

CANOE SLALOM ACADEMY NATIONAL STRUCTURE OVERVIEW

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Aims and Benefits of the Canoe Slalom Academy

The Canoe Slalom Academy is a Canoeing Ireland National program with the main aim of providing the opportunity for young paddlers to train in Canoe Slalom in Ireland and provide the necessary opportunities for them to develop their own paddling skills allowing them to reach whatever level of competition or training they would like to.

A key part of the Slalom Academy is to provide an appropriate learning environment for young paddlers to progress their slalom skills and develop their Slalom Training and Racing knowledge. It is hoped that through engagement with the Academy young paddlers will develop a range of skills to benefit their development both on and off the water.

Benefits of the Slalom Academy

- Regular Coaching, twice a week
- Coaching at National Races, both flat and moving water
- National Training camps with all Academy Groups
- International Training Camps with the Academy; Pending selection.
- Training Programmes delivered by the Academy Coaches from the Academy Coordinator.
- Assistance towards infrastructure at training locations. (Making Gates, rope for hanging lines for instance.)
- Develop more canoe slalom coaches to increase access to quality coached environments around the country.
- Outlined strategy for paddlers to progress from the beginnings and paddling for fun, all the way up to international competition.
- Insured by Canoeing Ireland for all activities under the Canoe Slalom Academy program

Participation in the Academy

Participation in the Canoe Slalom Academy will incur a fee, which will be reviewed annually. The monetary contribution from Academy Paddlers at weekly club sessions is added to a fund, which will be used to support Academy activities in that club. The Canoe Slalom Academy is currently hosted by several clubs around the country. In recognition of this, the contribution for participation in the Academy is €5 for members of the hosting club and €10 for non-members.

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Coaching and Training Structure

Within the Slalom Academy are three main levels for the Academy paddlers to be appropriately challenged depending on their skill level, age, experience and competency.

Academy Groups

- Novice Group,
    - All paddlers begin in the Novice group, only attending the coached sessions with their group until they are at an appropriate standard and point of development to move on to the Intermediate group. This move is at the discretion of each training groups, who will have the best understanding of how they are progressing as a paddler both on and off the water.
    - All the paddlers from this group are welcome to join any Canoe Slalom Academy Training camp that takes place at a Flatwater Venue, the paddlers attendance at any moving water training sessions is at the discretion of their group's coach.

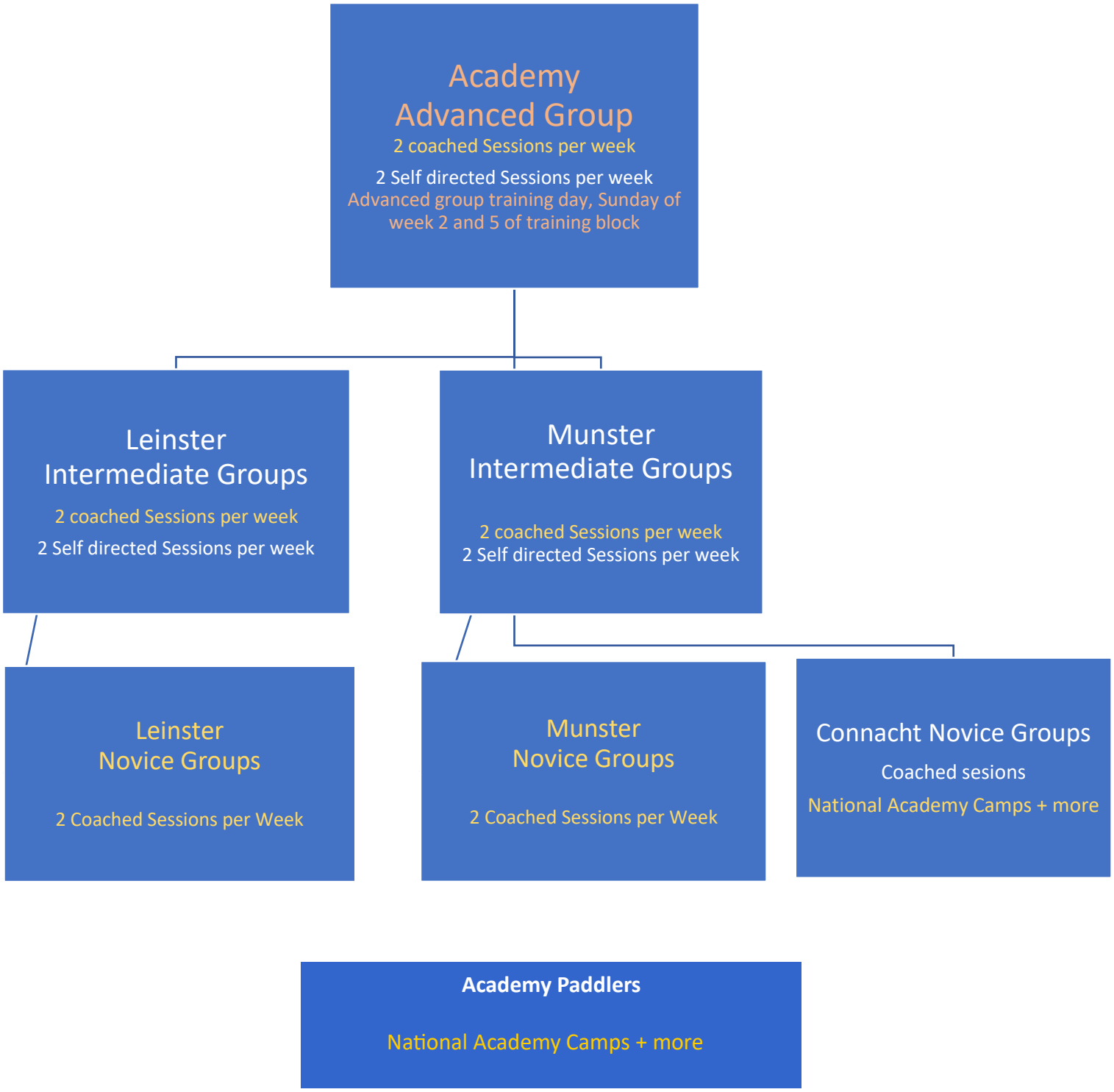
- Intermediate group
    - Those who have been regularly attending Academy training sessions and have shown an improvement are eligible to progress to the intermediate group. Criteria such as the paddlers ability and knowledge of Canoe Slalom, and their ability to complete self-directed training will be considered.
    - Paddlers in this group are welcome to join all Canoe Slalom Academy Training Camps throughout the year, and pending Selection by the Selection panel, may be selected to attend Summer Training Camps and races.

