

Westerville Crew

Parent Handbook

Juniors and Middle School Athletes



2025

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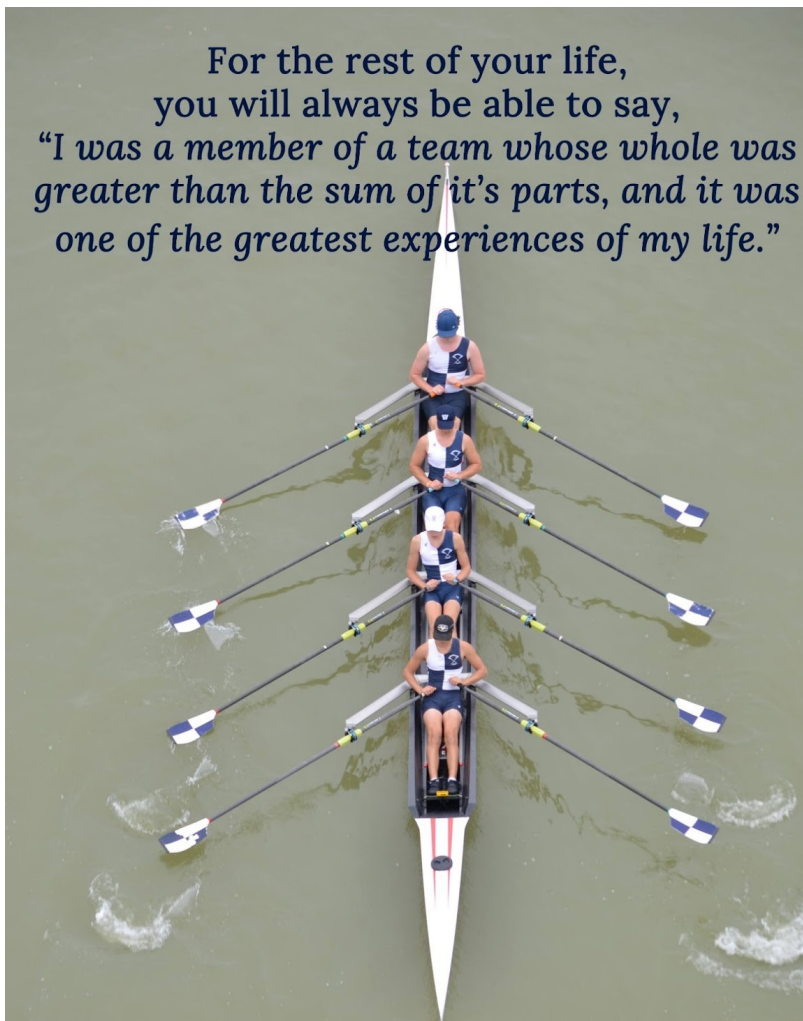
INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on venturing into the sport of rowing with your child! As a parent of a new rower or coxswain, you may be feeling a little unsure. Many parents have never even watched rowing, much less tried it themselves. It's quite different from other, more conventional American sports, and can feel intimidating at first.

Know that you're most certainly not alone! Many parents of experienced rowers were exactly where you are today just a few years ago. We're here to help and support you—don't hesitate to reach out and ask any questions that aren't answered in this handbook.



Rowing is not a mainstream sport in the US. As a result, relatively few young athletes discover it, but those who do almost always develop a passion for it. Rowing sets your athlete apart and will benefit them in ways you cannot yet imagine.



Rowing is one of the few sports that athletes can start at an older age and be competitive in on a regional and even a national level within a few short years. This makes it perfect for those athletes who tried many other sports and activities in their younger years, but never found the right "fit."

Westerville Crew provides a unique opportunity to youth athletes in central Ohio because we're not a school-based organization. We draw athletes from many surrounding communities. Your child is now on a team with students from multiple surrounding school districts—as many as 20 public or private high schools in 11 different districts in addition to students who are homeschooled.

ABOUT WESTERVILLE CREW

The Westerville Rowing Club (also called Westerville Crew or WRC) is a not-for-profit (501(c)(3)) organization and is governed by the WRC Board. Information on the governance and club staff can be found on the team website at: <http://www.westervillecrew.org/>

Who Rows With Westerville Crew

Westerville Crew has several rowing programs that cater to different age groups:

- **U14/Middle School:** This program is for students in 6th through 8th grade (11-14 years old). Girls and boys practice and compete together in the same boats. They practice three days a week.
- **Juniors/High School:** This program is for students in 8th grade through high school (14-18 years old). The men's and women's segments/teams practice and compete in separate boats. They practice six days a week.
- **Masters/Adult:** This program is for adults 21 and up. Men and women practice together. Competitions consist of men's, women's, and mixed boats. They practice three to four times a week. If you're interested in the Masters program, [reach out to the coach](#).

Additionally, there are other programs that use the WRC boatyard. One group is the Breast Cancer Survivors. Some years, local colleges such as Denison University also use our boatyard. No other programs use the Westerville Crew indoor training facility.



No prior rowing experience is required to participate in any WRC program. Each year, we have several Learn to Row programs for each segment. Interested people can participate to learn the basics of the sport. After that, they can opt to continue on with the appropriate segment.

This handbook is for parents of Junior and Middle School rowers and coxswains. Most of the information in the handbook applies to both segments. Where there are differences, it will be clearly noted.

ADMINISTRATIVE ESSENTIALS

This section covers the administrative essentials every family needs to know.

Registration

Registration is required for each season your athlete participates with Westerville Crew. Seasons are Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer.

Communications will be sent by email and posted on social media when registration opens for each new season. You will have a window of two weeks or so in which to register. Registration occurs online only. Payment may be made online by credit card or Zelle. If you wish to make alternate payment arrangements, contact the club treasurer (see [Contact Information](#) in this handbook).

For liability purposes, all athletes must be registered or they cannot participate with the club. Coaches will verify the registration of each athlete attending practices after the registration window closes. Each time you register your athlete for the upcoming season, you need to:

- Sign a waiver.
- Agree to the Westerville Crew Code of Conduct. Note that you are signing the Code of Conduct on behalf of your minor athlete as well as any parent, guardian, or other person who may attend or participate in an event with Westerville Crew.

SportsEngine

WRC uses an online service called SportsEngine to manage registrations. When you register for the first time, you must create an account with SportsEngine. This should be an account for you, the adult parent or guardian of your athlete.

To create a Sports Engine account and to join the WRC Directory:
<https://westervillecrew.sportngin.com/register/form/093901895>

Club communications are sent by email through SportsEngine. There are some important things to know about this:

- Use an email address you check often so you don't miss important messages.
- If more than one parent/guardian wants to receive club communications from SportsEngine, they must be added to the primary account as a guardian:
<https://help.sportsengine.com/en/articles/6304039-how-to-add-guardians>
- A second parent/guardian can also create a SportsEngine account of their own and join the Westerville Crew team directory. However, they will not receive emails because their account is not associated with a currently-registered athlete. To receive communications, **both parents/guardians must be listed on the account that is associated with the registered athlete**

US Rowing Membership

In addition to registering each season with Westerville Crew, athletes must also have a US Rowing membership. The US Rowing registration & waiver is required in order for athletes to be entered into regatta line-ups. A US Rowing membership number is required to complete WRC registration.

To register with US Rowing:

- <https://usrowing.org/become-a-member>
- Select a BASIC Membership. The upgraded Championship Membership is only required for athletes competing in Nationals Regattas.
- The Westerville Crew affiliation code is: B7BQF.

As a reminder, athletes who are 18 years old or will turn 18 in the current calendar year must also complete the US Rowing SafeSport training annually. See the [Safety](#) section of this handbook for more information.

Rowing Costs

Westerville Crew is a not-for-profit organization that is funded by fees/dues and donations. Fees are collected at the start of each season. The fees cover:

- Coaching costs. Coaches are paid per session they coach.
- Entry fees for regattas the club attends that season. Fees are paid per boat and per race.

What's left after these expenses goes toward the club's other operating costs throughout the year, which include, but are not limited to:

- Rental of the erg room and boatyard.
- Maintenance of all equipment and properties.
- Purchase of new equipment (shoes, nuts and bolts, and other consumable items).
- Insurance for boats, truck and trailers, and so on.

A portion of each athlete's dues also goes into a fund for the purchase of boats for the club.

For regattas, hotel costs and travel expenses are paid for by each athlete's family. Each season, Westerville Crew organizes blocks of hotel rooms near the venues for each regatta. Hotel blocks have a discounted rate. However, rooms are limited so it's important to book quickly when the communication is sent out about the availability of the blocks. Families are not obligated to rent rooms from the hotel blocks. You can use any hotel or other option you like.

After the first two weeks of each season, fees are nonrefundable, except in extreme circumstances.

Financial Aid

Rowing is an expensive sport. WRC wants all athletes to be able to participate. We provide financial assistance to athletes whose families find the costs prohibitive.

Assistance can be up to 100% of the regular seasonal fee. The amount of financial aid provided is dependent on the number of assistance requests received and the availability of funds.

If you have need of assistance or have questions about assistance, contact the WRC Treasurer (treasurer@westervillecrew.org).

Communications

The club sends important information to families by email through the SportsEngine platform. This is the platform we use for registration and other administrative purposes. Messages will be sent to the email address you use when registering your athlete. If a second guardian is on the account, that person will also receive messages.

Remind. Coaches communicate with athletes and families using Remind. This is a service that sends messages by text or through the app. All Coach and athlete communication should be done through Remind ONLY as Remind has measures in place to maintain athlete safety. You and your athlete(s) should join the appropriate groups for your athlete(s):

Download the app and use the following codes to join the appropriate lists, or join by sending a text to 81010 or 614-289-6309 with the codes as the message (codes are case-sensitive):

Remind List Code	WRC Remind List
@wrowing	Entire team
@wrcvm	Junior Men
@wcvw	Junior Women
@wcrewU14	Middle School

GroupMe. WRC has a GroupMe group for the parents of athletes in all youth segments. Coaches are not in this group. This is the place for parent-to-parent communication. Download the app or create an account on the website, then join our group:

https://groupme.com/join_group/106129089/ZrJfZpf2

Social Media. WRC is on social media (Instagram and Facebook):

- **Facebook:** Westerville Crew
- **FB Parent page:** (must request to join) Westerville Crew Parents Rowers
- **Instagram:** Westerville Crew

- **YouTube:** Westerville Crew

You don't have to follow WRC on social media. Important information will always be communicated via email or Remind in addition to going out via social media.

Contact Information

You can contact coaches directly via email or Remind. If you have the Remind app, you can reply to any message from a coach. It will go to that coach only. The coaches are:

- Coach Grace Bordner (Head Juniors Coach and Lead Women's Coach): grace@westervillecrew.org
- Coach Cory Henderson (Lead Men's Coach): cory@westervillecrew.org
- Coach Howard Bruss (Head Middle School Coach and Director of Rowing): howard@westervillecrew.org

Other email addresses you may need:

- Jeff Lattimer, President: president@westervillecrew.org
- Melissa Kappes, Vice President: vicepresident@westervillecrew.org
- Bruce Binnig, Treasurer: treasurer@westervillecrew.org
- Allison Marshall, Secretary: secretary@westervillecrew.org
- Committee chair email addresses can be [found on our website](#) (scroll down to Key Contacts).

To Learn More

Additional WRC documentation and handbooks are available on the [club website](#) under Resources. Other current information about the club, such as its calendars and upcoming events, is available on the website.

To learn more about rowing, see:

- WRC's Rowing 101 Guide, which is available on the club website under Resources.
- Row2k.com, where you can find lots of general rowing information.
- USrowing.org
- *Boys in the Boat*: It's a book with a documentary and a movie adaptation. Any version will give you a good sense for why so many love this sport.

NOVICE AND VARSITY (JUNIORS ONLY)

In WRC, athletes are considered novices during their first two competitive on-the-water seasons. After that, they move up to varsity.

You may occasionally hear someone talking about a JV (Junior Varsity) boat, but that isn't rowing terminology. We have novice boats/athletes and varsity boats/athletes.

While WRC considers athletes to be novices for two competitive seasons, US Rowing has a different definition. They consider athletes to be novices only for their first season. The reason WRC follows a two-season novice structure is because an additional competitive novice season provides additional time for growth and development of rowing skills. This gives athletes an advantage of having more opportunities to compete against other athletes of similar skill levels. This builds confidence and lets them focus on learning. Many regattas that we attend also define a novice as being an athlete in their first two competitive seasons.

