

2020 Riverside Crew  
Parent and Athlete Manual



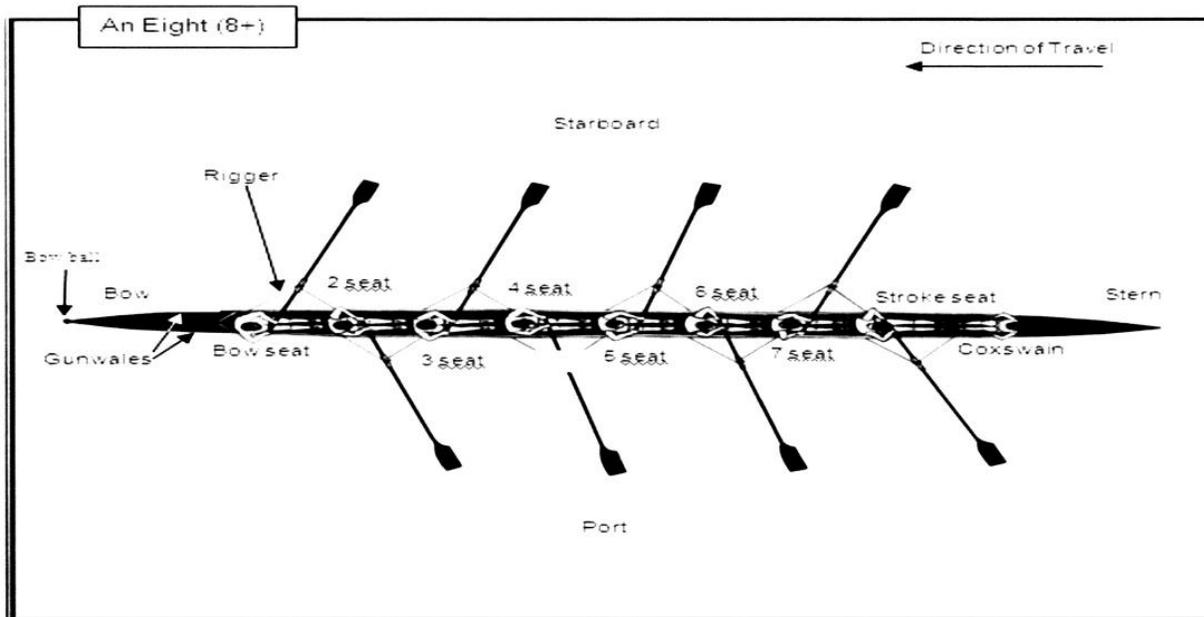
## Table of Contents

“10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT ROWING” .....	2
About Riverside Crew.....	7
The Four Rowing Seasons .....	8
RC Team Composition .....	9
Travel and Racing Information .....	11
Race Day Information for Parents .....	12
CODE OF CONDUCT.....	13