- Advanced group
    - Will include paddlers from each training group
    - The paddlers attendance of advanced sessions will not take them away from their normal group and their weekly sessions with their group coach.
    - Paddlers will progress to this group over time, showing consistent improvement in their racing and with an interest and drive in improving themselves on and off the water.

- Academy Paddlers
    - Paddlers who are not training weekly with an Academy training group but want to be involved with the national structure
    - This group is to facilitate paddlers which may not be near any of our training groups.
    - Those in this group will be able to attend the National Camps and Training days the day before race days.
    - They will also be eligible for international Academy camps and races if they're at a competent level and subject to selection for Racing Camps.
    - They are welcome to join weekly training session with the other groups if and when it suits them logistically (for instance, during school holidays when there's more time in their own personal schedule)

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The Canoe Slalom Academy Training Group Structure



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N.B. As the Academy grows more location-based groups will be added to this list as the Structure of the National Academy widens and brings in more locations and paddlers over time.

The Leinster, Munster and Connacht hubs will not be the only location-based hubs, they are listed above purely to give an example of how the working structure looks.

Academy Group Overview

Canoeing Ireland Strategy and Paddler Pathway ensure all paddlers are challenged to the appropriate level at the appropriate time.

- Novice
    - New and/or younger paddlers
    - Two coached session a week with the Group/Hub Coach
    - Welcome to all Academy training days the day before Flatwater Races
    - Those that are at a competent level for the water can join Academy Training the day before a race, at group coaches' discretion.

- Intermediate
    - Progression based on consistent engagement with the Academy. Promotion from novice to intermediate will consist of a conversation between paddler, group coach and parents.
    - Two coached session a week with the Group/Hub Coach.
    - Two self-directed sessions given in Academy training program; gates not necessary.
    - Access to all Academy training days before Flatwater Races.
    - Those that are at a competent level for moving water can join Academy Training the day before a more advanced race, at group coaches' discretion.

- Advanced
    - Two coached session a week with the Group/Hub Coach.
    - Two self-directed sessions given in Academy training program; gates not necessary.
    - Access to all Academy training days the day before Flatwater Races.
    - Access to all Academy training days the day before Moving Water Races.
    - Advanced group training on Sundays of Weeks 2 and 5

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Progression through the Novice, Intermediate, Advanced Groups

A wide range of variables are considered when assessing progression upwards through the Academy structure.

Novice → Intermediate

- Predominantly at the discretion of the group coach.
- Skill level, age, competency are considered here to ensure the paddlers aren't 'running before they can walk'. The most important factor will be their individual point of development.

