



WAYLAND WESTON ROWING ASSOCIATION COXSWAIN MANUAL

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OVERVIEW

As a coxswain you are a leader on the team. You are at the ground level managing the performance of your crew. You are responsible for the safety of your crew, implementing a coach's practice and race strategy, organizing rowers and equipment, and much more. A coxswain must be able to lead and motivate with enthusiasm while still being in complete control of the technical aspects of the job. A good coxswain can separate friendship and duty when necessary. A good coxswain is always aware of his or her surroundings and keeps his or her rowers in the best position for success whether in or out of the boat. A good coxswain makes a coach's job easier and aids in communication between a boat and the coach. An excellent coxswain leads and serves all at once.

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Coxswains are in some ways the most important members of a crew. They are the individual responsible for the steering of the shell, and also giving commands to the rowers in order to facilitate the safe and efficient operation of the crew as a unit. The coxswain is the leader of the crew while on the water, and works with captains to be leaders off the water as well. The coxswain is an integral part of the crew, and can have a large effect on the success of the crew. Many races can and have been won by well-prepared coxswains, while unprepared coxswains have played a large part in many races lost.

The qualities a good coxswain possesses are: confidence, intelligence, a positive attitude, the ability to think ahead, and the ability to understand and follow through on instructions. Other things that will help a cox improve over time is their willingness to seek out advice from rowers, coaches, and other coxswains, and adapt themselves to better interact with their crews. Just as the rowers are constantly trying to improve themselves, a coxswain must also be continually looking for ways to get better at what they do.



COXSWAIN SELECTION

Coxing is a critical and essential component of a rowing team, and is given its own set of selection criteria, both for current coxswains and those wishing to attain the role. Many teams place a high degree of responsibility and expectation on its coxswains, and only the most suitable individuals will be accepted.

The COXSWAIN (pronounced “cox’n”) is every bit as important to the team as the rowers themselves, and has as mentally a demanding task as the crew does physically. They are responsible not only for safely steering the boat, but must also give valuable feedback during practices, and motivation and tactical advice during races. Physically, the cox needs to be small in stature: 110lbs for women’s boats and 120lbs for men’s. Coxswains are generally 5’3” or shorter. Small is a distinct advantage in this case, and sought after. Mentally, the coxswain needs to have a strong, positive, and intelligent demeanor. They are required to multi-task constantly, and are ultimately responsible for the safety and well-being of both their crew and their boat.

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The coxswain has a tremendous amount of responsibility to account for, and because of that they hold a special place on the team. There is an interdependent relation between rowers and cox in that the better each can perform, the better the other will perform for them.

As with rowers, development of a good coxswain is a gradual process and it takes several seasons for the cox to fully come into their own. Successful coxswains are those who continually seek out knowledge of their sport and ways to improve themselves, are self-motivated, open-minded, highly communicative, and are able balance peer feedback with an all-important self-confidence.

To be considered, prospective coxswains must have already demonstrated that they are:

- Intelligent
- Mature
- Articulate
- Outgoing and vocal
- Confident
- Positive in their attitude

Without these attributes, it is not likely that an individual will be able to perform the task.

HOW TO BE A GOOD COXSWAIN

LEARN FROM OTHER COXSWAINS

Other coxswains can be a very good resource. Other coxswains in your program will know something about the role. Talk to them, watch them. If they don't mind ask them to make a recording or a race or even a practice. If you have the chance, go to a camp or a coxswain clinic. The more knowledge and experience you have, the better you'll become.

LEARN HOW TO ROW

One of the most important things that one must do if they are to master the art is to learn how to row. Don't just watch videos or other people row. Jump in the boat and do it! If you can't row yourself, your abilities will be limited. You could know the correct technique, and everything there is to know, but it's not the same as actually doing it. Physically taking strokes on the water will help you to better understand the movements involved which will help you in correcting the oarsmen with their strokes.

LISTEN TO COXSWAIN RECORDINGS

Find as many audio recordings as possible. [Ready all, row...](#) has great stuff, and it's always informative to poke around [row2k.com](#), as well as [usrowing.org](#). Record yourself during both practices and races, and listen to it carefully. Transcribe some of it to get a greater sense of what you're saying. Ask other coxswains for some of their recordings.

