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Rowing!!!

# Rowing

FOR

# PARENTS

St. Andrew Rowing Edition

Everything you ever  
wanted to know but  
was afraid to ask  
your Rower!

*A Reference  
for the  
Rest of Us!*



ST. ANDREW  
ROWING CLUB



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# Welcome



Dear Athletes and Families,

Welcome to the St. Andrew Rowing Club Season Kickoff. I know we are all looking forward to returning to a more normal season, but we will continue to stay vigilant and focused on our team's safety and ability to compete. I'm excited about the challenges ahead and look forward to working with you and the coaches as we build a winning team on and off the water.

Rowing is a unique, challenging, and demanding sport, but more importantly, it's rewarding and fun! The sport requires hard work, dedication, mental toughness, and safety awareness. In return, the sport will give you so much more - a strong, competitive team, a fit body, a healthier mind, and a sense of community.

Rowers are some of the most committed, disciplined, and passionate athletes in the world. In addition to the skills developed with oars and a shell, this is a highly competitive sport that requires great strength and fitness. The first few days of training were probably a little uncomfortable and stressful for some as they get to know not only proper techniques but also working together as a team. Practices will be exhausting, and they won't always go well. Stick with it and trust the process! When your athletes complain, listen, and encourage them. They will soon find the joy in the sense of speed, strength, and grace that's at the heart of this amazing sport.

Please take some time to read over the information in this booklet. It details rowing guidelines, requirements, and terminology with which everyone should be familiar. I also encourage you to stay connected by "friending" us on Facebook and Instagram and share with your family and friends. Expect to see more social media heading your way as we get back on track this season. And as we get closer to racing, the emails will begin coming more frequently and will be packed full of information. Out of respect for our volunteers and their time, please take the time to digest and organize the incoming emails.

Being part of St. Andrew Rowing Club is a tremendous source of happiness for me. I have met so many families and friends over the years and have had the opportunity to work alongside some of the most amazing and selfless volunteers. I hope that all of you will enjoy the thrill of being involved in this incredible program and being a part of the SA Family!

See you on the water soon!

Alice Westerfield  
President  
St. Andrew Rowing Club

# The History of SARC



There is hardly a rower in Atlanta who has never heard of John Hunter. Mr. Hunter was a devout Georgia Tech supporter. In fact, Mr. Hunter was the first non-Alumnus to hold a position on the Georgia Tech Advisory Board.

In 1986, Georgia Tech started a rowing team with used boats and oars purchased through the Student Foundation and surprisingly, their Men's four medaled in all the regattas they entered their first year and finished 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation. The team grew the following year, and in 1988 the president of the club had heard rumors about a GT board member named John Hunter.

During his studies at MIT, John Hunter fell in love with the sport of rowing. Although he had only rowed for a year before having to give up the sport, John Hunter retired to a beautiful estate along the Chattahoochee river and dreamed of seeing the long, sleek shells skim across the waters between Sandy Springs and Roswell.

In 1988, John Hunter was approached by the GT team and asked to help take them get to the next level of competition. He agreed to sponsor the GT crew and worked to identify and secure a permanent facility. Mr. Hunter contacted Reverend E. Peter Ludden to gain his support. And later in 1988, the Georgia Tech Rowing Club received permission to build its boathouse on the banks of the Chattahoochee River, behind St Andrew Catholic Church. If you stand at the boathouse and look back at the church, you can also see John Hunter's name on the face of the church building.

One stipulation for the arrangement was that Georgia Tech would establish a youth only rowing club which started in the fall of 1988 with great success. In 1990, the youth team and Georgia Tech separated and the St. Andrew Rowing Club, or SARC, took the name of the church while keeping the black and yellow colors of Georgia Tech. In 1989, both clubs co-hosted the first Atlanta Rowing Festival right here on the Chattahoochee River. The festival was later renamed the **John Hunter Regatta** in honor of the vision and generosity of Mr. Hunter for building an incredible rowing teams here in Roswell. The John Hunter was relocated to the Olympic Rowing Center on Lake Lanier and continues to be well attended by Jr. Clubs and Collegiate Teams from across the country.

# Chapter 1



## ***GENERAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES***

### ***Why Do They Want To Arrive So Early?***

Most SA squads are expected to already be warmed up and ready to go by the time practice begins. This takes some time, as it includes carrying the oars and launches down to the river if the squad is on the water, and the appropriate equipment out in the boat yard if the squad is on land. The rowers like to show up early to run their laps so they can get these activities underway.

### ***Why Doesn't Practice Ever End On Time?***

Sometimes the coaches want to talk to the rowers after practice as a group to discuss an issue or prepare them for something coming up later in the week. Sometimes your child may have a particular issue that s/he needs to discuss with the coach. When they are practicing on the water, unexpected trouble getting a boat docked or onto a boat rack may delay not only the kids in that boat, but anyone in a boat behind them in line. Sometimes even your child may be running late because they are busy socializing with their teammates which is an important part of this great sport! Most parents bring reading materials, walk the local paths and parks, or make calls during delays.

### ***What's The Big Deal With Missing Practice?***

Unlike most sports high school sports, many kids are rowing for the first time and are trying to go from learning basic skills to being competitive at a regional and national level in a couple of years. Missing building blocks can cause a child to fall behind.



**Secondly**, when the kids are on the water, coaches plan the line-ups in the boats carefully and one unexpectedly missing rower can mess up a line-up or in the worst case, keep the other rowers in a boat from being able to practice on the water (which makes the other kids really MAD!).

A lot of time goes into planning practice, whether it's on the water or land, and any unexpected absences results in the coaches having to spend valuable practice time re-doing their plans.

### ***Missing Practice?***

It is your child's responsibility to let the coach know if s/he is missing practice – so ideally your child should email the coach as early as possible in the day in order to give the coach time to adjust line-ups. If your child is too sick to get on the computer, you should e-mail the coach. Please keep in mind that the coaches' preference is always to hear from their athlete, your child.

## *What Should They Wear?*

All athletes should wear short or long spandex depending on the weather (some kids wear shorts over their spandex for running and/or weightlifting), a comfortable sweat-wicking shirt that is not too long, running shoes and enough layers to stay warm.

