JUNIOR SURFER SCHEME

COACH'S GUIDE
The Junior Surfer Scheme
A Coach’s Guide

Introduction:
This is not a definitive teaching resource, structured in such a way in which you must follow; it is merely a guide on what a junior surfer’s output should look like. In this guide there are no suggested methods for instruction, only an explanation of what the criteria should look like. People learn in a variety of ways and you are the professional. It is down to you, as the individual coach, to choose which methods best suit your students and how to deliver it.

Aim of the Junior Surfer Scheme:
The aim of the JSS is to set a national standard of surfing for young members of our sport. It is aimed at 7-17 year olds, and is meant as an engaging pathway to build the necessary skills for them to be a competent surfer. It should be a fun and enjoyable experience, with the most committed rewarded for their efforts. Young surfers can join the scheme at any level, but we should continue to encourage individual development. We want our juniors to be happy, competent, safe and stoked! There is no time scale in order to complete a level. Encouragement and support should be given to each individual in order to help them both challenge themselves and succeed.

Prerequisites:
Junior surfers who embark on the scheme must do so under the supervision and guidance of a fully qualified and recognised Surfing England coach. In order for junior surfers to receive their award, they must each be fully paid junior members of Surfing England.

Submitting an Award:
There are five levels of progression within the JSS. Each level has a PASS or MERIT qualification. In order to achieve a PASS at a particular level, you must be satisfied that the young person has met each criterion within the level. To achieve a MERIT, the young person would have to meet all of the PASS criteria and all of the MERIT criteria. Once a surfer is ready for an award, head to www.surfingengland.org/jss and follow the instructions.

The Cost of an Award:
The JSS is a free resource available to affiliated surf schools, surf clubs and educational establishments to use. There will not be a cost for any junior wishing to partake in the award scheme, however in order to receive their rewards, they must be a fully paid junior member of Surfing England.

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For access to digital versions of Junior Surfer Scheme resources and for the latest JSS news visit the website:

www.surfingengland.org/jss
Level 1:

The skills and knowledge tested at this level, forms a large part of a normal A-B-C lesson. These are the basic skills which you would expect a beginner surfer to know before entering the water for the very first time.

Fundamentals:

1.1 Emphasis here should be placed upon safe handling of their surfboard i.e. straight back when lifting and fins out when carrying. Smaller juniors should make effective use of the buddy system, whereas older juniors should demonstrate a single board carry under the arm. Juniors should be aware of others around them when carrying surfboards.

1.2 Juniors should know how to tie leashes safely and securely to their boards. Leashes should be tied up safely out of the way in order to avoid a trip hazard.

1.3 Juniors need to be able to identify the different parts of the surfboard i.e. nose, tail, deck, rails, bottom, fins, leash and stringer.

1.4 Juniors should be able to identify the basic RNLI flags and understand what they mean. They should be able to identify the black and white flags, the red and yellow flags, and the solid red flag.

1.5 Juniors should be able to identify some basic arm signals used by instructors in the water and be able to respond to them during the assessment. Basic arm signals include: ‘return to shore’, ‘move left’, ‘move right’ and ‘assistance required’.

1.6 Juniors should understand the importance of a warm up when preparing for physical activity. At this stage we would only expect juniors to perform a pulse raising activity, such as a jog or run, followed by some basic stretching of the core muscle groups.

Skills:

1.1 Juniors should be able to confidently enter the water, holding onto the boards securely by the rails; negotiating the white water safely by lifting the nose of the board and letting the board rock over the wave.

1.2 Juniors should be able to turn the board confidently and safely in their hands. The board must not be placed between the junior and the oncoming wave. They should understand the safety implications of not doing this correctly.

1.3 Juniors should be able to confidently ride the wave in a prone position, showing good positioning on the board in order to maximise their ride time.

1.4 Juniors should be able to push off the sand and onto their board at the correct time in order to catch the wave. At this stage, paddle strokes are not necessary.

1.5 Juniors should be able to position their hands in the correct position to maximise control and steering when riding in a prone position to the beach.

1.6 Juniors should be able to confidently and effectively stop the board by shifting their weight towards the tail and remaining in control of the board.