Varsity Lettering

As varsity athletes, rowers and coxswains can letter in rowing with WRC. To letter, athletes must achieve at least three of the following requirements during the year:

- Medal in a Varsity event.
- Achieve 2K times of:
 - Men: Sub 7:00 (sub 7:20 for lightweight)
 - Women: Sub 8:00 (sub 8:20 for lightweight)
- Attend a minimum of 95% of all practices
- Display outstanding commitment to the betterment of our team and community
- Display prolonged leadership within the boat and/or across the program

Athletes can letter more than once if they meet the requirements during subsequent years. The first year, they receive a letter. For every year after that during which they meet the requirements, they receive a pin.

ROWING SEASONS

Rowing is a year-round sport. This is surprising to many new rowing families, given that most other sports we're familiar with are limited to one or two seasons each year.

There are two competitive seasons, Fall and Spring. Winter is spent indoors on conditioning, while Summer is about building technique and recuperating from the grind of tough competitive seasons.

Participating in all seasons is not required. Some athletes want to do other sports or activities for part of the year. That's fine! However, missing a season or two may impact the athlete's fitness and technique, which may have an effect on their placement in boat lineups.

The rowing year is described in the following sections.

Fall

Fall is a competitive season. It runs from August through early November.

Juniors Racing. The Juniors segment goes to three or four regattas in the fall. One regatta is typically designated a [select race](#), which means WRC only takes certain boats. At the beginning of the season, information will be communicated about the plan for the select regatta that season.

Middle School Racing. The Middle School segment races at one or two regattas in the fall. They're always events that Juniors are also attending, and they're almost always local, so no travel is required.

From time to time some experienced Middle School athletes are asked to fill seats in novice Juniors boats at events that do require travel. Participation is always optional. If the athlete and their family opt to participate, they're expected to travel, find a hotel, and pay for any expenses that arise, just as Junior segment families do.

All About Fall Races. Fall races generally take place on rivers. They're often called "Head of the [River Name]." This is why they're referred to as "head races." Fall races that take place on other bodies of water don't have "Head of" in the name. For example, when WRC hosts fall regattas on the Hoover Reservoir, the name is "Hoover Fall Classic."

Races for Junior athletes are 5 km (3.1 miles), although many courses are shorter than 5000 meters by 200-300 meters. Middle school races are typically 1000 meters.

Fall racing requires endurance. River currents, turns, and bridges present challenges that make each race unique and exciting for the athletes.

The courses of fall races are not divided into separate lanes for each boat. The water has one buoy line down the center to create a wide lane for racing and one for boats rowing up to the start. At the start of the race, which parents rarely get to see because it happens 3 miles upstream, boats start one by one in a rolling start. This means that boats come up to speed as they enter the "chute" and

approach the starting line. Chute is the name for the couple dozen meters before the official starting line. As each boat crosses the starting line, a timing official starts the clock for that boat.

Middle school races don't start at the same starting line, because they're much shorter races. The boats start 1000 meters before the finish line and typically do not do a rolling start. Middle school races may receive medals or they may be exhibition events (no medals) depending on the event.

Because there are no lanes for head races, all boats in the race share the water. Coxswains must navigate around the other boats on the course, passing them if they're able to. Passing a boat is also known as "walking" a boat. For parents and athletes alike, it's hard to tell how a given boat is doing until after all the boats in the race have finished and the times are posted.

Fall Practices. Weather in the first half of the season is generally good and athletes practice on the water almost exclusively. The closer to the end of the season it gets, the more likely it is that at least some practices will be moved to the indoor training facility (erg room). Coaches will communicate changes in practice location to the athletes via Remind.

Winter

Winter season runs from November through February each year. The focus of Winter season is on building fitness.

Winter Racing. There is one competition, Midwest Championship Erg Sprints, an indoor sprint that takes place each February at The Ohio State University. A number of rowing machines are set up in a gymnasium. They're connected electronically to a computer, so data about the racers can be displayed on screens for spectators. Racers all start at the same time, and the status is updated on the screen in real time. Spectators can stand close to them, so they can cheer and watch their progress.

Both the Juniors and Middle School segments compete at the erg sprints. Juniors race 2 kilometers. Middle Schoolers race 1 kilometer. There are also events for coaches and coxswains.

Winter Training. Practices take place at the WRC indoor rowing facility (erg room). The head coach puts together a training plan for all athletes in their segment (Juniors or Middle School) to follow. This ensures that there is a comprehensive, consistent approach to training throughout the season. Although the training plan isn't shared ahead of time, if you have questions about it, coaches are happy to discuss their approach.

During the winter, training includes plenty of workouts on ergs, but also cross training. Athletes will do strength training using the equipment at the erg room. They will do stretching, calisthenics, and yoga.

Coaches may have the athletes complete some or all of their workouts outdoors if weather permits. For example, athletes may run or go hiking. Coaches will communicate changes in practice location, if any, to the athletes via Remind.

Spring

Spring is a competitive season. It runs from March through June.

Juniors Racing. In the spring, the Juniors attend three to four regattas. There is an additional regatta, US Rowing Youth Nationals, which athletes would only attend if their boat qualified during the final spring regatta and meets the [club criteria for going on to Nationals](#).

Middle School Racing. The Middle School segment attends one or two regattas. Depending on the event schedule for the season, this may require travel, as there are generally not as many local regattas in the spring season. Information will be communicated at the beginning of the season about the regattas and segment participation for that season.

All About Spring Racing. Spring races for Juniors are 2 km long. For Middle School, they're 1 km. They often take place on larger bodies of water such as lakes or reservoirs.

Spring races are sprints. Their courses are straight and are divided into lanes. All boats in a given race start at the same time, so it's easy to see how one boat is doing against the others. If there are more boats in a race than there are lanes on the course, there will be multiple heats. If there are multiple heats, there will be finals where the top boats from each heat compete to determine the top places. Typically, the top three boats from each heat move on to the final.

Spring Practices. Coaches and athletes are always eager to get back on the water as soon as the weather makes it possible. Some years this is possible for a few days in early to mid March, but other years, it's mid to late March. Because spring weather is highly unpredictable, many practices will still take place indoors through April. Coaches will communicate changes in practice location via Remind.

Spring Break. We know that Spring Break is a favorite time for many families to take trips. However, Spring season is short and because of central Ohio weather, every practice on the water is critical. Missing a week of practice is not recommended. WRC strongly encourages families to plan their trips for times other than Spring Break.

Summer

Summer is a season for building skill and technique on the water, as well as increasing fitness and endurance in preparation for the upcoming fall season. It runs from June to August.

Summer Racing. There are regattas in the summer, and Westerville Crew generally participates in one regatta and hosts a second. Races are 1 km sprints for Juniors and Middle School. Just like Spring sprints, the courses are straight and divided into lanes.

Summer Practices. Summer season can be an opportunity for athletes to dedicate focused time to rowing. They can focus on technique to enhance the training they do the rest of the year. Summer season is also an opportunity to include cross-training, such as CrossFit, swimming, running, and strength training.

Practices are on the water in the Summer season. However, weather can be unpredictable, so some practices may be canceled, take place on land at the JCC, or be moved to alternate locations. Coaches will communicate changes in practice times or locations via Remind.

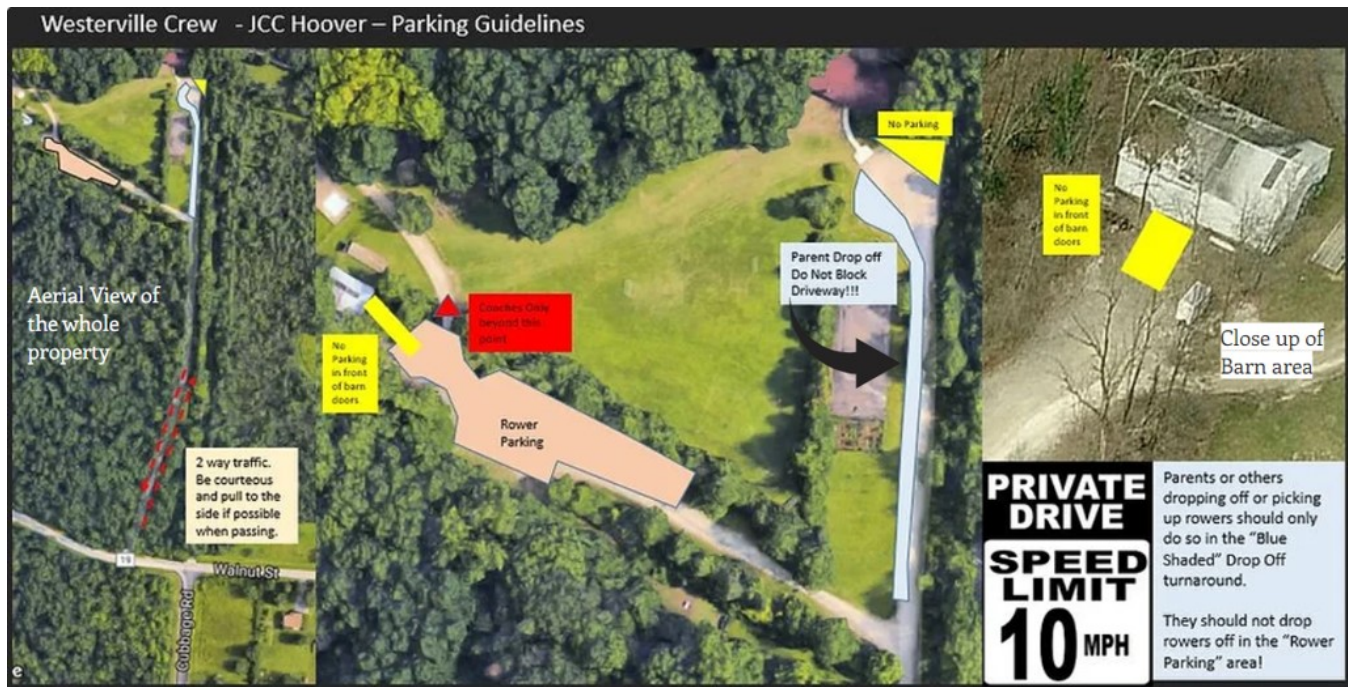
PRACTICES

The Juniors segment practices six days a week year-round. The Middle School segment practices three days a week year-round.

Training Locations

Westerville Crew trains in two locations:

- **Indoor Facility:** Called the “erg room.” Located at 6363 Cooper Road Columbus, Oh 43231 (next to Power Shack).
- **Outdoor Facility:** On the Hoover Reservoir. Our boatyard is accessed via the JCC Camp at 4290 E Walnut St. Westerville, OH 43081. See map below.



The above map shows the end of the driveway that you follow from Walnut St when entering the JCC property. Note the following important points:

- The speed limit is a strict 10 MPH. This speed limit is set by the JCC, which owns the driveway. We are tenants on their property and must follow their rules. The caretakers of the JCC property are watching and let WRC know when drivers break the speed limit.
- For dropping off athletes, drive straight along the path (follow the light blue markings on the above map) until you reach the turn-around at the end. Do not block the entrance to the

driveway that extends back from the turn-around (marked in yellow on the above map; this is the entrance to a private residence).

- Athletes walk across the field toward the left side of the map above.
- If you are waiting at the JCC for your athlete during practice, you may pull off to the side of the driveway between the dropoff spot and the entrance to the athlete parking lot. There's a large rock at the entrance to that lot.
- Do not enter the athlete parking area for any reason, including to drop off or wait for your athlete. This is for athletes only (youth athletes who drive, as well as adult athletes).
- For athlete pickup, line up along the driveway starting at the entrance to the athlete parking lot. Do not block the entrance to the athlete lot or the Caretaker's entrance (marked with a sign and chain).
- During pickup, pull forward to fill empty spaces as cars in front of you leave. This helps everyone behind you.

Practice Times

Each segment has defined practice start and end times. Unless otherwise stated, the start times should be treated as the time when athletes should be ready to put hands on their boats and head to the water. This means that they should arrive at the JCC earlier than the stated start time.

Practice end times are not necessarily the time that athletes will be released. Due to the nature of the sport, it's best to treat practice [end time as a range](#).

Arriving Early Matters

An athlete arriving at the JCC at the stated start time will actually be late for practice. The stated start time is the time when athletes are expected to have their hands on the boat and be ready to lift it off the racks and carry it to the docks. This is known as hands-on time.

