

D4DR White Water: an Intensive Instructor Training Programme

The Beginning

During the Winter of 2006 Simon Westgarth and Leo Hoare whilst working on a BCU 5 Star Assessment, decided to work together to produce a programme for paddlers who wish to make paddling their life. We agreed the programme should be of such a high quality and cutting edge it would lead the industry. It is now ready and we've named it the concept D4DR.

What is D4DR

D4DR's an eight week intensive whitewater instructor training programme. You'll learn everything you need to live the whitewater life. We group the course into three core areas: river guiding, rescue and kayak coaching. And you'll pick up a slew of qualifications to prove your skills to future employers.

We base the course from our own large house by Slovenia's Soča river, and we also travel throughout the Balkans (including Montenegro) and visit Austria to uncover the skills you need for real alpine river leading. The programme's headed by Leo Hoare, who'll be helped out by the likes of Dave Carroll, Deb Pinniger, Simon Westgarth and rafting specialist Rob Hind.

Who are D4DR?

D4DR's made up of experts - and we measure that by more than just qualifications. We demand terminal kayakers - that sub-species whose veins flow with whitewater.

Leo Hoare is our Course Director. He's been paddling since the age of nine and as a junior he raced slalom for Great Britain, winning numerous junior internationals and paddling on the Barcelona Olympic squad. He also featured on UK TV's 'Paddles up', before moving on to coaching various national squads.

Now he's one of Britain's top whitewater professionals. He's worked at the Welsh national mountain centre, Plas y Brenin, and the Welsh national whitewater centre, Canolfan Tryweryn. He's got a slew of qualifications and he's spent the last XX years working as a whitewater coach, guide and instructor.

And the rest...but because no one paddler can ever cover it all, we bring in some of the paddling world's top names to share their expertise. Olli Grau, Deb Pinniger, Simon Westgarth and Dave Carroll will all join us during the eight weeks, setting the D4DR course firmly at the top of the sport.

What's on offer?

Every whitewater professional wants something different from the river, but we give you a broad-based grounding in three main areas:

River guiding

Whether you're in a raft, canoe or kayak, there's a set of common skills you need for safe, successful river guiding. We give you those skills. We'll spend two weeks in Austria training for the Austrian raft guide test. One of the world's most exacting rafting qualifications, it's known globally and recognised as rigorous enough to show the truly competent guide. During that time, we'll also aim to qualify for the BCU L3 raft guide (Trip Leader). We'll also look at river guiding from a kayak, concentrating on running fun, safe trips on water up to class IV.

We'll aim to cover all the elements of BCU 4* and 5* but - first and foremost - we'll be showing you all the skills and tricks that we've picked up from year after year on the water. Experience matters, though, so we'll spend time on rivers

throughout Europe. Slovenia's Soca has everything you need from a destination whitewater river, while the rivers of the Austrian Alps are as good for kayaking as they are for rafting. And we'll finish with a run down the Tara for up to two friends or family members for each student, entirely run by D4DR students.

Rescue Technician

Safety's paramount to working on whitewater, so we'll give you the skills to stay safe in a dynamic river environment. The Rescue 3 International Swiftwater Rescue Technician is an internationally recognised qualification that covers everything from first response to vertical access work. The D4DR course includes SRT basic and SRT advanced, to give you a complete set of rescue skills and give you a foundation that – if you choose – can lead to SRT instructor status. We also include a three-day Rescue Emergency Care first aid course. The REC course covers the essentials for first aid in a wilderness outdoor situation.

Kayak coaching

We'll offer your UKCC level 3 training but, more importantly, we'll develop coaching skills to apply to any situation. We cover how different people learn and ways to break down even the most complex moves and techniques into clear, easy-to-follow teaching points. From flatwater to Alpine class IV, we'll show you the tactics you need for a solid coaching repertoire. D4DR's an eight week intensive whitewater instructor training programme You'll learn everything you need to live the whitewater life. We group the course into three core areas: river guiding, rescue and kayak coaching. And you'll pick up a slew of qualifications to prove your skills to future employers.