1.7 Juniors should be able to maintain their position in the same area as their ‘buddy’ whilst in the water.

1.8 Juniors should be able to efficiently respond to the instructor’s arm signals (see Fundamentals 1.5).

1.9 Juniors should be aware of the dangers associated with falling off a surfboard. They should be able to demonstrate the default wipeout position i.e. hands over the top of the head, bringing the elbows in to protect the face.
Freestyle:

1.1 Whilst riding in a prone position, juniors should have the confidence and balance to perform a strong push up on the board.

1.2 Juniors should be able to shift their weight onto either rail and successfully change the direction of the board.

1.3 Whilst riding in a prone position, juniors should have the confidence and balance to push themselves up onto their knees and ride the wave whilst staying in control.

1.4 Whilst riding in a prone position, juniors should be able to successfully shift their weight both forward and back on the board, demonstrating that they can speed up and slow down respectfully.

1.5 Juniors should be able to confidently and effectively paddle into broken waves without assistance. They should be able to demonstrate good paddling techniques with large deep strokes and good posture, whilst remaining in control.

Surf Safety:

1.1 Juniors should be able to perform the basic signals which they learnt in the fundamentals section (1.5)

1.2 Juniors should be aware of the dangers associated with falling off a surfboard. They should be able to demonstrate the default wipeout position i.e. hands over the top of the head, bringing the elbows in to protect the face. They should take care when breaking the surface of the water and be wary of the position of their board.

1.3 Juniors should be aware of other water users and give good space between other water users. They should demonstrate that they can check their surrounding area before paddling for a wave and refrain from ditching their board.

1.4 As a progression from the fundamentals 1.1, juniors should demonstrate good teamwork and communication skills when using the buddy system, demonstrating sensible and safe behaviour.

Level 2:

The skills tested at this level, still forms a part of a normal A-B-C lesson, however the knowledge may be from a series of further lessons, existing knowledge or from independent study. The expectation is that juniors will still be riding white water and broken waves for this section.

Fundamentals:

2.1 Juniors will be able to show competency of board handling both in and out of the water. They will know the different board parts, how to carry the board and how to care for it. Juniors will be aware of other water users and will keep their board at a safe distance.

2.2 Juniors will be aware of what rip currents do, what to do when caught in a rip and how to escape them. They may not necessarily know at this stage the different types of rip current. Competent water users may demonstrate more efficient methods of escaping rip currents.

2.3 Juniors will need to know the fundamental difference between offshore and onshore winds. They will need to be able to recognise the effect that the wind has on the shape of the winds and be able to identify current wind conditions at their beach.

2.4 Building on the knowledge from Level 1, juniors will demonstrate that they can perform an effective warm-up unassisted, which includes both a pulse-raising activity and a good stretch.

2.5 As a progression from the fundamentals 1.1, juniors should demonstrate good teamwork and communication skills when using the buddy system, demonstrating sensible and safe behaviour. (same criteria for Surf Safety 1.5)

2.6 Juniors should be able to perform the ‘assistance required’ signal they learnt in the fundamentals section (1.5) and know when to use it. They should also be aware of the necessity of staying with their surfboard and using it as a flotation device.
Skills:

2.1 Juniors will be more confident at choosing their waves. Juniors will choose waves that maximise their riding time, being selective using safe waves and not collide with other water users.

2.2 Juniors should be able to confidently and effectively paddle into broken waves without assistance. They should be able to demonstrate good paddling technique with large deep strokes and good posture, whilst remaining in control. (same criteria as Freestyle 1.5)

2.3 Juniors will be able to perform a pop-up to their feet in some form. Coaches/Assessors should not be too concerned about technique for this criteria, but whatever their method, they will have reached the same result.

2.4 Having performed an effective pop-up, juniors will be able to ride the board in some control for three seconds whilst standing. Technique at this stage may not be perfect, but they will perform a short, smooth ride for three seconds.

2.5 Juniors will be able to dismount their surf board safely from standing. They should avoid jumping off their board, but be rewarded for stepping off holding their board, or returning to prone and slowing the board down.

2.6 Juniors should now start to demonstrate more signs of control whilst standing. They should be showing good posture, with their lead arm pointing forward. They should now start to ride for longer than 5 seconds.

Freestyle:

2.1 Whilst in the standing position, juniors will have a good awareness of their surroundings. They will be able to ride the wave whilst looking in all directions.