This means that it's very important for athletes to arrive at the JCC well ahead of the stated start time. Your athlete may request to arrive as much as 30 minutes before the start time. Anything between 15 and 30 minutes is the general recommendation.

To understand the reason for the early arrival, it's helpful to have an idea of what athletes need to do before hands-on:

- It takes 6-10 minutes to walk from the drop-off line to the boatyard.
- Athletes must stow their phones and other gear in the rowers' shed.
- Athletes have pre-practice tasks to complete, such as checking the lineups, preparing the boat, stretching, and so on.

Pickup Time is a Range

Practice isn't always over precisely at the stated end time, so it's important to be patient while waiting in the pickup line. You'll see athletes start to trickle up from the boatyard around the time that practice is supposed to finish, but it is normal for it to take 15-20 minutes for all the athletes to make it up to the pickup line. Sometimes it can take longer.

The reason for this spread out ending time is that athletes aren't dismissed as a group. Boats arrive at the docks at different times, depending on their workout of the day and the coach they were working with. Sometimes there's a traffic jam at the docks and some boats need to wait for a space to clear.

After equipment is put away, coaches and athletes spend time talking about their experience on the water. Depending on how a particular boat's practice went, these conversations, called boat talks, can take longer on some days than on others.

Coaches are aware of parents waiting for the athletes, and will communicate with parents via Remind about unexpected or excessive wait times when possible. If you're concerned about your athlete being late after practice, try texting them or giving them a call. Parents are discouraged from walking down to the boatyard to check on their athlete.

Visiting the Boatyard

Parents often want to visit the boatyard to speak with a coach or watch their athlete during practice. For the safety of athletes and the convenience of other parents/guardians in the pickup line, random visits to the boatyard are discouraged.

There are occasions when parents are invited to visit the boatyard. These opportunities will be communicated ahead of time, along with arrangements for parking. If you'd like to visit the boatyard outside of these pre-arranged times, speak with a coach to make a plan.

Parking and leaving your vehicle in the pickup line at the JCC is not allowed. It creates a disruption in the flow of traffic. The athletes' parking lot at the JCC must be left for athletes only. This is especially important at pickup time, when the Masters rowers and other groups that hold evening practices are arriving. Space in that lot is limited and there is unfortunately not enough room for non-athletes to park.

If your athlete is unusually late to the pickup line and you're worried, try calling them or a coach instead of walking down to the boatyard. There are times when a boat stays out on the water longer than usual, or when conversations after practice ("boat talk") take longer than they typically do.

Speaking with a Coach

WRC encourages athletes to talk to their coaches about any concerns or questions they have, or that you have on their behalf. This helps young people learn to advocate for themselves. It also allows for many concerns to be resolved swiftly by keeping the conversation centered on the parties involved.

If your athlete has discussed a concern with a coach and an appropriate resolution wasn't reached or if there are unanswered questions, you should reach out to the coach. You can email them, send a message on Remind, or call them.

While coaches are happy to have conversations with parents or guardians, before and after practices is not the appropriate time, unless you have made prior arrangements with the coach. Coaches' attention and focus is on the athletes in the time before and after practices. They have duties to attend to during these times and may not be able to give their whole attention to spontaneous conversations with parents.

How to Watch Practices

Many parents want to visit the boatyard to watch practices. However, this isn't a good location to watch practice, and parents are discouraged from [visiting the boatyard](#) without prior approval. The unfortunate thing about rowing is that practices on the water are very hard to watch.

Practices happen in various places on the reservoir, depending on the day. Most of the time, coaches take boats from the docks and go out into the south bay or through the Smothers Road bridge and go north. When going north, boats often travel several miles up toward Sunbury.

There are no good places to see all of any given practice, due to the distances boats travel. However, there are places where parents can go to catch glimpses of boats during practices:

- **When boats are in the south bay (between Smothers Rd. and dam):**
 - Walnut Street Parking Lot: 7800 Sunbury Rd, Westerville, OH 43081
 - Lakeview Park: 7940 S Sunbury Rd, Westerville, OH 43081
- **When boats travel north past the Smothers Rd. bridge:**
 - Redbank Boat Ramp: 6977 Sunbury Rd, Westerville, OH 43082

What to Wear and Bring to Practice

On the Water

What to...	Rowers	Coxswains
Wear in Warm Weather	<p>Spandex/Dri-fit bike or running shorts. It's critical that they are close-fitting. Loose shorts will get caught in the boat's sliding track. (Required)</p> <p>T-shirt/tank top - preferably dri-fit. Shirts should not be too long or they will get caught in the sliding track and will get holes or stains. (Required)</p> <p>Socks (Required)</p>	<p>Similar to rowers, although tight fits are not required.</p> <p>Visors/Hats (help with position of the coxbox microphone)</p>

	<p>Shoes that are easy on/off and that can get wet and muddy. Shoes go in the boat with athletes. Crocs or old tennis shoes are common. Flip flops are not recommended. They can be dangerous on the rocky path to the docks. (Required)</p> <p>Sunblock (Strongly recommended)</p> <p>Sunglasses (Optional)</p> <p>Hair ties, headbands, hats (Optional)</p> <p>Running shoes on days that include land-based workouts. (Optional, but encouraged depending on the rower's boat shoes)</p>	
<p>Wear Wear in Cool/Cold Weather</p>	<p>Same as above except:</p> <p>Dri-fit/spandex is <u>very important</u>. Cotton holds moisture next to the skin and drains body heat. When the air is cold, it's important not to be in cotton.</p> <p>Consider long sleeves and long spandex.</p> <p>Consider heavier/wool socks.</p> <p>Layers, layers, layers! The colder it is, the more important multiple layers are. Rowers will quickly warm up and begin to shed layers.</p> <p>Sunblock is still important when it's cold out.</p> <p>Waterproof outer layer if it's raining. Many rowers wear their Goretex jacket in the boat when it's raining, or as an outer layer when it's cold. Some rowers don't want an outer layer in the rain, so it's very much an individual preference.</p> <p>About Gloves: Rowers generally prefer not to wear gloves, even when it's very cold. They can interfere with the ability to feel the oar, which affects their stroke. WRC doesn't go out on the water in unsafe temperatures, so although hands may be uncomfortable, they won't be at risk.</p>	<p>Heavier Layers: long pants, sweatshirts, wool socks.</p> <p>Waterproof outer layer if it's raining. Many coxswains wear their Goretex jacket in the boat when it's raining, or as an outer layer when it's cold.</p> <p>On very cold days (the beginning of spring and end of fall season) coxswains may also use hyposuits/ flotation suits for warmth. Westerville Crew has a limited number available for coxswain use or athletes can purchase their own.</p> <p>Gloves and Hats</p> <p>Waterproof boots</p>
<p>Bring</p>	<p>Water Bottle</p> <p>Medications that may be required during practice, such as insulin, epi pens, or inhalers. Medications that come onto WRC property must be declared during registration so coaches and staff are aware of them. Athletes should manage their own medications during practice unless other arrangements have been made.</p> <p>Rowers may want to bring other items such as tape for blistered hands, a dry change of clothes, or a towel for after practice. These items, and anything else they bring, including</p>	<p>Same as rowers, plus:</p> <p>Smaller backpack/sling bag/waterproof bag is used to carry items including wrenches, first aid items, etc while on the boat.</p>

	phones, stay in the athletes' shed while they're on the water.	
Leave at Home	Cash, credit/debit cards, valuables. The athletes' shed is generally safe and theft is rarely an issue. These items should never be taken out on the water. Losing valuable items at the bottom of Hoover reservoir IS an issue. It's best to avoid potential issues by leaving these items at home or in the car (in the case of athletes who drive themselves to practice).	

Erg Room

What to..	Rowers	Coxswains
Wear	<p>Similar to when rowing on the water when it's warm, except that looser-fitting shorts and longer shirts can be worn, within reason. Rowers sit higher up on ergs, so clothing is less likely to get caught.</p> <p>Most rowers continue to wear close-fitting spandex on the erg. Many prefer shorts year-round, even in the winter.</p> <p>Layers are helpful, especially during winter seasons.</p>	No specific requirements. During indoor practices, coxswains assist coaches and walk among the rowers on the erg machines.
Bring	<p>Water bottle. The erg room has a water dispenser for refilling if needed, but no bottles/cups. (Required.)</p> <p>Medications required during practice.</p> <p>Towel for wiping hands/face.</p> <p>Hair ties, headbands.</p> <p>Headphones, if coaches permit personal music during practice.</p> <p>Bag or backpack and leave it next to their erg.</p>	<p>Water bottle, if desired.</p> <p>Notebook/pen</p>
Leave at Home	<p>Cash, credit/debit cards, valuables. The erg room is generally safe and theft is rarely an issue. However, it's best to avoid potential issues by leaving these items at home.</p> <p>Athletes who drive themselves may opt to leave these items in their cars, but they do so at their own risk. The parking lot is public and is shared with two other businesses, so the potential for break-ins exists.</p>	

Attendance Expectations

Athletes should attend as many practices as possible. The fewer missed practices, the better. Coaches for any sport will say this, but in rowing, it's especially important. The reasons for this are:

- Each missed practice is a missed opportunity to grow their skills. In rowing, athletes don't benefit from years of Little League or gym class lessons, as they do in many other sports. There's a lot of learning to do in a short amount of time. This makes every practice very important.
- Missing practices affects the other athletes directly. Each boat must have its seats filled with rowers and a coxswain (unless it's a boat without a coxswain). If any of those positions aren't filled, the boat cannot be rowed. Anytime someone misses practice, it disrupts the lineups for that day's practice. A boat may be left unable to go out on the water, which means not only does the absent athlete miss out on the benefits of that day's workout, but so does everyone else in the boat.
- Practice builds team bonds. Missing practices means missing out on critical bonding time. A strong bond among the athletes contributes to a boat that rows well together.
- For rowers, the more time spent on the water or the erg, the better physical condition they'll be in for competitions. Consistent steady-state workouts are key to building the level of physical fitness required to be competitive at a regional and national level.

All that being said, there is life outside of rowing, and sometimes athletes must miss practice. When it happens, it's your athlete's responsibility to let their coach know by sending a message through Remind. If your athlete is too sick to text on their own, you can reach out on their behalf.

If the practice is on the water, the earlier the coach is notified, the better. This allows them time to make alternate lineups for that day's practice. When possible, a 24-hour advance notice is appreciated.

Excused and Unexcused Absence Policy

Excused absences:

- Illness
- Doctor's appointments
- Required school events

Unexcused absences:

- Homework
- Vacations
- Test prep

Other reasons for absences are handled on a case-by-case basis by the athlete and their coach.

More than five unexcused absences in a season will prompt a meeting with coaching staff.

Extended Absences (Vacations, Etc)

Athletes may occasionally need to miss more than one day of practice at a time, such as for vacations. Your athlete should speak with their coach as soon as you know about the extended absence.

A common time for families to plan a vacation or family trip is during spring break. This is unfortunately very poor timing in rowing. [Spring season](#) is short with unpredictable weather, which means that every day on the water is extremely valuable.

Spring break happens in the midst of training for some very important races. Spring season culminates with Nationals (Juniors segment only). Qualifying for Nationals requires intense, dedicated training throughout the season.

WRC encourages all its families not to travel during Spring Break. For families that are used to traveling during this time, this can be a challenge to adjust to. However, we ask that you consider changing your plans during your athlete's time with WRC to support your athlete, their boat, and the team as a whole.

Lost and Found

There are lost and found boxes in the athlete's shed at the boatyard and at the erg room. If your athlete is missing something, the lost and found boxes are the first place they should check.

If the missing item is a water bottle they may need to look around outside the lost and found. Water bottles sometimes stay on benches around the boatyard or on surfaces in the erg room for a while before being put into the lost and found.

After regattas, items left around the tent area are gathered up by a parent volunteer. The parent takes them home and will sort them, then share photos with parents, typically on the parent GroupMe groups and/or the parent Facebook group. Be sure to check these photos after each regatta, even if your athlete hasn't mentioned missing items. Unclaimed items will be donated after a period of time. The exact process of lost and found handling depends on the parent volunteer who handles the lost and found for a given year or regatta.

Periodically, unclaimed items from the lost and found are cleaned out. They're washed and donated or thrown away. Typically this happens at the end of the season.

