

# **Radnor Girls Crew Club Handbook**



**2009/2010**

## **Welcome to the Wonderful World of Crew!**

For those of you who are veterans, you've been bitten by the bug and are hooked, you have our utmost respect – it takes a tremendous amount of discipline and energy to row six days a week. For those fresh faces in the crowd, you are about to begin a new, different, unpredictable and always exciting experience – one that can leave a lasting impact on your life.

What follows is a handbook with all you need to know to get you through the season. We hope we've answered any of the questions you may have. Please don't hesitate to contact any of the board members, coaches or captains should you have any questions or concerns.

Best of luck to our 2009/2010 Radnor Girls Crew Team  
See you on the river!

### **Mission**

The mission of the Radnor Girls Crew Club is to develop young student-athletes that are well-versed and prepared in the athletic arena and to develop strong character and life skills in our women. We strive to provide a highly competitive environment for our athletes to excel. We aim to create a rewarding experience for all athletes on the team, whatever their level may be.

It is important that our young women be successful in their futures. Our focus remains the overall development, safety, and well-being of our athletes. We accomplish this with a wide variety of teaching tools, parent resources, and an overall competitive atmosphere. Positive teamwork and sportsmanship are required for the success of not only our individual athletes but for the overall success of our team.

## Radnor Crew History

In the spring of 1996, two Radnor students expressed an interest in forming a crew team. With the help of Villanova University's Varsity Women's Crew Coach, Jack St. Clair, and the support of RHS staff, parents and students, a team was born.

We've come a long way since then. In just 13 years, we've built a competitive team comprising almost 60 rowers and now requiring "try-outs" for first-time rowers. Four Radnor boats qualified for Nationals last year, and the Freshman Eight placed 2<sup>nd</sup> overall (missing first place by only 0.6 seconds). In 2008, we moved to a brand new location, Whitemarsh Boat Club in Conshohocken.

Co-head coach Travis Shilling was a collegiate rower at Wisconsin and will be coaching the freshman boats this year. Co-head coach Megan Biging was a collegiate rower at USC, has placed in international regattas, and will be coaching the varsity boats this year.

## Who We Are

Radnor Crew is recognized as a club sport with the endorsement of Radnor High School. We are supported through our seasonal dues and are governed by a board comprised of parent volunteers. We have requested and receive financial support from the Radnor Township School Board that is set on a per rower basis. This only provides a small portion of our required funding, which is why we must charge dues.

**As a volunteer organization, the support and involvement of our parents is critical to the continued success of our club.** Club meetings are held once a month through the school year, usually scheduled on the 2nd Tuesday at 7pm in room 150 at Radnor High School. Please plan on attending these meetings and learning how your participation can make the club even more successful. Rowers are also invited to attend.

Our team races in boats with either eight or four seats (categorized as "sweep" rowing), in several racing categories -- Freshman, Novice, Junior Varsity and Varsity. Within those categories, we also row in a lightweight division. In addition, each boat has what is called a coxswain who sits at the back controlling the boat, as well as directing and motivating the rowers during both practice and races.

## What We Do

Most of our regattas occur during the spring season. Our spring races are 1,500 meters long and take place in different locations. Our first spring races are called the "Manny Flicks" and are held down by Boathouse Row on the Schuylkill River, as are the City Championships, Dr. White Regatta (freshman only) and a nationally recognized regatta called the "Stotesbury Cup Regatta" – the largest high school rowing event in the world. We are also often invited to invitational races in locations such as Delaware and New Jersey. Any fall races typically will involve our varsity and JV boats, and fewer boats usually participate in these races than in the spring races. However, the fall season is an important opportunity for rowers to hone their skills and prepare for the spring racing season.

## Who's Who in Radnor Crew

### 2009/2010 Board Members and Coaches

**President**

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**Co-Head Coach**

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**Fundraising Chair**

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**Hospitality Chair**

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**Communications Chair**

To be determined

**Nationals Chair**

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**Spiritwear Co-Chair**

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**Spiritwear Co-Chair**

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**Captains**

Sarah Hernandez '10  
Liz Bereznak '11

## **Making the Race Lineup**

The process of selecting a race lineup is not an exact science and should be thought of as a process that is ongoing throughout the season. Our general philosophy is that the athletes “self-select” the boats, which is to say that those who work hard, come to practice, and show initiative, a desire to improve, and an understanding of the team concept will not only win favor with the coaches but will show rapid improvement as well, thereby putting themselves in a position to get the choice boating assignments. Every coach is going to have a slightly different approach to making their race lineups, but the general criteria follow:

- **Rowing Ability:** This encompasses both technical ability and “boat moving” ability (i.e., how much of a contribution the rower has on the boat’s speed).
- **Erg Score:** The raw number generated on a timed ergometer test tells the coach a lot about a rower’s level of fitness, strength, power, and, perhaps most importantly, mental toughness. It’s not just what kind of number you generate, but how you get to that number. Consistency and focus are the keys to a good boat racer.
- **Attendance:** Rowers who make the commitment to being at practice every day are more likely to be boated than rowers who do not, regardless of talent.
- **Attitude:** Coaches are looking for enthusiastic, positive, cooperative and “coachable” athletes with a winning attitude and a competitive drive.

**The coaches have total discretion in selecting race lineups, free from interference from parents, board members and others.** If a rower has a concern about the lineups, she should discuss the concern directly with her coach (or with the head coach). Only if a rower cannot resolve her concern directly with a coach should parents contact the coach.

# Radnor Crew from A to Z

## Academic Eligibility

Same rules apply as to any other Radnor High School sport or activity.