Remember – your child does not know for certain whether they will be on land or water on any given day – so they need to be prepared!

Some kids are self-conscious in the beginning about wearing spandex – but anything else is likely to get caught in the seat mechanism of the boat when they are rowing. (This is also the reason for not wearing shirts that are too long.) Don't worry – they get used to it quickly!

## *What To Bring To Practice?*



Besides the layers to stay warm, rowers should bring a water bottle, Band-Aids, extra hair ties and any required medicine (inhalers, epi pens, etc.). Make sure your child communicates any potential necessary medical equipment (inhalers, epi pens, etc.) to their coach!

## *Visitors At The Boathouse*

Please remember that parents are not allowed to enter beyond the gate. This is for your safety and the safety of our rowers, coxswains, and equipment. Navigating a 40 to 60 foot boat over your head is a very difficult task and especially for the new rowers. One drop or slip of a boat can cost the club \$10k of repairs.

It is also preferred that parents not come into the boathouse after practice and definitely not unless the other members of your child's team have left. After practice, the coach typically remains behind to speak with various athletes about their successes and challenge that day. Your presence can be disruptive and/or embarrassing.

## *Speaking With The Coach*

A lot is going on at the end of practice and you will probably be waiting for a while before the coach is free – and s/he may or may not have much time or be able to provide the proper attention to the conversation. It is usually best to e-mail the coach and ask when would be a good time to talk. Also, you should ask yourself if whatever you want to talk about should be handled directly between the athlete and the coach. We strongly encourage rowers to advocate for themselves and work through any concerns with their coaches to develop a healthy and mutually respectful relationship.

# Chapter 2



## *LAND PRACTICE*

### *How Can They Practice On Land?*

Running, weightlifting, and rowing on a rowing machine (or ergometer, aka erg) builds stamina, strength, and technique for the rowers. The work done on land helps to maximize the experience of being on the water. As a new rower, your athlete will generally be less motivated to attend land practice however, erg scores are very important when determining placement in the boat and there is no substitute for cardio conditioning. Also, a lot of team bonding happens during these on land activities.

### *Nice Arms?*

Although it may not be obvious when you are watching someone row, rowing is a *pushing* sport and not a *pulling* sport. Most of the power comes from the **rower's legs** (about 60%), followed by the core muscles (about 30%) and the arms (about 10%). This is why rowers will generally develop great leg strength.

### *What Is An Erg?*

An ergometer or “erg” is a rowing machine. Erging is “rowing on a rowing machine”. The rowing machine measures the time you rowed and how much power you generated and calculates a presumed distance rowed from that information.

But can you really learn how to row on a machine? The erg allows you to get a feel for how the parts of the stroke fit together without having to worry about the motion of the boat or coordinating your actions with another rower. Also, erging builds stamina and strength. Our rowers typically develop a love/hate relationship with the Erg, but it is a critical part of their conditioning and an excellent addition to a home gym and workout routine.

### *What's Up With All These Numbers?*

Honestly, many of us spend months nodding our heads and trying to judge from our child's expression whether we should be happy for them or just sympathetic but often we have no idea what they are talking about.

## My Rower Says:



"We did 2 times 3K and for the last 500 of the second piece I pulled a 2:15:8."  
Or "we did 5 by 5's and I broke 2".

## Can Someone Please Translate!

When the kids practice indoors on the erg, the coaches instruct them to do sets of exercises (called "pieces") to see how fast s/he can do a preset distance or how much distance s/he can cover in a given amount of time. Usually a piece is done multiple times in a single practice with short rests in between.

- The first number is the number of times the piece is done.
- When a number has a "K" in it – the piece is a test of how fast your child can row a certain number of kilometers (rowing always measures in kilometers or meters). So, in the example above, the kids rowed three thousand meters two times.
- When there is not a K after the second number – the piece is a test of how far your child can row in a certain number of minutes. In the case above they are rowing for five minutes five times.
- The last number represents the time it takes to row 500 meters (also called a "split"). The time is measured in minutes, then seconds, then tenths of a second. In the first example, it took the rower 2 minutes, 15.8 seconds to row the last 500 meters. In the second example, the rower had some portion of the piece where s/he was rowing at a pace at which s/he would complete 500 meters in less than 2 minutes.

## Test Stress!!!

A 2K test is the standard method of comparing the power of various rowers; it is sort of the SAT of rowing. It is a test of how fast a rower can go 2000 meters on a rowing machine. Although a good 2K time does not guarantee that someone will be a good rower on the water – it is indicative of their power which is a very critical element of rowing.

The 2K test is often dreaded by rowers because, **first**, it is HARD. Rowers are expected to give it everything they have (imagine sprinting for seven to ten minutes!) **Second**, it is fairly public – your teammates know how well or poorly you do. **Finally**, it is a key element in how coaches evaluate rowers and is used by them to determine in which boat rowers will be racing.

PR is an abbreviation for **Personal Record**. It refers to a rower's best time on the erg for a particular type of piece. A PR is always good news. A PR on a 2K is great news!

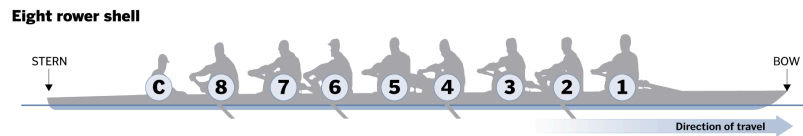
# Chapter 3



## ***PRACTICE ON THE WATER***

### ***Row, Row, Row Your Boat***

Rowing shells (boats) are called by the number of rowers in the boat. Most novice rowers are in an eight-person boat (“an eight”) so all the following information refers specifically to the 8 but may be appropriate for smaller boats.



### ***Starboard Or Port?***

Starboard is a nautical term that mean the right side of a boat from the boat’s point of view. Because rowers sit backwards in the boat, this can be confusing since the starboard side of the boat is on the rower’s left. Port is the term for the left side of the boat (on the rower’s right).

Each rower uses one oar (sweeping). Rowers whose oars extend from the right side of the boat are called starboard rowers or “starboards”. Rowers whose oars extend from the left side of the boat are called port rowers or “ports”.