Families are encouraged to put names on their athlete's gear. This makes it much easier to return items to their owners. There are some high-quality, laundry-safe name labels that work really well. You can order them with names pre-printed on them. Mabel's Labels is one brand that is well-tested by rowing families over the years.

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR ATHLETE

As with any sport or activity your child tries, there will be highs and lows in rowing. It's a challenging sport to learn, a difficult sport to master, and it is both physically and mentally demanding at all times.

Kids have a lot going on in their lives in addition to rowing- school, friendships, other extra-curricular activities, family obligations. Westerville Crew recognizes that rowing is one facet of your child's life, and that as your athlete grows with the club, his or her needs change. One thing that never changes is the need for the adults in the athlete's life to be supportive.

Here are some things you can do to support your athlete:

- Read the weekly email updates sent from Westerville Crew. This will keep you up to date on what's happening.
- Pay attention to the Remind messages sent by the coaches. Important and time-sensitive information is communicated through Remind, so it's important to stay on top of them.
- Learn about the sport of rowing so you can have meaningful conversations with your athlete. You can:
 - Ask your athlete questions about aspects of rowing you don't know much about. Kids love to be the expert on things that are important to them.
 - Ask your athlete to teach you how to use the erg machine, if you have one or if you belong to a gym that has one.
- Monitor your athlete for changes in behavior, weight, mood, and so on. These may be signs of stress or other mental health struggles.
- Work to establish a routine around preparing for practice. This makes it much easier to get out the door on time.
- Encourage healthy, balanced habits around nutrition and sleep.
- Allow your athlete to express frustration and upset without feeling as if you need to solve the problem.
 - Sometimes kids need a safe space to talk openly. They may not expect or want their problems to be fixed.
 - Respond with empathy and understanding.
 - Acknowledge that it [whatever it is] is hard/challenging/frustrating.
 - Practice active listening by reflecting feelings back with comments like "You're really annoyed at your coach" or "That must be super frustrating."

- Ask questions like “Is this something you want to fix or do you just need me to listen?”
- Encourage healthy competitive behavior. Model compassion and a balanced attitude toward winning, losing, and the competition.
- Encourage self-advocacy. If your athlete has a conflict with a teammate or a coach, encourage them to handle it on their own with empathy and a focus on problem-solving. It might help to role-play tough conversations with your athlete - it’s helpful even if you both feel ridiculous!

SAFETY

Athlete safety, both on and off the water, is a primary commitment at Westerville Crew. To meet that commitment, Westerville Crew has both a water safety and an athlete abuse prevention program. Both programs follow the US Rowing Safeguarding trainings and publications (<https://usrowing.org/about-safety/safety-resources> and <https://usrowing.org/safe-sport>).

Safety measures on the water include:

- Swim tests. All Junior and U14 athletes are required to pass a swim test prior to rowing on the Hoover Reservoir. Swim tests are held at the start of every Spring and Fall season. Swim tests require certification by a lifeguard, which uses [this form](#).
- Coach safety trainings, including CPR, AED use, and first aid.
- Safety equipment on all coaching launch boats, including flotation devices and first aid kits.

WRC has an AED device. During on-the-water seasons, the device is kept outside the coaches’ shed at the JCC. During the winter, the device is stored in the erg room. All coaches are trained to use the device.

The Westerville Crew Athlete Safety Manual follows regulations from US Rowing and Safesport and can be found here: [Westerville Crew Safety Manual](#).

In addition to the US Rowing Safeguarding, Code of Conduct, and Safesport rules and regulations, Westerville Crew also requires all athletes and their families adhere to the Westerville Crew Code of Conduct. The [Code of Conduct can be found here](#).

SafeSport

Athlete abuse prevention, or SafeSport, is a comprehensive program used in US Rowing and in many other athlete sports programs. It was developed to educate coaches and other adults involved with youth sports on recognizing and preventing many kinds of abuse, including physical, emotional, and sexual. SafeSport also provides an anonymous system of reporting suspected violations.

Westerville Crew requires all coaches and adult athletes to take the SafeSport training. Adult athletes include youth athletes who are 18 and up, as well as athletes on the Masters team.

Incident Reporting

In the event of a safety incident, Westerville Crew follows this process:

1. Athletes are encouraged to bring concerns to their coaches immediately.
 - a. Coaches are to deal with issues as they happen and to address them in a timely manner.
 - b. Coaches work with the Conduct Chair and the WRC President to review and document the event. They continue to work with the team throughout the investigation of the incident until it is resolved.
2. Concerns that cannot be or are not addressed by a coach can be reported via the WRC Incident report in the following ways:
 - a. Concerns for either On-the-Water/Practice or athlete conduct incidents can be reported directly via this form: [Westerville Crew Safety Incident Report](#). This form can be completed anonymously if needed.
 - b. In lieu of submitting the incident report via the above Google form, you can include the information as outlined in that form in a document or email and send it to any member of the Board. The President and/or the Safety Chair are recommended, as they have the primary responsibility for handling incidents.
3. When an Incident report is received, if you include your name, you will get an acknowledgement within 24-48 hours. On-the-Water/Practice incidents will be addressed by the coaching staff. Athlete conduct incidents will be addressed initially by the Athlete Conduct Chair.
4. The Conduct Chair will investigate, discuss with parties involved, and discuss recommendations with Coaches and the Board President, and then work with this group to determine a resolution.
 - a. Coaches or the Conduct Chair will provide documentation of any discussion and the resolution with the athletes and families involved, depending on incident.
 - b. Note that in the interest of privacy for all involved, the reporting party will receive documentation of their discussion, but they will not receive information on the resolution or discussion with the accused individual(s).
 - c. If you are unhappy with the resolution of this process, you can escalate by [reporting to US Safesport](#).
5. If you have concerns or issues beyond which you feel comfortable completing an incident Report, reports can be made to US Safesport via their website ([US Safesport](#)). Safesport will

review reports and decide if the issue will stay within their jurisdiction or will be assigned back to WRC and the Conduct Chair to address.

VOLUNTEERING

Westerville Crew is an organization that runs on volunteer hours. All roles are volunteer positions, except coaching. To help the club thrive, we need assistance from every parent and guardian. Athletes, too, are often asked to volunteer their time to help with certain tasks.

Most of the jobs that help WRC run smoothly don't require knowledge of or expertise in rowing. In fact, many jobs require expertise and knowledge that fall in a variety of areas. You or your partner/spouse might have some of the skills we're always in need of, such as:

- Carpentry
- Electrics, plumbing
- Bookkeeping
- Law/attorney
- Party or event planning
- Community engagement
- Engine repair and maintenance
- Fundraising
- Grant writing
- Driving a truck with a trailer
- Organization
- Auto mechanic
- General handiness

If you have any of these skills and are interested in seeing how you can help out around the club, reach out to a board member. They'll put you in touch with the right person to find out more.

Volunteer jobs come in varying types and sizes, with different levels of commitment. The next few sections discuss the various types of volunteer opportunities available.

One-Off Requests

There are many tasks that need done once, or only every so often. One-off jobs often involve maintenance of WRC equipment or property. These jobs may be small or large, but won't have an on-going commitment.

For these, we put out a request via email or GroupMe. If you're interested in helping, just respond to the email or reach out to the contact, if any is given.

If you notice something that could be done to improve WRC equipment or property, please reach out to a board member or coach.

Season-Long Roles and Committees

WRC has many committees that drive the work that needs to be done. Each committee has a chair, and most have at least one other person helping out.

Some of the roles discussed in this section are one- or two-person jobs that are best handled by a single person or small team of people across a whole season or school year. They're regularly-occurring but don't require much time outside of when the tasks need to be done.

Other roles require time and effort on a weekly or monthly basis. The amount of time varies by role, and sometimes, by the season.

If you're interested in assisting with any of these committees or want to know more, reach out to the current chair. Some of these roles are listed on the [Our Board page of our website](#), along with the current chair, if there is one. If there isn't a current chair, ask a board member.

- **Alumni:** Responsible for keeping in touch with former WRC athletes, sharing their successes on social media, and inviting them to participate in fundraising and other events.
- **Apparel & Uniforms:** Responsible for organizing orders for apparel and uniforms, tracking the club apparel inventory, and sending apparel-related communications.
- **Away Trailer Driver:** Responsible for driving the away trailer to away regattas. Must have a truck capable of towing 3500-5000 lbs.
- **Food Tent for Regattas:** Responsible for managing regatta food tents for the club. Plans food offerings, puts together signup geniuses, shops for food and supplies, organizes the away trailer, and manages the food tent and volunteers on regatta days. Ideally this role is shared between two or three people.
- **Fundraising:** Responsible for planning and executing a variety of fundraising events and opportunities throughout the year. Often combined with Sponsorships.
- **Grants:** Responsible for finding and writing grants for various WRC needs.
- **Hotels & Travel:** Responsible for coordinating hotel blocks for club families for away regattas. Also responsible for arranging rooms and other travel needs for coaches for away regattas.

- **JCC/Site Maintenance:** Responsible for overseeing needed maintenance tasks at the JCC and the erg room. May include building or repairing docks, resetting dock anchors, launch/john boat maintenance, mowing, clearing underbrush, and so forth.
- **Launch Boats:** Responsible for maintaining the safety launch boats used by coaches on the water. Includes overseeing the safety equipment each boat is required to carry at all times. Familiarity with small engines is helpful.
- **Parent Engagement:** Responsible for building relationships with families by presenting at parent meetings, encouraging involvement, supporting in answering questions families may have about the club.
- **Safety:** Responsible for overseeing the safety of the athletes, handling safety-related incidents when they occur, and ensuring that safety policies are up to date and enforced.
- **Senior Parent & Banquet Planning:** Responsible for planning, organizing, and executing various events for athletes during their senior year. Plans the end of year banquet.
- **Social Media:** Responsible for our social media presence. Plans posts, advertising, and takes and shares photos of events, athletes, etc.
- **Sponsorships:** Responsible for seeking out individuals and businesses willing to sponsor the club in general or for home regattas. This can be combined with Fundraising.
- **Tent City Supervisor:** Responsible for the set up and tear-down of the WRC tents at regattas. Also responsible for any maintenance that the tents require.
- **Volunteer Coordinator:** Responsible for working with other committees chairs, both general and home regatta-specific, to determine volunteer needs, update the relevant Signup Genius if applicable, and assist with recruiting volunteers.
- **Webmaster:** Responsible for maintaining the club website.

Board of Trustees

The WRC Board of Trustees is responsible for the high-level operations of the club. This includes:

- Determining and upholding the club's mission and purpose.
- Providing financial oversight for the club.
- Ensuring adequate resources for all segments of the club.
- Safeguard legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability across the club.
- Ensuring effective organizational planning to keep the club on track toward fulfilling its goals.
- Enhancing the club's public standing.
- Determining, monitoring, and strengthening the club's programs and services.

- Supporting the executive director and head/lead coaches.

The current Board members are listed on the [Our Board page of our website](#). You can reach out to them at any time with questions or concerns related to the Board’s responsibilities as outlined above. Note that some concerns, such as those pertaining to day-to-day operations and coaching decisions, are more appropriately directed to the executive director or the coaching staff.

The existence and makeup of the Board is outlined in the WRC Bylaws. As outlined in the Bylaws, the Board of Trustees must consist of a minimum of three members. Up to four Board members hold Officer positions, and any additional Board members hold the title of At Large. You can download and read the Bylaws from the club website under [Resources](#).

If you have questions about how the board operates or you’re interested in joining the Board, reach out to a current Board member.

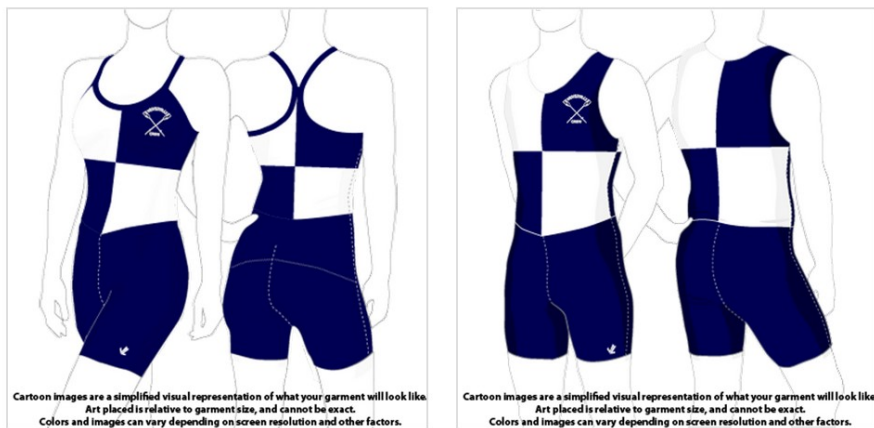
UNIFORMS AND SPIRIT WEAR

Questions about uniforms and spirit wear should be directed to the apparel chair at this address: apparel@westervillecrew.org.