## Attendance

***See the Athlete Expectation Contract, which must be signed by each rower at the beginning of each season. Every*** practice is important. Rowers are expected to attend each one. Two *unexcused* (defined as 'just didn't show up') absences and a rower will no longer be a member of the team. If a rower is not in school by 11:00 AM, she may not participate in practice. In order to compete in any regatta, rowers must participate in at least 4 of the 5 scheduled practices for that week. **Racing privileges and priority will go to those who make our training a priority. This means if a rower misses large chunks of time throughout the season, she will still be welcome on this team; however, her racing may be compromised.**

If a rower knows in advance that she cannot make it to practice or will be late, she should call or email a coach the night before or that day by 1 PM. Coaches will not wait to boat a rower who is late, nor will they rearrange to fill the rower's seat. At a minimum, the rower's boat mates for that day will remain on land and erg. Missed practices may result in the potential of losing your seat.

## Attitude

Rowers are expected to come to practice and races with a positive attitude about their team and their training. If something comes up that is bothering a rower for 48 hours or more, it is officially a **problem**. Rowers should see their coaches or captains in order to resolve the issue.

## Carpools and Safe Driving

Each rower is required to arrange her own transportation to the boathouse and regattas. Other rowers may offer to provide transportation and coordinate carpools. Student drivers may assist in transporting non-drivers down to the river and back to school or homes at the end of practice. Be courteous to your driver. As young adults, it is the drivers' responsibility to respect traffic laws and be sure they and their passengers arrive safely. Passengers have a responsibility to not distract their driver. Rowers will have more than enough time to get to and from practice within the speed limit. Showing up late is bad; showing up with a ticket is unacceptable. Passengers are also expected to pay for their share of gas, on a monthly basis. Call the night before if you won't need a ride to practice.

## Commitment

Rowers are encouraged to partake in other activities, but should not stretch themselves so thin that those other activities are detracting from the team. If a rower can already anticipate missing upwards of 5 practices due to other commitments, she should reconsider joining this team.

## **Communications**

Every parent and rower is encouraged to subscribe to the RGCC email distribution list, a link for which can be found on the RGCC web site at <http://www.radnorcrew.com>. **You may also subscribe by sending an email to [subscribe@radnorcrew.com](mailto:subscribe@radnorcrew.com).** By subscribing, you will not only receive important information regarding club activities, but you'll also receive race result updates.

## **Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Use**

Using any of these three items is detrimental to any athlete, illegal and will not be tolerated by your coaches and board members. Our policy for these infractions is the same as Radnor High School policy – not to mention the law.

## **Dues**

Dues for the fall season are \$500. Dues for the spring season are \$1,200. Dues pay for coaches' salaries, boathouse rental, the cost of training, entrance fees for races, insurance, purchase/rental/maintenance of equipment – boats, launches, oars, ergs – as well as all the other expenses of running and maintaining the team. A detailed treasurer's report is available upon request.

If a rower chooses to drop out of fall crew, a full refund will be provided up until the first Friday of practice, a 66% refund will be provided up until the second Friday of practice, and a 33% refund will be provided up until the third Friday of practice. Thereafter, we regret that we cannot provide any refund. Refund policies are subject to change.

If a rower chooses to drop out of spring crew, a full refund will be provided up until January 12, a 66% refund will be provided up until February 9, and a 33% refund will be provided up until March 2. Thereafter, we regret that we cannot provide any refund. A full refund will be made to rowers who are not selected to remain on the team during tryouts. Refund policies are subject to change.

**New freshmen team members' dues are payable immediately after notification of team selections. You will receive an email with payment instructions.**

Membership in RGCC entails certain other costs that rowers and parents should be aware of. Freshman will need to purchase an RGCC uniform and freshman t-shirt, and all rowers are expected to maintain their uniforms in proper condition. Many rowers wish to purchase other RGCC garments, such as a rower's jacket, sweatpants, etc., but these garments are optional. Rowers pay a nominal charge (about \$20) for a spring break dinner. Parents and guests (but not rowers) are required to pay for their attendance at the spring banquet. Rowers advancing to Nationals will be required to pay their pro rata share for lodging, meals and transportation, which varies depending on the destination. All parents will be asked to share in hospitality duties, which includes a financial contribution toward hospitality supplies [see Hospitality Tent].

## **Forms**

**It is imperative that all required forms be completed by all new and returning team members.**

These forms should be forwarded along with the dues payment to the secretary. A forms packet can be downloaded from the RGCC website ([www.radnorcrew.com](http://www.radnorcrew.com)). Rowers may not participate in practice until all forms and dues are collected.

## **Fundraising**

Because we are a parent run organization and receive only limited financial support from the school district, fundraising and volunteer efforts will be critical from time to time to ensure the continued financial stability and success of the club. Some of the efforts in the past have included an erg-a-thon, a 5K Run, T-shirt sales at a major regatta, parking permit auctions, and oar and boat naming opportunities. Please support these efforts.

## **Hospitality Tent**

For all of the races, we provide snacks and lunch for parents and rowers under a tent owned by the Radnor Girls Crew Club. Every family is part of the Hospitality Committee and will be EXPECTED to provide food and to set-up or dismantle the tent and equipment on a rotating basis. More information and schedule will be distributed by the Hospitality Chairperson.

## **Parents**

**The support of parents is critical to the success of the RGCC.** There are many opportunities to help. Please attend the monthly parent meetings at the Radnor High School to learn more and respond to appeals for assistance. And come out to the regattas!

