



Williamsburg Boat Club New Rowers' Handbook



The Williamsburg Boat Club (WBC) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. The goal of the rowing program is to develop rowing skills, encourage teamwork, and have fun. Rowing provides the opportunity to learn sportsmanship, self-discipline, and team participation, while training and competing with peers.

The WBC student rowing program gives all Williamsburg area middle and high school students an opportunity to row in competition against teams from other public and private schools and clubs. The student rowing program has two seasons, fall and spring. Winter workouts are offered, as well as various summer programs.

WBC does not receive funds from James City County, Williamsburg, York County or any school system. All of the expenses involved for the team as a whole and for each individual rower must be paid for by the crew members. Due to the nature of the sport, the majority of funds collected are used to provide the team with a competent coaching staff and safe, effective equipment. A smaller portion of dues go to the operating costs of insurance, regatta entry fees, boat storage, and administrative expenses.

Club equipment, including boats, oars, launches (plus motors and gasoline), cox boxes, the boat trailer, etc., must be kept in good working order to ensure integrity of performance and safety for the rowers.

Coaches are instrumental in providing an atmosphere that is safe and conducive to the development of a competitive team. The coaches run fall and spring season practices Monday through Friday and attend the regattas which are held on Saturdays or Sundays and take a full day to complete.

Fall season: August to November Spring season: March to June

In the winter, rowers are invited to coordinated fitness training practices for an additional fee.

In the summer, rowers are welcome to continue rowing with the club through the programs that are offered. See the website for more details. www.WilliamsburgBoatClub.org

LOCATION

The Williamsburg Boat Club operates with the College of William and Mary Rowing Club (WMRC) from Chickahominy Riverfront Park, which is operated by James City County. The club shares responsibility with WMRC and James City County Parks and Recreation for the overall maintenance and appearance of the site. Please obey the 10-mph speed limit in the park.

ROWING BASICS

The term “juniors” refers to high school rowers. A “novice” is typically in their first year of racing. “Varsity” is not used in the same way as high school sports. Varsity rowers are junior rowers that are not novices. The term does not necessarily indicate a higher skill level, although skill often comes with experience. “Masters” are adult rowers, even if they are beginners. Middle School is a new program, so is only identified as “middle school.”

WBC is composed of both male and female rowers. Males and females usually race in separate boats, although there may be some opportunities for mixed boat races. The boats we typically row with students are referred to as either “eights” or “fours.”

Eights and fours actually hold nine and five crew members respectively, with the extra person being the coxswain, who doesn't row, but rather steers the shell, motivates that rowers, and carries out race strategy. The “cox” is the only person in the shell facing forward; all rowers face the stern (rear) of the shell. Each rower in the shell has a single oar and rows either port (right) or starboard (left). See the website for more information. www.WilliamsburgBoatClub.org/About-rowing

Rowing allows for a full cardio workout, which helps increase your lung capacity. It also supports better blood circulation and is great for your heart. Other forms of exercise can be very hard on the joints, but rowing provides a low impact activity great for many large muscle groups. You'll receive a full-body workout, which provides excellent weight-loss benefits without putting stress on your joints. Rowing touches on more than just developing the student physically. Being a crew member will help an individual to listen and work with others with life-long benefits.

ROWER RESPONSIBILITIES

Be **on time**, dressed, and ready to row for all practices and regattas.

If you use an inhaler or epi-pen, or have other medical considerations, make sure you bring it and the coach is aware. Advise your coach of any medications, illnesses, or injuries you may have.

Come to practice ready to work hard.

Keep the best interests of your crew and teammates as your first priority.

Accept and support coaching decisions. Seek out coaches with any questions or feedback on your rowing.

Take responsibility for the safety, maintenance, and cleanliness of all equipment, the boathouse, and dock.

If you will routinely be unable to attend, will be late, or have to leave early for certain weekly practices, notify the head coach at the start of the season. The team uses the team-up app to keep track of schedules. It is your responsibility to get access to that app and use it to keep in touch with the coaches.

Be prepared to help with all tasks that need to be done at practice and regattas, including rigging, loading,

and stowing equipment. Don't wait to be asked; be proactive and look for work that needs to be done. Do not expect to leave until all tasks are finished, and you have been dismissed by the coach—that includes practice and regattas.

Do tasks, especially those requiring the moving of equipment at the boathouse or dock, quickly and quietly, listening to and obeying the commands of the coaches and coxswains.