Uniforms

All WRC athletes in the Juniors segment wear a uniform when competing. Middle School athletes don’t have a required uniform. They can wear a WRC T-shirt (see [Spirit Wear](#) below) or order a uniform tank.

For Juniors, all athletes wear a unisuit, often referred to as a uni. They look different for men and women. In the following image, the image on the left is women’s and the one on the right is men’s:



The club has some unis available that you can use to check sizing. If your athlete is in between measurements, this is recommended! Unis cannot be returned or exchanged. Contact the apparel

chair (apparel@westervillecrew.org) to arrange pickup of a uni to try on for sizing or for other questions about apparel.

Information about uniforms is available on the [Uniforms and Apparel page of our website](#). Orders are placed two to three times per year. Emails will be sent out with a link to the online store for ordering.

In colder weather, athletes often wear long sleeve spandex shirts or long spandex leggings under/over their uni. The long sleeved/legged pieces should be black or navy.

GORE-TEX Jackets

After you spend a season with WRC you'll notice or hear athletes and parents talking about GORE-TEX jackets. These garments are much-beloved by many athletes—and parents too. They're windproof, waterproof, and breathable, which makes them ideal for wearing in unpredictable weather when on the water.

These jackets are high quality and last a long time when properly cared for. They are not required pieces of the uniform. They are expensive, however many families find they're an excellent investment.

Orders for GORE-TEX jackets are generally made twice a year, before Spring and Fall seasons. Each order must contain a minimum number of jackets ordered. If that number is not met, the order cannot be placed. Typically, the minimum is six jackets. This number is set by the vendor we purchase from.

Spirit Wear

WRC has an on-demand spirit wear store. You can find a link to it on [this page](#). The items in the store change from time to time, but generally you can find t-shirts, hoodies, sweatshirts, hats, and sweatpants. If there's something you'd like to see in the store, contact the apparel chair (apparel@westervillecrew.org) too see if there's an option that can be added.

You can place an order through the store at any time. It's printed and shipped directly to you

BOAT LINEUPS AND BOAT/SEAT SELECTION

Winning races requires that coaches put together the fastest boats possible. They need to figure out which combination of rowers and coxswains is the fastest. To do this, coaches evaluate all the athletes, both individually and as a group, to determine who to place in the first varsity or novice boat, which in the second boat, and so on.

Next, within each boat, coaches must decide where each rower will sit. Where a particular rower sits in the boat can matter a great deal to the overall speed and efficiency of the boat as it moves through the water. Some seats are ideal for rowers with superb technique, while other seats are best for very powerful rowers. It isn't always obvious which rower should sit in which seat.

The selection process is one of the most exciting and difficult periods of the rowing season. It can be challenging for athletes and families because selection is not a straightforward process with single, easy choices. While one athlete may be faster based on erg scores, when on the water, they may not be as effective at moving the boat. Sometimes a lineup that doesn't seem like it should be the fastest just *works*. This can be very frustrating to athletes who aren't selected for a boat they think they should be part of.



The coaches' goal is to create an excellent racing experience for all athletes. They will place each athlete in the lineup they believe to be most beneficial, both for the athletes and the team.

The information in this section will help demystify the selection process. If you or your athlete have any questions about the process in general or your athlete's placement in a boat in particular, have your athlete speak with their coaches. Coaches can provide valuable feedback on the decision-making process.

Coxswains

Selection criteria for coxswains includes (in no particular order):

- **Technical ability:** Can the athlete steer a course efficiently-straight in the spring and around curves, boats and bridges in the fall? Can they launch and dock the boat effectively?
- **Safety:** Can the athlete manage stressful weather situations and dock safely? Can they think on their feet when necessary?
- **Technical understanding:** Does the athlete understand how to coach rowers to improve their rowing stroke?
- **Ability to inspire:** Does the athlete have the people skills required to manage and motivate a boat of different personalities and skill levels?

- **Attitude/Conduct:** Does the athlete have the maturity to be responsible for up to 8 of their peers?
- **Attendance:** Does the athlete consistently attend practice?

Rowers

Selection criteria for rowers includes (in no particular order):

- **Technical ability:** Does the athlete have a strong understanding of the rowing stroke? Poor technique from one rower impacts the entire boat.
- **Erg score:** What is the athlete's erg score? Erg score (time it takes to row 2 km) is a measure of the top speed the athlete can achieve on the water.
- **Seat racing:** Is the athlete faster than their peers when raced head to head in practice?
- **Attitude/Conduct:** Does the athlete display the maturity and grit required to race at a competitive level?
- **Attendance:** Does the athlete consistently attend practice?

Attitude and Conduct (Coxswains and Rowers)

An athlete's attitude and work ethic has an impact on lineup decisions. WRC encourages athletes to develop their character along with their physical and mental strength. We want athletes to demonstrate:

- A strong work ethic
- A healthy attitude toward competition and hard work
- A drive to improve themselves
- Mental and emotional resilience
- Humility
- Support for teammates
- Positive sportsmanship

Additionally, athletes are expected to pay attention to coaches and follow the direction and feedback they're given. They should accept coaching decisions and trust that coaches have the best interest of every athlete at the heart of every action and choice they make.

Fitness and Erg Scores (Rowers)

Physical fitness, mental toughness, and erg scores are interrelated. Physical fitness contributes to good performance on the water or on the erg. Mental toughness gives an athlete the edge to push

past the pain and eke out a better time or more power. Coaches look for a well-developed combination of these three factors.

Rowers demonstrate their physical fitness through their erg scores and their performance on the water, and when running or participating in other cross-training activities. These are easy to measure, and it's easy to see improvements with them. This makes these factors easy to focus on as THE determining factor in lineups.

Coaches periodically test rowers on the erg. Rowers must go a specified distance as fast as they can. The distances vary depending on the season. For example, in the fall, tests may be 5 km or 10km pieces to test the athletes' endurance. In the spring, tests are 2 km, which tests the athlete's sprinting ability.

Each rower's time is recorded after each test. The improvement in score over time gives coaches and athletes an idea of the improvement they've made. However, coaches know that not every athlete performs as well on the erg as they do on the water, or vice versa. This is why erg scores are only one factor when determining lineups.

Because erg scores are only one factor, it's possible for a rower to be in the second boat despite having a faster erg score than a rower in the first boat. If your athlete has a question about their boat placement, encourage them to talk to their coach.

Seat Racing

Seat racing is a test of an athlete's ability to move the boat. It's one of the factors coaches use to determine boat lineups. It's particularly helpful because it lets the coach see the difference a given rower makes in the boat.

This is how seat racing works. Two boats, typically either fours or eights, race side by side on the water. The coach will switch one rower at a time and have the boats race again, repeating this until they have their data. By switching only one rower at a time, the coach can see the direct impact the rower has on the boat's speed compared to the previous rower.

Coaches use seat racing when there are questions about possible lineups, but it's not used for every lineup for every regatta. There are factors that impact the method's effectiveness, such as wind and currents. Coaches have the experience to know when it's the appropriate tool to use, and which athletes they need to seat race.

COMMUNICATING WITH COACHES

Parents naturally want what's best for their children and it is hard to see them struggle or deal with the challenges that life – and rowing – throws at them. Rowing is a foreign sport to many crew parents, which can make it hard to understand coaching decisions.

WRC coaching staff has your athlete's best interests at heart. They have many years of experience in the rowing world, both as rowers or coxswains and as coaches. They understand how to work with student athletes, and how to grow young people into skilled rowers and coxswains.

There may be times when you want to talk to your athlete's coaches about something that's going on. You may have information that can help the coaches better understand your athlete in general or in regard to a specific situation.

When there is a conflict or a problem, we encourage parents to have their athletes speak with their coaches as a first step. This helps them learn to advocate for themselves, which is a lifelong skill they'll benefit from. It also helps them learn to think through problems they're having, as well as to learn to identify and articulate the issues.

You may want to reach out to a coach in addition to having your athlete speak with the coach. This can be a good way for both you and the coach to get another side of the story and a different perspective on the situation.

Is a Coach the Right Person to Ask?

WRC is a good-sized organization with a lot of moving parts. Depending on your question, there may be other people who could also answer your questions. For example:

- **General questions about rowing, regattas, practice, and so on** These are good questions to ask other parents or athletes.
- **High-level questions about the club, its goals and direction, and finances** Questions such as these are best directed to the Board.
- **Questions about your athlete or their specific performance** These should be addressed directly with the coach. Other crew parents or Board members are unlikely to have the full story or all the information necessary to respond with helpful, effective answers.
- **Problems with a coaching decision** Have your athlete speak with their coach first.
- **A coach has done something inappropriate, illegal, or abusive** Contact the head coach, Director of Rowing, or Safety Committee Chair.

How to Get in Touch with Coaches

The best way to get in touch with a coach quickly is through Remind. You can reply to any message a coach has sent and your message will go directly to the coach (it won't go to anyone else). You can also send emails to coaches. See the [Contact Information](#) section in this handbook.

Talking to coaches before or after practice, at a regatta, or with a spontaneous phone call are not recommended. All of our coaches have professional lives and other personal responsibilities they must attend to outside of the hours with WRC. If you want to have a phone call or a face to face conversation, message the coach through Remind and schedule a time that works for both of you.

WRC ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

WRC athletes are the most important part of the club. Without them, there would be no club. We have developed a framework to guide and focus our actions so the positive development of our athletes always comes first.

The framework recognizes that our club has athletes spanning a wide range of ages, from the 11 year old Middle School athlete to 18-year-old high school seniors. We also have Masters athletes ranging from 21 to 65+. The needs and abilities of athletes at each stage are different and need to be addressed thoughtfully.

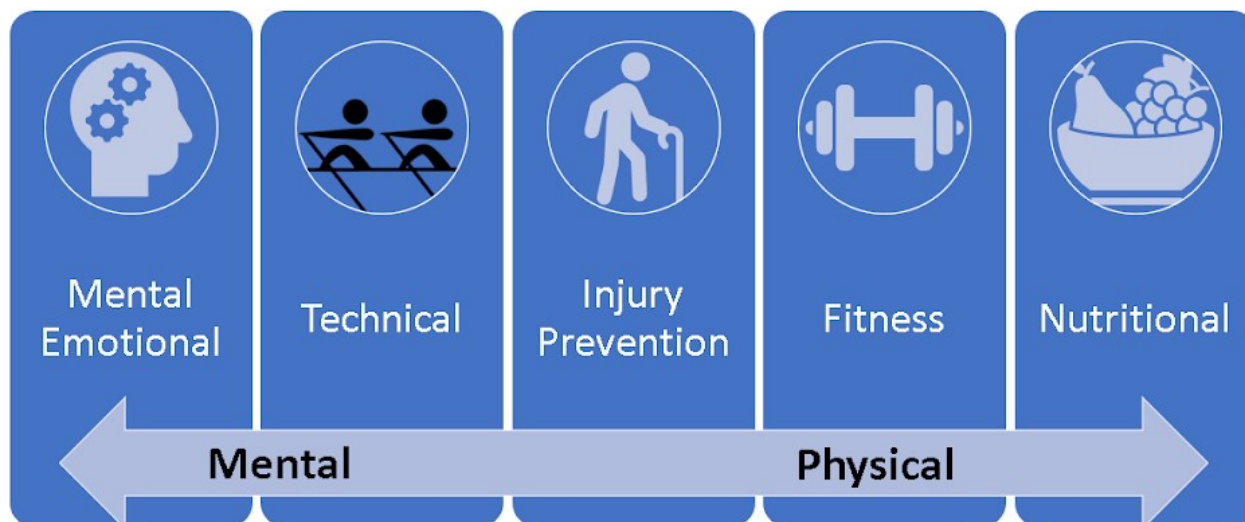
This framework has two major components

- **The Athlete Spectrum of Needs:** Athletes are more than their physical fitness and technical abilities. This component addresses the range of needs that must be met to support the whole athlete.
- **The Student Athlete Lifecycle Progression:** Athletes at each grade level have different capabilities and needs. This component focuses on the needs of each stage (Middle School, Novice, Varsity).