Most rowers feel more comfortable on one side or another and usually settle into being a port or starboard rower. It is not uncommon for a coach to switch a rower from one side to the other – especially when the rower is a novice, and being able to row both sides is ultimately to the rower’s benefit. That’s called bisweptual.

### ***Hey, Some Kids Are Not Rowing!***

The rowing stroke is a highly precise and technical set of movements and can be challenging to learn. It is more difficult to learn if the boat is leaning to one side or the other. For this reason, one or more pairs of rowers may be asked to sit out for a period of time to “set” the boat – i.e., help stabilize it - while the others work on their stroke. The people sitting out are rotated so everyone gets time rowing.

### ***It’s Musical Chairs!***

In rowing, the idea is for all eight rowers to be rowing in perfect unison, with no motions that interfere

with the forward motion of the boat. That being said, the different positions in the boat have slightly different roles to play. Although any rower should be able to row any position, the coaches will switch the rowers among seats to find out which rowers excel in which positions and which combination of rowers can move the boat the fastest.

All the rowers need a combination of strengths: technique, rhythm, power, balance, and the ability to adapt to the motion of others. Each seat makes slightly different demands on the strengths of the individual:



**Eight Seat**, also called **Stroke**, sits in the rear of the boat (or “stern”) nearest the coxswain. Since everyone sits backwards this is the rower that all the other rowers must follow in order to row together. The stroke must have strong technique (since the others are matching his or her motion) and a good sense of rhythm (since s/he is responsible for adjusting the stroke rate in response to instructions of the coxswain).

**Seven Seat** rows on the opposite side of the boat as stroke (i.e., if the stroke is a starboard, seven seat will be a port and vice versa) and, like stroke, needs strong technique plus the ability to mirror the motions of the stroke (but on the opposite side). All the rowers who row on the same side as the seven seat mirror his or her actions. **Stroke** and **Seven Seat** together are called **Stern Pair**.

The **Four Middle Rowers** (six, five, four and three seat), while still demonstrating the combination of strengths, are generally the most powerful rowers, with six and five the stronger pair. You will sometimes hear the middle rowers referred to as the "**engine room**."

**Bow Pair** is made up of **Two seat** and **Bow seat** (who is for some reason not called one seat) and amongst the pair's other strengths, excel at "**setting**" or stabilizing the boat to ensure effective forward motion.

### ***Why Is My Child On Land Today?***

There are many reasons why a rower may not be "**boated**" (assigned to a boat) on any given day. First, there are only a certain number of seats and not everyone can go out every day. Coaches try to be fair in making sure that everyone gets their share of time on the water. Second, for safety reasons, there needs to be a certain number of coaches out on the water per number of boats. With brand new novices, there are fewer rowers on the water per coach. Finally, the coaches will use their discretion when placing rowers in boats and someone who misses practice, is chronically late or slacks off during practice is less likely to get put in a boat.

### ***What Does a Coxswain Do?***

It is NOT easy. The coxswain or “cox” is the person in charge of the boat and the rowers, who sits in the stern (back) of the boat and is the only person without an oar and the only person facing forward. Coxing is hard because there are so many varied responsibilities:

**Steering** – an eight-person boat is almost 60 feet long – longer than anything most of us have ever driven. Now imagine driving something that long where there is a delay in the steering, may have more power on one side (which pushes your vehicle to the opposite side), is greatly affected by wind

and current/tide, and instead of an accelerator and brakes you must control speed by telling your vehicle to speed up/slow down and use more/less power. Oh, and did I mention that you are probably short and can't see the front of your vehicle over the heads of the eight people in front of you but must avoid hitting logs and other debris at all costs?

***Running drills*** – A typical drill in a boat will have six rowers do one part of the stroke for X strokes, then add in another part of the stroke for X strokes, until the rowers are doing the full stroke. Pairs of rowers are switched in and out so that every rower does the drill three times and sets the boat one time. The cox (while still steering) has to keep track of the number of strokes and switch rowers in and out of the drill. Alternatively, a drill will be for rowers to row at a set rate (e.g., 20 strokes per minutes, and after X strokes increase the stroke rate to 22 strokes per minutes.) In this case the cox (still steering) is counting strokes and watching the monitor to keep track of the stroke rate.

***“Coach in the Boat”*** – the coxswain is also responsible for giving feedback to the rowers. S/he can tell whether they are moving together, whether they are at the correct stroke rate, whether one side of the boat is rowing more powerfully, etc. Additionally, the coxswain is expected to be able to motivate the rowers – knowing what to say when they are ready to give up, or bringing them back into a unified motion when they lose focus. In a race, the coxswain is responsible for the execution of the race plan and for making adjustments to reflect the actions of his or her own rowers and that of the competitor boats.

***Safety of the Boat*** – the coxswain has overall responsibility for the safety of the boat when it is on the water, coming into dock and being moved on land. The cox is the person you will see walking by the boat when the others are carrying it, giving instructions to the rowers to make sure they are all moving together.

### ***Why Is The Coxswain Waiving?***

The coxswain raises his or her hand to signal to a coach or race official that they have heard an instruction and understand it. In races, the coxswain will raise a hand to let officials know that the boat is not ready to begin the race. After a race, a coxswain may raise his or her hand to indicate a problem with a crew member or to protest the results of a race.

### ***What To Wear For Outside Practice?***

Long or short spandex on the bottom and layers that can be removed and shoved under the seat as s/he warms up. Rowing is hard work, so don't be surprised if your child looks underdressed for the weather. Often in colder weather you will see kids in short spandex and short sleeves but wearing a hat.

Regardless, please be sure that your rower is bringing warm clothes and layers that can be removed as we are never certain if we will be inside/outside and on land or water.

### *Can The Boat Tip Over?*

No. Most people go years (and perhaps their whole rowing career) without having a boat tip over. Also, the eight is the most stable type of boat which is one of the reasons it is used for beginners. Although the boat is narrow, the oars extending out on either side provide stability and make it difficult to tip over an eight-person boat.

### *Can My Rower Wear Gloves?*

**No, no and no. Rowers don't wear gloves!!!** The explanation is usually something along the lines of, "it ruins the feel of and connection with the oar." Yes, your child's hands may get cold, but although it may be uncomfortable, most kids quickly learn to accept it as part of the experience.