## **Parking**

For the Manny Flicks down at Boathouse Row, you may be able to purchase a parking permit to be allowed into the parking area on the river, depending on that year's current parking policy enacted by the City of Philadelphia. A limited number of parking permits may be available through a fundraising event. There will be a police roadblock on Kelly Drive that will stop your car unless you have a pass. Otherwise, you will have to park up on the hill along Fairmount Park and walk down to the race area. **Note that parking permits will not be good for the Philadelphia City Champs or Stotesbury Regatta – they're only valid for the five Manny Flick races.**

## **Phone Chain and E-mail**

Our primary form of communication with team members will be via e-mail and the RGCC website. It is very important that you give us your correct and up-to-date e-mail address – both rowers and parents. With so many team members, this is the most efficient way to get information to our rowers. **To be added to the RGCC email distribution list, send your name and email address to [subscribe@radnorcrew.com](mailto:subscribe@radnorcrew.com).**

The Captains or class parents will also be putting together a phone chain involving all team members. Team members are required to make their calls once they are called. This will be our secondary form of communication and will assist in better team communications.

## **Practice Schedule**

Winter practice will take place Tuesdays through Saturdays most of January and February. The freshmen and novice try-outs will occur Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at Radnor High School. Once the new members are named, they will join the returning rowers down at the Whitemarsh Boat Club in Conshohocken. Please see the Season Calendar. All members not participating in a winter sport are expected to attend winter training regularly. Members participating in a winter sport are expected to attend soon after the completion of their season.

Fall practices are generally held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 3-5 PM, with optional "Sunday Swings" on, of course, Sundays. Winter practices will take place Tuesdays through Saturdays most of January and February. Spring practices are generally held every Tuesday through Friday from 3:00 to 5:30 PM. Mondays are added as practice days following Manny Flick #5 (around mid-April). Weekend practices occur on Saturdays (11:00-1:30). RGCC does not observe spring break. Spring break falls in the heart of racing season, and we cannot afford the time off. Practices over spring break will occur twice daily at 8:00-11:00 and 3:00-5:30. All practice times are subject to change by the coaches. Please refer to the RGCC calendar on the website

The typical practice starts with and 10-15 minute warm-up and stretching. The athletes then carry their boats down and are on the water by 3:30/3:45. The on-the-water segment of practice lasts between 75 and 90 minutes, with time being devoted to technical drilling and fitness training. As the season progresses, more and more time is committed to race training as opposed to technical rowing. The athletes can plan on being out the door by 5:30. However, please note that **practice is not over until the coach explicitly dismisses the crew!** Always allow for 15 minutes delays when coming off the water.

**What to bring:** Rowers should come prepared with workout clothing and running shoes to every practice. Workout clothing should be comfortable but not too baggy. Baggy clothes, especially baggy shorts, interfere with the boat's moving parts and can hinder the rower's movements. Coxswains should come prepared for the cold, especially late in the fall season and early in the spring season. All athletes should bring a non-disposable water bottle.

Running shoes are athletic shoes suitable for running and with appropriate foot support. Not basketball shoes, not sandals, not walking shoes.

The well-equipped rower always has a "bag of joy" waiting for her back at the boathouse in the event that they are drenched at some point during practice. (The ways that this can happen are too numerous to list.) The bag should contain a complete change of dry clothes.

Racing uniforms may not be worn at any time during practice. **The racing unisuit and team shirt are race day items only.**

## Race Day

The race day typically starts very early in the morning. Athletes are expected to be on time, with Vince Lombardi's maxim in mind that, "If you're five minutes early, you're ten minutes late." Arriving at the race course wearing their uniforms, the rowers are expected to immediately set about the business of preparing the boats to race. The process of rigging the boats is a labor-intensive job and requires the participation of every member of the team. Athletes who fail to involve themselves in this work are showing disrespect for their teammates and the team and will, consequently, be pulled out of their races if they do not respond to their coaches' requests to help. (The coaches should not have to ask, but understand that some athletes need a little prodding to break the inertia.)

The races typically commence about two hours after the team arrives at the course. Every athlete is expected to know when they are racing and what time their boat meeting/warm-up is. This is important because the coaches have a lot to worry about on race day, and keeping track of wandering athletes should not be part of that list. After their warm-up and last minute strategy review, the rowers hit the water. While on the water (and, in fact, at all times while at a regatta) the rowers and coxswains are expected to exhibit exemplary sportsmanship. They are expected to win with pride and lose with dignity. Win or lose, the crews congratulate their competitors on a well-fought contest and then row back to the dock, heads high, professionals to the last.

Crew is a team sport. Between races, athletes are expected to support their teammates by gathering at the water's edge to cheer them on as they come by.

With the races over, everyone must again help de-rig the boats and load the boat trailer. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken. **No one may leave the course until the last boat is strapped and the coaches have officially dismissed the team.**

**What to bring:** As mentioned previously, athletes must arrive at the race venue looking like they belong on the team. Rowers should all bring a water bottle with them. Food and water will be provided by the parent committee at the course, but having your own water bottle is a very good idea. We highly recommend that you come prepared for different kinds of weather. A well-packed regatta kit would, therefore, include sun block, a hat, shorts, sweatpants, a rain jacket, and a sweater or sweatshirt. Snacks are a good idea when traveling to distant regattas. We also recommend bringing something to do, as there is typically a lot of down time at regattas. Those wishing to listen to music should bring headphones as we prefer not to have publicly broadcast music at the regatta. **The most important thing you can bring is a great deal of enthusiasm!**

## Regattas

The regattas are the events toward which we direct our every action at practice. All of the work that we do on the water, on the erg, and the running trail is designed to make our crew as successful as they can possibly be on race day. This involves an incredible amount of work. For every minute that an athlete spends on the race course, she has logged over 10 hours of practice time. Every stroke that she takes in competition is backed by tens of thousands of strokes taken in practice. Consequently, we take the regattas very seriously and expect the athletes to do everything in their power to be as well prepared as they can be. If they do so, then regattas can be a lot of fun – exciting, exhilarating, and memorable for all the right reasons. They represent the athletes' best chance to test their abilities, to push their limits, and come together as a team in a way that only a rower could ever truly comprehend.