We believe these components are foundational to our program and intend to make progress in phases (Awareness/Education, Planning, Action/Results).

Athlete Spectrum of Needs

To be successful, WRC must meet all of the following needs:



Each need is met in appropriate ways throughout the year. For example:

- We meet mental and emotional needs through:
 - Discussions between coaches and athletes about mental toughness and resilience and how they relate to on-the-water success.
 - Offering parent webinars on supporting athlete mental health.
- We address the technical needs of rowers and coxswains by:
 - Running drills during every practice to focus on various technical aspects.
 - Offering opportunities for advanced skills development throughout the year.
- We address injury prevention by:
 - Planning plenty of cross training to balance athletes' physical efforts.
 - Allowing athletes to perform alternate exercises when needed, such as using the exercise bikes at the erg room instead of the ergs.
- We address fitness through:
 - Providing a variety of workouts to build endurance, increase VO2max, strength, and flexibility.
 - Building in opportunities for extended periods of rest between seasons. Rest is essential for mental and physical fitness.
- We support nutritional needs by:
 - Discussing nutrition with athletes, including what good nutrition looks like, the importance of macros, and how to eat well without eating too much.
 - Encouraging adequate hydration during every practice and between practices, particularly during hot weather.

Athlete Lifecycle Progression

The athlete lifecycle progression recognizes that there are different needs at each stage of the progression from not being a WRC athlete yet to after leaving WRC (or a college rowing program, if that is part of the athlete's journey). We build each program to focus on those needs and preparing the athlete to move into the next stage.

The progression is as follows:

- **Pre Westerville Crew:** Before joining WRC, kids may never have participated in a sport before. Or, they might have tried a variety of activities and never found their "home." Whatever their background, every WRC athlete eventually finds out about rowing and wants to try it (or is compelled to try it by a parent). To help draw potential athletes to the club, we focus on:

- Raising awareness of rowing and WRC in the community.
- Sparking interest among potential athletes.
- Creating opportunities for potential athletes to try rowing and meet current athletes.
- **Middle School:** Middle school rowing is focused on building general physical fitness and teaching foundational skills. The program is fun to engage the athletes and help them make friends, build confidence, and learn about the sport. The program prepares athletes to transition into the Juniors team when the time comes.
- **Novice:** The novice year can be a challenge, as athletes learn the team dynamics, make new friends, and figure out what's expected of them. For athletes new to rowing, they're also learning the sport. For former Middle School athletes, they're adjusting to the expectations of performing at a higher level than they're used to. The program:
 - Helps athletes integrate into the team and the sport.
 - Develops the discipline and commitment necessary to be successful.
 - Builds technical skills.
 - Develops physical fitness (rowers), leadership skills (coxswains and rowers), and mental toughness (everyone).
 - Prepares athletes to move into the varsity program.
- **Varsity:** The varsity program focuses on technical mastery, increasing physical fitness, and developing leadership skills. Varsity athletes have the opportunity to compete at a high level, and the program should help those athletes who want to race at select regattas, such as Nationals, to prepare for and pursue that goal.

Many varsity athletes go on to college, although not all varsity athletes will want to continue rowing in college. The varsity program is aware of the needs of athletes as they prepare to transition beyond high school and high school rowing. This includes providing guidance on the college recruiting process.

- **WRC Alumni:** After athletes leave WRC, they will ideally maintain a connection to their time with the club. They're a valuable link between the club and the wider community - both the general Central Ohio community and the rowing community. The club supports its alumni by remaining in touch with them and reaching out with opportunities for them to remain involved. Many alumni support club fundraisers or attend home-hosted regattas. Some alumni return as coaches or to row with the Masters team.

ROWING COMPETITIONS: REGATTAS

Rowing competitions are called regattas. They are day-long events that feature a number of races. Some regattas are multi-day events, but most are only one day long.

Spring and Fall are the primary competitive seasons. The Juniors team attends three to four regattas in each of these seasons and one or two during Summer season. The Middle School team typically rows in one regatta each season. Winter always ends with an indoor competition that takes place on erg machines.

The regattas WRC attends are selected to provide the best competition for our rowers. Club communications are sent out ahead of time about the schedule for the upcoming season. This allows families time to plan and make travel arrangements.

Siblings of athletes are welcome to attend. So are other family members and friends.

Where Regattas Are Held

Because of the nature of rowing, there aren't a lot of regattas held locally in the central Ohio area. Clubs and teams are spread out over wide enough areas that regattas almost always require travel. Most regattas that Westerville Crew attends are within a three hour drive from central Ohio.

WRC does not transport athletes to and from regattas. Each family is expected to bring their athlete to regattas. The costs of travel are likewise expected to be covered by athletes' families.

Each season, the Travel/Hotel committee coordinates hotel blocks that WRC families can book. These blocks provide a discounted rate. There is no requirement to stay in these hotels. Families are free to book at different hotels, at Air B&Bs, campgrounds, and so on.

When possible, Middle School athletes participate in local regattas only. If they do travel, they may not be expected to stay overnight like the Juniors athletes do. If you're unsure about the expectations for your Middle School athlete, reach out to the coach.

Regattas are hosted by rowing teams or clubs. Most of the time, they're held on the team's home water, where they practice. It's important to remember that we attend regattas as guests of the hosting team.

If you or another parent/guardian are not able to accompany your athlete to a regatta, you can arrange for them to travel with another family. Athletes are not allowed to drive themselves to a regatta.

Who Goes to Regattas (Middle School)

Participation in regattas for Middle School athletes is determined in the weeks leading up to an event. If enough athletes with sufficient experience are available and able to participate, the coaches put together a boat.

If you have questions about regattas for the Middle School segment, reach out to a coach.

Who Goes to Regattas (Juniors)

Most regattas are attended by all athletes. Sometimes regattas will be for varsity athletes only, or only for select boats. This will be clearly communicated by the club well in advance. However, if you're uncertain if your athlete will be expected to attend a particular regatta, have them ask their coach.

Regattas that only part of the Juniors segment participates in are called select regattas. There are two levels of select regattas. One level are the regattas that WRC takes only varsity athletes to, such as Head of the Hooch. The other level are the regattas that WRC only takes certain boats to, such as Nationals. See the [Select Regattas](#) section for more information.

Boat Dinners

Boat dinners are a tradition where athletes meet for dinner on the Thursday before the regatta. They're fun for the athletes and help create a sense of unity and bonding prior to racing.

The nature of boat dinners varies. Sometimes a large group of athletes may decide to attend together, regardless of boat lineups for the regatta. Other times, individual boat lineups may decide to go out - usually the eights, but fours may plan a dinner too.

Boat dinners are coordinated by the athletes in the boat. Someone typically takes the lead and communicates to the others in the group.

At the Venue

Regatta venues vary widely. Some are held at parks that are far from conveniences such as restaurants and stores. Others are held in the middle of a city. Most are somewhere in between these extremes.

It can be helpful to learn about the venue when preparing so you know what to expect and what to bring. Asking other parents is a great way to learn this - either on GroupMe or the Facebook group. You can also look up the area on a map to get a sense for what the area is like.

What to Expect

Venues at most regattas have the following areas:

- **Team tent areas:** This is where teams set up tents for athletes and parents/guardians/friends to spend the day when they're not racing or watching racing. Tents are usually 10 x 10 or 10 x 20 pop-ups. Teams typically have a food tent and space for athletes to store their gear.

Families can bring folding chairs, blankets, or their own pop-up tents or canopies (at most venues). At some regattas, we don't take tents or have a food tent; see the [Food Tent](#) section for more information.

- **Boat trailer parking:** Teams bring their own boats to most regattas. They load them onto trailers specifically designed for carrying racing shells and drive them to the venue.
- **Boat preparation space:** Before loading the boats, the riggers are removed from the shells (see the Rowing 101 handbook to learn about riggers). Before they can be raced, boats must be unloaded from the trailer, placed on special slings designed to hold racing shells, and the riggers must be put back on. This process is ideally completed the afternoon before the regatta, but sometimes must be done the morning of the event. The preparation space is typically near the finish line and the boat trailer parking.
- **Start and finish lines:** The starting line is usually not accessible for spectators. The venue is set up near the finish line. The finish line is usually accessible by spectators. You may not be able to be right on the finish line, however, due to the race officials who need primary access and visibility.
- **Launch Docks:** A venue has two kinds of docks: launch and recovery. Launch docks are where boats launch, or enter the water to row before the race. When it's time, the rowers carry their boat to the launch docks. The coxswain directs them and helps them navigate through the crowds of spectators and other boats. Other athletes carry the oars and distribute them to the rowers.
- **Recovery docks:** The recovery docks are where a boat leaves the water after the race. Other athletes who aren't racing at the time meet a boat at the recovery dock and take the oars back to the oar area.
- **Oars:** All the oars that teams use are stored in the same location, usually in between the launch and recovery docks.
- **Merchandise:** Most regattas have vendors. Some have food trucks. There is almost always a vendor selling t-shirts and other merchandise for the event. This is a source of fundraising for the host team. Athletes love their event t-shirts. Most vendors will accept credit cards.

Food Tent

The WRC food tent provides food for all athletes, coaches, and WRC family, friends, and guests. Breakfast, lunch, and plenty of snacks are available throughout the day. There is no charge for anyone to access the food tent. There is always more than enough food for everyone, but it doesn't happen without help from athlete families.

The food tent is managed by the food tent chair and co-chair. They plan the menu for each regatta and shop for some of the needed supplies. The rest of the food is brought by WRC families.

A week or so before the regatta, two Signup Genius signups are sent out. One is for food donations, the other for parents and guardians to sign up to volunteer in the food tent. Both of these signups are

very important. Families are expected to sign up and bring items from the food signup and to volunteer for at least one shift in the food tent at each regatta they attend.

The food tent volunteer signup has a number of different jobs listed. It's recommended for new families to sign up for general roles at first. The more times you help out in the food tent, the more familiar you'll be with the more specific jobs, such as grill or flat top cook. Other roles, such as driving the away trailer, require specific skills and equipment, such as having a large truck that can handle the trailer.

In addition to volunteering in the food tent on regatta day, volunteers are also needed to help with setting up the tent area on Friday and taking down the tents at the end of regatta day. If you have questions about helping out, reach out to other parents or to the current food tent chairs.

Regattas with No Team/Food Tents

There are a few regattas where WRC does not bring the away trailer, team tents, or food tent. Generally, these are the select regattas, such as Head of the Hooch.

In addition, there are some regattas that the whole team attends whose venue is not well suited to bringing tents. These situations will be clearly and well-explained ahead of time so you know what to expect and how to plan.

Race Day Information

When race day finally arrives, this information will help you navigate your first couple of regattas with more confidence.

When to Arrive - Friday and Saturday

The expectation is that Junior athletes and their families travel to the regatta on Friday afternoon. Coaches will communicate expectations to athletes regarding arrival times for Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. Communications about arrival times are sent out via Remind, so it's important to pay attention to those so you know the latest plans. Separate communications will be sent to Middle School athletes about their expected arrival times, as they are different from the Juniors.

Coaches typically want athletes to be at the venue Friday afternoon to help unload and rig boats. Sometimes it's possible for boats to go out on the water Friday afternoon to practice.

It's not always possible for every athlete to arrive in time to help on Friday, but when possible, they should be there. The more work that gets done on Friday, the less that needs to be done Saturday morning, which could mean an extra half hour of sleep.

Race days start early. The first races start between 7 and 9 AM. Generally, coaches expect athletes to arrive at the event venue between 6 and 7 AM, even if they aren't racing until later in the day. It's a team sport, and the whole team is expected to be there for the entire event. Additionally, there is often preparation that needs to be done before racing. Some boats may need to be rigged. Rowers and coxswains have equipment to check to make sure everything is working properly or to make repairs if it's not.

Driving There Saturday Morning While it is possible to drive to some regattas on the morning of the event, this is not recommended. Unforeseen weather or traffic may delay your ability to get to the regatta by the time the coaches have asked athletes to arrive.

Being late to a regatta can have serious repercussions. If your athlete is late, they may not be able to race. Regattas have scheduled event times and there isn't usually much flexibility in them. Boats must launch up to an hour before the designated start time of their event. If your athlete is late and misses that time, the coach must try to find a replacement rower or coxswain. If they can't, the entire boat must be scratched.