### *Why Can't I call it Paddling?*

When rowers are told to paddle, it means that they can row slowly and without much pressure. A paddle is a rest stroke. To imply that someone was paddling when they should have been rowing is something of an insult – sort of like asking a sprinter how they enjoyed their stroll around the track.

### *What You Should We Do For Blisters?*

Blisters are part of rowing and comparing blisters is a common rower activity. We have found the best thing is to keep them clean, leave them uncovered during the school day so they dry out and then put Band-Aids on them while rowing. Blisters turn into callouses and are not a frequent issue once your child has been rowing for a while.



If a blister is raw and open, try to keep it dry and put **antibiotic ointment** on it to keep it from becoming infected. A great but painful treatment is called **New Skin** (can find at any drug store), it burns while going on but creates a new layer of skin and it will feel better almost instantly.



## *Are There Crabs in The Chattahoochee?*

Well, its pretty unlikely to find a crab in the Chattahoochee. When a rower says that someone “caught a crab” they are describing a mis-stroke in which the rower is unable to release the oar blade from the water and the oar blade acts as a brake on the boat.

Because the boat is still moving the handle of the oar tends to come back with some force and the rower will often end up lying flat in the boat. It can be difficult for the rower to get the oar back into position until the boat has slowed sufficiently and reduced the pressure on the blade.



To find out more about Catching a Crab, sign up for one of our ***Parent Learn to Row Days***. It is a great way to get to know the other parents and to understand the sport.

## *What Is “Seat-Racing”?*

Seat racing is one input that coaches use in figuring out the final line-up for a boat. By having two boats race during practice, then switching one rower at a time and racing again, the coach can see what impact a specific rower in a specific “seat” has on a boat and what combinations of rowers are most effective. Seat racing most often occurs in the lead up to a regatta.

# Chapter 4



## *THE REGATTAS*

### *Planning For Race Day*

**First**, your child's coach will tell them the approximate time they are expected to race. Times can move around depending on competitor no shows, weather and other factors outside the coaches' control – so be prepared to be flexible and ensure your rower is ready at all times. It is not a good idea to plan on spending much time with your rower. They can be moved around in boats and substituted at any time based on what the team needs.

**Second**, most regattas have websites and they usually allow you to download a “heat sheet” before the regatta. The heat sheets list the times of the races, as well as the lane assigned to each boat. Wait until the night before or the morning of the regatta because things always change.

Go to: [www.regattacentral.com](http://www.regattacentral.com)

Select the Name of the Regatta and Heat Sheet along the Left Hand Side.

### *Why Does Everyone Need To Be There So Early?*

There is a lot to do to prepare for racing. Because boats have been brought to the regatta by trailer, the kids need to reattach the riggers (the part that has the oar lock and that sticks out from side of the boat). Then, the kids check over the boat and make sure it is ready to go. The kids also need to warm up, get final instructions from the coach and get into a racing frame of mind. The entire day is a team activity and the teamwork around preparation is important.

### *What Do Parents Do At A Regatta?*

Regattas take a long time and you will most likely be there for multiple hours. Most people bring **folding chairs**, many bring **binoculars** and **cameras**. You should bring a **water bottle**. Bring more **layers** than you think you need – you will be sitting there for a long time and it is easy to get cold. Also, remember to pack plenty of jackets and blankets for the kids at Tent City. You may want to bring something to do (books, newspaper, work, etc.) since it can be a long time between races that include SA boats. Some people bring **bicycles** to enjoy the venue and to follow along the race route (Dogwood & Sarasota venues). Also remember to bring hats, sunscreen and extra chargers for your iphone as most races will be posting instant results on the **HereNow** website. But the most important thing is that you are there and supporting your rower. They have worked very hard to prepare for what could be a 6 min race. Your support and enthusiasm for the team's success is the best thing you can bring to a regatta!!!

## *Packing For Your Rower*

For most races, athletes will row in an SA “uni” (or unitard) a one-piece racing suit made of spandex that has legs that are shorts length and a top that is cut like a tank top. Generally pack several layers of warmer clothes to wear before getting on the water.



Several days before each race, you will receive an email that will include details of what to pack, where the team will be staying and general logistics for the upcoming weekend. Generally, the rowers like to bring pillows, blankets and music on the bus and have plenty of money for snacks along the way.

## *Cancellations*

Races are sometimes cancelled due to bad weather, although it is highly unusual. Generally, a regatta will proceed unless and until the officials determine that it is unsafe. Sometimes a decision will be made that it is not safe for Novices, but is okay for Varsity rowers based on their experience and skill levels.



We have all been at regattas in the rain and the cold – so remember, bring clothes appropriate to the weather and **bring more layers than you think you will need**. You may want to consider packing a “Bad Weather Bag” to keep in your car for the season. In general, we try to keep the regattas on track – the rowers have practiced very hard and the season usually has only 3 or so races.

## *Head Race V.S. Sprints*

There are two main types of races – **Sprints** and **Head races**. A sprint is what you think of as a race – everyone lines up at the start and the first one to cross the finish line wins. Sprints are most often **2,000 meters** and generally the racing format for most Spring Events.

A **Head race** is a race in which the rowers all start at the same place but at staggered times. The first boat goes and then the next boat chases it down the course while in turn being chased by the third boat and so on. You generally do not know who wins until the end when the times are announced. Head races are pretty boring to watch – the only excitement is when one of the boats catches the boat ahead of it. A head race is generally about **3,000 meters** longer than a sprint.

## *First Boat, Second Boat...*

The first boat is made up of the eight rowers (and the coxswain) that the coaches believe can together row faster than any other potential combination, generally called the V1. Second boat is the made up of the eight rowers out of the remaining rowers that can row fastest together, the V2.

## *But My Rower's Erg Score Is Better!*

Erg score is only one of the considerations that a coach uses to determine the line-up in a boat. In order to be good, a rower needs not only strength and stamina, but good balance and the ability to move in unison with his or her teammates. Superior strength can make up for some weakness in form; the ability to follow the movements of teammates can make up for some degree of lesser

strength – the ability to consider the strengths and weakness of each rower and put together the fastest boat possible is one of the core jobs of the coaches.