2.2 Whilst in the standing position, juniors will demonstrate good body positioning, in particular use of their leading arm. The leading arm will be outstretched, pointing in the direction of travel, with their eye-line following the direction of the arm.

2.3 Whilst in the standing position, juniors will be able to demonstrate that they can move their feet, shifting their body weight to remain balanced. Juniors may perform a series of skills, including the cross step, riding switch or simply shuffling their feet up and down the board.

2.4 In order to prove excellent balance, whilst in the standing position, juniors should perform a selection of board grabs. Various grabs can be performed, but juniors may not necessarily recognise the different terminology associated with the grabs.

Surf Safety:

2.1 Juniors will be able to identify various beach hazards and safe surfing zones in a particular area. For example, rips, rocks and flagged areas. They show understanding of dangers and are able to select a safe surfing area.

2.2 Juniors will now be getting into the habit of protecting their head each time they fall from their board and should be able to demonstrate safe head protection. (see Surf Safety 1.3)

2.3 Juniors should know the role of the coast guard and how to contact them in an emergency. When contacting the coastguard in an emergency, they should know the essential emergency information required i.e. their name, the place of the incident, what has happened and who is involved.
Level 3:

Junior surfers at this level are standing regularly on their surfboard and are making the transition to turning their boards. Juniors will still probably be surfing white water and broken waves for this level, but will become more competent in their board riding skills, showing good control of speed and turns.

Fundamentals:

3.1 Juniors will be able to identify various beach hazards and safe surfing zones in a particular area. For example, rips, rocks and flagged areas. They show understanding of dangers and are able to select a safe surfing area.

3.2 Juniors will be confident in their understanding of their equipment. They will know how to check their fins, their leash and their board for any damage.

3.3 Juniors will have gained an understanding of changing weather patterns and their effect on the surf. Building on their knowledge of winds and how they affect the waves, they will also understand wave height and how it is affected by the tides. They will be able to make personal judgement calls about the size of waves and the current state of the tide; how they affect the surf conditions and the safest beaches in which to surf.

3.4 Juniors will be competent in their understanding of their own fitness and how it is progressing. Warm ups now include a strong pulse-raiser, and a dynamic stretch, such as arm circles, squats, star jumps, lunges, and twist and lunge.

3.5 Juniors should know the role of the coast guard and how to contact them in an emergency. When contacting the coastguard in an emergency, they should know the essential emergency information required i.e. their name, the place of the incident, what has happened and who is involved i.e. their name, the place of the incident, what has happened and who is involved.

Skills:

3.1 Paddling is becoming progressively better. Juniors will now have good posture and balance when paddling, making deep effective strokes. They will be able to paddle confidently over broken waves, using the push-up technique and shifting their weight over the wave.

3.2 Juniors will be able to balance when standing on the board and will be showing improvement. Juniors, whilst in the standing position, will be able to demonstrate good body positioning and shifting their body weight to remain balanced. Juniors may perform a series of skills, including the cross step, riding switch or simply shuffling their feet up and down the board. Body positioning will be good; they will be able to recognise the difference and demonstrate flexing and extension of the lower body.

3.3 Juniors will become increasingly confident in the pop-up. The pop-up will be executed in one movement with good foot placement on the board. Technique may require work; however the pop-up will be executed efficiently.

3.4 Whilst out at sea, juniors will be able to use a variety of techniques to turn their board, whilst lying on the deck. Assessors should look for shifting of weight, use of arms and the use of legs to help perform this task.

3.5 Juniors will be able to turn the board, both forehand and backhand, whilst riding on a wave. They will begin to develop their turning technique; turns at this stage may not be executed efficiently. They will make good use of body positioning and the leading arm.

3.6 Juniors will recognise how to shift their body weight on the board to both accelerate and decelerate.
Freestyle:

3.1 Juniors will be able to surf white water waves, performing a series of small S-turns on the wave. Turning both backhand and forehand will be essential to achieve the criteria, although turns at this stage may be small.

3.2 Juniors will be able to show good balance when paddling on their knees. They will need to successfully demonstrate that they can paddle over a wave at least three times in a row. Waves do not need to be of a specific size for this.