Regattas often last all day and, while each boat has their prescribed time to row, team members are expected to stay and support their teammates. Once we get to the Stotesbury Cup Regatta, the events can run two days (should boats advance). **Please note that once girls are launched, race times are out of our control.** While the officials do try to adhere to schedules, frequently race times are delayed. Be prepared for those delays and unpredictable circumstances.

Rigging and de-rigging boats are race day standards and team responsibilities. Rowers are expected to take part in both of these activities. Skipping these responsibilities will affect rowers' racing opportunities. Prior arrangements to leave may be made with the coaches through your parents, but should not be abused.

**IMPORTANT: All team members should report to the trailer two hours before the FIRST Radnor girls' race of the day. This should be confirmed with the coach prior to the regatta.**

### **Snacks**

Rowing requires energy. While beverages and snacks will be provided at the hospitality tent, it is suggested that team members bring their own filled Nalgeen water bottles to each race and practice. Disposable bottles are no longer allowed.

### **Spring Break Mini Training Camp**

During spring break, RGCC will practice twice a day Monday through Friday. There will be a team bonding dinner one evening. Location and details will be provided prior to the dinner. All rowers are expected to attend all spring break practices.

### **Swim Tests**

It is mandatory for all **NEW** rowers to take the swim test. Testing will be conducted at the high school pool. We will advise you of the date. All team members should bring a long-sleeved shirt and pants to be worn in the pool. **New rowers must take and pass this test to be on the team.**

### **Uniforms**

All girls will be required to purchase Radnor Crew Club uni-suit and long-sleeve shirt. Freshman/novice rowers will be required to purchase a t-shirt and shorts. Radnor Girls Crew Club jackets and warm-up pants are optional. All uniforms will become the property of each rower.

### **Website**

Please log on to **[www.radnorcrew.com](http://www.radnorcrew.com)** to get the latest information and updates, and remember to subscribe to the RGCC distribution list (see Communications).

## **Directions to RGCC Events and Facilities**

### **To Whitemarsh Boat Club:**

Take the Blue Route (476) North and exit at Route 23 Conshohocken. Go straight, passing the Marriott on your right. Cross over the bridge to the first light at the end of the bridge. Turn right. Take your first right and cross over the railroad tracks. Turn left and take the industrial road down about a mile and a half. The Whitemarsh Boat Club is a red brick building on your right.

### **To Philadelphia/Boathouse Row:**

Take the Schuylkill Expressway to the Kelly Drive/Lincoln Drive exit (exit is on left one mile after the Belmont Avenue exit). Cross bridge and stay left, following signs for Kelly Drive. Follow Kelly Drive approximately three miles to Strawberry Mansion Bridge/Canoe Club. On right is boat trailer parking lot, but general parking (no permit required) is up Strawberry Hill Drive (see Parent Race Day Handbook for more information).

# Crew Terminology

(Courtesy of Wikipedia)

## The Athletes

**Ambidextrous:** A rower who can row both on the starboard and port sides of the boat.

**Bow (or bow seat):** The rower closest to the front or bow of a multi-person shell. In coxless boats, often the person who keeps an eye on the water behind him to avoid accidents.

**Coxswain:** The oar-less crew-member, usually included, who is responsible for steering and race strategy. The coxswain either sits in the stern or lies in the bows of the boat.

**Engine room:** The middle rowers in the boat. In an 8-person shell, these are generally seats 5, 6, and 3 and 4 to a lesser degree. They are generally the biggest and strongest rowers.

**Gimp seat:** Seat 3 in an 8-person boat, often regarded as having the least responsibility.

**Heavyweight:** A rower who weighs more than the restrictions for lightweight rowing. Often referred to as Open weight.

**Lightweight:** A rower whose weight allows him or her to be eligible to compete in lightweight rowing events.

**Novices:** Rowers who are rowing for the first season, or (in the UK) a rower who has not won a regatta.

**Port:** A sweep rower who rows with the oar on the port or left side of the boat.

**Sculler:** A rower who rows with two oars, one in each hand.

**Seat number:** A rower's position in the boat counting up from the bow. In an eight, the person closest to the bow of the boat is "bow," the next is 2, followed by 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and finally 8 or "stroke." In certain countries the seats are numbered the opposite way, from stroke up to bow.

**Starboard:** A sweep rower who rows with the oar on the starboard or right side of the boat.

**Stroke (Seat):** The rower closest to the stern of the boat, responsible for the stroke rate and rhythm.

**Sweep:** A rower who rows with one oar (in both hands).

## The Boats (sometimes called "shells")

In a sweep boat, each rower has one oar. (In a sculling boat, each rower has two oars, one on each side of the boat. RGCC only races sweep boats.)

**Eight (8+):** A shell with 8 rowers. Along with the single scull, it is traditionally considered to be the blue ribbon event. Always with coxswain because of the size, weight and speed of the boat - bow loader eights exist but are banned from most competitions for safety reasons.

**Four (4-) or (4+):** A shell with 4 rowers. Coxless fours (4-) are often referred to as straight fours, and are commonly used by lightweight and elite crews and are raced at the Olympics. In club and school rowing, one more frequently sees a coxed four (4+) which is easier to row, and has a coxswain to steer.

**Pair (2-) or (2+):** A shell with 2 rowers. The Coxless pair (2-), often called a straight pair, is a demanding but satisfying boat to master. Coxed pairs (2+) are rarely rowed by most club and school programs. It is no longer an Olympic class event, but it continues to be rowed at the World Rowing Championships. The bow loader coxed pair was nicknamed "the coffin" due to the difficulty for the cox to escape in the event of a capsized.