MOTIVATIONAL SKILLS

You must be able to motivate your crew. Pay close attention to them both on the water and off, and listen to what they say. Short of coming out and asking them "what motivates you?" this is the best way to gain this information. Put yourself in their stretchers and think about what you'd like to hear. Try things at practice and pay attention to what works and what doesn't. Ask other crews what they like to hear from their coxswain to get some ideas.

Develop your own style. There is no one simple "magic call" which will make a boat move faster. All crews respond to different things. What works for one boat may not work for another. You should develop a broad base of knowledge so that you can put together the right thing to say at the right time. Don't be afraid to make mistakes, sometimes calls just don't work. Learn from your mistakes.

EARN RESPECT

As a coxswain you have responsibility. Don't go on a "power trip". You are a leader and motivator, but you are still part of the crew, and in that way equal to each rower. Don't let yourself sound bossy, or your crew will immediately tune you out. Learn how to work with the other members of your team. If your crew respects you and trusts you, you will have a much better experience and will be more likely to win. It's not about you telling them what to do, it's about you helping them get the most out of their work. Ask others how you come across, and be willing to accept their answers.

Know how to do your job. Know the workouts. Know the lineups. Know how to make correct calls, how to dock, how to rig, and above all, how to steer. If they look over the stern and see a crazy serpentine wake or feel the boat constantly losing set to your drastic adjustments, you can bet you'll have to work hard to get them to trust you again.

KNOW YOUR CREW

Know the names of every rower in your boat. Write it down if you need to. Don't just use their number when talking to them. Sometimes rowers forget where they are sitting. During a race they will respond better to their own name rather than to a number. Also, try to build a relationship with the rowers on your boat. It's a big plus if your rowers like you.

PERSONALITY AND STYLE

Personality is an important issue. Rowers tend to like it if their coxswain has a personality. Be able to be serious but have a sense of humor at the same time. Style is another important part. Style is what you say and how you say it. Some coxswains like to verbally attack their opponents during a race. Some are able to stay calm the whole race, but still have the control and burning desire. And some are true motivational masters. Style is up to you. Find what works with your crew.

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WORKING WITH YOUR COACH

It is important for the coach to understand that there are some psychological challenges of the coxswain. Coxswains are generally short people in a sport of tall people. Coxes are the only person in the boathouse that is not there to row. The boathouse can be a lonely place for a new cox. It is important for the coach to pay attention to this, especially in the first few weeks of the season.

It is vitally important that a coxswain knows what the coach wants from both them and the rowers. The coach should spend a minute or two before each practice explaining the purpose of the training session. The coach should spend at least 10 minutes after the practice listening to feedback from the cox. Specifically going over each rower in the boat and reviewing what worked and what can be improved on. Make sure you know the workout for the practice, or the race plan at the regatta. You will be expected to know these things, have them written in your notepad, and be able to execute them without having the coach present.

On the water, the coach is in the launch working alongside the boat, it is important that you are listening to what he/she is saying. You'll need to know what the focus is and what the problems are to assist the rowers. Whenever a coach addresses you specifically, you should always raise your hand as an indication that you heard them. (This is also the case when an official addresses you at a regatta). Additionally, whenever the coach is speaking remain silent. If both of you are talking, the crew will hear nothing at all.

Your relationship with the coach:

- You have a continuous role with the coach before, during, and after practices and races. On race day you become the eyes and ears of the coach.
- Communication – always communicate with respect and know that your opinion will be respected by the coaches.
- The cox has different rights with the coaches than the rowers, as the coach will see you as a strong support person for both himself and the rowers.
- Race Days: most coaches have little to say to the rowers on the race day because they feel that the race is now up to the rowers because the work is done. The coach will want to review with you your race plan and then will ask you how the race went, what worked, what could be improved upon.

The key to producing outstanding coxswains lies in the attitude of the coach toward the coxswains.

DUTIES OF A COXSWAIN

In Order of Importance:

SAFE MANAGEMENT OF CREW AND EQUIPMENT

The underlying goal of any program is 100% safety of both crew and equipment. To accomplish this the cox must be in control of both the boat and the crew at all times. The cox should have a complete 360° awareness of the immediate vicinity on land and on the water. This requires keen observation and a great deal of forethought.