3.3 Juniors should be encouraged to move and shift their weight around the board. In order to achieve this criterion, they should attempt a hang-five manoeuvre on the board. Placing their feet in the final third of the board will suffice as having achieved this.

3.4 Whilst in a standing position, juniors must be able to demonstrate that they can safely position themselves back into the prone position, showing good control.

3.5 Juniors will ride a wave for its full length, showing good technique and good control. Technique will include good body positioning, good use of leading arm and good use of head positioning. Control will include smooth turns, flexing and extension of the lower body and movement on the board.

Surf Safety:

3.1 Juniors should be able to describe the different wave types and they should be able to fully explain rip currents. They should show good understanding of how to escape rip currents, how to identify rip currents and the different types of rip currents.

3.2 As a surf coach (not a surf lifesaving trainer assessor) we need to be careful about what rescue techniques we teach our juniors. This criteria allows juniors to demonstrate that they could carry two people safely on a board without ‘teaching’ them how to perform a rescue. The principles of board riding will be the same skills they have already been taught. They only need to demonstrate that they can ride a wave prone, with a partner. Unless you are a qualified RNLI or SLSGB trainer/assessor then Surfing England recommends you avoid teaching juniors any surf lifesaving skills.

3.3 It is essential juniors know the skills and techniques to body surf a wave. They must demonstrate this skill/technique to achieve this criterion.

3.4 Juniors should understand the 4 principles of training: Progression, Overload, Specificity and Reversibility. They should be able to utilise exercises to help build and maintain their fitness levels for surf performance.
Level 4:

Junior surfers at this level will now have moved away from soft-boards altogether. It doesn't matter what size or board type they are riding, as the aim of this scheme is to be inclusive to all boardriders. Juniors will also now be riding green and unbroken waves.

Fundamentals:

4.1 As Surf Safety 3.4

4.2 Juniors will be taught the surfers code of conduct and will understand its fundamental purpose. They will be able to apply this code of conduct in the water.

4.3 Juniors will be able to recognise the difference between soft and hard boards. They will understand how to maintain their board and be able to successfully wax a board.

4.4 Having previously understood how to escape rip currents, juniors can be taught that rip currents are useful in making it out the back. They should demonstrate that they can use a rip safely using good technique to do just this.

4.5 Juniors will be able to identify all beach hazards and safe surfing zones in a particular area. For example, rips, rocks and flagged areas. They should show understanding of all these dangers and be able to select a safe surfing area.

4.6 Juniors should be able to describe the different wave types including, dumping, plunging, shorebreak, spilling, backwash and standing.

Skills:

4.1 Juniors will be confident in paddling out in surf conditions that range from 1-3ft. They should demonstrate that they can effectively paddle out in larger conditions, showing good technique. They may not necessarily be able to duck dive at this stage, but they should make good use of either the ‘turtle roll’ or ‘press up’ technique.

4.2 Waves that are ridden will be unbroken ones, so timing is key when performing this task. Juniors will need to show good technique and timing to take off both right and left on an unbroken wave.

4.3 Whilst sitting out at sea, juniors will be able to use a variety of techniques to turn their board, whilst sat on the deck. Assessors should look for shifting of weight, use of arms and the use of legs to help perform this task.

4.4 Juniors will be confident in their turns, making progress from the small S-turns from level 3. They will now be able to demonstrate that they can change direction on the face of an unbroken wave, although turns at this stage may need fine-tuning and improvement for technique.

4.5 Juniors will effectively be able to surf ‘down-the-line’ of an unbroken wave, showing good technique and good control. Technique will include good body positioning, good use of leading arm and good use of head positioning. Control will include smooth turns, flexing and extension of the lower body and movement on the board.

4.6 At the end of their ride, juniors will be able to safely dismount their board. Simply ditching their board should be greatly discouraged, instead a form of ‘kick-out’, ‘riding off the back’ or board control should be demonstrated.

Freestyle:

4.1 At the end of their ride, juniors will be able to safely dismount from their board by performing a good kick-out away from other water users.

4.2 Juniors will need to perform a combination of three moves from the following:
   - Hand drag
   - Board grab
   - Cheater hang fives
   - Standing to prone

4.3 Juniors will be expected to show understanding for the
need to be aware of their surroundings whilst surfing. They will need to understand the importance of looking ‘at/for’ their next turn/manoeuvre. Therefore, to achieve this criterion they will need to show that they are actively looking along the wave.

