

This section outlines the Sports Diver course and provides guidance and definitions specific to the Sports Diver grade. Much of this information is common to many of the lessons and hence is consolidated here, rather than repeated in each lesson.

## Definition of a Sports Diver

A Sports Diver is defined as a diver who is competent to:

- conduct dives with an Ocean Diver within the restrictions of the conditions already encountered by the Ocean Diver during their training, and under the supervision of a Dive Manager
- conduct dives with another Sports Diver, within the restrictions of the conditions already encountered during their training or previous experience
- conduct dives with a Dive Leader or higher grade, to expand their experience beyond that previously encountered, under the supervision of a Dive Manager
- dive to a depth which is initially limited to 20m, but which can subsequently be extended progressively, under the supervision of a Nationally Qualified Instructor (NQI), to a maximum of 35m
- use breathing gas mixes up to Nitrox 36
- plan and conduct dives requiring mandatory decompression stops
- rescue a casualty and provide Basic Life Support
- conduct dives where other divers, capable of providing assistance and rescue management skills, are available at the surface
- conduct dives within BSAC safe diving practice recommendations

## Sports Diver Course Outline

The Sports Diver Course consists of the following elements:

- six classroom lessons
- a theory assessment
- a dry practical lesson
- one Sheltered Water lesson
- one optional Refresher/Orientation dive
- five Open Water lessons.

All practical training in both Sheltered and Open Water includes the achievement of specific performance standards at appropriate points throughout the lessons.

## Instructor Requirements

Sports Diver Training is required to be carried out by, or supervised by, a suitably qualified BSAC

Instructor detailed as follows:

- **Assistant Diving Instructors** qualified to **Sports Diver** - can teach classroom, sheltered water lessons, and open water lessons under the direct supervision of an Instructor who holds the minimum qualification of BSAC Open Water Instructor.
- **Assistant Diving Instructors** qualified to **Dive Leader** - can teach classroom, sheltered water lessons, and open water lessons under the on-site supervision of an Instructor who holds the minimum qualification of BSAC Open Water Instructor.
- **Assistant Open Water Instructors** - can teach Classroom and Sheltered Water lessons and Open Water lessons under on-site supervision of an Instructor who holds the minimum qualification of BSAC Open Water Instructor.
- **Theory Instructor** - can teach classroom lessons unsupervised.
- **Practical Instructor** - can teach sheltered water and Open Water lessons unsupervised.
- **Open Water Instructor** - can teach all elements of the Sports Diver Course

## Student/Instructor Ratios

For practical lessons, student/instructor ratios should comply with the following guidelines:

**Sheltered Water lessons** - As for Ocean Diver training, the sheltered water lesson notes assume the most likely scenario of lessons being carried out in a swimming pool, where time constraints impose a one hour limit. In order that all students can receive **effective** tuition during this time, a ratio of four students per instructor is assumed.

In less favourable circumstances, this ratio may need to be reduced appropriate to the water conditions and time available.

Where water conditions allow longer lessons, the above ratios may be increased to a ratio of a maximum of six students per instructor provided that:

- all students can receive **effective** tuition within the time available
- underwater visibility is a minimum of 5 metres
- the instructor is a Nationally Qualified Instructor of a minimum grade of Open Water Instructor
- the instructor has the assistance of another diver, minimum qualification Dive Leader, to monitor the safety and control of students
- the lesson briefing includes clear directions

as to the role of the assisting diver during skills instruction

**Open Water lessons** - Because of the nature of the exercises being taught, the lesson contents assume a ratio of a maximum of two students per instructor, to ensure that each student receives **effective** tuition.

## Dry Practical Lessons

To ensure that the student can fully participate in the exercises and receives effective tuition, the lesson contents assume a ratio of one student per instructor.

## Equipment Configuration

For Sheltered Water training, the following student equipment configuration is assumed:

- a single cylinder
- Buoyancy Compensator (BC)
- regulator equipped with main demand valve, Alternative Supply (AS) 'octopus' demand valve and cylinder contents gauge
- mask, fins and snorkel
- weightbelt or integrated weights where necessary

When progressing to Open Water lessons the equipment should also include

- depth gauge and watch/timer or decompression computer
- protective clothing where appropriate

Instructors should wear a similar configuration of equipment to the students although, for open water lessons, an AS supplied from an independent breathing gas supply ('pony' cylinder) is recommended.

For lessons involving AS ascents, an AS is defined as the buddy's AS, regardless of whether the student's own AS is supplied from an independent breathing gas supply. This is to ensure that the more complex technique appropriate to situations where an independent breathing gas source is not available eg. the buddy only has an 'octopus' AS, rental equipment used on holiday etc. is practiced.

Rebreathers are not to be used by anyone participating in in-water lessons or experience dives involving trainee Sports Divers.

## Definitions

Certain terms are used throughout this section of the Handbook which are defined as follows:

**Sheltered Water** - a well maintained swimming pool or water which provides similar conditions, eg. is generally less than 4m deep, with a stepped or gently shelving bottom of firm composition, has adequate visibility (minimum 5m), and is free from significant water movement from either waves or currents. Within sheltered water depths are defined as follows:

- **standing depth** - water that is between waist and chest deep allowing students to either stand comfortably or to kneel and be fully submerged
- **deeper water** - water that is from approximately 2m to 4m in depth

**Open Water** - water encompassing conditions beyond those defined for sheltered water, including a variety of topography and underwater life, and which may have noticeable water movement due to waves or current (max 0.5kn). Visibility will generally be in excess of 4m but may, on appropriate occasions, be less.