Know the proper emergency procedures. Know how to handle your crew if the boat swamps or flips. Know where you are on the lake, in the river and what to do if lightning or thunder is observed.

STEERING

Additionally, the coxswain must be able to maintain the focus of the crew. Talking in the boat, joking around, unnecessary movement, and spacing-out will be highly disruptive to practice. It is the job of the cox to keep their crew in line and with their heads in the boat.

Sit still with a slight forward lean in the seat, bracing the feet against the stretcher; not only is it detrimental to the set if the cox is not braced, but the beginning of each stroke will slam your back into the rear of the seat. Place all, but your pointer finger and thumb on the outside of the shell and then hold the string between the pointer finger and thumb. This way you feel your hand moving against the boat, which will serve as a reminder not to over-steer. Also, make sure you steer with the wrists, not the arms.

In 8's, move the rudder line *away from you* on the side to which you want to steer. To steer right, push your right hand forward, to steer left, push your left hand forward.

For coxed 4's the steering will change based on the boat brand, however with Vespoli's (the most common brand at Wayland Weston), the lever goes forward to go right, and back to go left.

Since a shell slides through the water, the shell will continue to swing after the rudder has stopped being used. Therefore, slightly understeer from your final target. It is vital to anticipate the beginning and end of a corner, or a correction, otherwise the turn will have to be counteracted, and the boat will "fishtail" down the course.

The boat is very long, so it takes a while for it to turn. This often makes the cox think that the boat isn't turning, and they will respond by pushing harder on the rudder. The cox must be patient, so he does not over-correct. Also, it should be noted that a 4 responds faster than an 8, and individual boats have their own steering idiosyncrasies.

When steering a straight line, the cox will find it easiest if he/she aims at some distant object. This is called steering by a point. Use *SMALL CORRECTIONS* as soon as the bow strays from this point, rather than making big corrections later.

Steer with your crew whenever possible by adjusting port and starboard pressure.

Remember, there is a "blind spot" directly in front of the boat. Be constantly scanning the water in front of your boat for obstacles or debris in the water, and other shells. If necessary, *slightly* lean over to one side to view directly in front of your bow.

GIVING COMMANDS

When calling commands, it must be done clearly and confidently, and with a definite cadence. And you must know what you're going to say before you say it. REMEMBER, the crew has their hands full trying to row or carry the boat; they do not have time to interpret your commands. You want to make it as easy as possible for them to understand and do what you want.

Each time you give a command, you are telling the crew firstly, what they are going to do, secondly, when to do it, and finally, to actually execute the command. Examples are: "Weigh enough in two. One, two, weigh enough," and "Hands on, Up an inch, ready, up." Each of these commands should be given with a definite rhythm, or pace (cadence), so the crew can easily predict when to execute.

On land the coxswain will use "ready" or "and" to tell the crews when to move ("Roll to waist, *ready*, roll." "Up and over heads, *and*, up.") On the water, the cox will generally give two strokes prep time, calling the cadences at the Stroke's catch. ("Add bow pair in two. One, two, bow pair in.")

ENTHUSIASM AND MOTIVATION

Always be POSITIVE and ENTHUSIASTIC with your crew, you want them to improve and have fun. Listen to how you're talking to them. Are you too bossy, too authoritative? Or the opposite—too quiet, too relaxed and unpredictable? Striking a good balance between too harsh and too nice takes a bit of practice, but is essential for the coxswain's relationship with the crew.

If you're giving critique, it will be much more readily accepted if it is phrased in a positive manner. Avoid words like "don't" and "stop" or generally telling them what *not* to do, but instead give them positive suggestions on how to do things correctly.

TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS AND ADVICE TO ROWERS

There is a tremendous amount of information a knowledgeable coxswain can see and feel from the cox seat. Blades moving in perfect unison, both in drive and recovery speed as well as height, roll ups, clean catches and releases with appropriate puddles are all hallmarks of good rowing and can be clearly seen from the stern. Likewise, variations in these motions are much like symptoms, indicating to the trained eye what the body is doing incorrectly. Additionally, the feel of how the boat lifts at the catch and runs at the release gives the coxswain, who is not in constant motion, a unique ability within the boat to diagnose the power performance.

