Rowing 101

An Introduction for New Families

WESTERVILLE CREW

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ROWING 101: AN INTRODUCTION FOR PARENTS

Many families have no prior experience with or exposure to rowing before their athlete joins WRC. Rowing is a sport unlike any other. There is a lot to learn, even for parents! This guide is for you. It introduces the sport and will help you make sense of the things your athlete tells you about after practice.

Rowing has a vocabulary all its own. This guide defines some of these terms, but doesn't include a glossary. If you want to look up a term, see this page on the USRowing website:

https://usrowing.org/learn-about-rowing/terminology

The People in the Boat

In rowing, there are rowers and there are coxswains. The rowers hold either one or two oars and power the boat.

The coxswain sits in the boat and calls out commands to the rowers so they know when to start rowing and when to stop. Coxswains also provide encouragement and motivation during races, and leadership on and off the water. You can learn more about coxswains in the Coxswains section.

Boats

Although we refer to them as boats, their technical name is *racing shell* or simply *shell*. Most of the time we just call them boats.

Boats are made of carbon fiber and fiberglass and coated with a layer of epoxy, resin, and/or paint. They're designed to be as light and sleek as possible.

There are several types of boats, differentiated by the number of rowers they hold, whether the boat can carry a coxswain, and how many oars the rowers use:

- **Eights (8+)**: Hold eight rowers and a coxswain. These boats are around 62 feet long and weigh around 200 lbs. Each rower holds a single oar.
- **Fours (4+)**: Hold four rowers and a coxswain. These boats are around 42 feet long and weigh around 135 lbs. Each rower holds a single oar.
- **Straight Fours (4-)**: Hold four rowers. These boats are around 42 feet long and weigh around 135 lbs. Each rower holds a single oar.
- **Quads (4x)**: Holds four rowers, with or without a coxswain. These boats are around 42 feet long and weigh around 135 lbs. Each rower holds two oars.

- **Doubles (2x)**: Holds two rowers. These boats are 34 feet long and weigh around 60 lbs. Each rower holds two oars.
- **Pairs (2-)**:Holds two rowers. These boats are around 34 feet long and weigh around 60 lbs. Each rower holds one oar.
- **Singles (1x)**: Holds one rower. These boats are around 27 feet long and weigh around 32 lbs. The rower uses two oars.

Boats are designed to hold a particular amount of weight, so they're sometimes referred to as being lightweight or heavyweight boats. This is important because it has a big impact on the quality of the rowing experience. Heavier rowers in a lightweight boat will not have a good experience, and vice versa.

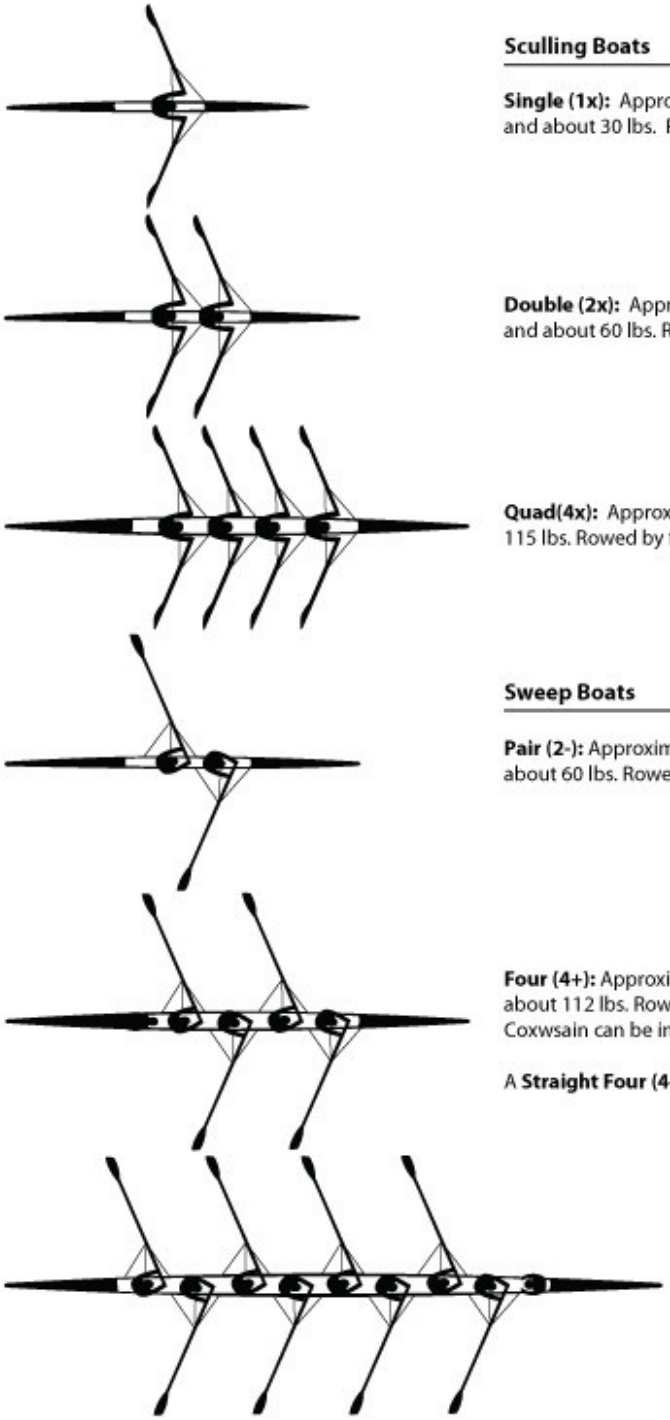
Westerville Crew primarily rows eights and fours. We call these "big boats." We use smaller boats during some practices. They're helpful for conditioning and improving certain skills. They may be raced at times, but they are not our competitive focus.

