Demonstrating the recovery position on a casualty

Using the 'figure 4' method to don fins

LEARNINGCURVE

Cutting edge snorkel instruction

What does it take to attain BSAC's highest snorkelling qualification?

Nick Stevens, Snorkelling Advisor for Surrey, tells the story

On a weekend in April this year, 11 candidates from around the UK came together at Wraysbury Dive Centre to learn what it takes to become a BSAC Advanced Snorkel Instructor.

The Advanced Snorkel Instructor Course and Assessment (ASITCA) is designed to develop and assess the aptitude of appropriately trained Snorkel Instructors, in advanced training and safety management skills. Eligibility is open to those who have achieved the Snorkel Dive Manager award, Advanced Snorkel Lifesaver award and are a qualified BSAC Snorkel Instructor or equivalent.

The course includes training in specialist risk assessment, safeguarding, dive emergency management, personal development plans, and complementary training styles. It is an intense weekend, packed full of both theory and practical sessions, putting the candidates under pressure to perform to a very high level.

Such high standards are extra important, as many of the successful candidates will go on to develop the future of our diving community – our children. Training children as divers in any format can be challenging, but provides fantastic opportunities for us to share our love of the underwater world and is extremely rewarding.

The course, run at Wraysbury Dive Centre, tasked the candidates to brave the chilly waters of the lake to demonstrate their advanced snorkelling skills. This included the recovery of simulated unconscious casualties from (a minimum of) 5m depth on one breath, plus rescue drills, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid, as well as scene management and reporting. There were also other sessions covering site risk assessment, search and recovery, seamanship and navigation.

"It is an intense weekend, packed full of both theory and practical sessions"

Back in the classroom, students demonstrated their delivery of complex theoretical topics, such as chartwork and position fixing, with presentations and coaching sessions to other candidates, ending with a final written examination. All this took place under the watchful eye of experienced Instructor Trainers from the Snorkelling Development Team, headed by Chief Examiner (now National Diving Officer) Sophie Rennie.

All 11 candidates were successful in completing the course and will be awarded their Advanced Snorkel Instructor qualification on ratification of results by BSAC. They will return to their clubs to help develop students of all ages across the country.

In addition to training club members in advanced skills, Advanced Snorkel Instructors will also be qualified to run the new Snorkel Dive Guide course, due to be released soon by BSAC. This commercially rated qualification is a 'zero to hero' development course aimed at those working in open water environments, with clients wishing to experience the underwater world without learning to scuba dive. This will include leading snorkel excursions for both beginners and experienced snorkellers.

There is so much more than meets the eye in the world of snorkelling. It is the gateway to the underwater world, open to all from eight to 80 and beyond…

Find out today what it takes to be a snorkel diver by contacting your local snorkel club, BSAC HQ or by starting your own snorkel section within your own dive club.

The author signals OK after surfacing from a duck dive