Reminding rowers of problem areas can be a good thing if done appropriately, but it is very easy for a coxswain to fall into the roll of coach. This should be avoided for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it can be extremely irritating for the rower and coach alike. Constant or often repeated reminders will cause the rower to tune you out, and will distract the crew. Reminders about anything the coach is not actively working on will also be disruptive to the practice. Take special care to avoid talking over the coach in all but emergency situations. You should be listening as attentively to the coach as the rowers are, and if you are both talking, nothing gets heard. If you need to make a call such as switching a pair, or to weigh enough, RAISE YOUR HAND before you begin to let the coach know you need to talk. Do not hesitate if you feel the call is urgent enough. A coach doesn't always see everything you see, and will respect your judgment if the safety of the crew and craft are at stake.

Know the proper emergency procedures. Know how to handle your crew if the boat swamps or flips. Know where you are on the lake, in the river and what to do if lightning or thunder is observed.

Notice this section was *last* on the list of coxswain duties. If the cox is knowledgeable enough and familiar enough with the crew, or if the coach has asked specifically for them to remind the crew on these points, then it is appropriate to give advice. Otherwise, be very cautious about how you work with your crew. If you don't know exactly what you're talking about, it may be best to remain quiet.

COXSWAIN'S TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

The most important piece of equipment used by the coxswain, other than the boat itself, is the Cox-Box. This is a compact and sophisticated (and expensive) electronic device which gives the cox various readings in the boats, most commonly strokes-per-minute (s/m) and the clock.

The Cox-Box should be treated with extreme care because there are a limited number of them belonging to the club, and they are relatively fragile if handled improperly. Always carry the CB by the attached handle— NEVER CARRY IT BY THE HEADSET WIRE. Also, be careful when plugging the unit into either the boat or the recharger. The connection pins bend easily if they are not aligned properly. (More in the appendix)

Any self-respecting coxswain will own a watch with a stop-watch function.

Coxswains should also carry with them a small bag of tools including:

Any tools specifically for your boat (if available), if not:

- A 7/16" wrench
- A 10 mm wrench
- An adjustable wrench which opens up to 3/4"
- A screwdriver
- A roll of electrical tape
- A roll of athletic tape
- Some Band-Aids
- A small bag of spare parts (7/16 nuts, washers, rigger spacers)
- A notepad with a pen or pencil for writing down daily line-ups and workouts, and a Ziploc baggie to keep these things dry in the boat.

** Refer to Appendix for more details and images of coxswain tools and equipment*

MOVING A BOAT

A boat is most susceptible to damage when it is moving on land, either in the hands of the rowers or on the trailer. **DO EVERYTHING IN YOUR POWER TO KEEP YOUR BOAT SAFE** on the way to the water. If you hit the boathouse door with the riggers, knock off the skeg on the dock, or damage the boat in any other manner, the boat may be wrecked and you and your crew may erg for the day.

The best way to keep your boat safe is to keep your crew under control, and to be thinking **TWO STEPS AHEAD** at all times.

- Do you have your cox-box and tools?
- Line-up and work out?
- When you're getting hands on, are there people standing in the doorway?
- Is there a boat on slings in the yard?
- As you come up to the dock, is your bow facing the right direction?
- Are there boats ahead of you?
- Are boats coming off the water?

Because the boat is long, heavy, and awkward to maneuver, it's far easier to avoid a problem by thinking about it before it comes up. Remember, you are the coxswain. The boat is **YOUR** responsibility. If it gets damaged, the coach will come down on you first, because you are in charge. At hands on, the coxswain's attitude must change from "being one of the guys" to being serious and in control.

As a newer coxswain, the best you can do is watch and listen to experienced coxswains moving boats on land. Listen to what they say and how things are done at the boathouse. Every boathouse has its own little quirks, procedures, and rules related to moving boats. Ask questions, and write down appropriate sequences. Ask about typical obstacles like the rogue lamp post by the dock, boat-eating trees, tight corners, and the one rack that doesn't quite fit a certain boat. Every boathouse has something. a boat, you check to make sure it is strapped correctly. If they do it wrong, you will be the one who gets yelled at!

