MULTI PITCH SYLLABUS

Transcribed from
Rock Climbing Leader Award
Prospectus and syllabus (1996)
-published by the Northern Ireland Mountain Training Board-

1 personal competence

1.1 refer to 2.4
1.2 refer to 2.6
1.3 refer to syllabus

1.4 candidates should be shown how to link anchor points using slings and /or tape.
They should be shown a variety of methods for joining the abseil ropes , eg:

- overhand knot
- fisherman's knot
- Reef knot with double fisherman's

and understand the advantages and disadvantages of each. Candidates must be made aware of the damage caused to slings and tape by contact with a running rope .

this syllabus does not involve multiple retrievable abseils .

2 Group supervision

2.1 effective management includes; checking harnesses, helmets ,organising a climbing order , giving advice about moves , remaining aware of how the students are coping and the organisation of a safe means of descent from the crag top.

2.2 candidates should be aware of UIAA guidelines for using single and half ropes . They should also take care to instruct students in the use of modern Camming devices if they are expected to use them while unsupervised .

2.3 students should be tied into the climbing rope by method recommended by the manufacturer of their harness

2.4 candidates should be made aware of the advantages and disadvantages of both parallel and series rope system .

While both systems are acceptable candidates should be made aware that the parallel system may help avoid some potential problems . regardless of whatever system is chosen the candidate should be able to deal with problems should they arise.

A] parallel ropes system

In this system the leader ties on to the top end of both ropes and each student ties on to the end of one rope . Both ropes must be UIAA approved single ropes .

Disadvantages :

Rope management on the belay stance can be more complex for the leader : also, the second rope can be in the way of the first student .
Advantages :

Both ropes can be taken in and locked off before either student starts to climb . This avoids the danger of a student unclipping the wrong karabiner before leaving the stance and attempting to climb . using this system the leader can be confident that both his/her students are safe irrespective of any unpredictable actions they may undertake .
B] series rope system

This is where the leader drags one rope which is attached to his/her first student who in turn drags a second rope which is attached to the second student. Both ropes must be UIAA approved single ropes.

Disadvantages:
The same student always last to leave the stance which may make them feel vulnerable. The leader only has direct contact with one of the students and the first student may be required to clip the second rope into runners .

Advantage:
With only one rope being taken in on the stance at any one time the system is easier to manage .

2.5 Candidates are encouraged to consider the direction of pull for their students , line of vision and traverse problems when selecting a belay stance .

2.6 Candidates should show a system which allows for safe rapid anchoring of the students on their arrival at the stance and which allows for no confusion on their departure ; thereby facilitating a well organised , safe and efficient ascent of the route . candidates should be made aware of the advantages and disadvantages which are specific to various belay arrangements. Whichever system is used the student should be normally be attached to more than one anchor point.

A] sling arrangements

The leader may use slings to link the anchor points to one central point . this point can then be Used for either a direct or in-direct belay .

Advantages
- the climbing rope is not involved in the belay system therefore the leader may leave The stance to lead the next pitch with a minimum of rope work

- when students arrive on the stance they clip directly to the focal point of the sling Arrangement
- as students leave the stance they have a minimum of rope work to sort out

Disadvantages
- complex rope management is required for the leader to leave the belay stance
- there is no central point which links anchors where the students can easily attach
- large amounts of climbing rope can be involved in the belay system reducing the possible length of pitches
- students may find it confusing to take the belay apart as they leave the stance
- large amounts of slack can come into the system as students climbs up to unclip anchor points before departing the stance .

while both systems are acceptable candidates should be encouraged to link the anchor points using slings when belaying in multi pitch leadership situations . rather than being any more correct than using the climbing rope this simply helps to avoid problems . there will be occasions when a leader is low on equipment or the anchor points are far apart and it will be necessary to use the climbing rope in the belay system . candidates should be able to cope with these situations .

2.7

A] candidates should be made aware that stance management can be enhanced by :

- giving students simple jobs to help organise the stance eg recoiling and stacking the rope
- giving students clear and concise instructions as to what order they leave in , and how they should detach from the belay system

B] candidates need to be made aware that students do not always do exactly as they are told , they should were possible :
- make systems simple
- provide a back-up which secures the students even if they do not follow instructions

3 communication

3.1 the communication system should be appropriate to the prevailing conditions and the characteristics of the route/crag

4 route choice

4.1 special consideration should be given to:
- safety of approach and descent
- the party's effect on other users
- the availability of suitable stances
- the previous experience of the students

5 emergency procedures

5.1 in a multi pitch situation it is possible that a stuck climber may have to be hoisted past a difficult section . candidates are expected to perform an assisted hoist . A useful teaching sequence for the assisted hoist may be as follows :

A) lock off the belay device
B) place a French prusik on the live rope
C) Lower a loop of rope and a karabiner to the climber who attaches it to a suitable part of his/her harness
D) Put on a waist belay
E) Unlock the belay plate
F) Both the leader and the second pull on appropriate ropes

5.2 evacuation from a multi pitch crag may be more straightforward ,if it can be done without taking an interim stance . passing the knot through a friction device is an important part of this technique. The following may be a useful teaching sequence.
A) Place a French prusik on the live rope and using a sling to attach it to the anchor system
B) Lower away until the knot approaches the lowering device then load the prusik
C) Back up the prusik by tying a bight of rope back into the anchor system
D) Take the rope out of the lowering device and reattach on the other side of the knot and lock off the device
E) Untie the bight of rope
F) Slowly release the prusik to load the device
G) Remove the prusik and continue lowering

5.3 escaping from the system in a multi pitch situation is extremely serious and cand idates should appreciate that this should only be considered as a last resort to enable abseiling off, administering first aid etc. the method of escape required will depend on the original belay method adopted by the leader . the most simple escape will be when the leader has used a sling arrangement to connect the anchor points and has connected the friction device directly to this . escape is simply achieved by untying from the rope after locking off the device. The most complex system is where

the leader has tied into the anchors using the climbing rope and is belaying indirectly with the friction device attached to his/her harness (refer to 2.6 of the single pitch award) .
candidates will be trained in both methods and will be free on assessment to use whichever method is appropriate to the belay system they choose to use .
because of the seriousness of being out of the system in a multi pitch situation candidates should only be trained or assessed escaping the system when at the top of the crag .

5.4 all students are attached to the rope via their friction device and the leaders descends first. Each Student comes one at a time and their descent can be controlled by the leader who can tail the rope

5.5 This is were a nervous or injured student can be abseiled off in direct contact with the leader. A sling knotted in the middle is used to connect both student and leader to the abseil device and a French prusik clipped to the leaders' leg loop backs up the system .

5.6 In an emergency situation , the leader may decide to tie two ropes together and abseil directly to the ground without retrieving his/her ropes . in this event , leaders must be able to abseil past a knot. The sequence for this is similar to that for extended lowers (refer to 5.2) but trainers should emphasise how, in this case, it is easier to have the self protection system above the abseil device and attached to the main body of the harness, not the leg loop .

6 further training

6.1 A variety of jamming knots can be used with a prusik loop for this purpose and trainers should introduce the advantages and disadvantages of the most common. This technique can be used to safeguard a leader who is out of the system and needs either ascend or descend to sort out the problem. There are many dangers and this should be shown to students in a training situation as a last resort solution. Students will not be expected to perform this technique in assessment situations.

6.2 The full prusik system is safer than the self-protection method above but is much slower. Once again students will be trained in a prusik system but will not be specifically required to do so on assessment.