Until qualified as a Sports Diver, depth should not exceed 20m. Subsequently, and with appropriate experience, this may be increased to 35m.

## Lesson Sequencing

Classroom lessons are structured to provide the pre-requisite knowledge appropriate to their counterpart practical lessons. Classroom and practical lessons should therefore be run in an integrated sequence as follows:

Classroom lesson	ST1 Sport Diving
Classroom lesson	ST2 Diver Rescue
Sheltered Water lesson	SS1 Rescue Skills
Open Water lesson	SO1 Diver Rescue
Classroom lesson	ST3 Equipment and Techniques
Classroom lesson	ST4 Deeper Diving
Open Water lesson	SO2 Use of SMB
Open Water lesson	SO3 Simulated Decompression Dive
Classroom lesson	ST5 Breathing Gas Planning and Systems
Open Water lesson	SO4 Compass Navigation/DSMB deployment
Classroom lesson	ST6 Going Diving
Open Water lesson	SO5 Dive Leading/Basic Skills Review
Dry practical lesson	SP1 Assistant Dive Manager

In addition to the above, where training has been interrupted for a significant period or was carried out in dissimilar conditions, an optional Refresher/Orientation lesson - SOR/O is available. This should be conducted prior to any open water training if required.

## Open Water Lessons

Some Open Water lessons involve multiple ascents. Where these require an ascent to the surface, decompression considerations dictate that they be performed at the start of diving activities and before diving to any greater depth.

Where lessons involve ascents from 10m, these

should be performed early in the lesson and they should be terminated at a depth of 6m.

Instructors should ensure that the impact on decompression considerations for the remainder of the particular lesson, and on any subsequent diving activities, are taken into account.

To ensure that students receive experience in a range of conditions, the open water dives must include 5 conditions from the following, appropriate to the local conditions in which they will subsequently be diving:

- **shore dive** - dive either commencing and/or ending at a gently shelving shore requiring a wading entry/exit
- **nitrox dive** - using a breathing gas > 21% Oxygen up to a maximum of 36% (Nitrox)
- **dive using shot line** - dive commencing with a deep water entry, using a shot line as the only visual reference for the descent and ascent, and ending with a deep water exit
- **low visibility dive** - dive in visibility in the range between 2 and 4 metres
- **drift dive** - dive in moving water in the speed range between 0.25 and 0.5kn
- **small boat dive** - dive from a boat of less than 8m overall length, where water entry is via a backward roll, and egress from the water requires removal of equipment in the water
- **large boat dive** - dive from a boat of greater than 8m overall length, (where the water entered) is via a stride entry, and egress from the water is accomplished via ladder without removal of any equipment except, possibly, fins
- **wall dive** - dive along a vertical or near vertical wall with no solid bottom closer than 4m below the divers
- **dive in protective clothing** - dive wearing either a wet suit or dry suit

Only one of the above conditions may be logged per dive.

The Sports Diver syllabus includes 5 open water lessons which should total a minimum of 150 mins. underwater time.

## Adapting Lessons for Differing Conditions

The sheltered water lesson contents have been based on the most common conditions of a swimming pool containing warm water. As with Ocean Diver training however, Sports Diver Sheltered Water training may be carried out in other conditions. The main impact on the lesson will be that due to buoyancy of any protective clothing. The objective of keeping the task of buoyancy control as simple as possible by using the minimum number of volumes of gas should be maintained. In

practical terms this means:

- no protective clothing or wet suits - buoyancy control and CBL using the BC
- dry suits - buoyancy control using the gas in the suit; CBL using the gas in the suit where possible
- surface support - BC in all cases

For most Open Water lessons the content is not affected by different standards of protective clothing. In those few instances where some adaptation may be required this is addressed at the end of the relevant lesson notes.

## Dry Practical Lesson

Before undertaking this lesson, students should have a good basis of experience of diving activities. For this reason, this should be included as the final lesson in the sequence.

## Depth Experience

Newly qualified Sports Divers, wishing to increase their depth experience, should be encouraged to do so in a progressive manner, in increments of approximately 5m. They should be accompanied on such dives by a diver holding a minimum qualification of Dive Leader, and all such dives should be performed under the supervision of a NQI.

## Performance Assessments and Standards

Sports Diver training includes a specific theory assessment and continuous assessment of the practical skills.

## Practical Assessments

As in Ocean Diver training, where specific performance standards are required to be achieved, these are identified in the lesson notes by the words "competent and confident". Where these words appear in the lesson content, students should have progressed sufficiently to be able to achieve the specified performance standards without supervision.

The appropriate performance standards are therefore incorporated into the relevant lesson notes.

During the lessons, students should also be monitored for any deterioration in skills learned during Ocean Diver training. Where necessary corrective instruction should be provided to re-establish the appropriate performance standard.

## Theory Assessment

The theory assessment can be undertaken any time after the completion of the classroom lessons but must be successfully completed before the Dry Practical Lesson. A pass mark of 80% must be achieved.