rope and helmet when demonstrating.
- d) Be aware at all times of what all members in the group are doing.
- e) Give clear instructions to the group as to where they may go within the area. Dangers must be pointed out to them.

- f) Check that all long hair is tied back, draw cords, neckerchiefs removed, or tucked out of the way, all rings, watches and bracelets are removed. Check that participants are wearing suitable clothing for the activity and that loose clothing cannot snag the system.
- g) Understand the importance of checking all equipment that group members put on and develop the habit of rechecking during the activity.
- h) Ensure that group sizes are not too large.
- i) Ensure an adequate Supervisor/Participant ratio.
- j) Understand the benefits of bouldering as part of climbing training and its use as a group management technique.