

Enjoy and Care for the Countryside

Access:

You have the right to walk and climb on most land in Scotland as long as you do so responsibly. What does that mean? – know and practice the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. See more at www.mcofs.org.uk/access-law-and-soac.asp.



See www.mcofs.org.uk/cragcode-leaflet.asp

Climbing Ethics:

The development of sport climbs in Scotland is still a contentious subject for some climbers. The crags developed so far have been accepted by most active climbers. If you wish to develop new sport climbs, discuss it with experienced climbers and consult the MCofS for advice or your efforts may be in vain. Always place new bolts to the manufacturer's recommendations. See the MCofS Crag Code and Bolt Policy.

Climbing Competitions

In Scotland (and the UK) all competitions are held at indoor climbing walls.

The Youth Climbing Series (YCS) is an annual 3-round event for children from 7yrs to 16yrs. Scotland has 2 Regions (North & South) competing against each other and 10 other regions from England, Wales & Ireland leading to a British Final. Held in March and April with the final in June. Applications for Scotland should be made to the MCofS: see www.mcofs.org.uk/youth-climbing-series.asp.

The Scottish Youth Climbing Championship (SYCC) is an annual one-off event for the top 5 placed climbers from the YCS to find the Scottish Champions.

The Scottish Tooling Series (STS) is a 6 round competition for dry-tooling only held in Scotland. Details can be found at www.mcofs.org.uk/scottish-tooling-series.asp.

The Leading Ladder is organised by the BMC. It is an informal lead climbing competition offering set routes at walls across the UK. Submission of results leads to a formal Final. Contact the BMC at www.thebmc.co.uk

The British Lead Climbing Championship (BLCC) and the **British Bouldering Championship (BBC)** are operated by the BMC and have a junior category open to 13-16 year old boys and girls. The BMC also run **The British Team**.

The International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC) operates **International Competitions** (World & European Cups, World Championships). See www.ifsc.com

Competitions at Walls

Each of the major walls operates their own winter series of competitions. See their individual websites or see www.mcofs.org.uk/climbing-walls.asp.

Join Us



- Free Quarterly Scottish Mountaineer magazine (for regular bouldering, climbing & coaching articles) OR:
- Free Digital Version of Scottish Mountaineer (direct to your Email)
- Reduced entry to Youth Climbing Competitions in Scotland
- Access to Coaching Sessions (coaching in performance)
- Access to REALrock Sessions (outdoor climbing)
- Access to the Climbing Bursary (grants for competitions and climbing)
- Reduced subscription to 'Climber' magazine

Membership Categories: Individual Youth (under 18yrs); Individual Adult; Family

Scottish Kids Climbing Clubs (MCofS Members): These are clubs operated by parents dedicated to encouraging their children's climbing. Membership of the club entails both parent and child. They will be expanding in number across Scotland. Contact the following:

The Quickdraw Climbing Club: Based at the EICA: www.quickdrawclimbingclub.com



The Lead-On Club: Based at Aviemore (contact MCofS)

See www.mcofs.org.uk/join-us.asp for our current Membership Offers and pay by PayPal at finance@mcofs.org.uk or Tel: 01738 493 942

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sport climbing and competitions IN SCOTLAND

MCofS Fact File No.1



www.mcofs.org.uk

mountaineering council of scotland

Sport Climbing

What's it all about?

Sport climbs are climbs that are protected with **bolts**. These are placed into the rock by the first person to climb the route and left for others to use. Traditional 'gear' climbs leave nothing in the rock - climbers must find and place their own protection in cracks. Sport climbing is what you do at indoor climbing walls (although the differences outdoors are explained below). Most Scottish sport climbs are one pitch long. Sport climbing is one of the safest disciplines and is a good introduction to climbing for children/beginners.

What technical kit do I need?

- **Harness** (with 3 gear loops for carrying 'extenders')
- **Rope** (dynamic, 50m long, 10mm thick, 'full' rope - denoted by '1')
- **Belay Plate** with locking 'screwgate karabiner' (a 'stiff' or 'grabbing' device is better than a 'slick' device. An 'automatic' grabbing device is not suitable for beginners)
- A **Cows-tail** (a 'screwgate' karabiner on a 60cm(4ft) sling for clipping to abseil & lower-off points)
- **Extenders** (also known as 'quick-draws': are web extensions with 'snapgate' karabiners clipped into each end)
- **Rock shoes** (get the style that fits your foot and your climbing)
- **Helmet** (recommended for beginners)
- **Chalk bag and chalk** (to clip to the harness or round your waist)



Route descriptions, grades & style:

The line of the climbs is obvious - following the bolts. Guides with crag photos and approximate route lines indicated ('topo' style) are the norm. Scotland has adopted the French grading system. The best ascent (without prior knowledge and without 'weighting' the rope at any point) is an 'on-sight'. Or, you practice the climb as much as you like and then climb it in one go for an ascent called a 'red-point'

Where can I go sport climbing?

Indoor Venues

A climbing wall is a great place to start. Unlike climbing outside, the extenders are usually in place on the bolts, lower-offs are easy-to-use and top-ropes are in place if needed. All walls offer beginners courses. **Your nearest Climbing wall:** See the Climbing Walls Directory on the MCofS website. The big walls are at Inverness, Aberdeen, Aviemore, Dundee, Edinburgh, EICA: Ratho; Glasgow, Kinlochleven.

Outdoor Venues:

To progress outdoors, it is best to find a small low-lying sport crag with few natural hazards (e.g. easy access). Setting up top-ropes may not be possible at many crags without leading the route first so choose a crag with climbs below your indoor leading grade. In Scotland outdoor venues are almost all located at lower altitudes.