## Equipment / Parts of the boat

The term "Rigging" is used to describe how the boat is outfitted, including all of the apparatuses (oars, outriggers, oarlocks, sliding seats, etc.) attached to a boat that allow the rower to propel the boat through the water. It is derived from an old Anglo-Saxon term wrigan or wrihan, which means "to clothe." It literally means to outfit or clothe a boat.

"Rigging" is also used to describe the configuration of the boat and settings of the apparatuses. The following terms are often associated with a boat's rigging, along with other often used terms for equipment used in rowing.

**Backstay:** A brace which is part of the rigger of sweep rowing boats, which extends toward the bow from the top of the pin.

**Backstop:** The stop mechanism on the seat slides which prevents the rower's seat from falling off the sliding tracks at the back end (towards the boat's bow) of the slide tracks. As a command, it instructs the crew to adopt this position. Also, in the UK, the sliding seat position closest to the boat's stern. As a command, it instructs the crew to adopt this position. (The US calls this seat position the "back end").

**Blade:** The spoon or hatchet shaped end of the oar or sweep.

**Bowloader / Bowcox / Bow-steered:** When a coxswain is placed in a seat partially enclosed in the bow of the shell.

**Bow:** The front section of a shell.

**Bow ball:** An essential small, soft ball no smaller than 4 cm diameter securely attached to a rowing or sculling boat's bow. Primarily intended for safety but also useful in deciding which boat crossed the finish line first in very close races.

**Bow number:** A card holding the number assigned to the boat for a race.

**Canvas:** The deck of the bow and stern of the boat, which were traditionally made from canvas

**Cleaver blade (also Hatchet blade):** Modern oar blades that have a more rectangular hatchet-shape.

**Collar / Button:** A wide plastic ring placed around the sleeve of an oar. The button stops the oar from slipping through the oarlock.

**Cox box:** Portable voice amplifier; may also optionally incorporate digital readouts displaying stroke rate, boat speed and times.

**Coxmate:** A portable amplification device, similar to a cox box, incorporating a digital readout. Higher models may also have a built in radio and speed sensor.

**Ergometer (also Ergo or Erg):** An indoor rowing machine.

**Footchock (also Footplate):** An alternate name for the cross bracing which allows a rower to secure his/her feet.

**Footplate (also Footchock):** The piece of the boat to which the rower's feet are attached, either by tying their actual shoes (sneakers) in, or (more often) by putting their feet into a permanently-attached pair of sneakers.

**Foot stretcher:** An adjustable footplate which allows the rower to easily adjust his or her physical position relative to the slide and the oarlock. The footplate can be moved (or "stretched") either closer to or farther away from the slide frontstops.

**Footstop:** The shoe assembly in a shell into which each rower laces his or her feet.

**Frontstop:** The stop mechanism on the seat slides which prevents the rower's seat from falling off the sliding tracks at the front end (towards the boat's stern) of the slide tracks. Also, in the UK, the sliding seat position closest to the boat's stern. As a command, it instructs the crew to adopt this position. (The US calls this seat position the "front end")

**Gunwales (also Saxboard):** (Pronounced: gunnels) The top rail of the shell

**Handle:** The part of the oar that the rowers hold and pull with during the stroke.

**Hatchet blade (also Cleaver blade):** Modern oar blades that have a more rectangular hatchet-shape.

**Hull:** The actual body of the shell.

**Inboard:** The length of the oar shaft measured from the button to the handle.

**Keelson:** A structure timber resembling the keel, but on the inside of the shell.

**Launch:** A motorboat used by rowing instructors, coaches or umpires.

**Leather / Sleeve:** A thick piece of leather (plastic) around the oar to keep the oar lock from wearing out the wood.

**Lines:** The ropes held by the coxswain to control the rudder.

**Loom:** The part of the oar between the blade and the handle.

**Macon Blade (also Spoon blade and Tulip):** Traditional U-shaped oar blade.

**Oar:** A slender pole which is attached to a boat at the Oarlock. One end of the pole, called the "handle," is gripped by the rower. The other end has a "blade," which is placed in the water during the propulsive phase of the stroke. The blade portion of the oar is similar to a razor blade or a piece of paper: Essentially two-dimensional, the third dimension is very thin, although it should be noted that there is a very important element to the third dimension of the blade, namely that it is curved into a sort of hydrofoil, which helps provide much of the thrust.

**Oarlock:** The rectangular lock at the end of the rigger which physically attaches the oar to the boat. The oarlock also allows the rower to rotate the oar blade between the "square" and "feather" positions.

**Outboard:** The length of the oar shaft measured from the button to the tip of the blade.

**Outrigger:** See Rigger

**Pin:** The vertical metal rod on which the rowlock rotates.

**Pogies / Poagies:** A type of mitten with holes on each end, which allow the rower to grip the oar with bare hands while also warming the hands, used frequently by rowers in colder climates.

**Port / Portside:** The left side of the boat when facing forward.

**Ribs:** The name given to that part of the boat to which the skin of the hull is attached. They are typically made of wood, aluminum or composite materials and provide structural integrity. The riggers bolt to the ribs.

**Rigger:** A "Rigger" is the rowing slang name for an Outrigger. It is a projection from the side (gunwale) of a racing shell. The oarlock is attached to the far end of the rigger away from the boat. The rigger allows the racing shell to be narrow thereby decreasing drag, while at the same time placing the oarlock at a point that optimize leverage of the oar. There are several styles of riggers, but they are most often a triangle frame, with two points attached to the boat, and the third point being where the oarlock is placed. Rigging is also used to describe whether a boat is stroked by a port or starboard rower (i.e., port-rigged, starboard-rigged). With sweep rowing, riggers typically alternate sides, though it is not uncommon to see two adjacent seats rigged on the same side of the boat.

