

Cape Coral Rowing Club
Youth Crew Student/Parent Handbook
2025-2026



Coaches: Sandra Weston & Todd Antrim

Welcome to Cape Coral Rowing Club's Youth Crew. We are committed to serving our community's students by offering coaching and education in the sport of rowing. Crew rowing is highly competitive in the state of Florida and throughout the nation. It is one of the fastest growing sports of the past decade. Collegiate opportunities abound and many students earn scholarships to help fund their continuing education.

Crew rowing is different from other team sports in several ways. The equipment and location requirements are highly sport specific. Because most schools aren't located on or adjacent to an acceptable waterway for rowing, they partner with clubs to form teams. Equipment is highly specialized and is also very space consuming. This is another reason clubs become a central location or hub for rowing education and training. As a club sport, youth crew receives no funding from the state, county, or any school systems. Therefore, the club must cover its costs of operation via monthly membership dues. Unlike some other popular club activities, crew rowing is easily one of the most physically and mentally demanding sports young athletes can engage in. Rowing is serious business and success in rowing requires serious athletes and engaged parents and school administrations. The objective of this athlete/parent handbook is to clarify program expectations designed to position your crew member for great success.

Youth Crew Mission:

Our objective is to develop a competitive youth rowing program that builds fitness, strength, teamwork, character, accountability, sportsmanship, and discipline.

Youth Crew Conduct and Culture:

Athletes are only as successful as the culture they inhabit permits. Youth crew coaches expect students to conduct themselves as young adults focused on a common mission. This means that we will foster and promote a culture that includes the following foundational elements:

- Respect – for coaches, captains, teammates/crewmates, parents, and oneself. Disrespect of any of these populations will NOT be tolerated.
- Discipline – unhesitating adherence to rules and regulations
- Pursuit of excellence on and off the water – performance focus at every practice and academic achievement in the classroom
- Leadership – commitment to the crew, the team, and the program; willingness to help others and lead by example
- Character – conducting oneself with integrity

Crew Member Expectations:

- **ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY** - All crew members are expected to attend **at least 80%** of scheduled practices on time in order to be crewed for competition. Attendance will be taken at each practice and tracked by the coaching staff to inform crew assignments for practices and competition. Coaches will evaluate attendance compliance every 3

weeks to determine adherence to the 80% requirement. ***Athletes that fail to attend at least 80% of practices each 3-week period will be excluded from racing the next scheduled regatta.*** Prior notice via email, text, chat, or phone is expected when an excused absence or late arrival is unavoidable. Illness, severe injury, and family emergencies are examples of acceptable reasons for absence. Missing practice for lesser reasons is a disservice to your crew, your team, and your coaches and directly impacts their ability to achieve success. Coaches have already provided for time off around the holidays so **vacations outside of these periods are not considered excused absences.** Academic requirements (standardized tests, official college visits) may be excused if it is not possible to schedule them around crew practices. Athletes should discuss such conflicts well in advance with the coaches. Non-emergency doctor/dentist appointments will not be considered excused absences unless extenuating circumstances preclude a family from scheduling them around crew. Athletes and/or parents should notify the coaches ahead of these situations so they can be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The planning calendar for the season is released well in advance to enable families to schedule non-emergency appointments around crew practices and regattas. Arriving habitually late is also a discourtesy to everyone else and will result in not being seated for practice. Athletes are expected to arrive at practice fully prepared for training. This means they are properly attired, have water in plastic bottles, and have already completed any hand-taping or similar preparations. Athletes are **REQUIRED** to use SportsEngine RSVPs to indicate their attendance. RSVPs need to be logged at least two weeks in advance. Lineups will be posted by 2 pm on weekdays and 5 pm on Fridays (for Saturday morning practice). Anyone who has not completed RSVPs over the 2-week planning horizon will not be boated for practice until they come into compliance. Use of the "MAYBE" option should be rare and conditional. It MUST include a note to explain the decision criteria. EXAMPLE: RSVP = Maybe; NOTE = "Waiting to hear whether I can reschedule my AP exam. Will update ASAP." Inappropriate use of the "maybe" response will result in not being boated for practice.