Sculling and Sweeping

Sculling and sweeping are the names of the two styles or rowing. They're defined by the number of oars the rowers use. The difference is:

- **Sculling**: Rowers use two oars. The oars are technically called *sculls*. They are generally 9 to 10 feet long and weigh 2 to 3 lbs.
- **Sweeping**: Rowers use one oar. The oars don't have a special name. They're generally 12-13 feet long and weigh 3 to 5 lbs.

Westerville Crew focuses on sweep rowing. Sculling is valuable to learn, but we use it largely as a skill-building method. We rarely enter sculling boats in races.



Sculling Boats

Single (1x): Approximately 26 feet long, 11 inches wide, and about 30 lbs. Rowed by one person using two oars.

Double (2x): Approximately 32 feet long, 13 inches wide, and about 60 lbs. Rowed by two people using two oars each.

Quad(4x): Approximately 42 feet long and about 115 lbs. Rowed by four people using two oars each.

Sweep Boats

Pair (2-): Approximately 32 feet long, 13 inches wide and about 60 lbs. Rowed by two people using one oar each.

Four (4+): Approximately 42 feet long, 21 inches wide and about 112 lbs. Rowed by four people using one oar each. Coxwsain can be in the bow or the stern.

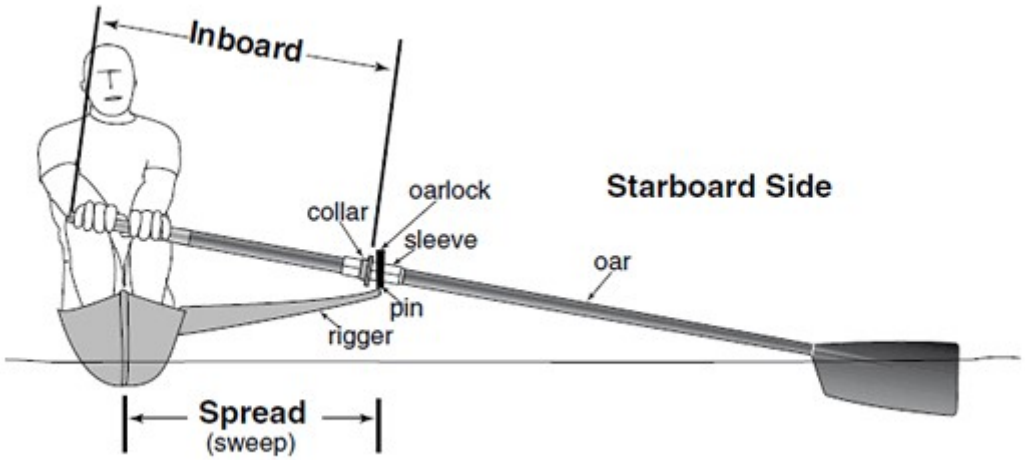
A **Straight Four (4-)** is a similar boat but without a coxswain.

Eight (8): Approximately 60 feet long, 26 inches wide and about 210 lbs. Rowed by eight people using one oar each. Coxwsain sits in the stern.