Participate in team functions including fundraising activities.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Be sure to fill out and send in all forms and pay all fees on time. Notify coaches of any medical conditions or medication needed.

Ensure that your child attends and is on time for all practices and regattas.

Schedule any appointments outside of practice time, or if this is not possible, let the coaches know in advance so they will be aware and able to adjust lineups.

Be supportive of the team and coaches, respecting their decisions with regard to boat selection and other matters regarding rowing.

Volunteer to help WBC in some capacity such as participating on the WBC board, organizing or driving in car pools, the running and executing of our Head of the Chick regatta in the fall, participate in fundraising events, etc.

We encourage you to join the booster club that organizes food for the rowers during regattas, as well as raising funds for the club.

Bring any issues, questions, or problems that arise directly to the coaches at an appropriate time.

Most of all encourage and support your child and cheer for them and the team at regattas.

BOOSTER CLUB

Mission Statement:

The mission of the WBC Booster Club is to support the rowing program both financially and logistically by providing support at regattas (volunteers, equipment, food, and spirit wear), assist in the recruitment of new rowers, organize fundraisers, and promote unity within the WBC family. The parents of all rowers are members of the WBC Booster Club by default. There is no additional membership dues.

WBC is a 501(c)(3) organization. Obtaining corporate sponsorship is an ongoing desire. Please contact the Booster Club Committee if you would like to volunteer or head up any fundraising events. Check the website for the current booster club board members. <https://www.williamsburgboatclub.org/contact-us>

SAFETY

Ensuring the safety, health, and welfare of the rowers is an important part of the WBC mission. In order to accomplish this, rowers are expected to follow the guidance of coaches and coxswains while exercising common sense and good judgment.

Be aware of your surroundings at all times. The ground and dock can be very slippery, and conditions can change quickly.

Boats are large, heavy, and the riggers have bolts and other metal parts sticking out. Do not run or engage in any horseplay on the dock.

The water at our dock is quite shallow. Do not push or throw anyone in the water. Do not dive into the water. Be aware of when and where boats are being carried so as not to be in the way.

Be careful on the dock. Take care when getting in and out of the boats. Keep oars upright when moving them so as not to hit someone with one. Push off smoothly and together.

In the boat, keep quiet in order to hear the coxswain and coaches. Talking in the boat can confuse other rowers and makes it difficult for coaches and coxswains to safely conduct practice. Listen to and quickly obey all coach or coxswain commands.

Be aware of weather conditions. We row even if it is raining. We will not row if the waves are too high, the current is too fast, the wind is too strong (think whitecaps), it is below freezing, or there is thunder or lightning. The bottom line is that there is nothing to be gained from rowing if it causes an injury to our rowers.

If we are on the water and thunder is heard or lightning is seen, we immediately return to the dock or the location designated by your coach.

Rowers will be supervised on the water by coaches in launches. The coaches carry life jackets, cell phones, and other safety equipment in the launch.

REGATTAS

WBC participates in regattas in both fall and spring. In the fall, we row Head Races—longer, timed races of 5000 meters, where the boats start at staggered intervals. In the spring, we row Sprint Races—shorter, faster, more intense races of 1500 meters, where a number of boats start at the same time.

At all regattas, you are representing WBC and all rules of conduct will be in effect. Make every effort to be polite and show respect towards officials, volunteers, other crews & coaches, your parents and crew members, and anyone else encountered at the regattas.

Middle School rowers do not usually compete in regattas. When an opportunity arises, the head coach will make the decision about which rowers are ready to race.

Preparation and Travel

It is imperative to notify the coach if you cannot attend a regatta.

Be aware of weather conditions at the regatta locations and dress appropriately.

Be prepared to de-rig and load boats and equipment on the trailer, usually the Friday before the regatta. Everyone is expected to help as a team.

Be flexible; changes in lineups are sometimes necessary on the day of the race.

Know how to get to the regatta site. Give yourself enough time, allowing for heavy traffic. Parking at regattas can be congested and quite a walk from the site.

Always have the coach's cell number and that of at least one other crew member in case of problems.

At the Regatta

Race days can be very hectic. Be on time or even early. The boats and other equipment will need to be unloaded and carried to the setup site.

Coxswains will need to attend the orientation meeting at the beginning of the day.

You need to be ready to launch approximately 30 minutes before your race. Do not wait until the last minute for hydration or bathroom use.

If you are not about to race, be prepared to help with oars, shoe buckets, or anything else that might need to be done.