Additionally, the coaches are looking for kids that they and the child's teammates can depend on. ***A child who misses practices or slacks off during practice may not get placed as highly as their skill level would otherwise warrant!!!***

## ***Visiting The Rowers***

We get asked all the time if it okay to go over to the boat trailer to wish their child good luck. The answer is **No!** The kids and the coaches are busy before the race and the area around the trailer is generally very crowded.

Although you stopping by will only take a few seconds, there are eight other kids in that boat and several other boats – a parade of well-meaning parents is not really helpful. Also, the same applies for congratulating the kids after a race – the kids will return to the team tent as soon as they are through with the post-race activities. Racing takes a lot out of our athletes and they really need their time to recover both physically and mentally before engaging.

## ***Which Boats Are SARC Boats?***

If you printed out the heat sheet from the regatta website prior to the race, you can check a specific race to see which lane SA is in. If you did not, there is usually a parent around who has and will let everyone know.

Second, every rowing team has their oars painted in a unique way and wears a unique team uniform. Generally, these designs can be seen from fairly far away. ***SA's blades are white with our SA logo on the face of the blade and our uni has the SA logo on the back.***

## ***Is SA Winning?***

Determining how their boat is doing is one of the real challenges of being a rowing spectator. Binoculars will help, choosing a landmark on the opposite shore and trying to see who passes it when can help. Some parents will move farther down the race course toward the finish line. And remember – the races are long, the boat that is ahead early or midway through the race may not be by the time they get to the finish line.

One parent explained it like this, "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, aren't moving together and you see a lot of splashing – they are probably having a rough day."

## *Cheering On The Team*

Rowing is a team sport and the kids learn to take pride in their accomplishments as a team. Generally, there will be groups of SA parents, siblings, grandparents and friends in groups along the shoreline, screaming, "GO SA," "SA, SA, Go, SA" and similar sentiments. All of us cheer for all the kids, the idea is to be the loudest cheering section at the regatta!

# Chapter 5

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## COMPETITION

### The Types Of Events



Events are divided into two disciplines: sweep rowing and sculling, and two categories within those: lightweight and open.

### Sculling

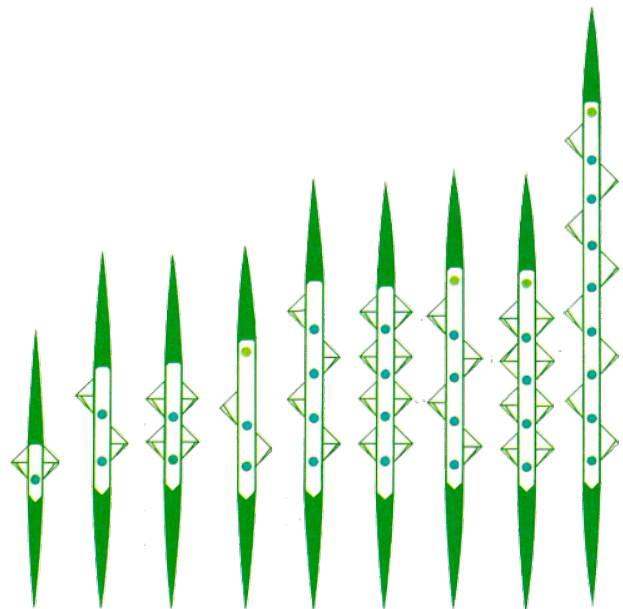
Athletes with **Two Oars** – one in each hand – are called scullers. There are three sculling events: the **Single** – 1x (one person), the **Double** – 2x (two) and the **Quad** – 4x (four). On the heat sheets, Scullers are always indicated with an “x” after the number of rowers. It’s easier to remember when you think that Sculling has 2 L’s and the L’s cross to make a “X”.

### Sweep Racing

Athletes with only **One Oar** are sweep rowers. Sweep boats may or may not carry a coxswain to steer and be the on-the-water coach. In boats without coxswains, one of the rowers steers by moving the rudder with his or her foot. Sweep rowers come in **Pairs** with a coxswain (2+) and **Pairs** without (2-), **Fours** with a coxswain (4+) and **Fours** without (4-) and the **Eight** (8+), which always carries a coxswain. The eight is the fastest boat on the water. A world-level men’s eight can move almost 14 miles per hour.

Heat sheets will generally include the number of rowers followed by a +/- for Sweeping (1 Oar) or X for Sculling (2 Oars).

The **Pairs** and **Fours** with coxswain are sometimes the hardest to recognize because of where the coxswain is sitting. Although the coxswain is almost always facing the rowers in an eight, in pairs and fours the coxswain may be facing the rowers in the stern or looking down the course, lying down in the bow, where he or she is difficult to see.



## Lightweight And Open Weight

An athlete of any weight can enter the open categories, although the average woman in an open race will approach 6'2" in height and an average open weight man 6'6". Lightweight men cannot weigh more than 160 pounds. Lightweight Women cannot weigh more than 130 pounds.

Lightweights row the same events as open weight athletes, except that other than the men's lightweight eight, they do not carry coxswains, so there is no lightweight 2+ or 4+.

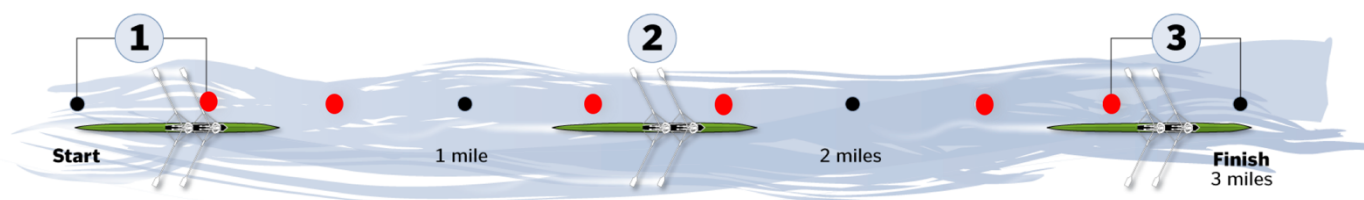
## Racing Details

You will find that most venues provide several opportunities for you to see your rower. Generally, the teams will put their boats in the water about an hour before their event and pass the crowd heading up river. For a Sprint Race, the race begins with all boats aligned at the start in the lanes they've been assigned. Individuals in each lane hold the stern of each boat steady while an official, known as the aligner, ensures that each boat is even with the others and squarely facing the course.