Where to Go and Where to Park

RegattaCentral.com has maps and information such as where to park. If you have questions or aren't sure where to go, ask parents who have been to that venue before.

On Friday afternoon, parking is typically less restricted than it is on race day. When you're at the venue on Friday, it's helpful to note where the parking for the day of the event is located so you're prepared the next day. Arrival time on Saturday morning is almost always while it's still dark, so knowing where to go is helpful.

Friday afternoon while the athletes are unloading and rigging boats, parents who are on site unload the away trailer and put up the team tents. The away trailer is a small trailer pulled to the regatta by a parent volunteer. It holds the team tents and all the equipment used for the food tent. Help is always welcome. The more hands we have, the faster the work goes.

When to Leave for Home

Athletes must remain at the venue until the coaches release them. This doesn't happen until all the boats are derigged and loaded onto the boat trailer. After this is done, coaches call parents to the boat trailer, where they do a medal ceremony to give medals to those boats that earned them. They usually say a few words about the day, and pass on updates, news, or plans for the following week.

Racing at most regattas finishes up between 3 and 4:30 PM. There is variation depending on how many events are on the schedule, whether racing started on time, and how much delay time occurred throughout the day.

As boats come off the water, coaches will direct athletes to derig them if they're not to be used again that day. Sometimes boats can be loaded on the trailer, as well. However, this isn't always possible because there's a certain order in which boats must be loaded onto the trailer. If the next boats to be loaded on the trailer are used in late races, loading must wait.

While athletes are derigging and loading the trailer, parents have work to do, too. The team tents must be disassembled. The food tent equipment must be cleaned, dried, and put away. The away trailer must be loaded. As with unloading on Friday, the more people who help with this, the faster the work goes.

The medal ceremony can happen anywhere from 4:30 to 6 PM. This makes for a long day, but it helps if you're prepared and know what to expect.

Incllement Weather

Rowing happens in rain, snow, cold, and wind - provided the conditions fall within the US Rowing safety guidelines. Athletes are expected to adjust their clothing choices and go out on the water. For information about unsafe conditions, see the [Safety](#) section of this handbook.

Most of the time, regattas proceed through all weather conditions. It's rare for a regatta to be canceled completely due to the weather.

If the weather for race day has potentially unsafe conditions in the forecast, adjustments may be made throughout the day. For example:

- The time between races may be shortened to fit in as many races as possible before expected dangerous conditions.
- The race distance may be shortened (Fall season only).
- Small boat races may be canceled due to high winds.
- Novice boats may be canceled if conditions are unsafe for less experienced rowers, but varsity races are kept as scheduled.
- Racing may be paused while a storm moves through.

It's important to plan and pack for all weather conditions at every regatta. Even if it's not in the forecast, it's a good idea to have rain gear or clothes for much colder temperatures available in your car. See the [What to Bring](#) section for more information about packing.

Race Lineups and Results

Coaches determine entries and submit them to the host club by a deadline that's typically a week or so before the date of the regatta. The entries appear on RegattaCentral.com under Entries and Clubs, but lineups may or may not be available, depending on whether the coach submitted them along with the entries.

The event times listed on RegattaCentral are not the official, final times when races will start! Race times can and do shift earlier or later depending on many factors, including weather or events with no entries being removed.

Rowers will be in one or two races in the fall and between one and three in the spring. Coxswains can have more than two races. Novice rowers are more likely to have one or two, while varsity rowers will almost always have two or three.

Note It may seem like a lot of work to go to a regatta for only one race. However, it's important to remember that rowing is a very physically demanding sport, even when the race is a short sprint. Novice rowers may not be physically ready to take on two races in one day.

Heat Sheets and Race Results. Race heat sheets are made available by the Thursday or Friday before race day. Heat sheets specify which lane and heat boats are in for Spring and Summer races, and bow numbers for boats in all seasons. Bow numbers are plastic cards with numbers on them and attach

to the bow of each boat in a race. Each boat on the heat sheet is listed with the stroke seat rower's name. In the Fall, the [rolling start](#) is organized by bow number.

Heat sheets are available on the site used for race timing and results. Most regattas use HereNow.com, but some use Crewtimer.com. Some small regattas use Google Sheets spreadsheets.

The site that is used for heat sheets and race results will be sent out in communications about the regatta. RegattaCentral also often includes a note about the site/service they use for timing and results.

First/Second/Third or A/B/C Boats

One of the things you will see in regatta race lists and entries are terms such as *first varsity* or *second varsity*, or *Westerville A* and *Westerville B*.

First, second, and third varsity or novice is a way of ranking boats by their relative speed. The first varsity boat is faster than the second varsity boat, which is faster than the third varsity boat. This is often abbreviated with 1V8 or 1V4, 2V8 or 2V4, and so on.

Novice can have first and second boats as well. This would be abbreviated as 1N8 and so on.

A, B, and C are used when a team has more than one boat entered into the same race. There's not always a correlation between the letter label and the speed of the boat. Sometimes the assignment of letters is random.

Watching the Races

Watching rowing is similar to watching a cross country meet in that you'll see your rower in their boat for a few seconds out of the entire race. They can be very exciting seconds if it's a sprint race, where boats are racing each other in lanes or in a Fall race where one boat may actively be passing another boat as they go past you.

Each regatta venue has a slightly different viewing experience. Unlike other sporting events, where there are bleachers and seats or defined spaces for spectators, at most regattas, spectators find places along the body of water where they can get a good view. This might require climbing over rocks or walking through some underbrush.

Start and Finish Lines. The starting line is sometimes visible for sprint races, but it's rarely accessible by spectators. For Fall head races, it's three miles upstream.

Regatta venues are located near the finish line. You can generally get close to the finish line, but you might not be able to be right at the finish. Race officials and timing volunteers need to be right on the finish with good visibility so they can do their jobs. At some venues, this obstructs the spectators' view of the finish line partially or even completely.

Westerville Spotting. Depending on the body of water, the racing boats may be pretty far away. You can identify Westerville boats by:

- **Looking for the bow number.** The bow numbers are printed on plastic cards attached to the bow or front of the boat, and on a bib attached to the back of the bow seat rower. You can look up WRC bow numbers on HereNow.com or whatever timing service the regatta uses.
- **Watch for WRC uniforms:** All Juniors rowers wear the same uniform, which is usually pretty distinctive and easily visible from a distance. Middle School athletes aren't required to wear uniforms.
- **Watch for WRC oar blades:** Most of WRC's oar blades have a pattern on them that matches the uniforms. When boats start to come into view in the distance, you can watch the oar blades flashing in and out of the water. Eventually you'll be able to see our blade pattern. It looks like this:



- **Binoculars:** Some parents bring binoculars to regattas. There are some venues where they're really helpful.

It can be pretty hard, or even impossible, to tell which boat is ahead during races. In sprint races (Spring and Summer seasons), boats race in lanes and all start at the same time. In these races, you can tell who's ahead depending on your perspective and the angle you're viewing the race from.

In Fall races, boats start the race one by one. Most of the time, race officials start boats in bow number order. So if your athlete's boat passes and is ahead of lower bow numbers in the race, it's a good sign that they're having a great race. The only way to know for sure how your athlete's boat placed is to check the results.

Generally, you can get a sense for what kind of row any given boat is having based on how they're rowing. As one parent put it, "If they look like they are not working that hard* and you don't see a lot of extra motion or splashing, they are probably doing well. If it looks like they are working really hard, they aren't moving together, or you see a lot of splashing, they are probably having a rough day."

*Don't let appearances fool you - rowers that make it look easy are still working incredibly hard.

Athlete Expectations

At regattas, athletes are expected to:

- Arrive at the time and place specified by their coach, both of the evening before the regatta and on race day.
- Be driven to the regatta by a responsible adult (parent, guardian, or another rower's family). Athletes may not drive by themselves to regattas, even if they're licensed drivers. This is a US Rowing rule that WRC adheres to. Athletes can drive if a parent is in the car; It's a good opportunity for learners to get highway hours.
- Bring their uniform, socks, and any other accessories or equipment they require to race (inhalers, hats, sunglasses, water bottles, etc).

- Be well hydrated. Hydration starts days before race day.
- Follow the WRC Code of Conduct at all times. This in essence means they're expected to display good sportsmanship and respect for teammates, athletes on other teams, race officials, regatta staff and volunteers, and all property that isn't theirs.
- Pay attention to Remind messages from their coach so they're informed throughout the day.
- Arrive at their boat at the time specified by their coach prior to each of their races. This is usually an hour and a half to two hours before the race's listed start time. They should arrive at the specified time even if the regatta is running behind.
- Complete all tasks assigned to them by the coaching staff. Athletes who aren't racing or preparing to race may be asked to carry oars for boats that are launching to start a race, or to meet other boats at the recovery docks to help carry oars.
- Remain at the venue for the duration of the event until released by their coach.
- Help the team when there is work to be done. Athletes spend a portion of regatta day hanging out with their teammates in the athlete's tent, at the food tent, or around the boats and boat trailer. This is fine, unless they've been assigned a job or there's work to do, such as derigging and loading boats.

Parent/Guardian Expectations

At regattas, parents and guardians are expected to:

- Drive their athlete to the regatta venue and ensure they arrive on time as specified by the coach. If work or other obligations mean your athlete will be late, ensure they know this ahead of time and that they communicate this to their coach.
- Plan ahead to ensure their athlete has transportation to the regatta, if the rest of the family is unable to attend.
- Sign up to bring food donations for the food tent. You can also opt to contribute a monetary donation instead of bringing food items.
- Sign up for at least one shift in the food tent. If your athlete is racing during your volunteer shift, just let the food tent coordinator know. They will understand and be fine with you taking fifteen or twenty minutes to go watch the race.
- Assist with unloading the away trailer and setting up the tents on Friday afternoon, and/or assist with putting away food tent equipment, tearing down the tents, and loading the away trailer on Saturday afternoon.
- Bring reusable water bottles and coffee cups. WRC provides a limited supply of disposable cups but prefers families to bring non-disposable ones. Many venues appreciate clubs limiting waste and ask visiting teams to use reusable cups as much as possible.

- Follow the WRC Code of Conduct at all times. All spectators associated with WRC are expected to display good sportsmanship and respect for teammates, athletes on other teams, race officials, regatta staff and volunteers, and all property that isn't theirs.

What to Bring and Other Survival Tips

Regatta days are long and you spend all day outside in the elements. It's important to plan for your comfort. This is a basic list of essentials that other rowing families have found helpful.

There's a saying that regattas are always hotter than you expect, colder than you expect, and wetter than you expect. Any given regatta can be all three of these things over the course of the day. It's best to be prepared for anything and everything.

Remember that you'll be arriving very early in the morning. Even if the temperature later in the day will be warm, it's likely to be cool for the first hour or two. Also, early mornings are often dewy. You'll be walking on the grass around our tents, so you may want different footwear from what you'll wear later in the day.

The following list is helpful for anyone attending a regatta. However, Middle School athletes and their families may not need everything on this list. Typically, Middle School athletes are not expected to spend the entire day at the regatta site, as Junior athletes are.

- Folding chairs. Chairs with umbrella attachments are nice on very sunny days.
- Umbrella, raincoats, or ponchos for rain.
- Reusable water bottles and coffee cups.
- Food tent donations and 2 gallons of water. The water is used for drinking, cooking, and washing dishes.
- Sunblock, bug spray, pain killers, and other medication or comfort items. The team does have a first aid kit on site for injuries.
- A dry set of clothes for your athlete. Rowing is a very splashy sport and athletes appreciate dry clothes for the drive home.
- Baby wipes are useful for all kinds of things, from hand washing to your athlete wiping down before getting into the car at the end of the day.
- Headlamp or flashlight. The first hour or two on site can still be dark, particularly early in the spring or late in the fall.
- Battery packs and charging cords for phones and other devices.
- Hats, sunglasses, blankets (if it's cold).
- Clothes for all possible weather.

- Your athlete should bring the items described in the [What to Wear and Bring to Practice](#) section of this handbook. Most of that is applicable to regattas. The essential items are:
 - Uniform.
 - Long sleeve/legged under layers for cold weather.
 - Sunshirts, cooling towels, and battery-powered handheld fans for warmer weather.
 - Hoodies and sweatpants, hat, gloves, warm coat for cold weather.
 - Socks - two or three pairs minimum. Wool is favored by some, but regular athletic socks work just fine.
 - Shoes that can get wet to wear to and from the docks. Some athletes want other shoes for walking around the venue.
 - Deodorant and sunblock.
- Binoculars.
- Entertainment: Book, Kindle, iPad, work, puzzle books, etc.
- A personal pop-up tent or canopy. These are permitted at most venues, but some locations have restrictions.
- A personal cooler if you plan on bringing your own food or drinks.
- A folding wagon is a handy tool to carry things from the parking to the team tent area. Sometimes it's quite a walk.