**Roller:** The wheels upon which the seat slide travels along its track.

**Rudder:** Adjacent to the skeg and used by the coxswain (or in some coxless boats, by a rower using a "toe") to steer the boat via attached cables. Extra-large rudders are used on narrower and/or bendier rivers.

**Saxboard (also Gunwales):** The sides and top edge of a boat, which the riggers attach - see also Gunwales

**Scull:** (a) An oar made to be used in a sculling boat where each rower has two oars, one per hand; or (b) a boat (shell) that is propelled using sculling oars, e.g., a "single scull," is a one-person boat where the rower has two oars.

**Seat:** Molded seat mounted on wheels, single action or double action. Single action is fixed bearing wheel; double action is wheel on axle that rolls on track and rolls on horns of seat. A secondary meaning of location in the shell, the bow seat is one, and is numbered upward to the stroke seat (8, in an 8-man shell). Thirdly, can mean a competitive advantage in a race, to lead a competitor by a seat is to be in front of them by the length of a single rower's section of a shell.

**Seating:** Seating positions in a racing shell are generally numbered from the bow to the stern in English-speaking countries, unlike many non-English-speaking countries which count from the Stroke forward. Generally, the forwardmost rower is called the "Bow" and the aftmost rower the "Stroke," regardless of the number of rowers in the boat, with all other seats simply being numbered. So, for instance, the crew of an eight (with coxswain) would number off from the bow: "Bow," "Two," "Three," "Four", "Five," "Six," "Seven," "Stroke," whereas a four (with or without coxswain) or a quad would number off: "Bow," "Two," "Three," "Stroke."

**Shell:** The boat used for rowing.

**Shoulder (also Knee):** Load bearing supports that mount the rigger and attach to keel of boat.

**Skeg (also Fin):** Thin piece of flat metal or plastic that helps stabilize the shell in the water.

**Slides (also Tracks):** Hollow rails upon which a rower or sculler's sliding seat will roll. Older shells might be convex rails with double wheels.

**Slings:** Folding, portable temporary boat holders. Two are required to hold a boat.

**Smoothie:** A blade design in which the face of the oar blade is smooth, without the traditional central spine.

**Speed coach:** A device mounted on the keel of some high-performance shells that determines the boat's speed based on the speed of a small propeller and transmits this information to the cox box.

**Spoon blade (also Macon blade):** Traditional U-shaped oar blade.

**Starboard (also Starboard side):** The right side of the boat when facing forward.

**Starboard rigged:** A boat where the stroke rower is a starboard rower.

**Starting gate:** A structure at the starting line of the race. The shell is "backed" into the starting gate. Once in the gates a mechanism, or person lying on the starting gate, holds the stern of the shell.

**Stern:** The rear section of a shell.

**Stretcher:** A slang abbreviation for Foot Stretchers.

**Swivel:** Term for the rowlock/oarlock. Often referred as gate due to the securing bar/gate at its top.

**Toe:** In some boats without a coxswain, a rower may be able to control the rudder and steer the boat by changing the direction his foot points. This is called "toeing a boat," and the mechanism is called a "toe."

**Top-nut:** The nut which screws onto the top of the pin holding the Oarlock in place.

**Tracks:** See Slides

**Tulip (also Macon blade):** Traditional U-shaped oar blade.

## **The Commands**

**"(#) Fall in/out":** These commands tell the rower(s) either to stop rowing or to start rowing with everyone else. (#) indicates the number of rower(s) who should start or stop – e.g., "Bow pair fall-out, stern pair fall-in in two."

**"Ahead" or "Look Ahead":** Command shouted by a crew about to be overtaken by another crew, telling the overtaking crew of their presence.

**"(#) Hit it" or "(#) row on":** Tells the rowers to row until told to stop – e.g., "Two, hit it."

**"Back it":** To have the rowers place their blades at the release position, squared, and push the oar handle towards the stern of the boat. This motion causes the shell to move backwards.

**"Blades Down" or "Drop":** Used to tell the rowers to place their blades back on the water after performing an easy-all.

**"Blades in (side)":** Tell the rowers on one side to pull their blades in, in order to prevent hitting an object or another boat in the water, or to let another crew pass on a narrow river.

**"Cant it upriver/downriver":** While carrying the shell, the athletes are commanded to hold the shell in a diagonal position, the high side as stated.

**"Check it/her down":** Square the oars in the water to stop the boat.

**"Count Down" (or "number off"):** Tells the crew to call out their seat number, starting at the bow, when ready to row.

**"Down on port/starboard":** Means that the boat is leaning to one side or the other. Rowers on the side that is down must raise their hands, and the other side must lower their hands.

**"Easy" (or "ease up"):** To stop rowing hard.

**"Even it out" (or "even pressure"):** This command tells the rowers to pull with even pressure on both sides. This is the complement to ease-up.

**"Firm up":** Tells the rowers to apply more pressure as needed.

**"Give her ten" (or "power ten"):** Commands the crew to row 10 strokes of special effort. It is frequently given when a crew is attempting to pass another boat.

**"Gunnel!":** A command by the coxswain, where the rowers all hit the gunnel (sides) of the boat with their oar handles.

Used in set exercises occasionally.

**"Hands in":** Tells the rowers to grab the ribs on the inside of the boat so that the boat can be rolled from heads. The coach or cox uses this command when the crew is putting the shell in the water.

**"Hands on":** Tells the rowers to grab the boat next to their seats, so that the boat can be moved.

**"Hands out" (or "sit ready to shove"):** Tells the rowers to grab the dock in preparation for shoving off.

**"Hard on port/starboard" (or "port/starboard pressure"):** The rowers on that side of the boat must row harder (and the opposite side must row slightly easier) in order to facilitate a sharper turn.