Each crew is allowed one false start; two means disqualification. If within the first 100 meters there is legitimate equipment breakage (e.g., an oar snaps in two), the race will be stopped and restarted with repaired equipment.

The stroke rate (the number of rowing strokes per minute that a crew is taking) is high at the start of the race – maybe 45 to even 50 for an eight; 38 to 42 for a single scull. Then, the crew will “settle” into the body of the race and drop the rating back – 38 to 40 for an eight; 32-36 for a single. The individual coach and the way the race is going will determine when the crew will sprint. Finishing stroke rates of 46+ in the last 200 meters aren't unheard of. However, higher stroke rates are not always indicative of speed. A strong, technically talented crew may be able to cover more water faster than a less-capable crew rowing a high stroke rate.



Note: Rowers are allowed to leave their lanes without penalty, so long as they do not interfere with anyone else's opportunity to win. An official follows the crews to ensure safety and fairness.

Despite the exhaustion of the race, the crew will row for five to 10 minutes afterwards in order to cool down. In rowing, the medals ceremonies include the shells. The three medal-winning crews row to the awards dock, climb out of their shells and receive their medals before rowing away.

# Chapter 6



## THE STROKE

### Perfecting The Stroke

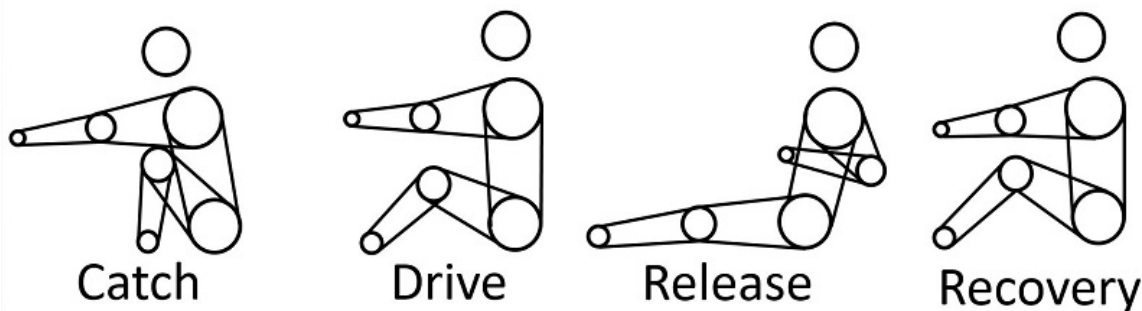
Since so much attention is focused on perfecting the stroke, we wanted to provide you with a primer to fully understand the complexity. First, the entire body is involved in moving a shell through the water. Although rowing tends to look like an upper body sport, the strength of the rowing stroke comes from the rower's legs. Your rowers will definitely see some development in their legs over the season if they are working hard.

The stroke is made up of four parts: **Catch**, **Drive**, **Finish** and **Recovery**. As the stroke begins, the rower is coiled forward on the sliding seat, with knees bent and arms outstretched.

At the **Catch**, the athlete drops the oar blade vertically into the water.

At the beginning of the **Drive**, the body position doesn't change – all the work is done by the legs. As the upper body begins to uncoil, the arms begin their work, drawing the oar blades through the water. Continuing the drive, the rowers move their hands quickly into the body, which by this time is in a slight "layback" position, requiring strong abdominal muscles.

During the **Finish**, the oar handle is moved down, drawing the oar blade out of the water. At the same time, the rower "**Feathers**" the oar – turning the oar handle – so that the oar blade changes from a vertical position to a horizontal one. The oar remains out of the water as the rower begins **Recovery**, moving the hands away from the body and past the knees. The body follows the hands and the sliding seat moves forward, until, knees bent, the rower is ready for the next catch.



**Catch:** The beginning of the stroke when the oar is inserted into the water.

**Drive:** When the rower propels the oar through the water.

**Finish/Release:** When the oar is taken out of the water & rower is at the bottom of the slide.

**Recovery:** When the rower goes back up the slide before taking another stroke.

**Square blades** - keeping the blade perpendicular to the water on the recovery.

**Feathered blades** - keeping the blade parallel to the water on the recovery.



## *The Oars*

The Oars move the boat through the water and act as balancers. Sweep oars are longer than sculler's oars and have wooden handles instead of rubber grips. The shaft of the oar is made of extremely lightweight carbon fiber instead of the heavier wood used years ago.

The popular "hatchet" blade – named because of its cleaver-like shape – is about 20 percent larger than previous blades. Its larger surface area has made it the almost-universal choice among world-level rowers.

The oars are attached to the boat with riggers, which provide a fulcrum for the levering action of rowing. Sometimes, most typically in the 4- or 4+, the coach will rig the boat so that two consecutive rowers have their oars on the same side in order to equalize individual athlete power.

# Chapter 7



## ***PARENT VOLUNTEERING***

### ***I'm Not Sure I Can Help***

The really hard jobs are filled on a long-term basis by experienced parents. Other than pulling the trailer, which requires a big vehicle with a tow hitch, you can sign up for any job. There is almost always someone with more experience there to help show you the ropes and the volunteer coordinators will explain what you need to know. In addition to being a requirement, volunteering with other parents is the best way to get to know the SARC Family. We pride ourselves on having a great parent community and welcome any help, large and small.

### ***How Can I See My Rower If I Am Volunteering?***

This can be a challenge since generally you sign up weeks before you know what time your child is racing. Generally, the coach will give your child some idea of the time and the regatta website will have a general schedule. Also, all the other parents understand that you want to see your child race and are flexible about covering for you briefly if you need to step away to watch your child.

### ***Eating At Tent City***

During these COVID times, we are asking parents and family members are welcome to eat at Tent City. The food quantities are estimated assuming that families and other guests will be eating. Some key items are usually held back for the kids – who generally will eat little or nothing prior to racing. Please come and help out with the other parents at the tent – it is one of the real pleasures of regatta days!