## “10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT ROWING”

1. **Rowers are probably the world's best athletes.** The sport demands endurance, strength, and an ability to tolerate the pain that their muscles experience in the last 500 meters of a race.
2. **It's the legs.** Rowing only looks like an upper body sport. Although upper body strength is important, the drive, which moves the boat, comes from strong legs. Rowing is one of the few athletic activities that involve all of the body's major muscle groups.
3. **Meters, not miles.** The standard length of a rowing race is 2000 meters in college and 1500 meters in high school competition -- about a mile and a quarter and a mile respectively. Rowers refer to parts of the race in 500-meter sections.
4. **Sweep (like a broom) and sculling (with a "c").** These are the two basic types of rowing: sweep rowing, where the athlete holds one oar with both hands, and sculling, where the athlete has two oars -- one in each hand.
5. **Think even numbers.** Sweep rowers come in 2s (pairs), 4s (fours), and 8s (eights). Scullers can row alone (in a single), with somebody else (in a double) or with three other people (in a quad). Scullers steer their own boat, using a rudder that they move with their foot. Sweep rowers may or may not have a coxswain - the on-the-water coach and person who steers. For example, all eights have a coxswain, but pairs and fours may or may not.
6. **It only looks easy.** Great rowing looks graceful and fluid, but don't be fooled. Pulling oar blades smoothly and effectively through the water while balancing a boat that may be as narrow as 11" across with 10'-12' oars is very difficult work. Watch how quickly that graceful motion before the finish line turns into pain and gasping for air afterwards.
7. **High tech versions of age-old equipment.** Although wooden boats were the norm for many years, most of today's rowing boats -- called shells -- are strong, lightweight carbon fiber. The smallest boat on the water is the single scull, only 27'-30' long, a foot wide and about 30 pounds. The largest is the eight at 60'. Today's oars -- not paddles -- are also incredibly lightweight. Sweep oars are somewhat longer than sculling oars and have longer handles that are made of wood, instead of the rubber grips on sculling oars.
8. **SPM not MPH.** Rowers speak in terms of strokes per minute (SPM); literally the number of strokes the boat completes in a minute's time. The stroke rate at the start might be high -- 38 to 40 -- and then settling down to a slower cadence. Boats often sprint to the finish, taking the rate up once again. The coxswain may call for a Power 10 -- a demand for the crew's best, strongest 10 strokes. Although the number of strokes a boat is capable of rowing per minute is indicative of speed and talent, the boat getting the most distance out of every stroke may win the race.
9. **Timing is everything.** Rowing competitions are typically conducted on six lanes on the water. They follow a double-elimination format in a system designed to identify the fastest six crews for the final race in each category. Heats are first, followed by repechage (French for second-chance) races. There are no style points for rowing -- the boat whose bow crosses the finish line first is the winner.
10. **Teamwork is number one.** Rowing isn't a great choice for athletes looking for MVP status. It is, however, teamwork's best teacher. The athlete trying to stand out in the eight will only make the boat slower. It is the crew made up of individuals willing to sacrifice their goals for the goals of the team; the athletes determined to match their desire, their talent and their oar blade with the rower in front of them, that will be on the medals stand together.

*Source: U.S. Rowing*



## SEAT POSITIONS & THEIR PURPOSE

**Coxswain** -- The Coxswain (pronounced cox'n) commands the shell. It is the responsibility of the Coxswain to plan the race strategy; steer the shell; and motivate the rowers, via commands and encouragement, to pull hard and in unison.

**Seat #8** -- The rower with the smoothest stroke and the best rhythm leads the boat and sets the stroke length and cadence. The "stroke" sits nearest the "stern" (rear of the boat or "shell") and the coxswain.

**Seat #7** -- The rowers on the opposite side of the "stroke" look to the "7-seat's" oar to get their timing in the boat. The "7-seat" must mimic the movement of the "stroke's" body. It is essential that the "stroke" and "7-seat" put their oars in and out of the water simultaneously.

**Seat #6** -- The "6-seat" is usually one of the two most powerful rowers in the boat. The "6-seat," "5-seat," "4-seat," and "3-seat" of an eight, called the "middle four or engine room," typically provide most of the power for the boat. The "engine room" four must swing together as a group, using much power from their legs as possible.

**Seat #5** -- The "5-seat" is usually the most powerful rower on the starboard side of the boat. This is the most stable seat.

**Seat #4** -- This seat is filled by the next most powerful rower on the port side.

**Seat #3** -- This rower adds strength and support to the task of rowing the boat through the water.

**Seat #2** -- This rower adds strength and support to the task of rowing the boat through the water.

**Seat #1** -- The rower with the second smoothest stroke sits in the “bow” (front of the boat) and finishes the race first

## CREW GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Blade** -- The surface of the oar that pushes and displaces water. Spoon, standard, or Macon blades have a curved blade shape and are often used by less experienced rowers. Hatchet blades, a newer design, have a flat-ended cleaver shape, shorter but with a larger surface area.

**Bow** -- The forward section of the boat; the end that crosses the finish line first. Also the Seat 1 rower, who occupies the seat closest to the bow.

**Catch** -- The instant the oar blade enters the water – and the boat’s moment of greatest instability (see crab). The catch is done by moving the arms upward; blade should be at almost a right angle to the water.

**Coxswain, cox** -- The person who commands, motivates, and steers a crewed shell; usually a small, lightweight person. Pronounced "cox-n."

**Crab, catching a crab** -- An oar blade that gets "stuck" in the water, often because it enters at angle instead of perpendicular and is forced deep into the water and twisted parallel to the boat. The oar suddenly absorbs the energy of the boat’s momentum, slowing the boat. It also can flip the rower out of the boat or seriously injure him or her, as the oar handle can hit the rower’s head or chest.