**"Heads" or "Heads Up":** Off the water, a shout to alert others to watch out for a boat being carried.

**"Heads, ready, up":** Tells the rowers to press the boat above their heads.

**"Hold it/her up":** Stop the boat.

**"Hold it/her hard":** Emergency stop.

**"Hold water":** Emergency stop. Also used after the command "weigh enough," it instructs the rowers to square their blades in the water to stop the boat.

**"In 2...":** Most water commands are appended prior to the command to take place after two strokes. For example "In 2, Power 10" or "In 2, Weigh-enough."

**"Inside Grip":** A command used when lifting the boat. Grab the boat so that you can lift it over your head. Grab only the gunwale or hull structure - do not lift by the footstop assembly.

**"Lay Hold" (or "hands on"):** Command given telling the athletes to go to their stations and grab a hold of the boat.

**"Let it/her run":** To stop rowing after a given piece of on the water rowing length, but to put the handles of the oars either to the gunwales or out in front of the rower, in such a manner that the oar paddles are parallel to the water yet not touching it. This allows the boat to glide for a distance leaving no paddle wake in the water. Similar, but not exactly the same is the command "Gunnel", where rowers push the oars until the handle touches the boat's gunwale.

**"Paddle":** Tells a crew to row with just enough pressure to move the boat. The paddle command is also used to bring a crew down from full pressure at the end of a workout piece or race.

**"Pick it / Picking":** A rapid stroke where rowers use only their arms and use minimal pressure. An effective and impressive way to turn a boat when done right.

**"Power 10" or "10 firm"**

The command to take 10 strokes at more than full pressure. Used for passing and gaining water in a race. Sometimes "Power 5", "Power 20", or "Power 30."

**"AMF 10":** Ten extremely hard strokes after the yelling of the phrase AMF 10.

**"Ready all, Row":** Begin rowing.

**"Roll it":** Tells the crew to flip the boat over, in unison, from above their heads.

**"Set it up":** Reminds the rowers to keep the boat on keel.

**"Set ready":** Commands the crew to move to the catch blades buried, and be ready to start the race.

**"Settle":** A command and a part of the race. This tells the rowers that the crew is going to bring the stroke rate down for the body of the race, but still maintain the pressure. This usually occurs in the middle of the race.

**"Ship Oars":** Act of removing the oars from the oar locks and allowing them to float alongside the boat.

**"Shoulders, ready, up":** Tells the crew to lift the boat from any position below their shoulders, up to shoulder height. Can be reversed to lower the boat from heads to shoulders, i.e., "Shoulders, ready, down!" This is the best position for carrying a shell.

**"Sit in":** Tells the crew to get into the boat.

**"Scull":** A command used if the stern is held by a stake boat. "Port scull" usually means Two seat takes Bow's oar in front of him/her and rows lightly with it. Likewise, "Starboard scull" means Three seat takes Two seat's oar and does the same.

This is easier than having one seat take a stroke since it can move the boat in a more parallel direction.

**"Swing it":** A command used when carrying a boat to start turning either bow or stern.

**"Take the run off":** To stop rowing and hold the blades at a 45 degree angle in the water to slow the boat down.

**"Touch it / Touching":** A stroke where rowers use only their arms and back. Used mostly for warm-up or to turn a boat.

**"One foot up & out":** The command for exiting a team boat.

**"On the square":** To row without feathering the blades on the recovery.

**"Waist, ready, up":** Tells the crew to lift the shell to their waist.

**"Watch your blades (side)":** Tells one side to look out at their blades, and take action to prevent them possibly hitting something.

**"Weigh enough" (or "Wain... 'nuff", or "Way enough"):** The command to stop whatever the rower is doing, whether it be walking with the boat overhead or rowing.

## The Stroke

**Air stroke:** To take a stroke without the blade having been placed in the water, resulting in a complete lack of power.

**Backsplash:** This term is in reference to the water thrown back toward the bow direction by the blade as it enters the water. Less is best. This indicates that the blade has been properly planted before the rower initiates the drive.

**Backwater:** To propel the shell backwards.

**Body Angle:** Amount of forward lean of rower's body from hips at the catch.

**Bury the blade:** Submerge the blade totally in the water.

**Catch:** The part of the stroke at which the oar blade enters the water and the drive begins. Rowers conceptualize the oar blade as 'catching' or grabbing hold of the water.

**Catch point:** Where the blade enters the water.

**Check:** The amount of interruption of the forward movement—usually occurs at the catch and sometimes at the release.

**Cover:** The distance between one set of puddles and the next set of puddles.

**Crab:** A rowing error where the rower is unable to timely remove or release the oar blade from the water and the oar blade acts as a brake on the boat until it is removed from the water. This results in slowing the boat down. A severe crab can even eject a rower out of the shell or make the boat capsize (unlikely except in small boats). Occasionally, in a severe crab, the oar handle will knock the rower flat and end up behind him/her, in which case it is referred to as an 'over-the-head crab.'

**Drive:** The propulsive portion of the stroke from the time the oar blade enters the water ("catch") until it is removed from the water ("release").

**Feather:** To turn the oar so that its blade is parallel with the water (opposite of square).

**Finish:** That portion of the pull-through just as the oar is taken from the water.

**Hands away:** At the close of the drive phase, the hands move away from the body.

**Hanging at the catch:** The blade is hesitating at the catch point, before entering the water.

**Hot seating:** When two crews share the same shell, during a regatta, sometimes it is necessary for the crews to switch at the finish line without taking the boat from the water.

**Inside hand:** The oarsmen's hand nearest the oar lock. This is the feathering hand.

**Jumping the slide:** A problem where the seat becomes derailed from the track while rowing.

**Keel:** The balance of the boat. Good keel means that the stability of the boat is good. "keep keel" is a command often heard from the coxswain when the boat starts to sway.

**Lay-back:** What the rowers have when they sit with their legs flat and lean towards the bow of the boat with their body.