What Not to Bring

- Alcohol.
- Pets.
- Glass containers.
- Explosives.
- Weapons.
- Anything forbidden by the venue. Check RegattaCentral or contact the host regatta's planning chair if you have questions about whether something you want to bring is allowed.

SELECT REGATTAS (JUNIORS ONLY)

All Junior athletes attend most of the regattas that WRC participates in. However, there are some regattas that only part of the team attends:

- **Varsity-only select regattas:** Attended all varsity athletes. Head of the Hooch in Fall season and Dogwood Sprints in Spring season are two varsity-only regattas. See [Varsity-Only Select Regattas](#) for details.
- **Competitive select regattas:** Highly competitive regattas that are only attended by individual boats. US Rowing Youth Nationals and Head of the Charles are two of the most well-known competitive select regattas. See the [Nationals](#) and [Head of the Charles](#) sections.

Because select regattas are not attended by the whole club, they are considered to be outside the regular regatta schedule covered by seasonal fees. WRC policy is that participating athletes' families cover all costs associated with attending. This includes:

- Coaching fees.
- Coaches' travel, hotel, and per diem food costs.
- The costs of trailering boats to the regatta or renting boats at the event. For competitive select regattas, we often work with other regional clubs to have our boats added to another club's trailer. In this case, the cost is whatever the other club asks of us.
- Regatta entry fees.
- For Nationals only: Upgraded US Rowing membership.

Additionally, families are responsible for their own travel and hotel expenses, rental cars, food, parking, and so on. Venues such as Nationals charge an entrance fee for spectators, which includes athlete families.

There are other costs that can arise. For example, special shirts are often printed for athletes attending Nationals. These are optional. However, they do create a sense of bonding among the athletes and are a memorable keepsake.

Families attending competitive select regattas often go in together to help reduce some of these expenses. Competitive select regattas span more than a couple of nights, so sharing costs is very helpful. Families may rent a large vehicle and make the drive together, or share an Air B&B/VRBO house rental. These plans are handled by the participating families. WRC does not initiate or make any of these arrangements. The only travel plans WRC is responsible for are those for the coaches who are attending the event.

Varsity-Only Select Regattas

Some regattas are for varsity athletes only. When a regatta is for varsity athletes only, it's because the level of competition or that the way the events are categorized means that novice athletes would not be as likely to have positive experiences. Participation could be demoralizing and defeat the goal of providing confidence-boosting experiences during the novice year.

In addition, as was noted in the [Athlete Lifecycle Progression](#) section, the novice year is intended to ease athletes and families into the sport. To facilitate this, they are not expected to take on the same travel or financial commitments as experienced rowers. This approach helps build a strong foundation while keeping the experience accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

Head of the Hooch in Fall season and Dogwood in Spring season are two varsity-only regattas that WRC attends regularly. Both are located in Tennessee, which makes them a much longer drive. Both regattas are larger than the other regattas WRC attends, drawing teams from a much wider area.

Varsity-only regattas are not select regattas in the true sense, because the only distinction is varsity vs novice. There is not a requirement to qualify, as with Nationals, and the number of entries is not as limited as it is with Head of the Charles.

However, Head of the Hooch does have some rules about entries that affect the number of entries WRC can make some years. The Hooch offers guaranteed entries to boats with an adjusted time within 10% of the winning adjusted time in each event from the previous year's Head of the Hooch. Boats that finished outside of 10% of the winning time or that didn't compete in that event in the previous year are entered into a lottery.

Athletes' families may incur the additional expense to cover coaches' travel and boat trailering costs for varsity-only regattas, similar to other select regattas. The need for this is determined before the start of the season and is communicated to families in advance.

Nationals

US Rowing Youth Nationals are held in June every year. This event is the culmination of the Spring season and brings athletes from all across the country.

To earn a spot at Nationals, a boat must qualify at the Midwest Junior Rowing Championships, which is always the last regular-season regatta that WRC attends in Spring season. US Rowing has established that the top four finishers in each event automatically earn a place at Nationals.

WRC has the following additional parameters that must be met for the club to send a boat to Nationals:

- **No roll-down bids accepted.** This happens when a boat did not initially qualify, such as by placing fifth in the event, but is granted a chance to attend when one of the qualifying boats from that event declines their bid. WRC does not accept roll-down bids. Boats must qualify outright.
- **Must beat another boat.** If there are only four boats in the race and a WRC boat finishes fourth, that boat will not go to Nationals.

- **Qualifying events only.** Varsity events only; novice events are not considered, even if a WRC boat finishes in the top four spots. Additionally, 2V boats that qualify only go to Nationals if the 1V boat also goes. For example, if the 2V8 qualifies, it will not go unless the 1V8 also qualifies.

Head of the Charles

Head of the Charles is held the first week of November in Boston, Massachusetts. It's the largest three-day regatta in the world, with over 2500 boats competing. By comparison, most of the regattas we attend have 300-600 competing boats.

The Charles restricts attendance using guaranteed entries and a lottery system. Boats that meet the performance requirements (finishing in the top 25% or top half, depending on the event) receive a guaranteed entry in the same event-division at the following year's Charles. If they don't attend the next year, they lose their guaranteed entry.

Each year, the Charles has a number of entries that it awards to teams that did not compete in the preceding year. These entries are awarded by lottery. The number of lottery entries is determined by the difference between the maximum number of entries in a division (sweep boats, singles, or doubles) and the number of guaranteed entries that are being used. You can learn more about the [Charles' entry acceptance](#) policy and criteria on the regatta's website.

Because WRC does not attend the Charles regularly, we do not have guaranteed entries. This means that when we do attend, we must rely on the lottery to obtain entries. WRC must decide which events we want to compete in, then submit a request for an entry in those events. We must then wait for the Charles regatta committee to complete the lottery draws and notify us of the results.

In a given year, we may receive all the entries we submitted for, only some, or none. It's important for athletes and their families to understand how this process works and to be patient. Everyone needs to be prepared for the possibility that they may not be able to go to this regatta.

WRC understands that this is hard and is very disappointing for athletes who cannot attend. We know that families must make travel arrangements and other plans, and that these plans are time-sensitive. If your athlete is in a boat that's being entered into the Charles lottery, we recommend only making travel arrangements that can be refunded, just in case.

Home Regattas

Each year, WRC hosts one to three home regattas. These are exciting events that give athletes, WRC coaches, as well as parents and guardians a completely different regatta experience.

Hosting a regatta is a huge undertaking that brings 1500 to 3000 athletes and spectators to our venue. It requires a lot of planning and volunteer hours, both on regatta day and in the days and months leading up to the event:

- Planning begins six to eight months before the event date.

- In the couple of weeks leading up to the regatta, there is a large amount of work to be done to prepare the buoys and other equipment.
- On the day of the regatta, we have dozens of volunteer jobs that need filled.
- After the event, there is work required to disassemble the course, and clean up and return equipment to storage so it's ready for the next home regatta.

All volunteer needs are communicated ahead of time so everyone can sign up and make plans to assist.

WRC expects all families to give generously of their time to help make each event a success. We know that everyone has busy lives. WRC Board members and Regatta Planning Committee volunteers are in the same boat. The more families that help out, the wider the workload is spread, requiring fewer hours on average per family.

Benefits of Hosting a Regatta

Home regattas are beneficial to the club in many ways:

- Name recognition for WRC.
- Building relationships within the local community where we host the event.
- Fundraising from the event. Regattas can be very profitable to the host club. Rowing is an expensive sport. WRC relies on fundraising to help cover the costs of equipment (a new eight costs \$30,000 to \$50,000), site maintenance, and more.
- Home water advantage for our athletes, and a chance for more local family and friends to come out and cheer on our team.
- Creates unity across segments of the club as Juniors, Middle School, and Masters athletes, as well as parents and guardians and other family members work together toward a common goal.
- Saves the club money. When we travel to a regatta, it costs the club several thousand dollars in entry fees, coaches travel expenses, and the cost of driving the boat trailer to the event. When we host a regatta, we don't have these costs.
- Promotes rowing in the community.

Even our athletes contribute time to preparation for a regatta. In the week before a home regatta, Juniors athletes help coaches and other club volunteers putting in the race course, assembling docks, and preparing buoys. They assist with taking the course out and putting away equipment after the event, too. This takes a lot of time and effort - parents and guardians are welcome to help with these tasks. The more help we get, the more energy athletes have to devote to racing.

Don't worry if you aren't familiar with rowing. There is a wide variety of volunteer needs. There are plenty of jobs that don't require knowledge of the sport or any special skills. For more information about home regattas, see the [Home Regatta Volunteer Handbook](#).

College Recruiting

Many WRC athletes are interested in continuing their rowing career in college. WRC alumni have gone on to row at many colleges and universities, including well-known schools such as Harvard, Clemson, and Purdue. There are plenty of smaller schools that offer rowing, as well, such as Marietta College and Adrian College.

Any athlete who is interested in rowing in college is encouraged to consider doing so. There are different kinds of rowing programs that range from intense and highly structured D1 programs to club rowing, which is generally student-run and less structured.

Coaches will coordinate presentations and visits with college recruiters throughout the year. Oftentimes, coaches will visit to meet with a specific segment due to the differences in college recruitment for men's and women's teams.

Athletes are encouraged to discuss their college goals with coaches well in advance of fall of senior year so that coaches can help with guidance and connecting to college recruiters.

Rowing and Regatta Etiquette

In addition to the common-sense etiquette you'd follow in any public setting or youth sporting event, it's important to be aware of the following rowing-specific guidelines.

1. Athletes carrying boats have the right-of-way every time. If you're in the boatyard or walking around at a regatta venue, be vigilant for the boats. Stop and wait for them to move past you. If a boat is stopped and waiting, it's okay to walk around the front or back of the boat, but don't touch any part of the boat. It's also important to listen for coxswains calling out.

If you hear "Heads up!" look out, you might be in danger. Boats sometimes need to turn corners or even a complete 180° around, which means one end of the boat swings around. They need a lot of clearance to do this, and nearby spectators need to watch out or they may get hit by accident.

2. It may be tempting to offer to help with carrying the boat or the oars, but generally it's not needed. There are details about how to carry a boat that are important to know in order to avoid harming the boat. If someone asks you to help, go ahead. But it's best not to try to jump in unasked.
3. When athletes are rigging, derigging, or preparing their boat to row for practice or to race, give them space and don't distract them. Whether it's at practice or a regatta, athletes need to focus on what they're doing with the boat. Before a race, athletes are concentrating on their mental race prep. Properly preparing a boat is very important. An improperly prepared boat can be unsafe to row. Also, racing shells are very expensive equipment that cannot easily be replaced if damaged.
4. At regattas, cheering is perfectly acceptable! Of course, it's expected that all spectators will keep their cheering positive and clean. Keep in mind that most of the time, athletes won't be able to hear you, either because they're too far away on the water or because they're focused so intently on what they're doing that everything else is tuned out.

Some spectators ring cowbells too, which is fine. However, don't bring airhorns or similar noisemakers. At the race finish, airhorns are used to mark each boat as they cross the finish line. Spectators with airhorns may cause confusion for the race timers or to the athletes on the water.

5. Don't ask or expect your athlete to leave a regatta early. If you have a special circumstance where you need to leave a particular event early, have your athlete speak to their coach. Most of the time, however, it's best to plan on being at each regatta until the end.

Rowing is a team sport, and all athletes are expected to stay for the entire event to support their teammates and to assist with derigging boats and loading them onto the trailer at the end of the day. After the trailer is loaded, the team holds a medal ceremony. It's expected that all athletes be there to cheer for their teammates, even athletes who didn't earn a medal.

We know regatta days are long and exhausting and parents are anxious to head home, but it's important to support the team and to respect the club's rules and expectations.

6. In rowing, "paddling" means something specific. That is, rowers are told to paddle when they should be going slowly and without much power or speed. A paddle is a rest stroke. For this reason, if you refer to rowing in general as paddling, your athlete may react negatively or be upset. Calling all of practice a paddle implies they weren't working hard.