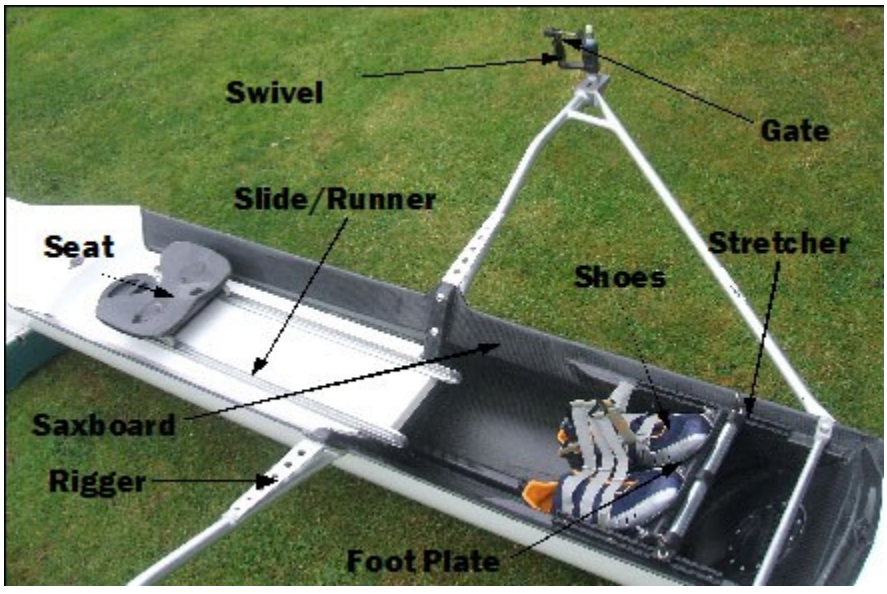
Graphic courtesy of UC Irvine Crew

Basic Mechanics of Rowing

The boat has a seat for each rower. The seats slide back and forth on tracks. Each rower has a foot plate (called a *stretcher*) to which a pair of shoes are attached. The oar (or oars, depending on the style of rowing) are attached to the side of the boat. The parts that support the oars and hold them in position on the boat are called the *riggers*. Each rigger has an *oarlock*, which keeps the oar secured in place on the rigger, while still allowing the handle to move through the stroke.



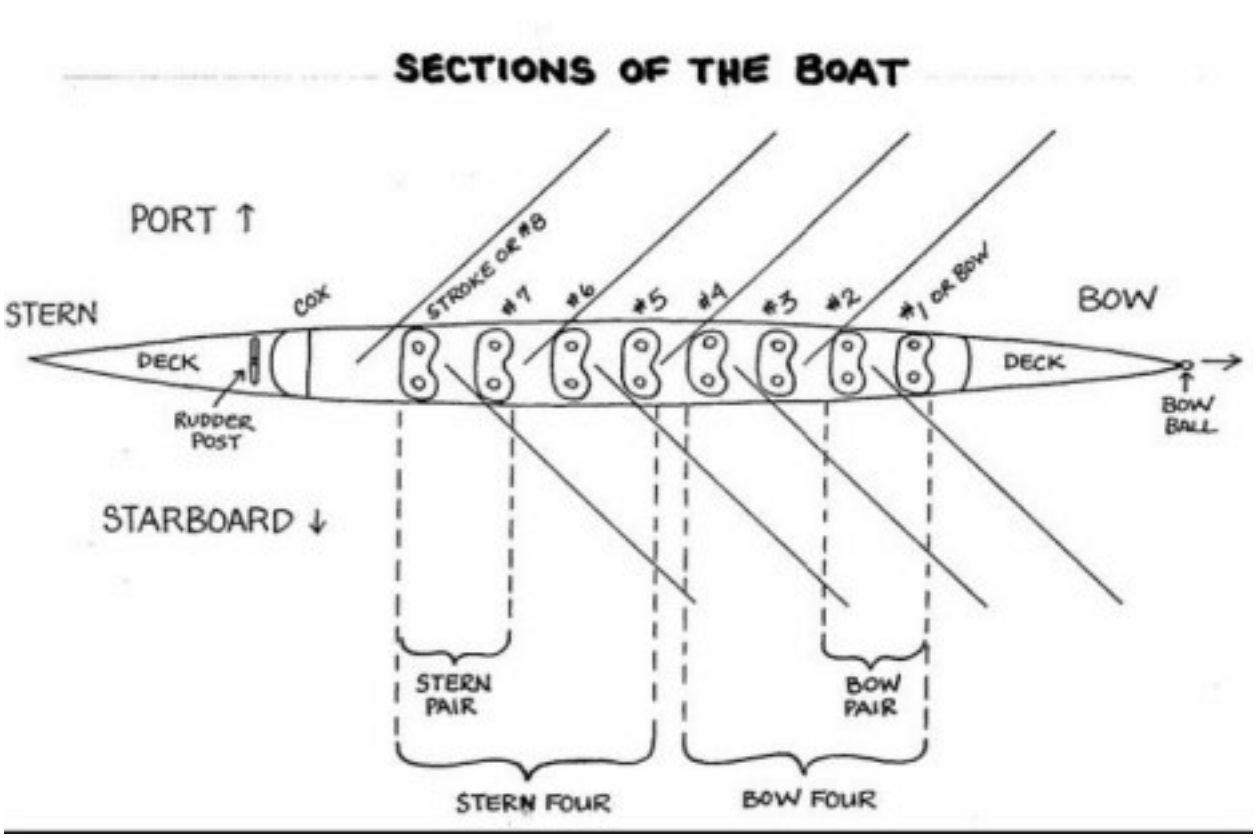
The rower sits on the seat with their feet in the shoes. They hold the oar with both hands (or one oar in each hand, if rowing with two oars) and push their feet against the stretcher while moving the oar through the water. The rower's legs flatten out as the seat slides backward on the track. When the rower has gone back as far as they can, they begin to slide forward again. One full repetition of these motions is called a *stroke*.