**Crew** -- common American name for the sport of competitive rowing

**Double** -- A boat with two scullers, each with two oars. Compare to Pair.

**Drive** -- Power sequence of the stroke, during which the rower presses on the foot stretchers and pulls on the oars, using legs, back, and arms in that order to force the blade through the water, moving the boat forward. For the first half, the rower remains upright as the knees move downward. When the legs are extended, the rower leans back and pulls with the arms (finish).

**Eight, eight-person shell** -- Boat that seats eight sweep rowers and a coxswain.

**Erg, erg machine** -- Ergometer or rowing machine, exercise equipment that simulates the motion and stress of rowing; thus used to rowers to build endurance. Erging means using an erg machine.

**Finish** -- The last phase of the drive, with power coming mainly from the back and arms.

**Foot stretcher, stretcher** -- An adjustable platform with two inclined footrests on which are mounted shoes or clogs. The shoes or clogs hold the rower's feet fixed during the race. The rower pushes legs against the foot stretcher during the drive phase of the stroke.

**Four, four-man shell** -- Boat that seats four sweep rowers (each rower has one oar), with or without a coxswain.

**Lightweight** -- A racing category that refers to the body weight of the rowers. High school lightweight class weight limits are 150 pounds for boys and 130 pounds for girls.

**Oar** -- A lever used to propel the boat forward.

**Oarlock** -- A U-shaped frame at the end of the rigger, which holds the oar in place with the help of a gate that closes across the top, and which swivels by rotating around a pin. The oarlock is the fulcrum of the lever.

**Pair** -- A boat with two sweep rowers (each rower has one oar). Compare to double.

**Port** -- The left side of the boat when facing forward (toward the bow); to the coxswain's left and the rowers' right. A port rower is a sweep rower who manages an oar on the port side.

**Racing Shell** -- specifically designed boat for competitive rowing.

**Recovery** -- Stroke phase between the release and the catch, in which the oar, out of the water, is feathered and brought into position for the next stroke, while the rower moves back up the slide with the knees coming up.

**Scull** -- (1) n. Oar designed for rowing with a single hand; about 9 feet long, shorter than a two-hand oar.  
(2) v. To use a pair of such oars.

**Sculling** -- Rowing with two oars, one in each hand (an oar rigged on each side of the boat). Scullers row in singles (1X), doubles (2X), and quads (4X). Sculling boats rarely have coxswains. Singles usually steer using the oars; doubles and quads usually control the rudder with a foot.

**Single** -- Boat that seats one rower who rows with two oars, one in each hand (i.e. one sculler).

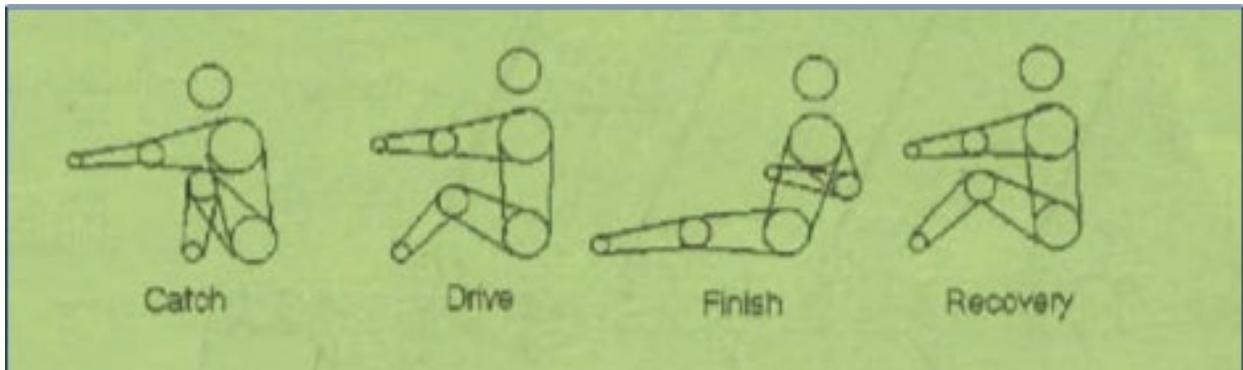
**Slide** -- Set of two runners, or tracks, with wheels mounted underneath each seat in the boat.