Warm up beforehand, not at the last minute.

Watch out for and be aware of boats being moved.

Coxswains need to be aware of their race times, where their crew is, and exactly when they need to launch. It is the coxswain's job to keep their crew together, make sure they are ready, and listen for launching announcements.

Rowers need to check their rigging, oarlocks, and foot stretchers before taking the boat to the dock to launch.

All rowers are expected to stay until the end of the regatta, until all boats and equipment are loaded, and you are dismissed by the coach.

When not racing or getting your boat ready, cheer on your teammates!

The Race

Be prepared to row your hardest in every race. Listen to the coxswain and obey their commands.

The only people talking in the boat before or during the race should be the coxswain and the stroke. If you can talk, you're not pulling hard enough.

Coxswains and strokes need to be aware of, and fully execute, the race plan set by the coach. Stay as relaxed as possible at all parts of the race.

At the finish, remember to congratulate the other teams on a good race (whether you won or came in last) and thank the officials for the job they did.

Enjoy the finish and be proud of what you just accomplished and how hard you worked.

Boat and Seat Selection

There are only so many seats in a boat as well as a limited number and type of races you can row in at a regatta (novice/varsity).

Rowers are placed in boats and seated based on a number of criteria—some objective (status), some subjective (skill, attitude).

Objective criteria used for evaluation include weight (if we are rowing in a lightweight category event), varsity/novice, side rowed, height, erg scores, attendance, and seat racing.

Subjective criteria include attitude, consistency of stroke, technique, boat balance, and the coaches determination as to what will produce a fast boat.

Seniority in the program is not a relevant criterion. Novices may sometimes row with varsity and varsity may row in novice boats (but not in novice races). The decision of the Head Coach is final in all boat lineup selections and is not subject to parent influence or input.

Things to Bring to a Regatta

LABEL ALL YOUR GEAR!

Uniform top and rowing shorts

Socks, including at least 1 extra pair (more if racing multiple races)

Extra shirt, long sleeve if it's cold

Sweats or jacket; weather dependent Reusable Water bottle

Sunglasses and sunscreen

Rain gear if needed

Hat, especially if it will be sunny or raining

Inhaler or any other medications needed

GLOSSARY

GENERAL

There are four different SHELL SIZES, distinguished by the number of rowers in the shell (8, 4, 2, or 1). The symbol following the shell size indicates whether with a coxswain (+) or without a coxswain (-), or whether it is a sculling boat (x).

COACH - someone who follows the boat in a motor launch or on a bike on the bank yelling through a loudspeaker.

COXSWAIN - A very important member of the crew. Their primary job is steering, but also provides race feedback about location on the course and relative to the other crews and stroke rate per minute. They serve as an in-the-boat coach during races. They do call "power tens" and encourage, but don't go "stroke, stroke, stroke."

COX BOX - A small electronic device which aids the coxswain by amplifying his/her voice, and giving him a readout of various information.

ERG (ERGO/ERGOMETER/ERG MACHINE) - A rowing machine designed to simulate the actual rowing motion; used for training and testing.

REGATTA - An organized crew race.

HEAD RACE is done in the fall and can be done on river, where there are twists and turns. The shells do not line-up, but race against the clock, after starting one behind the other. You need not pass another crew to beat it, but if you pass someone that started in front of you, you have surely beaten their time. The race distance is usually 3 miles long.

NOVICE - a rower in their first 12 months of rowing. Since it takes most people a while to refine the basics of rowing and racing, they can row against others of similar experience level.

SCULLING - Opposite of sweep. Sculling is rowing with two oars (an oar on each side of the boat). The length of each oar is about 9 feet long.

SPRINT RACE is done with the crews starting with the bow of their shells even and race parallel to each other. They start together, and the first crew to cross the finish line wins.

We do this racing in the spring. On the collegiate level and internationally, the race distance is 2000 meters. High school race 1500 meters. Master rowers race 1000 meters.

STROKE or STROKE SEAT- Rower in eight seat.

SWEEP – Rowing with one oar on one side of the boat. The length of the oar is about 12 feet long.

PARTS OF THE BOAT

BOW - End of the boat closest to the direction of travel. Also can be used to refer to one-seat, or in conjunction with either four or pair. Bow-four refers to seats four through one. Bow-pair refers to seats two and one.

BLADE - The face of the oar that pushes against the water.

FOOT STRETCHER - Part of the boat where the shoes are attached and where the rower pushes his legs against on the drive.