Rowing is a leg sport, not an arm/upper body sport. The power that moves the boat comes from the rowers' legs. The upper body plays an important role, but it's not the primary source of work. In fact, the American Fitness Professionals Association states that the rowing stroke consists of 65–75% leg work and 25–35% upper body work. That being said, rowing is a full-body workout. It works every part of the body: legs, arms, core, chest, back. In total, about 85% of the rower's body is used in each stroke.

Boat Terminology

The following illustration shows the parts of a boat that you will probably hear about from your athlete, coaches, or other parents. It's not important that you memorize this information, but it's helpful to be familiar with the terminology.



Some important points to note:

- Rowers sit facing backwards. That is, they face in the direction they're coming from. Only the coxswain can see where they're going. This is only one of the things that makes the coxswain an important part of the boat. More on coxswains in a later section. In the case of boats with no coxswain (quads, doubles, pairs, or singles), the rower in bow seat (#1 seat in the above diagram) is responsible for steering and will periodically glance behind them.
- Coxswains generally sit in the stern of the boat. In some fours, the coxswain sits in the bow.

- Seats are called by their numbers. In the diagram above, you can see that the seats are numbered one through eight. They're referred to by these numbers, so seat #1 is *one seat*, seat #2 is *two seat*, and so on. One seat is also referred to as *bow seat*, and eight seat is also called *stroke seat*.
- In every boat, seat numbering always starts at one in the bow. For example, a four or a quad has seats one through four. In a double or pair, the seats are generally referred to simply as stroke and bow.
- There are speakers placed every couple seats in a four, quad, or eight. The coxswain speaks into a microphone, and the sound plays through the speakers. This is how the rowers can hear the coxswain, who might be sitting 30 feet away.

Starboard and Port

Starboard and port and nautical terms that refer to the left and right sides of a boat or ship. Starboard is the right side of the boat and port is the left side when facing in the direction the boat is traveling in.

Because rowers sit facing backwards, their perspective is different: starboard is on their left and port is on their right. It's opposite from how the coxswain and people on land would view starboard and port.

In sweep rowing (where rowers use one oar each), the oars extend out from either the port or the starboard side of the boat. The coxswain will sometimes give directions to rowers based on the side of the boat their oar is on.

The method of moving the oar through the water is the same for both sides. However, it can feel very different to the rower depending on which side the oar is on. Many rowers are more comfortable rowing either starboard or port. They may have a preference for one side or the other. Some rowers will say things such as "I'm a port rower."

It's valuable for rowers to be able to row both starboard and port. It makes it easier for the coach to make boat lineups when many rowers are flexible and can row on either side. Rowers who can do this are sometimes called *bisweptual*.

In sculling, each rower has both a starboard and a port oar, so there's no distinction between the rowers based on the side where the oar is located.

Differences Between the Seats

Your rower may talk about which seat they rowed during practice in terms of a number. For example, one seat, four seat, bow seat, stroke seat, and so on. As mentioned in *Boat Terminology* above, the seats in the boat are numbered, starting with one, which is in the bow, or front, of the boat.

Every seat position in the boat is important. Without a rower in every seat, the boat cannot move effectively through the water. All rowers need good technique, a sense for the rhythm of the stroke,

power in their legs, and the ability to balance through the stroke. Of course, no one has these in equal measure. The individual strengths of each rower mean that they may do better in certain seats.

There are some differences between the seats based on their position in the boat. These differences mean that some rowers may be more effective in one seat than others. Coaches will often move rowers from seat to seat, usually over the course of several practices, to learn which rowers excel in which positions. There may be one combination of rowers that moves the boat faster than another.

The difference between the seats are:

- **Eight seat (Four seat in a four/quad)**: Also called *stroke seat*. This is the seat in the back of the boat (the stern). In an eight and some fours, the rower in this seat faces the coxswain. In a four, the coxswain may be in the bow of the boat.

  Although this seat is in the back of the boat based on the direction the boat travels, because rowers sit facing the stern, all other rowers follow stroke seat. Stroke seat must have strong technique and a good sense of rhythm. They establish and maintain the stroke rate in response to instructions from the coxswain.

- **Seven seat (Three seat in a four/quad)**: Like stroke seat, seven/three seat needs strong technique. They must be able to mirror the stoke seat's motions. In sweep rowing, seven/three seat rows with the oar on the opposite side of the boat. If stroke seat's oar is on port, seven/three seat's oar is on starboard.

  Together, stroke seat and seven/three seat make up the *stern pair* of rowers. All other rowers in the boat follow them. In sweep rowing, rowers pay close attention to the stern pair rower with the oar on the same side as them.

- **Middle four (six, five, four, and three seat)**: Generally these are the most powerful rowers. Often, six and five seat will be the stronger pair. These seats are called the *engine room* because they power the boat. Fours/quads don't have an equivalent.