Intermediate → Advanced

- Taken into consideration will be numbers/percentages from Mock Races as well as discussions with ***all involved*** (Paddler, Parents, Group Coach, Academy coordinator)
- Showing a level of commitment to the sessions and camps that are already available to them, i.e. doing all 4 sessions in the week and, where possible, not missing training camps.
- Performances in races and mock races improving. Tracked via percentages off the fastest paddler in the race.
- Clear progression in training with group coach.

N.B. Paddlers won't be swapped in and out between the Advanced and Intermediate groups, if one paddler were to rapidly progress in their performances, another paddlers won't be demoted from the group to make space. The groups can grow in numbers when there are more paddlers at the appropriate standard.

How one might come down from Advanced to Intermediate

- Difficulty committing to the training load, (School, college, family commitments etc.)
- If the paddler has vocalised the desire to engage with the sport at a lower level. Engagement at whatever the paddlers chosen level is will be the main priority for the academy.

The intention is that no paddler will have to return to the Intermediate Group from the Advanced group, and can continue on the pathway from the Academy to the Junior/U23 Team.

If there are any issues with meeting the expectations around progression, a meeting between the Coordinator, paddler and parents will be facilitated to see what can be done to aid in their progression and retention in the Advanced group.

Most importantly, if someone does move to the Intermediate group from the Advanced group, there is always the opportunity to return to advanced level. I.e. Those in exam years of school with less time to paddle may want to engage at a lower level to allow for greater

focus on academics, but can return to the Advanced group at a time when they can commit the appropriate time to their sport.

In line with the Canoeing Ireland Pathway Strategy over the coming years, retention and appropriate challenge for all paddlers is of the utmost importance.

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Academy Scheduling 2024

Format:

- 6-week blocks. may change up or down a week throughout the year when racing or international camps may clash.
- Training Programme is given to all coaches by the Academy coordinator for the 6 weeks.

- Week 1
  - 2 Self-directed sessions, Intermediate and Advanced groups
  - 2 Intermediate and Novice group sessions with Group/Hub Coach, weekday evening and Saturday morning
  - 0 Advanced group session, Sunday free.
  - No race

- Week 2
  - 2 Self-directed sessions, Intermediate and Advanced groups
  - 2 Intermediate and Novice group sessions with Group/Hub Coach, weekday evening and Saturday morning
  - 1 Advanced group Training Day, Sunday.
  - No race

- Week 3
  - 2 Self-directed sessions, Intermediate and Advanced groups
  - 2 Intermediate and Novice group sessions with Group/Hub Coach, weekday evening and Saturday morning **OR** All Academy Training Day on Saturday at race venue, where possible/gates available.
  - Flatwater race, Division 3 and Open

- Week 4
  - 2 Self-directed sessions, Intermediate and Advanced groups
  - 2 Intermediate and Novice group sessions with Group/Hub Coach, weekday evening and Saturday morning
  - 0 Advanced group session, Sunday free.
  - No race

- Week 5
  - 2 Self-directed sessions, Intermediate and Advanced groups
  - 2 Intermediate and Novice group sessions with Group/Hub Coach, weekday evening and Saturday morning
  - 1 Advanced group Training Day, Sunday.
  - No race

- Week 6
  - 2 Self-directed sessions, Intermediate and Advanced groups
  - 2 Intermediate and Novice group sessions with Group/Hub Coach, weekday evening and Saturday morning
  - **OR** All Academy Training Day on Saturday at race venue, where possible/gates available.
  - Moving Water race, Division 1+2

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National and International Training Camps

National Training Camps/Days:
Open to all Advanced and Intermediate members of the Slalom Academy, paddlers from the novice group may be invited under the discretion of each group coach provided they have the competency to train on the level of water where the camp will be taking place. A €5 paddler contribution is paid for each of the days of the national camps. A €10 fee will be in place for attendees who are not members of Canoeing Ireland.

International Training Camps:
During the year there will be international events in the calendar for Academy paddlers to attend, the ideal scenario will be

- 2 Training camps at a specific venue that will be open to many Academy members.
- 2 Training and Race Camps at Level 3 ICF Standard, World Ranking or ECA Cups

The Training camps with a competition element will not be open to every paddler in the Academy. These paddlers will be selected by the Canoeing Ireland Selection panel, based on evidence of their racing and progression over the previous few months. Similarly to how Junior Slalom Team Selection takes place.

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Language

Emphasis to be placed on broad development instead of purely performance.

- At this stage of development, enjoying the time on the water is more important than anything else. A fun and social environment on and off the water is the main aim of the academy, to create the conditions for paddlers to develop in a fun and holistic way.
- Within the nature of sport, are more demanding training sessions and environments, which are all part of the challenge. For example, simulation race training – the focus is on delivering a good performance, but once the paddler has crossed the finish line, it's straight back the positive learning environment.