New this year, we will also be posting information about a central parent location so you can meet and catch up with the other parents during the regatta. Typically, the parents are walking between the finish line and the tents so please drop by and introduce yourself. It's so much fun to meet the parents of the other rowers that are in your child's boat. We hear so much about the team mates, it's great to put a name with a face!

# Chapter 8



## *Recovery and Nutrition*

### *Focus On What's Important*

Complex training programs, fancy functional exercises, and “rah-rah” motivational speeches are necessary to having a winning season, but many athletes and even coaches forget to plan the most important thing: Recovery.

Our kids can be so focused on the end results, they often forget to plan for recovering between important workouts and regattas. This was apparent at some of the recent championship racing and the aggressive summer camp programs. The teams that won their respective events were not necessarily the fastest! At the championship level, all crews are fast and the crew that can go fast in the heat, faster in the semi-final, and fastest in the finals will ultimately win. This ability requires quick recovery between races; and that needs to be practiced months and months in advance.

Here are **6 Simple Rules to Recovery** to follow to improve your recovery. Keep a training log of workouts AND your recovery will allow you to look back and see what worked and what didn't.



### *Simple Rule #1: Monitor Your Nutrition*

As rowers, our kids have the luxury of stuffing their faces with anything because they burn so many calories during each workout (between 800-1000 calories for every 60 minutes of training). However, **WHAT** they put back in their body affects how quickly they recover. Aerobic athletes need to keep their **Protein** levels up because they actually **BREAK DOWN** muscle during our workouts.

Examples of good Protein sources includes: Wild Fish, Eggs, Chicken, Beef, Whey Protein, Almonds, Greek Yogurt

**Fat** (Good Fat) is next because steady aerobic activity requires a longer sustaining fuel source. Fat will allow you to keep up your energy especially at the end of long rows.

Some examples of good fatty food sources: Avocados, Cheese, Dark Chocolate, Whole Eggs, Fatty Fish, Nuts, Chia Seeds, Extra Virgin Olive Oil

**Carbohydrates** are your “quick energy” fuel that you can take before workouts, between sessions, and before competition. Monitor how much carbohydrates you are consuming, because overloading on carbohydrates can have the opposite effect. Your body is busy trying to digest rather than prepare for competition.

Athletes should consume between 0.8 to 1.5 grams of protein per pound of body weight per day.

So if you weight 160 lbs:

160 x 1.0 grams = 160 grams of protein per day  
160 grams/5 meals = 32 grams of protein for each meal



### ***Simple Rule #2: Ice – Joints And Muscles***

Rower's bodies take a real beating during the week. Icing your joints and skeletal muscles even if they are not sore YET is a proactive way to decrease muscle inflammation even if it has not occurred yet. MLB pitcher will ice their pitching arm after a MLB game to prevent soreness and tightness. It is part of their post-game routine so they are ready to pitch again in 5 days.

Make icing a part of your routine. Though it may not be necessary after every practice, it will definitely help you recover after a hard practice and prepare you for the next one. Apply ice to the joint or muscle for 15 -20 minutes, and repeat if necessary. Make sure to warm up the joint and muscle before practice/competition.



### ***Simple Rule #3: Myofascial Release***

Using a foam roller to massage and lengthen skeletal tissue is called Myofascial Release.

Use a foam roller or myofascial release tool to relax, massage, and lengthen tight muscles and soft tissue. MAKE sure that you STRENGTHEN the opposing muscle group after relaxing the muscle. For example if you foam roll your Quads and Hip Flexors, make sure that your Glutes are “turned on” so that your muscles are working together when you row.

Buying a foam roller and rolling around on it doesn't mean you will be loose before practice or a race. Do your research or work with a personal trainer or physical therapist who is more qualified to explain how to perform it correctly.

## ***Mental Training And Balance***

“Mental Imagery” or Visualization is a great way to “practice” your racing or erg testing warm up. Chances are the more you rehearse this in your mind, the more likely you will execute during your race or erg test.



#### ***Simple Rule # 4: Give Your Brain A Rest***

Mental training sessions can be just as physically and mentally stressful as normal training, so plan on balancing this session out with some fun or something that is not mental training and competitive. Choose something you could do all day without tiring yourself out. (hanging with friends, reading, video games (non-competitive)).



#### ***Simple Rule #5: Go, Go With H<sub>2</sub>O***

We all need to drink more water. ***Period.*** What makes it worse is when they really try to hydrate and overdo it. It's better for your rowers to make it a habit during the weeks and months before competition then trying to drink a gallon of water right before the race. Their bodies needs to get into a hydrating pattern well before competition season.

They will need 20-24 oz of water for every lb lost post exercise. Everyone is different; so encourage your rowers to keep a training log to know what amount of water works for them.



#### ***Simple Rule #6: Active Recovery***

Active Recovery or ***Regeneration*** is a workout in which the rowers are training at a very LOW intensity and build back some aerobic capacity. It will allow the rowers to focus on other aspects of their training – rowing technique, mobility, flexibility, and stability.

Find some time to PADDLE. This is especially effective after hard interval workouts, and the days after races. For Active Recovery your rowers can also go for a walk, a bike ride, do yoga, etc. Turn off intensity and allow their bodies to enjoy just moving.

Rest - Sometimes recovery is exactly what is needed. ***COMPLETE REST.*** It is perfectly okay for your rower to take time off, especially if their body needs it.

It is said that if you are not training and putting in the miles, then there is someone out there that is... we would also add that if your opponents are tiring themselves out training... let them, and go back to sleep.

# Chapter 9



## ***ROWING TERMS***

Power 10, coxswain, hot seat, what? In the following list you will find a collection of terms specific to the sport of rowing. Learn these terms and you'll be well on your way to becoming well-versed in the "language of rowing."... and not embarrass your child at the next meeting!!!