- **Two seat and bow seat**: These seats, together called *bow pair*, have a significant impact on the boat's stability. Although all the rowers influence the stability of the boat (also called the *set*) bow pair act as the primary stabilizers. This requires excellent technique and balance.

Boat Stability and Rowing Technique

In rowing, the boats are 15" to 21" wide and 30' to 60' long. Despite this, most rowers will go years, and perhaps their entire rowing career, and never be in a boat that flips over.

The larger the boat, the more rare of an event flipping is. Eights and fours almost never flip. The reason for this is that the oars being extended out from each side of the boat provide a lot of stability, particularly when the boat is at rest. The more oars there are, the less likely flipping is.

When the boat is moving, the boat can rock from side to side quite a bit depending on the skill level of the rowers. However, the boat can tolerate a lot of rocking before it flips. The oars are always extended when rowers are in the boat. When the boat tips to one side, they land on the water and help prevent further rolling.

Additionally, the more rowers that are in the boat, the more factors you have influencing the balance of the boat. The actions of one rower can have a dramatic effect on the set of the boat, but there are anywhere from three to seven other rowers also having their independent effect on the set.

In technical terms, the boats used in rowing have a very high center of gravity and a very low center of buoyancy. This relationship means that the boat has a narrow range where it's balanced and happy, and a wide range where its stability is challenged.

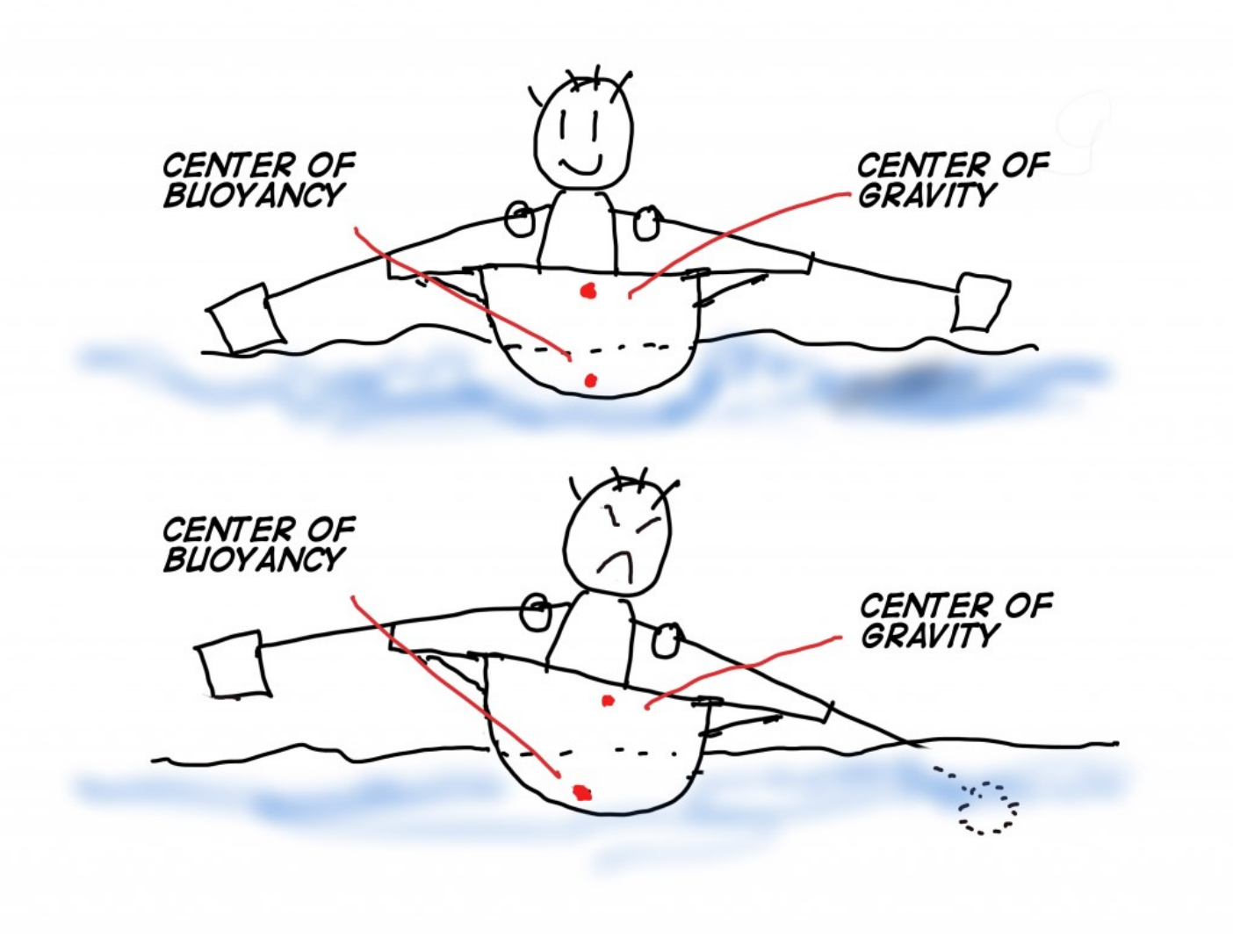


Image credit: https://maxrigging.com/what-gives-with-rowing-shells/

Rowers quickly learn how to fine-tune their movements during the rowing stroke to optimize the boat's set. No one likes to be in an unstable boat. It's uncomfortable and makes it hard to go fast. This is where the focus on technique is very important. In addition to making the boat go faster, technique makes the boat more stable.