D4DR WW Itinerary

Our itinerary shows a wide scope of destinations, different paddling opportunities and several formal training courses

Weeks 1-2

Warm-up. We'll get your paddling juices flowing with a warm up. We'll get to know the group with a couple of days of just paddling together to bond as a team. We'll cover the SRT basic rescue qualification and the three day REC first aid course. We'll do some intensive work on your personal skills a bit to give you a firm basis for the rest of the course

Weeks 3-4

Road trip. We'll start to travel beyond the Soca to cover not just logistics, but also the skills you need to lead on unfamiliar waters and varied types of river. We'll also cover more advanced rescue techniques on the SRT advanced course. We'll gradually work our way west through Oest Tyrol to finish on some of the Alpine classics in Tyrol, Austria.

Weeks 5-6

A change of boat. It's time to make the jump to rafts to sharpen up river guiding skills and work towards the Austrian raft guiding certificate. We'll aim to raft various different rivers, including sections of the Inn, Oetz and Sanna to cover everything from the tight and the technical to the bit and powerful. We'll also aim to assess for the BCU L3 Trip Leader raft guide award.

Weeks 7-8

The culmination of the trip. This is the time to bring everything we've learnt together as we travel back to Slovenia and beyond. We'll follow a few days in Slovenia concluding any assessments, and then head on a trip to Montenegro where our trainees will guide a multi-day raft-support trip down the Tara. Each student can offer up to two places on the trip to friends and family and put

what they've learnt into practice. Our aim of the D4DR is to nurture a keen paddler into a "complete" river leader, who could then make paddling white water a career. D4DR will provide you with the opportunity to be coached by some of the most experienced paddlers in the world who are passionate about passing on their expertise. Their aim over the eight weeks will be to share their knowledge and understanding whilst allowing you to develop your own skill through doing. Along with the coaching there will be fundamental training, which will lead to you gaining internationally recognised qualifications, giving you opportunities of work which do not restrict you to the UK. And lastly we will be using lots of locations, which are very, very exciting. Varying the locations will give you a broader range of experiences on river's which differ in nature. You will play a big part in organising the logistics.

The course provides:

- ALL COACHING, GUIDING & INSTRUCTION
- AUSTRIAN RAFT GUIDING LICENSE
- RESCUE 3 INTERNATIONAL WRT & SRT ADVANCED TRAINING
- BCU L3 RAFT GUIDE TRAINING/ASSESSMENT
- BCU 4 STAR WW KAYAK TRAINING/ASSESSMENT
- BCU 5 STAR WW KAYAK TRAINING/ASSESSMENT
- BCU L3T WW KAYAK TRAINING
- BCU COACHING PROCESSES COURSE
- REC FIRST AID FOR PADDLERS
- GROUP TRANSPORTATION THROUGHOUT THE COURSE DURATION
- FULL BOARD THROUGHOUT THE COURSE DURATION
- FULL ACCOMMODATION AT 22 TRNOVO WHILST IN SLOVENIA
- CAMPING/PENSION ACCOMMODATION WHILST AWAY FROM SLOVENIA
- GROUP MANAGEMENT TRAINING & CO-ORDINATION
- MENTORING THROUGHOUT THE EIGHT WEEKS
- DETAILED AND PERSONAL ACTION PLAN
- D4DR CERTIFICATE AND REFERENCE
- HELP AND ADVISE TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT

5 days of each week (Monday to Friday) will be a structured part of your training with progressive input, on your days off you will be encouraged to come out boating with us and have few adventures, again transportation will be provided. However, if you climb, mountain bike or hill walk the alpine weather and venues are superb if you want to dry out a bit. The plan for food is to go shopping together as a group and share the domestic tasks, with the odd night out at a local restaurant. Alcohol is not included.

The D4DR programme will run from 14th June to the 8th of August and will start and finish in Slovenia. You will be picked up and dropped off in Trieste Airport, Italy, although good trains link us to Venice, an hour away. Flights are not included. We will allow you to take your boat, paddles and kit, and may be able to offer new specialised equipment for discount purchase. If you wish to take additional kit there will be an opportunity for it to be shuttled out with one of our staff. You also have the option of driving out to Slovenia if you wish.

The price of the D4DR programme is £5600/8000€. This also includes an induction weekend in North Wales, 15th/16th March 2008. The induction weekend is designed to meet everyone, give you the chance to ask questions about the format and prepare you for the eight weeks with the finer details.

Lastly, at the end of the programme we have a commitment to you to follow up the course with a detailed action plan with feedback from each of your tutors, along with a reference and certificate outlining content of D4DR.

Your tutors have a great deal to offer in the way of career advice and contacts within the industry on a international scale and will do their best to help you on your way, if you have any questions email or phone either myself or Simon.

Happy paddling Leo & Simon

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