OARLOCK - Square latch to hold the oar and provide a fulcrum for the stroke against the rigger.

PORT - Side of the boat to the coxswain's left and to the rowers' right. See diagram. Known in some countries as STROKE SIDE.

RIGGER - An apparatus on the side of the boat to provide a fulcrum for the lever (oar).

RUDDER - A little fin on the bottom of the boat that the coxswain can control to steer the boat.

STARBOARD - Side of the boat to the coxswain's right and to the rowers' left. See diagram.

SLIDE - The tracks in which the rolling seat rolls.

STERN - End of the boat farthest from the direction of travel. See diagram. Also can be used in conjunction with either four or pair. Stern-four refers to seats eight through five. Stern-pair refers to seats eight and seven.

PARTS OF A STROKE

BOAT SET - The steadiness of the boat. If the boat alternates leaning from side to side, it's a sign of bad technique.

CATCH - The part of the stroke where the oar enters the water. See *How To Take a Stroke*.

CRAB - A stroke that goes bad. The oar blade slices into the water at an angle and gets caught under the surface. A bad crab can catapult you out of the boat.

DRIVE - Part of the stroke where the rower pulls the blade through the water using legs, back, and arms to propel the boat.

FEATHERING - Rotating the oar in the oarlock so that the blade is parallel to the surface of the water.

FINISH - Part of the stroke after the drive where the blades come out of the water. The rower removes the oar from the water, by first pushing downward then away with the hands.

LEG DRIVE - Term used for driving the legs against the foot stretchers on the drive.

LAYBACK - Term for how much you lean back at the finish. Too much is bad, too little is, well, bad also.

RECOVERY - Part of the stroke where the rower comes back up the slide slowly towards the catch. The oar is pushed away from the body by extending the arms, reaching the body forward and compressing the legs so the shin is vertical, preparing for the next Catch. The oar should not drag on the water.

RELEASE - Another term for finish.

RUN - The distance the boat moves after a stroke. Long run is very good. Run can be visually measured by the distance between the last puddle made by two-seat and where eight-seat's blade enters the water.

RUSHING THE SLIDE - Bad technique that causes boat to check. Results from coming towards the catch from the recovery too fast.

SKYING - Bad technique where the blade is too high off the surface of the water at the catch.

SPLIT TIME - The time to row the equivalent of 500 yards on an Erg.

STROKE - One full motion to move a boat. Consists of the catch, drive, finish, and recovery. Can also be used to refer to eight-seat.

STROKE RATE - Strokes per minute.

ROWING COMMANDS or TERMS

"CHECK IT DOWN!" - Coxswain call that makes all the rowers drag their oar blades through the water perpendicularly, effectively stopping the boat.

"HOLD WATER!" - Coxswain call. Another way of saying CHECK IT DOWN.

"LET IT RUN!" - Coxswain call for all rowers to stop rowing and to pause at the finish, letting the boat glide through the water and coast to a stop. Used as a drill to build balance.

"ONE FOOT UP, AND OUT" - command for exiting a team boat. Procedure: The outside hand holds the oar(s) away from the body. The inside hand holds the gunwale to the dock. The inside foot is removed from the foot stretchers and placed on the step-in board. The body weight is shifted forward as the athlete stands, supporting himself on his inside leg. The outside foot is placed on the dock, and he gets out of the shell.

"POWER 10" (or 20 or 30 etc.) - Coxswain call to take a certain number of power strokes. A power stroke is a stroke that musters all the strength you can give.

MISSING WATER - Bad technique where you aren't moving the blade through the water as much as you could. Usually caused by not getting the blade in the water soon enough at the catch. Therefore, missed water equals less movement of the boat.

"READY, ROW" or "ATTENTION, ROW" – Coxswain call to begin rowing.

WASHING OUT - Similar to MISSING WATER except it means taking the blade out of the water too soon at the finish.

"WAY- ENOUGH! " - Coxswain call to have all rowers stop rowing. Call actually sounds like "way-nuff."

IMPORTANT LINKS

WBC <http://www.williamsburgBoatClub.org/>

<https://www.wbcregattas.com>

US Rowing <http://www.usrowing.org/about>

Concept 2 <http://www.concept2.com/us/default.asp>

EVSRA <http://www.evsra.org/>

Row 2 K – articles classified ads <http://www.row2k.com/>

Sew Sporty Team Page- order swag from here <http://www.sewsporty.com/WBC/>