Flipping is Rare, But it Happens

So, what happens when a boat flips? When a boat does flip, it rolls over and turns upside down in the water. Rowers fall out of the boat into the water and surface to the side of the boat. Their feet release from the shoes quite easily because the shoes have safety features that allow this to happen. (Safety features: velcro fastenings across the top of the feet and heel ties that hold the shoe in place so the rower's tugging away from the shoe allows the foot to break free.) Video of a four flipping on purpose: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5IQLTf0xjU

Rowing shells have many pockets of air within their hulls. This means they float. Rowers can hold on to the shell if necessary while they wait for a coach in a launch to come to the assistance of the rowers. The coach will help rowers into the launch, then they will tow the flipped boat back to the dock. All launches have safety thermal blankets on board that the wet rowers can use if they are cold.

Rowers Who Sit Out: Rowing by Fours or Sixes

If you watch enough rowing, you'll notice that sometimes some of the rowers are rowing while two or more of them are not. This is because having rowers sit out in pairs helps stabilize the boat. Having a stable boat makes it easier to practice drills to work on technique. Having rowers sit out also gives them a chance to rest while keeping the boat moving.

The coxswain will call for rowers to sit out in pairs, so there's always one starboard and one port oar on the water. The rowers are not sitting idly when they're sitting out. They have a responsibility for paying close attention to the set of the boat and making small adjustments with their oars to hold the boat in a stable, set position.

When rowers sit out, it's often called "rowing by sixes" or "rowing by fours", depending on how many rowers are left actively rowing.

Athletes Who Ride in Launches

Another sight you may notice is an athlete riding in the launch boat with the coach during practice. There are a few reasons why this may happen:

- **Numbers**: Sometimes the number of rowers at practicework out so that there are one or two more than there are seats in boats. Sometimes, the "extra" rowers might be offered the chance to go out in a single or a double. However, there are days when small boats aren't a viable option. Coaches might swap rowers or coxswains out part way through practice, so the "extra" athletes get some time in the boat.
- **Seat Racing**: During seat racing, coaches swap rowers in and out of boats. Rowers who aren't being tested may be in the launch.

- **Illness or Injury**: If a rower becomes injured or ill during practice, they may be pulled out of the boat. It's possible to row an eight with seven rowers. It's not a pleasant row, but it can be done, and is definitely preferable to rowing a sick or hurt rower.

Coaches aim to be as fair as possible and make sure that all rowers get their time in the boat. They will use their discretion when determining which rowers to place in a boat and who rides in the launch and/or will swap out. Rowers who chronically miss practice, are frequently late, or often lack motivation during practice may be more likely to be selected for this, when all other things are equal.

Coxswains

Coxswains have a unique, challenging leadership role in a crew. They're the only person in the boat facing in the direction the boat is traveling and the only one without an oar. The coxswain (also called the cox) does not simply ride along with the rowers.

Whether on land or water, the coxswain is the lead. They are often referred to as the "coach in the boat". Rowers must listen to and follow the directions given by the coxswain. The coxswain keeps the rowers moving together effectively and safely as a unit. For example, when on land, the coxswain calls out directions to the rowers so they lift, carry, and put the boat down in unison, and makes sure that the rowers carrying the boat avoid obstacles.

When on the water, the coxswain's responsibilities include:

- **Safety of the Boat:** Coxswains are responsible for the overall safety of the boat. From the moment rowers put their hands on the boat to pick it up, until the rowers finish tying it down at the end of the row, the coxswain is the leader who directs every action the rowers take with the boat.

  The coxswain is responsible for understanding the body of water. For example, if there are shallow spots they need to know where they are and then avoid them. If there are obstacles in or under the water, the coxswain needs to know about them so they can steer the boat around them. Coaches will let coxswains know about any changes in the body of water that will affect the safety of the boat.

  Before every regatta, there is a coach and coxswain's meeting. One of the things that is covered during this meeting is safety concerns for the body of water where the races take place.

- **"Coach in the Boat"**: The coxswain provides feedback to the rowers on their technique. The coxswain can see the rowers and their oars, and so can see whether they're moving together, or if certain rowers are out of sync. The coach, who is out in the launch near the boat, is also observing the rowers and providing feedback on technique. Between the coach and the coxswain, rowers receive plenty of feedback from a variety of perspectives. On race day, all coaching in the boat comes from the coxswain as they make the race calls.