Surf Safety:

4.1 Using beach flags may be useful to assess this criterion. Juniors should be wary of their position in the line-up and be able to stay within a particular area. They should also respond correctly to signals from their coach whilst out the back.

4.2 Juniors will understand the basic elements of wetsuit design and its importance within the surf industry. They should know the difference between a summer suit, an autumn suit and a winter suit, including boots, gloves and hoods and when to use different wetsuit types, including wetsuit accessories.

4.3 For this level, juniors will show good control of their board at all times, both in and out of the water. They must ensure that they don’t put themselves or others in danger at any time.

Level 5:

Junior surfers at this level will now be confident and competent surfers. They will be confident in bigger waves and turns will be executed with accuracy. Juniors who complete level 5 will be at a standard at which they would consider competing in both local and regional competitions.

Fundamentals:

5.1 Juniors will be able to demonstrate excellent board preparation prior to entry into the water. This may include:
   a. Checking how secure the fins are
   b. Checking how secure the leash is
   c. Checking the board for dings/holes
   d. Checking the board for wax

5.2 Juniors will be able to assess the current weather conditions and make a suitable beach selection based upon where the best surf will be. They will consider the following:
   a. Wind direction
   b. Swell size
   c. Swell direction
   d. State of the tide
   e. Local beach states

5.3 Juniors will be able to successfully study the beach and its conditions. They will be able to identify all beach hazards and safe surfing zones in a particular area. For example, rips, rocks, and flagged areas. They should show understanding of all of these dangers and be able to select a safe surfing area. They will use rips safely to make the paddle-out easier.
5.4 Juniors will be able to name their nearest surf club and surrounding surf schools.

5.5 Juniors will have an excellent understanding of the surfers’ code of conduct and will understand its fundamental purpose. They will be able to apply this code of conduct in the water.

Skills:

5.1 Juniors will be able to demonstrate excellent, strong and efficient paddling, using good body positioning on the board and deep long paddle strokes.

5.2 Juniors will understand the fundamental skills and techniques used in order to complete a successful duck-dive. They will be able to demonstrate a duck-dive however there may be varying levels of success at this stage.

5.3 Juniors will show excellent technique and timing to take off, both right and left, on an unbroken wave. Their pop-up will be smooth in its application, with a single movement from prone to standing.

5.4 Juniors will show excellent technique and timing to take off at an angle both right and left on an unbroken wave. Their pop-up will be smooth in its application with a single movement from prone to standing.

5.5 Juniors will understand the benefits of producing a strong and effective bottom turn. They will be able to execute a good bottom turn at the start of their ride.

5.6 Juniors will make full use of the wave in order to generate speed. They will also use good rail-to-rail surfing to generate additional speed. Flapping and board tapping should be discouraged as a method of generating speed.

5.7 Juniors will be able to demonstrate the following: Bottom turn, cutback and floater on both forehand and backhand.

5.8 Juniors should be able to recognise all of these advanced manoeuvres, but need only demonstrate one.

Freestyle:

5.1 Juniors will understand the fundamental skills and techniques used in order to complete a successful duck-dive. They will be able to demonstrate an effective duck-dive, making good progress in their paddle-out.

5.2 In order to prepare juniors for competitive surfing, this criterion allows them to demonstrate all of the skills they have learnt in the Junior Surf Scheme. They should demonstrate that they can catch two good rides from out the back within the fifteen minute time frame.

5.3 Juniors will be able to link two or three basic manoeuvres from the skills section in 5.8 on one wave. Technique may not be excellent, but they are able to show they can perform the skill and link them together.

Surf Safety:

5.1 Juniors will show excellent overall awareness of other water users. They will keep a safe distance away from others whilst surfing and will be aware of their position in the line-up. They will pay attention to their coach and respond appropriately to signals and instructions.

5.2 Juniors will understand how waves are formed and will be able to use weather forecasting tools to predict surf conditions. In particular they will learn about pressure systems and how they affect winds.

5.3 Juniors will understand all the terminology used in the Junior Surfer Scheme that appear in the glossary. They will be able to use this terminology appropriately.
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