

Single Pitch Award—Course Notes

The Crag Environment

Access

Groups have no more right to use a site than Individuals and visa versa

Depends on

- Good will of landowner
- Appropriate conduct of climbers both individuals & groups

Information

- Guidebooks
- Local climbers & clubs
- Shops & cafes
- BMC / MC of S

Considerations

- Parking the key factor
- Use footpaths

As an individual you must have an understanding of the issues and problems, this responsibility is greatly increased when acting as a supervisor introducing novices to the sport

Conservation

You must be aware of the potential impact of climbers in general and groups in particular, at all times. Minimum impact on the physical environment and other climbers is fundamental to good supervision climbing.

- SSSI
- Nesting birds
- Important flora & fauna
- Geologically & ecologically important sites

Etiquette

- Local ethics e.g. top rope only, southern sandstone
- Avoid conflict with others (individuals & groups)
- Minimise domination of crag & routes
- Avoid classic routes
- Stick to small groups
- Avoid abseiling down routes

Session management

- Minimise impact on rock & other users
- Effective group supervision e.g. base camp, boundaries, route choice, decent etc
- Respect other users e.g. noise, language, other peoples equipment

Positive contributions

- Positive respect for the environment should be an essential element of any outdoor activity
- Avoid always using the same site
- Choice of footwear
- Leave site in an improved state i.e. remove other peoples litter
- Don't allow ropes to run over rock
- Must demonstrate lead climbing — climbing isn't top roping!

Group supervision Management

- Often the most important while novices are not actually climbing
- Unroped activities are more hazardous than roped climbing
- Be familiar with equipment suitable for & appropriate for group use
- Staff student ratios

Communication

- Basis of good organisation & group work
- Belaying & top roping
- Implementation of an appropriate system is an essential skill of a supervisor
- Beware of a variety of systems
- Environmental & safety issues
- Familiarity with a wide range of belay devices & systems
- Correct use of a belay device is fundamental
- Belay at top of crag?

Route choice

- Key element is problem avoidance
- Appropriate to skills & ability
- Safety
- Approach & descent

Abseiling

- Management of those not abseiling
- Safeguarding those who are
- Is a means to an end, not a separate activity?
- Site choice — take off, avoid routes & loose rock, should be able to see entire length

Bouldering

- Depends only on your imagination
- Supervision — boundaries, spotters, landings, skills & ability

Climbing walls

- Have regulations that apply to group use
- More heavily used — more people, less space
- Often steep, so warm up & progression vital
- Supervision can be made more difficult
- Have to pay
- Insurance

It cannot be over stressed how important experience is in gaining depth and breadth of knowledge. It is not just a range of technical skills that combine to make an effective supervisor BUT, the judgement of when to apply the different techniques that really matters.

- Personal & supervisory
- Rock types & environments
- Different areas
- Bouldering
- Climbing walls
- Local & national issues
- Personal & group equipment
- Belay systems

Sound knowledge and experience are fundamental to the SPA scheme

