



# Beaude Desert Outdoor Adventures

## Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) & Risk Assessment: **Traverse Wall (Bouldering)**

**Document ID:** SOP-BOA-TRAVERSE-001

**Effective Date:** March 2026

**Review Date:** March 2027

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### 1.0 Purpose

To outline the standardized and safe procedure for conducting sessions on the Traverse Wall. This activity introduces participants to bouldering and horizontal climbing techniques, focusing on balance, body positioning, and peer support (spotting) in a low-to-the-ground environment.

### 2.0 Scope & Instructor Competence

This SOP applies to all staff and participants engaging in Traverse Wall activities.

- **Technical Advisor (TA):** Joby Davies (Mountaineering Instructor Certificate - WMCI).
- **Authorisation:** Instructors must be "In House Trained and Assessed" under a scheme approved by the TA.

### 3.0 Location, Ratios & Management

#### 3.1 Location

- **The Traverse Wall:** Located in a designated, locked, and fenced area in the Southwest corner of the Walled Garden.
- **Surface:** Rubber matting is installed around the base to provide a softer landing.

#### 3.2 Ratios & Group Management

- **Standard Ratio:** 1:12
- **Instructor Positioning:** The instructor should predominantly position themselves at one end of the wall. This allows observation of both opposing sides with minimal movement.



- **Wall Capacity:** Generally, half the group (approx. 6) should be on the wall at any one-time during technique practice, though the whole group (12) may be on the wall for specific group games.

## 4.0 Equipment & PPE Rules

- **No Helmets or Harnesses:** Participants **must not** wear helmets or climbing harnesses. This eliminates the risk of the equipment snagging on holds and causing entrapment or neck injuries during a low-level fall.
- **Footwear:** Suitable enclosed sports shoes must be worn.
- **Jewellery:** All rings, necklaces, and loose jewellery must be removed.

## 5.0 Safety Briefing & Rules

*Mandatory briefing before anyone touches the wall.*

1. **The Height Limit:** Feet must never go above the painted area (approx. 2-3ft high). Traversing is about moving sideways, not up.
2. **No Topping Out:** Participants must not grab the very top edge of the wall; use the designated climbing holds only.
3. **Stepping Off:** If you need to come down or feel like you are falling, step down onto the matting. Do not jump away or push off horizontally to avoid landing awkwardly.
4. **Distractions:** Do not climb on the perimeter fence or become distracted by nearby activities.

## 6.0 Session Procedure & Coaching Phases

### 6.1 Pre-Session Checks

- **The Wall:** Check for spinning/loose holds and physically tighten them if required. Check padded posts are secure.
- **The Ground:** Ensure the rubber matting is clear of debris and free from severe damage/trip hazards.

### 6.2 Phase 1: Warm-up & Introduction to Spotting

- **Warm-up:** Start with a pulse-raising game (e.g., "Shark Attack") off the wall to loosen limbs.
- **Spotting:** Effective spotting is an essential safety control. Introduce spotting exercises (e.g., trust falls / Weebles in pairs / groups).

- **The Spotter Role:** Spotters must walk slightly behind / beside the climber with a good, balanced base, holding their hands high and ready to guide the climber's upper body and protect the head if they slip.

## 6.3 Phase 2: Basic Technique Coaching

Allow a brief practice, then bring the group back to teach fundamental techniques:

- **Legs over Arms:** Emphasize that leg muscles are stronger than arms; push up rather than pull up.
- **Foot Placement:** Use the inside edge or ball of the foot (not the toes pointing directly at the wall) to maximize grip and bring the body closer to the wall.
- **Body Weight (Hips):** Keep the bottom/hips close to the wall. Shift weight directly over the standing foot to allow the other foot to move freely.
- **"Hop and Swap":** Teach participants how to smoothly swap feet on a single hold without crossing their legs.

## 6.4 Phase 3: Route Reading & Hold Types

- Explain different hold types: Jugs (large, positive), Crimps (small edges), Pockets (holes), and Pinches.
- Explain that following specific colours creates a "Route" of varying difficulty.
- **Practice:** Number the pairs 1 and 2. Number 1s traverse for 3-4 minutes while 2s spot and coach foot placement, then swap.

**6.5 Phase 4: Games & Challenges** Once spotting is well-practiced and the instructor is confident in the group's ability to step off safely; spotting can be relaxed for certain development games.

- **Games:** "Simon Says" (touch nose, lift one foot) or "Hang Tough".
- **The Board Competition:** \* The wall consists of 5 boards on each side (10 points total).
  - Climbers start at board 1 and traverse as far as possible. The board number they step off at is their score.
  - They join the back of the line and try again. Each participant keeps their "Best Score" from all attempts.

## 7.0 Emergency Procedure

1. **Minor Fall/Graze:** Step the participant off the wall, administer First Aid, and record the incident.
2. **Major Incident (Suspected sprain/break):** Keep the casualty still on the matting. Halt the rest of the session (ask the group to sit quietly against the fence). Radio for the Duty Manager/First Aider.

## 8.0 Risk Assessment

**Activity:** Traverse / Bouldering Wall

**Review Date:** March 2027

**Assessment by:** Martin Kirby – Operations Manager

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	Controls: What are you doing to control hazards?	Risk Rating (with controls)
Slips and falls whilst off the ground	Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Height:</b> Strict height limit enforced (feet below painted line).</li> <li>• <b>Spotting:</b> Taught and utilized heavily in the early session.</li> <li>• <b>Flooring:</b> Rubber matting around the base.</li> </ul>	Trivial
Head injuries from contact with wall/floor	Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Spotting:</b> Peer spotters trained to protect the head/upper body.</li> <li>• <b>Helmets:</b> Specifically NOT worn to prevent snag/strangulation risks.</li> </ul>	Trivial
Moving/Spinning Hold causing a fall	Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Checks:</b> Instructor visually and physically checks for spinning holds pre-session and tightens them.</li> </ul>	Trivial
Entrapment (Jewellery/Equipment)	Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PPE:</b> Harnesses and Helmets are strictly prohibited on this wall.</li> <li>• <b>Rule:</b> All jewellery must be removed before climbing.</li> </ul>	Trivial
Contact with structural posts	Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Padding:</b> Corner/structural posts have been padded to reduce impact risk.</li> <li>• <b>Spotting:</b> Extra vigilance on corners/arêtes.</li> </ul>	Trivial
Distraction Hazards	Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Control:</b> Wall is located in a fenced enclosure to separate it from other activities. Briefed not to climb the fence.</li> </ul>	Trivial

## 10.0 Document Control & Review History

### Document Creation

Action	Name / Role	Date
<b>Created By</b>	Martin Kirby – Operations Manager	March 2026
<b>Approved By</b>	Martin Kirby, Luke Chance & Oliver Tombs (OM / SI / AOM)	March 2026
<b>Technical Auth.</b>	Joby Davies (Technical Advisor)	March 2026

### Review Log

*This document is to be reviewed annually or following any significant incident or change to the activity.*

Date of Review	Reviewed By	Comments / Changes Made	Next Review Due
March 2026	MKirby / OTombs / LChance	Document Created (V1.0). Added specific coaching phases, spotting exercises, and competition structures. Re-affirmed no helmet/harness rule.	March 2027