PROPER CALLS TO THE WATER

Make sure your crew is balanced bow and stern BY HEIGHT (bow short, stern tall), and arranged at the first two and last two (bow and 2, 7 and stroke) riggers.

Call as follows: (May vary based on the position of the boat in the racks)

- “Hands On” Crew grabs gunnels and is ready to lift. NO TALKING FROM HANDS ON.
- “Up an inch, and, up.”
- “Walk it out slow”
- “Up and over heads. Ready, UP”
- “Face the stern/bow.”
- “Split to the shoulders from stern/bow. Ready, split.”
- Before the boat moves forward call out “heads up!”
- “Walk it forward” Make sure the riggers will clear both sides of the bay door.
- Depending on which side of the dock you’ll be launching from take the stern to the left or right to align the boat for a clean approach to the dock. BE VERY AWARE OF THE BOW AND STERN AT THIS POINT. KEEP A CONSTANT EYE.
- Proceed with the boat onto the dock, sending the front four left or right. When in position call “weigh enough” and stand ready by the skeg.
- *It is important to perform the following commands in as fluidly and quickly as possible:*
- “Up and over heads. Ready, UP”
- “Toe the edge”
- “Roll to the waist. Push Out. And down.”

Make sure they lean out over the water, and have a hand on the stern to make sure the skeg clears.

ON THE DOCK

The aim is to get the boat launched as quickly as possible in less than two minutes. The line-up is to be set before “hands on.” There is to be minimal talking; no chit chat.

Call one side to retrieve oars, the other to undo locks. If time and traffic permits, adjust stretchers

if necessary. It may be necessary to make adjustments on the water.

- “Extend port out board oars. One foot in, and down. Tie in, and check riggers.”
- “Countdown from bow when ready.”
- “Lean away. Walk it down. Stern pair back it when clear”

DOCKING

APPROACH THE DOCK SLOWLY

As you approach the dock have the bow 4 (or 2 in a 4+) drop out and set. Then drop out 5&6. Then go to arms and back, and finally arms only with stern pair. The idea is to slow the boat down but still keep it moving.

As your bow nears the dock have the stern pair weigh enough, apply a little left rudder, have the starboards/ports raise their oars and have the crew lean away.

Call as follows:

- “Untie and count down.”
- “On foot out. And up.”
- Call one side to oars, the other to locks. *The idea here is that oar handlers get their shoes while the locks are being loosened, then the remaining crew can get their shoes while the oars are heading up. This is crucial for efficiency in removing the boat from the dock.*
- Again stand by the skeg, calling the next segment quickly:
- “Hands on. Up to waist, ready, UP. UP and over heads, ready, UP. Split to shoulders, ready, split. Walk it up.”
- Eights go in stern first, fours bow first. Again be careful of the riggers on the bay doors.
- Line up tape (on the boat) with the racks near the bow before pushing it in.

DOCKING TIPS & TRICKS

Stop first. Stop at least two boat lengths off the dock to assess wind condition, current, and communicate docking order with other coxswains.

Take it easy. Go SLOWLY as you approach the dock, rowing with the minimum amount of rowers possible. Rowing by pairs or by single person is usually the way to go. If you're going slow,

you will never have a situation where you crush the bow or push the bow up on the end of the dock.

Consider the weather. In bad or unusual weather or wind conditions, think about what you are going to do, explain it to your rowers, and stick with the plan. Move quickly and decisively. This is a situation where the expression, 'He who hesitates, is lost,' really rings true. If you get into trouble, back it, come up with a new strategy, and implement that, also quickly and decisively. There may be occasions where you will have to make a circle and come in again. Safety trumps docking order.

Go with the flow. If wind or current is blowing you toward the dock, you want to let it take you there with minimal rowing by your rowers. Point your bow slightly into the wind, and coast in.

As a newer coxswain, the best you can do is watch and listen to experienced coxswains moving boats on land.

Cross the current. If wind or current is blowing you away from the dock, steer straight at the end of the dock, and approach as slowly as possible (Warn rowers that they may have to hold water if you gauge it wrong). This is where your rowers need to be listening to you!