- **Running Drills**: During practice, rowers do drills to practice and refine various aspects of their technique. The coach will call for the drill, but it's the coxswain who runs it in the boat. Running a drill can include counting strokes, keeping track of time, and so on.
- **Motivation**: The coxswain has a huge impact on how the rowers feel during the row. They can bring the rowers down, or lift them up and motivate them to push through the challenge and give their all. During a race, the coxswain's motivation can make all the difference in how the boat places.
- **Executing the Race Plan**: In a race, the coxswain will have a race plan. The plan includes things such as the course to take around turns (in head races), how fast the boat goes at the start, when and how the boat will settle down into a race pace, how often to call for bursts of extra speed and power, and when to start the final sprint to the finish. During a race, the boat doesn't have a dedicated coach in a launch providing direction, so the coxswain takes on this responsibility.
- **Steering**: Coxswains must do all of the above while paying attention to their surroundings and the direction the boat is going at all times to ensure the safety of the boat and their crew. Many factors influence the direction the boat goes (the boat's *point*), including the wind, the current, and the rowers themselves. The coxswain can counteract these factors with the steering mechanism in the boat.
- **Communication with Race Officials**: At races, the coxswain is the member of the boat's crew who communicates with referees or course staff when necessary. The coxswain may ask them questions, or acknowledge instructions given by the officials. Sometimes you may see a coxswain raise their hand while in the boat. Due to distances on the water, the coxswain may do this instead of verbally responding to the officials. The coxswain may also raise a hand to let officials know that the boat is not ready, that there is a problem with a crew member or equipment, or to protest the results of the race.

  Coxswains may sometimes raise their hands in the boat during practices. When they do, it's for similar reasons.

Blisters

Blisters are a fact of life for rowers. Comparing blisters is a common rower activity. They can be quite a source of pride.

The blisters happen because of friction between the hands and the oar from the repetition of the rowing stroke several hundred times during practice. They're normal, but they can also indicate some issues with the rower's grip or stroke. Other rowers or coaches will point out things the rower can learn based on their blisters.

Eventually blisters turn into calluses. Once they are calluses, they're far less irritating, and far less likely to blister back up again, as long as the rower is still rowing.

Blisters are common early in the season, or when the rower rows on the other side the first time in a long time. For example, if they usually row starboard but rowed port one day to fill a seat in the boat, they'll likely come home with new blisters.

As far as care goes, it's good to keep them clean and dry. If they're open and raw, you can put some antibiotic ointment on them if needed. They should be allowed to dry out.

During practice, the rower can tape their fingers or hands. Some favorite products that rowers like are:

You Caught a Crab?!

One thing you will hear your athlete talk about is catching crabs. This refers to an event that happens in the boat. When a rower "catches a crab" it means their oar blade becomes trapped in the water during the stroke. Because the boat is moving, the trapped blade acts like a brake on the boat. The oar handle comes back toward the rower, often with force. The handle may hit the rower in the chest, or fly over their head. The rower often ends up laying flat in the boat as they react to the oar handle flying towards them. The boat must slow or even stop so the rower can reset the crabbed oar.

Catching a crab happens to all rowers. It's common with new rowers, but even experienced rowers catch crabs from time to time. It can be frustrating, scary, and embarrassing. It generally doesn't cause injury, other than bruised pride.

A rare occurrence is an "ejector crab." in which the force of the oar is so great that the rower is thrown from the boat. There are videos on YouTube, if you're curious. This is an extremely rare thing to happen, fortunately!

Indoor Rowing: The Erg

One of the things that surprises many people about rowing is that it's a year-round sport. During the cold months, we move practice indoors and use rowing machines, also called*ergometers*, or simply *ergs*.

Why ergometer? Because it measures the amount of work the rower does in *ergs*. In physics, an erg is a unit of work. The rowing machine measures the amount of work done based on the power output of the flywheel. The power output is measured in watts, and the computer display on the erg has a setting to show that number. It's one of the many numbers involved in rowing that you may hear your rower mention.

In addition to watts, the erg's computer also calculates speed and distance, as well as pace and calories. There's an app that goes with the ergs we use that tracks each workout, along with all the stats. Coaches, coxswains, and athletes track their data to determine individual improvements over time, and to make adjustments during training.

Erg Room

Our indoor training facility, called the *erg room*, has around 60 ergs, four Concept2 bike machines, strength training equipment, and a set of yoga mats. This allows coaches to plan a wide variety of workouts that focus on all aspects of fitness.

On nicer days, coaches may have rowers run outside, in the parking lot or around the building. This is a great form of cross training.

Erging helps build stamina and endurance. It helps improve cardiovascular fitness. Coaches choose workouts to focus on various aspects of fitness, while keeping things interesting with a wide variety of options.

