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TIPS FOR COXSWAINS

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In addition to the upper and lower Potomac River course maps with guidance on bridge arches/rocks, here are some additional tips for new coxswains or rowers who are Cox For A Day.

1. Safety and steering are your most important responsibilities. The Potomac River is a highway with a clear/empty middle 'lane' used only by launches or boats crossing the river at a 90 degree angle to change direction.
 - a. Before getting Hands On, ask the coach if we are meeting upstream near the boardwalk/flags or across the river heading downstream.
 - b. Be particularly vigilant when leaving the TBC dock. Potomac Boat Club singles, doubles, and quads sometimes approach quickly from downstream as they are ending their practice when we launch.
 - c. Steering an 8: Right hand forward and the boat moves to the right/starboard.
 - d. Steering a 4: If the lever is on your right: Lever forward moves the boat to the right/starboard.
2. LIFO: Coxswain is Last In and First Out at the dock when getting in and out of the boat.
3. Coxswain's seat.
 - a. In an 8, it's a skinny seat. You may be more comfortable sitting on a yoga block or life preserver but note that you are then elevating your weight and more likely to negatively affect the set of the boat.
 - b. In a bow-loaded 4, between bow seat and coxswain there's a horizontal bar which ideally is a neck rest not a back rest. The more you are able to lie down, the better the set is likely to be.
4. River Level: The river level changes due to tides and rainfall 200 miles upstream. Note the current water level of the river either online at Rock Creek's Safety/Water Conditions link or by noticing how steep the ramps are when walking down to the dock:
 - a. Steep ramp = low water due to low tide or otherwise, so err on the side of steering somewhat away from riverbanks and just a bit closer to the middle of the Potomac River if you have a choice. When water is low, notice exposed

rocks to avoid steering near when water level is higher/normal. When water is low, avoid Fletcher's cove due to too many rocks just below the surface.

- b. Ramp nearer to horizontal = flood or near flood, so higher water has a stronger current and higher probability of large debris flying down the river. If get to Fletcher's cove, you are unlikely to scrape rocks but the current is strong there so turning is tricky and the journey downstream from there is fast.
5. Docking:
- a. Approaching the dock from downriver, aim for the US flag flying in front of the TBC boathouse. Note that the tide and/or current may affect your docking.
 - b. After docking, walk the boat a length upriver to quickly give the next shell room to dock. Frequently there are additional 8s and 4s queued up downstream and waiting to dock.