

# Scottish Climbing Code

## Guidance for assessing suitable venues for sport climbing development in Scotland:

The MCofS, as the representative body, has conducted extensive consultation with climbers over many years and endorses the widely accepted ethic that adventurous bolt-free climbing remains the primary ethic in summer and winter for all Scottish climbs, but that there is a place for sports style climbing in the future of Scottish climbing.

The MCofS has produced the following statement regarding the use of fixed protection (utilising bolts) on both natural and quarried rock in Scotland to act as a guideline for climbers wishing to establish sport routes:

### REGARDING ESTABLISHED VENUES:

- Sport climbing development in Scotland is considered as an integral part of the diverse range of climbing styles available that now coexists with traditional adventurous climbs
- Bolts are unacceptable to the majority of Scottish climbers on established (documented) mountain cliffs and sea cliffs, in both summer and winter
- Established (documented) traditional and sport venues would be expected to remain in their documented style. If a change in style is to be considered in the future (bearing in mind the above guideline on mountain and sea cliff venues) then the following advice is given:
  - Retro-bolting (the addition of bolts to established climbs without them) should only be considered with the permission of the first ascensionist and after wide consultation with interested climbers at local and national level
  - Retro-trad (the removal of existing bolts) should only be considered with the permission of the first ascensionist and after wide consultation with interested climbers at local and national level

### REGARDING NEW DEVELOPMENTS:

- The development of sport climbs is welcomed within the context of a clear overall ethical framework
- Mountain and sea cliffs with a wild, remote character (also reflected in their surrounding environment) and adventurous nature are not suitable locations for bolts, either for the development of routes or their limited use in order to facilitate easy retreat. Self rescue and descent without fixed equipment are all part of the adventurous nature of traditional climbs
- Craggs with good or adequate quality protection within strong natural lines would be regarded as traditional venues. Craggs where an overall lack of natural cracks for protection together with a lack of strong natural lines would be suitable venues for sport climb development as long as they could not be classed as wild mountain or sea cliff venues
- Sport mixed climbing (and dry-tooling) has an important role to play in the future of Scottish winter climbing, but should not be at odds with these guidelines
- Those seeking to develop new sport mixed venues should enter into consultation with interested climbers at local or national level before taking action
- bolts should be placed using current best practices

### FACILITATION:

- It is the intention of these guidelines that they allow climbers to make informed decisions about sport development and allow the climbing world to self regulate
- If there are any doubts, or 'grey areas', an informal approach to gaining opinion is best at local level
- The MCofS will offer assistance (through awareness / distribution of information / debate / mediation) to aid consultation if required