**Sliding seat** -- A rower's seat, with wheels that roll along a track. Permitting each rower's seat to slide forward and back inside the boat allows the legs to provide power for the stroke.

**Starboard** -- The right side of the boat when facing forward (toward the bow), to the rower's left. A starboard rower is a sweep rower who normally rows an oar on the starboard side.

**Stern** -- Rear area of boat—common name.

for coxswain and stern pair Stroke Rate. Cadence of rowing—number count of cycles per minute  
Sweep (1) n. Sweep oar, an oar designed for use with two hands. (2)



## About Riverside Crew

Riverside Crew team offers several rowing programs: competitive high school age rowers and learn-to- row.

### **The High School Team**

Riverside Crew ([www.riversiderowing.org](http://www.riversiderowing.org)) is an independent high school rowing program that consists of intensive physical indoor and outdoor practice. Rowers compete in six to eight regional and national regattas during the year. Riverside Crew is committed to not only developing the physical strength of the rowers but to also enhancing their mental awareness regarding informed healthcare decisions. This approach includes the complete avoidance of alcohol, drugs and tobacco and maintenance of proper nutrition, not only before races but also during the entire training season. Each athlete, and their parent/guardian, must read and sign a Code of Conduct when registering each season.

Competitive rowing is an incredible sport that cultivates successful and hardworking athletes. Rowing achieves the ultimate level of teamwork through the mental and physical strength of each participating individual. Often compared to marathon running or cross-country skiing, rowing is an endurance-based sport that demands cardiovascular strength and mental focus. Competitive rowing demands the ultimate level of teamwork from each participating individual.

Riverside Crew takes a comprehensive approach to the physical, mental and social well-being of its athletes, and creates an environment that promotes physical exercise, teamwork, positive role models, and health awareness and education for high school students in the Northern Virginia area.

### **Diversity**

The Riverside Crew program supports diversity by enabling teenagers from varied socio-economic backgrounds to row. Riverside Crew team members come from all races, religions and income levels.

### **Contacting the Coaches**

At Riverside Crew, communication is between the coach and the rower. Rowers are asked to contact their coach regarding their schedule, expectations and suggestions for improvement. Parents should contact their rower's coach for concerns regarding their athlete's well- being. Contact information for the coaches is available on the website.

### **Vacation Days and School Absences**

In rowing, attendance is paramount. If you are sick, please stay home. Please contact the head coach if you will be absent from practice or a regatta for any reason. If you know you will miss

days during the season, please provide your schedule *as far in advance as possible* so that the coaches can plan accordingly.

## **Riverside Rowing Organization**

The Riverside Crew (RC), a non-profit organization. RC board members include parents of current rowers, and persons from the rowing and boating world.

## **Riverside Crew Boosters**

All rower parents/guardians automatically become Parent Volunteers when their child joins the team. All Parent Volunteers are expected to volunteer their time, whether on the Parent Committee, as chaperones at regattas, or volunteering for any of the myriad tasks that are required to run a team of around 40 rowers. The Parent Committee is the group of parents who are actively involved in supporting the team. If you are interested in serving on the Committee, please contact one of the coaches.

## **The Four Rowing Seasons**

### **Fall Season**

The fall season begins in late August, around Labor Day. Fall season runs from late August to Thanksgiving. Practices are every weekday from 4:30- 6:30 pm and Saturday mornings (when not at a regatta) from 9:30 – 11:30 am. Attendance is paramount; *if one rower is absent the whole boat cannot go out. Rowers are asked to contact their coach directly regarding their schedule. At RC, communication is between the coach and the rower. A mandatory parent/guardian meeting will take place at the beginning of the fall and spring season.*

During the fall season the coaches concentrate on rowing technique. RC typically attends three to four regattas in the Virginia area.

### **Winter Season**

Winter season begins after a brief Thanksgiving break. Rowers go inside to practice. The athletes train by using a variety of “off water” training techniques, mainly on indoor rowing machines (ergometers, or “ergs”). Practice is every weekday and times are slightly shorter than practice on the water. In addition to erg workouts, RC will incorporate weight training, running, stretching, and sport specific drills in the winter season.