‘Paddlers’ instead of ‘Athletes’

- An ‘athlete’ trains full-time in their given sport and makes decisions with their training, racing, and performance all as the main priority while they are competing internationally on the national team.
- This is not an expectation we want to place on the young paddlers in the Academy.
- Language is one of the most important factors in a young paddler's development. For them to understand where they stand in the pathway and sport as a whole; and so, the words "paddlers" and not "athletes" should be used.

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Canoe Slalom Academy - Financial Governance & Oversight

The financial model for the Canoe Slalom Academy operates at two levels.

1. Club level. For weekly contributions paid my members of the Academy to attend club-based sessions. These funds will be managed centrally by Canoeing Ireland. Each Groups finances will be kept separate and can be used to support that group if and when needed.
2. Canoe Slalom Academy level. Any contributions paid during national camps or wider Academy activities will be managed at an Academy level by Canoeing Ireland. These funds will be used to support wider Academy activities.

The governance and oversight of the Canoe Slalom Academy finances will be administered by Canoeing Ireland. In line with Canoeing Ireland guidelines and recognised best practice.

Income:

Participation in the Canoe Slalom Academy will incur a fee, which will be reviewed annually. The monetary contribution from Academy Paddlers at weekly club sessions is added to the groups fund, managed by Canoeing Ireland. The Academy is currently hosted in several clubs around the country. In recognition of this the contribution for participation in the Academy is €5 for members of the hosting club and €10 for non-members. Wider Academy sessions will have the same fee attached.

Functions of the centralised fund:

- Subsidizing coaching fees, or providing extra coaching where necessary.
  - Coaching fees will be standard across the entire programme, regardless of location or individual and will also be paid centrally from the CI bank account for pre approved CSA activities.
- Provide assistance to an Academy training group that requires it, for example:
  - The purchase of new/first set of gates and/or lines at a club.
  - Purchase of equipment to aid the groups in delivering sessions (Capital expenditure on equipment etc. falls under the capital grants scheme, which is, and will remain, separate to current expenditure.)
- Repair costs for Academy boats.
- Subsidising costs of National and international training camps.
  - Fuel, Water fees, Boat transport - (non-individualised assistance).
- Education
  - Guest speakers, workshops and courses which will be open to all Slalom Academy paddlers.
    For example: Strength & Conditioning, nutrition, psychology/preparation etc.
- Provide assistance to further develop Slalom and the Slalom Academy in Ireland.
- All above benefits are subject to the level of funds available and are for those Academy Groups who contribute to the National Academy Fund.

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The resources are available to:

- Those who are actively and regularly engaging in Slalom Academy training throughout the year and following the Slalom Academy program.

- Academy Coaches can submit expense reports to the Academy Coordinator for the following, once the purchase has been agreed previously.
  - Fuel travelling to Training Camps not at their usual training venue.
  - Equipment to aid in the delivery of sessions at their training venue if the club/facility is not in a position to assist them.

Communication

Official communication within the Canoe Slalom Academy is done through email. All stakeholders who wish to receive updates of CSA activities should sign up to the email updates below –

Email Updates Sign Up

Any questions or queries relating to the CSA are to be sent to SLAinfo@canoe.ie

Academy Group chats

Each Academy Group will have an individual group chat for the organising of group training. i.e. Limerick Slalom Academy WhatsApp Group chat.

Group chats may be set up for international racing/training camps and national training/racing camps.

Where possible, Juniors will not be in any group chats that are set up within the Slalom Academy, the parents will be the main point of contact.

In cases where paddlers under the age of 18 are added to group chats created for international training camps and races, it will be to ensure that the paddler receives all communication in relation to training and racing times for the event as there can be issues with phones and their connections in other countries.
Consent from the junior paddlers parent or guardian will be obtained prior to adding them to the group chat.

All above group chats will have the Slalom Academy coordinator as an admin, each local group will also have the groups respective main coach as an admin to ensure that the group chat is being used appropriately.

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Code of Conduct

A code of conduct in sports is used to promote fair play, ensure safety, preserve the spirit of the game, foster respect, set expectations for behaviour and protect the sport's reputation. Our code of conducts outline expected behaviours for paddler, coaches and parents, helping maintain a positive and respectful environment for all involved.

Paddlers:
https://www.canoe.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CI_Code_of_Conduct_for_Young_Athletes.pdf.docx

Parents:
https://www.canoe.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Parents_code_of_conduct.docx

Coaches:
https://www.canoe.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CI-Coaches-Code-of-Conduct.doc

All can be found here:
https://www.canoe.ie/governance-documents/