<b>Rowing Term</b>	<b>Parent Definition</b>
2K	A two thousand meter race only rowed in the spring. A full out sprint.
5K	A five thousand meter race only rowed in the fall. A slower paced, long-distance race.
Blade	The flat, painted part at the end of the oar. Drives through the water and generates power.
Bow Loader	When a Coxswain sits behind the rower in the bow of the boat.
Bow Seat	The rower in the back of the boat.
Catch	Right before a rower takes a stroke. The blade is right above the water, the rower's legs are bent, and their hands are turned and extended outside the boat.
Check	When a rower puts their oar up and down to quickly stop the boat from moving.
Count Down	The crew calls out their seat number, starting with the bow seat, to signify that they are ready to row.
Cox Box	Plugs into the boat. Allows the coxswain to see stroke rate and talk to the rowers in the back of the boat using the built-in microphone.
Coxswain	Sits in the front of the boat. Steers the boat and motivates the rowers.
Crab	Your oar catches too much water, turns sideways, and pops back into your face.
Digging	When a rower's oar is more submerged in the water than necessary.
Dipping	When a rower carries their hands too low at the catch, and the boat shifts one way.
Double	A 2 person boat, each rower has 2 oars (sculling), usually denoted as 2x.
Early roll up	A command you will hear frequently, reminding you to roll up or square up the blade on the recovery BEFORE the blade enters the water, to achieve a clean catch.
Eight	An 8 person boat, each rower has only 1 oar (sweeping), usually denoted as 8+.
Ejector Crab	When you crab so bad, you're launched out of the boat (doesn't happen too often).

Erg	AKA “rowing machine.” What we use to continue training in the winter Measures power and stroke rate.
Feathering	On the recovery, flipping your oar from squared (perpendicular) to flat. This makes it easier for the boat to glide on the water but makes the boat harder to control.
Finish	The end of the stroke. A rower's legs are extended and their hands are pressed against their abdomen.
Footstretcher	A pair of shoes attached to the boat a rower velcro’s their feet into. Makes sure that a rower has a steady anchor point to push off from during the race.
Four	A 4 person boat, each rower has only 1 oar (sweeping), usually denoted as 4+ if they have a coxswain and 4- if they do not.
Gate	The bar across the oarlock that keeps the oar in place.
Handle Height	Where each rower holds their hands. Everyone’s hands should be on the same plane.
Hot Seat	When a group of rowers jumps in a boat that just finished a race and doesn't remove the boat from the water at all.
Inside Hand	Depends on whether a rower is a port or a starboard. The inside hand does the feather and maintains control of the stroke.
Layback	During the finish, a rower bend backward to allows the boat to more easily glide through the water.
Let it Run	A command to stop rowing and let the boat glide, oars off the water.
Light weight	Refers to the rowers, not the boats; there is a maximum weight for each rower in a lightweight event as well as a boat average.
Mixed	A coed team of half men and half women.
Oar	The main tool used by a rower. A long pole with a blade at the end that moves the boat.
Oars squared and buried	The standard command to prepare to row. This means that all oars should be squared, or perpendicular to the water, and buried in the water so just the top edge is showing.
Octopus	When everyone in the boat is out of synch, and each of the eight oars is going in a different direction.
On Two	The standard way that a command is introduced. This provides advance notice to the rowers that a command is coming and gives them two strokes to get prepared.
Outside Hand	Depends on whether a rower is a port or a starboard. The outside hand provides most of the power.
Paddle	A coxswain tells a rower to give as little pressure as possible.
Pair	A 2 person boat, each rower has only 1 oar (sweeping), usually denoted as 2+ if they have a coxswain and 2- if they do not.
Pause at...	The command “pause at half slide” means that you freeze your position at the middle point in the movement of the slide up the track on the recovery. Once the boat is set, with everyone still, the command “continue” means you then continue through with the rest of the stroke.
Port	Your oar points out the right side of the boat. Your left hand is your outside hand.

Power 10	A “call” by the coxswain to motivate the rowers. The rowers put all their effort into the next ten strokes.
Quad	A 4 person boat, each rower has 2 oars (sculling), usually denoted as 4x.
Racing Shell	Simply put; the boat. Without any riggers, foot stretchers, or wiring.
Ready Row	The general command to begin rowing, starting on the word “Row”.
Recovery	Slowly moving from the finish back to the catch. Where feathering occurs.
Regatta	The Rowing term for an event. Boats gather together and race.
Rigger	The metal rods sticking out the side of the boat that holds the oars in place.
Rigging	Before a race, when rowers attach the riggers to the side of the boat with nuts and bolts.
Rowing by Fours	This command will be used a lot as you are learning to row. This means that only four (or six) rowers will be rowing at a time, while the other four (or two) are setting the boat.
Run	The distance the shell moves during one stroke. You can figure it by looking for the distance between the puddles made by the same oar.
Rush	When a rower's recovery is too fast. The boat loses momentum because rowers are pushing too hard in the opposite direction.
Sculling	Athletes with two oars – one in each hand – are scullers.
Seat	Where the rower sits. Slides back and forth to allow the rower to easily move back and forth to fully complete their strokes during a race.
Seat Numbers	2 seat, 3 seat, 4 seat, 5 seat, 6 seat, and 7 seat. Numbers used to identify where rowers in the middle of the boat sit. In rowing, we count backward. So, the higher the number, the closer to the front the rower is.
Set	How level the boat is. Boats are not supposed to wobble back and forth. Perfect set means the boat will stay completely still the whole time. Bad set means the boat might flip.
Single	1 one person boat in sculling.
Skeg	The steering mechanism in the boat.
Skying	When your blade is too high off the surface of the water.
Slide	The set of runners for the wheels of each seat in the boat.
Square Rowing	Keeping the blade perpendicular to the water the entire time.
Starboard	Your oar points out to the left side of the boat. Right hand is your outside hand.
Stern Loader	When a Coxswain sits in the front of the boat.
Stoke Rate	How many strokes a rower takes per minute. In the fall, we normally sit around a 26 or 28 stroke rate.
Stroke	AKA “The Drive” The motion of moving your oar through the water.
Stroke Seat	The rower at the front of the boat. Sets the tempo for the entire boat.
Sweeping	Athletes with only one oar are sweep rowers.
Washing Out	Completely Missing water on a stroke.
Way ‘nuff	Coxswain slang for “way enough” tells the rowers to immediately stop what they’re doing.
Wiring	Runs throughout the boat. Connects everything to the Cox Box.