Winter training is an important part of conditioning for spring season, which is the main competitive season. The erg scores compiled from the training are crucial to any collegiate acceptance. Of course, if a rower plays a winter sport that keeps him/her in shape, that is an acceptable alternative to winter training with RC. However, if you are not planning on participating in another competitive sport during the winter season, it is highly recommended that you row. The winter season ends at the end of February.

## **Spring Season**

RC tries to be back on the water for spring season at the beginning of March (weather, of course, permitting!). Practice times are the same as in the fall. Since spring season is RC's most competitive season, attendance is extremely important.

Regattas during the spring season might typically include travel to and those who qualify to participate must pay a supplemental fee to cover the costs of attending. The regatta locations vary each year.

## **Summer Season**

From mid-June to mid-August, RC may offer a summer rowing camp.

## **RC Team Composition**

### **What is a "Junior" Rower?**

RC is a competitive team that focuses its training towards successful competition. 'Junior' just refers to all high school-aged rowers.

### **Who is a Typical Rower?**

Rowers are very dedicated to their sport! It's not uncommon for novice rowers to fall in love with the sport very quickly.

### **Coxswains**

Crew also has an important position called the coxswain, a naturally light person who motivates the rowers, executes racing strategy and steers the racing shells. There are collegiate scholarships available for good junior coxswains.

### **Squads**

RC is a novice boys and novice girls team.

### **Novice Rowing**

The United States Rowing Association states that rowers are considered to be novices for one year after they start racing. RC starts novices each season and builds a team throughout the school year. Regardless of when you started rowing, the next school year you are considered to be a varsity rower. Novices have started rowing as late as the spring of their senior year and have learned fast enough to be awarded a collegiate scholarship the very next fall. It is never too late to start rowing but preferably you start as soon as you get to high school, or even in eighth grade.

Beginning rowers will spend about a week learning the basics on indoor rowing machines before going on the water. Once on the water there are just a few weeks before the team starts racing.

## **Varsity Rowing**

Regardless of what season you started rowing (fall, winter, spring), the next school year you are considered to be a varsity rower.

## **Attendance**

In rowing, attendance is paramount. We row in eight or four-person boats that are unworkable with fewer rowers. *Rowers are asked to present their coach with a list of days they cannot attend practices at the beginning of each season. All rowers are expected to take responsibility by calling or texting the coach as soon as possible if an emergency arises and they cannot make it to practices.* Please don't intentionally schedule appointments during practice times, and most definitely not on regatta days. *Missing a practice affects all the rowers in an athlete's boat.*

## **Membership Dues**

RC is a non-profit club supported by its membership dues and sponsorship. The fees collected by RC go towards the daily operations of the team, race entry fees and repairs to and maintenance of equipment.

## **Sponsorship and Fundraising**

The fees collected each season cover only part of the costs associated with rowing. Expenses for new equipment such as racing shells, oars, and launches must be covered by fundraising and sponsorship. Families are asked to participate in fundraising activities such as our Ergathon which be held during the winter season.

## **Registration**

Each season, rowers must complete a registration form, which is available on the RC website. This includes rower/parent contact information, medical information and consent form, parent volunteer form, code of conduct contract, USRowing release of liability, and regatta waivers. Fees are due at the start of the season. Payment plans are available. Offline payments must be submitted at the start of each season along with the offline payment plan form.

## **Financial Assistance**

RC offers partial financial assistance to families who qualify based on economic need. Aid is need-based and families must complete a Financial Assistance Request Form in order to be considered eligible for aid. Every family is expected to contribute as much as it can to support its rower.

## **Practice Clothes**

Most athletic gear works fine as long as it is not too baggy. Gym shoes are required. *Layering your clothes is best so that you are ready for any kind of weather.* We row **rain or shine** and all rowers are expected to dress appropriately. We row on the water late into the fall and early in the spring; layering usually works best for those colder weather practices. Also, *please bring a bottle of water to every practice* to stay hydrated.

## **Weather**

We row rain or shine. Only during lightning storms or freezing weather do we not row on the water. This is at the discretion of the Head Coach. On questionable weather days athletes should call/text their coach to find out if practice will be on the water or will be moved indoors. As a rule, you should be prepared for indoor or outdoor practices every day.