**Leg Drive:** Power applied to the stroke, at the catch, by the force of driving the legs down. Often heard being yelled from the coach boat.

**Missing water:** A technical fault where the rower begins the drive before the catch is complete.

**Outside hand:** The hand of a rower that is placed on the end of the oar handle.

**Over reach:** Fault done by an oarsman when he comes to his full reach forward and then attempts to obtain even greater length by releasing his grasp on the handle with his outside hand or by bringing his outside shoulder further forward.

**Pause paddling:** Rowing with a pause between each stroke. The coxswain or rower giving commands will indicate where in the stroke this pause should be taken.

**Pitch:** The angle between a "squared" blade and a line perpendicular to the water's surface.

**Puddles:** Disturbances made by an oar blade pulled through the water. The farther the puddles are pushed past the stern of the boat before each catch, the more "run" the boat is getting.

**Pull through:** The portion of the stroke from the catch to the finish (when the oar is in the water). This is the propulsive part of the stroke.

**Rating (also Stroke rate):** The number of strokes executed per minute by a crew.

**Ratio:** The relationship between the time taken during the propulsive and recovery phases of a rowing or sculling action.

**Recovery:** The non-work phase of the stroke where the rower returns the oar from the release to the catch.

**Release:** At the end of the drive portion of the stroke. It is when the oar blade(s) is removed (or released) from the water.

**Run:** Distance a shell travels during each stroke.

**Rushing:** Term for when rowers move too quickly along their tracks into the catch. The boat will lose the feeling that it is gliding or "running out."

**Set:** The balance of the boat. Affected by handle heights, rowers leaning, and timing, all of which affect the boat's balance, after which the coxswain tells rowers to "set the boat".

**Shooting your slide:** Term used for when an oarsman's seat moves toward the bow faster than his shoulders.

**Skying:** Term used to describe a blade that is too high off the surface of the water during the recovery. The rower's hands are too low causing an upset to the balance of the boat (the "set").

**Spacing:** Distance between bowman's puddle on one stroke and the point at which the No. 7 rower catches water on the next stroke.

**Split time (split):** Amount of time it takes to row 500 meters. Displayed on all ergs and on cox boxes installed on boats with speed coaches (see above).

**Square:** To turn the oar so that its blade is perpendicular to the water (opposite of feather).

**Stroke:** (a) One complete cycle through the process above; or (b) the rower in the stern of a multi-person shell, whose timing is followed by the other rowers.

**Stroke rate (also Rating):** The number of strokes executed per minute by a crew.

**Super human 20:** A crew's 20 strongest strokes, which usually occur in the middle of a race.

**Swing:** A feeling in the boat when the rowers are driving and finishing their strokes strongly and getting good layback.

**Three-quarter / Half / Quarter slide:** Shortened strokes, often used during the start of a race or in a warm-up.

**Walking:** When passing a boat, the coxswain announces each seat as it is passed.

**Washing out:** When an oar blade comes out of the water during drive and creates surface wash that causes the shell to lose power and become unsteady.

## The Race

**Start:** In head to head races, the start is one of the most important parts of the race. In head races, where boats do not race next to each other, there is a running start, where rowing begins before the starting line and rowers are already at full speed when they cross the start. In sprints (head-to-head), the start consists of the following sections:

1. **Actual start:** This is generally five or six partial strokes done at a high rate and in a certain pattern, i.e., three-quarter length stroke (sometimes called three-quarter slide), followed by half, half, three-quarters, three-quarters, and then a full length stroke. The goal is to get the rowers off to a cohesive start and quickly build momentum.
2. **High Ten:** A set of strokes done at a high cadence immediately after the start. Not to be confused with "Power Ten," the high ten is ten strokes at a high rating to finish building speed. Some crews may pull 15 or 20 high strokes to build even more speed.
3. **Settle:** Immediately after the rowers complete their high cadence strokes, the stroke tempo is lowered and the stroke lengthened to the rating to be used throughout the body of the race. Often accompanied by a Power 10 or 20. Coxswains may call a "Ten to Settle" or "Ten to Glide" to drop the cadence more gradually.

**Body:** The body of the race is carried out at a consistent rating, with power tens called as the coxswain deems necessary.

**Repechage:** The "second chance" race given to those crews which fail to qualify for the finals from an opening heat. "Rep" qualifiers move onto semi-finals or finals depending on the number of entries. Used in international racing.

**Sprint:** The last 500 meters of most races are generally at a much higher rating than the rest of the race, as crews pull to exhaustion.

**Flutter/Shunt:** In head-to-head races, the coxswain may decide to call a flutter, which is essentially the six-stroke start put into the race close to the end. The flutter may push one boat which is trailing another a few seats ahead, but is extremely demanding on a crew. In many cases, it is used as a desperation move when all other options have been exhausted.

**Head race:** A long race in which rowers race a twisting course of about three miles. A race for time. The start is staggered. Usually in the fall months.

## Miscellaneous

**Egg beater:** A race where the crews are drawn randomly from a hat, so that boats are made up of members from different teams and often the lineups include coxswains as rowers and vice versa. Also known as scratch race.

**Masters (or Veteran):** Rowers 27 (31 - UK) years of age or greater.

**Open water race:** Competition on unsheltered water exposed to current, tide, wind and requiring navigation skills as well as strength, endurance, and technique. Generally uses a mass start and includes a mix of human-powered boats. Typical race distances are 6 to 26 miles.

**Pot:** A tankard awarded as a prize to each member of a winning crew.

**Scratch crew:** A crew which has not rowed with each other before.

**Seat race:** A method to compare two rowers in fours or eights. Two boats race against each other once. One rower from each boat switch positions, and the two boats race again. Relative performance in the two races is used to compare the abilities of the two rowers.