Starter Crag (4+ - 6a+): ●

Benny Beg, Crieff; Ley Quarry, Forfar; Kirrie Hill, Kirriemuir; Cambus O'May, Deeside; Creag Beag, Golspie; Grass Crag, Gairloch.

Mid-grade Crag (6a - 6c+): ●

Rob's Reed, Forfar; Arbroath Sea Cliffs; Weem Rock Aberfeldy; Rock Dust, Pitlochry; Dunira, Comrie; Glen Ogle; Strathyre, Nr Callander; The Camel, Duntelchaig; Moy Rock, Inverness; Ardvorlich, Loch Lomond; Wild Swans Buttress, Invernaid; North Berwick Law Quarry; Creag nan Luch, Poolewe.

Seventh-grade Crag (7a - 7c): ■

Crystal Crag, Invernaid; Tunnel Wall, Buachaille Etive Mor; Cave Crag, Dunkeld; Glen Ogle; Am Fasgadh & Goat Crag, Gruinard.

Elite Crag (8a+ and above): ▲

Dumbarton Rock & Dumbuck Quarry, Dumbarton; Tighnabraich, Argyll; The Anvil, Lochgoilhead; Steall Hut Crag, Glen Nevis.

Where do I get more information?

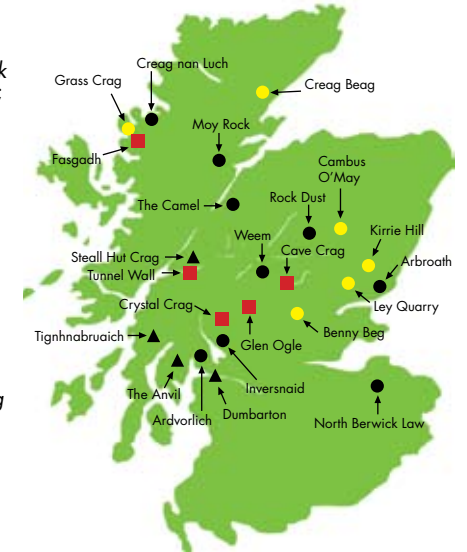
How to' Books: *The Complete Guide to Climbing and Mountaineering* (2008) by Pete Hill (David & Charles), *Sport Climbing* (2007) by Pete Hill (Cicerone), *SportCLIMBING+* (2006) by Adrian Berry & Steve McLure (RockFax)

Guidebooks: SMC Guidebook Series: *North East Outcrops* (for Aberdeen, Deeside and Arbroath), *Lowland Outcrops* (for Lomond area, Dumbarton & Dumbuck and North Berwick Law), *Northern Highland Central* (for Gairloch), *Highland Outcrops* (for Ogle, Dunkeld, Weem & Strathyre) and for selected venues across the country: *Scottish Rock Climbs (SMC)*, *Rock Climbing in Scotland* (Howett), *Scottish Rock* (Latter); there is an SMC Sport Climbs guide being prepared. *Arbroath Sport Climbs* (2007) is available direct from their website or from Avertical World.

Website info: See www.scottishclimbs.com for topo guides of all the above crags and more. An 'Arbroath Sport Climbs' website has general information for the sport crags in Angus. See www.wildwesttopos.com for guides to the North West. A Visitor's Guide to Rock Climbing is available on the MCofS website at www.mcofs.org.uk/visitor-guides.asp.

Parents Guide: More detailed information about participation and progression can be found at www.mcofs.org.uk/kids-info.asp.

SPORT Grades		Traditional Grades compared:	
		Overall Grade	Technical Grade
1, 1+	Starter Grades	'Mod', 'Diff'	1, 2 (not used)
2, 2+		VD	2, 3 (not used)
3, 3+		Severe, 'HS'	4a, 4b
4, 4+		VS, HVS	4a, 4b, 4c
5, 5+	Mid-Grade	HVS, E1	4c, 5a, 5b
6a, 6a+		E1, E2	5b, 5c, 6a
6b, 6b+		E2, E3	5c, 6a
6c, 6c+	Seventh Grade	E3, E4	6a, 6b
7a, 7a+		E4, E5	6a, 6b, 6c
7b, 7b+		E5, E6	6b, 6c
7c, 7c+	Elite Grade	E6, E7	6b, 6c
8a, 8a+		E7, E8	6c
8b, 8b+		E8, E9	6c, 7a
8c, 8c+		E9, E10	7a, 7b
9a, 9a+		E10, E11	7a, 7b



How is it done?

Climbing in pairs, one person 'belay' the rope attached to the 'leader' who climbs the route from the ground up. The leader links the rope to each bolt using extenders. It is important not to 'back-clip' (pictured right) the rope into the extender's karabiner or it may unclip when fallen on - a common mistake. If the leader falls off, the belayer 'brakes' the rope with the belay device and prevents the leader falling too far. In Scotland protection bolts are generally close together and potential falls are short.

Clipping the second bolt is the most hazardous, and some climbs have only been done by pre-clipping the first bolt (by 'stick-clipping'). Belaying is extremely important - learn to belay correctly.

It is usual to find a lower-off point just under the top of the crag: usually two bolts linked by chain with a karabiner to clip in to. The climber is then lowered to the ground from this. At some crags there are solid rings or 'maillons' instead and the rope must be threaded through. Whilst untying from the rope and threading the ring, protect yourself using the cows-tail. Never run the rope through a bolt hanger.

How reliable are the bolts?

No organisation formerly checks bolts. Unsafe bolts are often replaced by local climbers when known about. You must take responsibility for your own safety and inspect in-situ bolts. Do not rely on them if they appear rusted or loose. Donate to local 'bolt funds' to help replacement costs.