## **Safety**

The sport of rowing has a long history of safety and so does RC. We are serious about safety and follow a comprehensive plan in accordance with guidelines set by the United States Rowing Association (rowing's governing body). RC coaches follow USRowing's rules as well as applying their own judgment and experience.

Water safety: When rowers train on the water, coaches accompany the team in safety launches (motorized skiffs). The launches are equipped with safety gear (including a personal floatation device for each rower in the rowing shell) as well as a cell phone. No RC rower is allowed on the water without the direct supervision of coach in a safety launch.

Regatta safety: Parents/guardians need to arrange for transportation for their child when the regatta

## **Swimming Ability**

You do not need to be a great swimmer to row but basic swimming skills are required. It is possible that a boat could capsize, and the rowers must have the ability to swim to safety or tread water until help arrives.

## **Travel and Racing Information**

### **Travel and Racing**

A major part of what we do is race. All rowers on the team are expected to attend each race. After all, that is what the team trains for! When a rower is training for a particular season it is assumed that he or she can make it to the races on the schedule. Please consult the regatta schedule and make sure the coaches know immediately if for some reason you can't make a race. A regatta schedule will be posted on our website about a month prior to each season.

## **Regatta Costs**

Membership fees cover the cost of the team's travel to regattas.

## **Regatta Itinerary**

Trip information will be distributed two weeks prior to each regatta. Times of departure vary with each regatta. Usually, the link to the regatta's website will be found on our RC website. These race sites may contain information on the race schedule, as well as directions, parking, etc. It is extremely important that you are ready to leave on time!

## **Chaperones & Volunteers**

Volunteers are needed and appreciated. Volunteer positions will be posted at the beginning of each season on the Volunteer page of the RC website. Every family is expected to volunteer for at least one race/event each season.

## **Uniforms**

Novice rowers wear RC racing t-shirts that can be worn with any black spandex shorts that you provide. The cost of the novice racing tee is included in your membership dues. The required varsity team uniform can cost up to \$50 but will last for several years.

## **Race Day Information for Parents**

### **Qualifications for Racing**

RC makes every effort to race all of its rowers. Because rowing is done in 8's and 4's it can make things difficult when there are odd numbers of rowers on a squad. This is one reason why the coaches like to enter each squad in multiple events (e.g., a novice boys 8 and a novice boys 4). If there are an odd number of rowers on a squad then the coaches will attempt to make sure that each rower races in at least one of the events. Sometimes there are a few rowers who don't race.

### **Regatta Information**

Regattas are generally much like daylong outdoor swim meets. Each regatta follows a similar schedule but each venue has its own schedule. The final race schedules are posted to competing teams a few days before the event. It's only then that we have a good idea of when each rower will race. However, because rowing is an outdoor sport, delays in the event schedule are very likely. It is for that reason that we encourage rowers not to plan something important on race days. Many of the regattas we race in have event information online. If you are looking for an estimated time for your rower's race, go to our regatta schedule. We will have links to each regatta when available. Ask if your rower is rowing in a 4 or an 8; novice.

## **Race Day Tips for Rowers...Good Luck!**

- 1.) *Eat your pre-race meal at least two hours before race time.* Race day jitters may make your body slow to digest food. The pre-race meal should be high in carbs, low in fat, and about 500 calories. Try oatmeal, toast and juice for breakfast. If you are racing early in the morning, eat a really big dinner and a light breakfast, or you may not have 2 hours to digest. If you are still unsure about what to eat, ask your coach.
- 2.) Do not experiment with new foods or energy drinks on race day! Try the new stuff during the week, during practice.
- 3.) **STAY HYDRATED!** The coaches can't say this often enough. Drink lots of water the day before the race, and up to 2 hours prior to racing.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

**EACH athlete and parent** must read this Code of Conduct carefully, and keep a copy for review.

### **RULES TO DO:**

1. **DO** give 100% at practice every day;
2. **DO** inform the coach of any absences (e.g. doctor's appointment, college visit, standardized test);
3. **DO** follow the instructions of coaches and regatta chaperones during trips and at regattas;
4. **DO** check in with the return chaperone before leaving the bus when returning from regatta;
5. **DO** wear a seat belt in vehicles with seat belts, as a passenger for RC;
6. **DO** maintain a passing grade average in all classes;
7. **DO** maintain a healthy lifestyle;
8. **DO** maintain clean facilities.