- **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE** – Youth crew is an extra-curricular activity and should not interfere with excellence in the classroom. Every NCAA crew has a minimum GPA eligibility requirement for incoming athletes. Time management is a critical life skill. As such, Youth Crew requires that each team member maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher (with no failing classes) to qualify for seats in racing crews. In keeping with our desire to create a culture of teamwork and respect, we will work to do whatever we can to help students who may be struggling with academic requirements. Coaches will periodically require athletes and/or parents to share their current academic standing to assure adherence to this policy.
- **PERSONAL CONDUCT** – There will be no tolerance for inappropriate personal conduct during any crew events (practices, regattas, team functions). Some examples of these unacceptable behaviors are as follows:

- Foul language, bullying, inappropriate contact of any kind with teammates or coaches (pushing, hitting, kicking, etc.), any reckless behavior that jeopardizes the safety of teammates, oneself, or equipment
- Inappropriate physical contact or overt, public displays of attention/affection at any practice, regatta, or team function
- Using, possessing, or distributing any drugs of any kind, including but not limited to marijuana, vaping, alcohol, steroids/PEDs, tobacco, or any controlled substances
- Theft of and/or damage to others' property
- Athletes who choose to bring mobile phones and AirPods / earbuds to the boatyard will have them secured in the club's phone storage box upon arrival. Phones and earbuds will not be accessible to athletes while they are at the boatyard until permission is granted by the coaches.

Failure to meet these basic expectations could result in consequences ranging from being disqualified from competition to being expelled from the crew.

- **VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS** – Our nonprofit organization is run by volunteers. As such, crew families are expected to participate in recruitment and fundraising activities that directly benefit the team. The club's primary fundraising activities involve working concessions at a couple of area event centers (Hertz Arena and JetBlue Park).
 - At Hertz Arena, we actively engage our team members because the concessions manager allows youth ages 13 and higher to work in the stands. Opportunities at Hertz typically fall on Saturday evenings during the Florida Everblades hockey season (end of October through April). All youth crew members who work a concession stand at Hertz Arena are awarded service hours to help them fulfill their school's requirements. Hertz Arena pays us 10% of our concession sales (plus all tips) in exchange for working their stands. We generally make \$800 - \$1000 each time we work.
 - At JetBlue Park, our organization is given a concession stand to manage for the entire spring training season of the Boston Red Sox. We are required to commit to staffing the stand each January (spring training usually starts at the end of February). Unfortunately, Aramark (concessions company used by the Red Sox) does not permit youth under 18 years of age to work at JetBlue. As a result, we are forced to staff with only adults. This is the club's primary fundraiser, so we require each youth crew family to take responsibility for supplying one volunteer for 4 games throughout the spring training season. These games can be staffed creatively – e.g. by using grandparents, retired friends (for day games), college students, coworkers, etc. The shifts do not have to be worked by crew parents. We just need each crew parent to contribute volunteers to help us staff the season. Funds raised from this commitment are typically used to purchase equipment for the crew. Aramark pays us 12% of net sales plus any tips we earn.

Earnings per game are similar to working at Hertz. The spring training schedule is released in the fall and will be distributed to all crew families right at the start of the season so everyone has plenty of time to plan ahead and sort out a staffing strategy.

- **COACHING BOUNDARIES** – Youth crew coaches invest significant time and resources into the crew. They clarify expectations to the athletes and strive to create an environment that is safe and conducive to athletic performance. Coaches make every effort to clearly and effectively communicate with parents so they have all the knowledge they need to support their athlete and the crew. Coaches are required to make decisions daily that impact the athletes and the team and are based on accumulated data available to them at the time. There will be instances when athletes and/or parents disagree with decisions made by the coaching staff. When this occurs, athletes and/or parents may have questions. While it is certainly OK to submit these questions to coaches, such conversations need to be conducted appropriately and with decorum. Coaches may choose NOT to engage in such conversations on the athlete's or parent's terms but will indicate how and when (OR IF) they are willing to proceed, given the specifics of the situation. There will be occasions when athletes are not crewed for practices or regattas. In every instance, the coaching staff will have reasons for such decisions that are in keeping with communicated expectations and are in the best interest of the team. This handbook specifies expectations so that athletes and parents are clearly informed ahead of any such situation. Coaches will not engage in conversations questioning decisions based on clearly communicated conduct rules.

YOUTH CREW HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understand the contents of this handbook.

Athlete Name: _____ Date: _____

Athlete Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____