The work done in the erg room leads to gains in fitness and strength that rowers can feel when they get back on the water. A lot of team bonding happens during time in the erg room, too.

A Lot Like Being in a Boat, But Not Exactly

Ergs simulate the basic movements of the rowing stroke, so it's a lot like being in a boat, but not exactly. In addition to the physical workout of using the erg, ergs can be helpful to work on the sequence of the rowing stroke.

This is great for newer rowers. Erging removes the complexities of being on the water, such as the motion of the boat and the precise timing and movements of the oar. This allows them to focus on the bigger, basic movements. This can lead to great improvements the next time they're on the water.

Sometimes you'll see a series of ergs on frames that are resting on the floor of the erg room. These are called slides, and they connect the series of ergs together so they all move in tandem. This simulates rowing together in a larger boat. Using the slides allows rowers to practice synchronizing their movements, which can translate into improvements when on the water.

Erg Workouts: Lots of Numbers

When your rower talks about workouts on the erg, you'll hear a lot of numbers and terms that don't mean much at first, unless you are a former rower. For parents who have no experience with rowing, here's a brief primer on rowing workouts.

Coaches put together workouts that are sets of exercises on the rowing machine. These sets are called *pieces*. Often the same set is repeated two, three, five, or more times. There is usually rest time built into the workouts. Rest can happen after each piece, or after a group of pieces.

Workouts are usually either time-based or distance-based. These allow focus on different things. In a time-based workout, rowers see how far they can go in a set amount of time. In a distance-based workout, rowers see how fast they can complete a set distance.

Sometimes each piece in the workout is the same in speed and intensity. Other times, something changes with each successive piece - the speed, the intensity, or both.

There is a shorthand used to describe workouts. The shorthand is used in writing and when talking about workouts.

In writing, it looks like this:

3x20 at 18 3' rest

10x500 race pace, 30" rest

2x3K at 20/22/24 2' rest

The first number is the number of times the piece is repeated.

The second number is what the piece is. It's either time or distance. In the above examples, the 20 means 20 minutes. The 500 means meters. The 3K means 3 kilometers/3000 meters.

The x separates the two numbers so they're read as *by*. So you'll have "three by twenty," "ten by five hundred," and "two by three k."

The "at 18" and "at 20/22/24" indicate the number of strokes per minute (SPM or S/M), also called the *stroke rate*. One stroke is equal to moving the rowing machine seat forward and back one time. Going at an 18 means going back and forth 18 times each minute during the piece. The higher the stroke rate, the more intense the piece will be.

"At 20/22/24" indicates that each piece will have a different stroke rate. During the first piece, the rowers will do 20 S/M, then 22 during the second 3K, and 24 during the last piece."

"Race pace" indicates the rower should treat the piece like a race. This means they go as fast and hard as they can, within their limits to sustain it for the piece and across the whole workout.

The amount of rest is indicated by "[#] rest". The rest time allows the rowers to get some water, and for their heart rates to come down. The amount of rest depends on the intensity of the piece, with shorter amounts of time between higher intensity pieces.

Split Times

One other thing you're likely to hear your rower talking about is*split times*. This refers to the amount of time it takes to row a specific distance (the split). Typically the split distance is 500 meters. It's a way to divide up a longer piece and develop a sense for pacing throughout that longer piece.

For example, a 2k race consists of four 500 meter pieces. So rowers can focus on how fast they row each of those 500 meter pieces as a way of managing the larger race. They know if they can hold certain split time - be it 2:13, 2:00, or 1:45 - that they can match their personal record (PR) time. If they go faster, they'll break their PR.

Rowers will often talk about split times when discussing their workouts. You might hear "We did 2x3k and for the last 500 of the second piece I pulled a 2:02." Or "We did 5x5s and I broke 2:00!"

Note that the terminology and concepts in this section apply to on-the-water workouts as well as erg workouts.

2K Tests

You will hear a lot about 2Ks. This is the standard method of comparing the power potential of rowers. You can think of it as the SAT of rowing.

It's completed on erg machines. Rowers row 2000 meters as fast as possible. The time is recorded, and future lineup decisions may be made based on this time. For rowers who go on to row in college, their 2K time is part of the information collegiate coaches want to know.

A good 2K time doesn't guarantee that someone will be a good rower in the boat on the water. However, it does showcase their power, which is a very important element of rowing.

Rowers generally dread 2K tests, and for good reason:

- They are HARD. Two kilometers is just over a mile. It's quite long for a sprint, but definitely not an endurance race either. And yet, rowers are expected to go all-out for the entire distance, which can take seven to ten minutes.
- They're fairly public. 2K tests are completed by the whole team at the same time. It's very obvious who finishes quickly and who takes longer. The times are displayed on the erg monitors where others can see.
- Decisions are made based on their performance. Coaches make decisions for placement in lineups based in part on 2K times.

Many rowers put a lot of pressure on themselves to perform well, and may be hard on themselves if they didn't hit a personal goal.