Hold water. If you are pointed at the dock at a bad angle, you might be able to save the landing by having your stroke and six seats or seven and five seats (depending on which side you are coming in on) jam their oars in and hold water or back their oars.

Chop. If you are too far off the dock, you might be able to save the landing by having your bow and three seats or two and four seats (depending on which side you are coming in on) take a few quick, short, 'chop' strokes.

Lean out. When in a pinch, it is OK to lean your body weight out one side or the other to move the boat into the right spot. Your steering will not do much with only one or two people rowing.

Start over. If you are at a terrible angle, and it is too late to save the landing, have your stern four back it and start again. We have all been there. If you remain confident and authoritative, none of your rowers will question you.

PRACTICE

Practice is a very important time used for developing the technique and ultimately the speed of a crew. Practice is the most important time for the coxswain to act as a leader in the boat. It is the time when all the kinks in the rowers' technique can be ironed out. The coxswain must aid in this progressive environment by setting a positive and focused tone for the practice. Once the crew gets "hands on" and hits the water, everything is serious. The crew must use their time wisely and not waste it. Wasted time in practice will mean lost seconds during a race.

Most programs have coaches who are on the water with the crews providing instruction. The coxswain should listen to the coach. The coach will tell the coxswain what the workout will be, so he should pay attention. Coaches don't like to say things more than once. If the coxswain needs the coach to repeat something he should just ask. It is better to have the coach repeat his directions than for a coxswain to begin a workout when he does not know what he should be doing. The coxswain should just not make a habit of asking the coach to repeat himself. The coach will also provide feedback to the rowers while on the water. The coxswain should listen to what the coach tells each of the rowers and watch their oars so he can learn more about how to fix certain technique issues. While the coach is talking to the crew, whether to provide workout instructions or technical feedback, the coxswain should remain silent, so the instructions of the coach can be heard.

Coxswains should make a habit of using hand signals on the water. ANYTIME a coach or official speak directly to the cox, they should raise their hand as an acknowledgement. If you do not, the person speaking has no idea if they've been understood. If you cannot hear or do not understand, a generally understood signal is to point at your ear and shake your head ("I didn't hear you.")

If there are multiple crews on the water working with the same coach, the coxswains of each crew should work to keep the boats close together, unless instructed otherwise. If one boat gets ahead, the coxswain of that crew should tell his crew to ease up on the pressure, slow down the stroke rate, or even add a pause in the stroke. For crews that are behind, the coxswain should have the crew increase the pressure, or increase the rate. It is likewise necessary to keep the boats close if they are side by side. Anything over half a boat width (the length of an oar) is to be avoided.

It is vitally important that a coxswain knows what the coach wants from both them and the crew. Make sure you know the workout for the practice, or the race plan at the regatta. **WRITE IT DOWN.**

RACING

Racing is the test of all that has been learned in practice. Before the race itself, the crew will have to row to the starting line. The crew will use this time to warm-up for the race. In other words they will get their bodies ready to perform. A warm-up will usually consist of brief technical work and then end with short, full pressure pieces.

During the warm-up, the coxswain should maintain a positive and calm atmosphere in the boat. The rowers may be nervous and it is up to the coxswain, no matter how nervous he himself may be, to calm the crew. Before the race is not the time to add anything new or to try and fix problems which were unable to be fixed in practice. The crew must focus on doing the best they can with what they have and should not expect any major changes or improvements just moments before the race. Attempting to fix too much on race day can have a negative effect on the performance of the crew.

Sprint Racing

Sprint races are the type of racing which take place during the spring and summer months. The distance of these races is 2000 or 1500 meters for high school rowing. Each race can have between two and six crews racing at the same time. The crews start even with each other. Each crew is assigned their own lane which they must stay in the entire race. Some sprint races may make use of a starting platform where a person holds the stern of the boat in place and makes certain each crew is aligned.

THE START

The coxswain must line the crew up on the line when their event is called for. If the boat must be backed into a starting dock, the coxswain should do so carefully and slowly!

If not pointed correctly down the course once on the line, the coxswain should raise his hand until he is straightened out, then lower it. The coxswain should have bow or 2 seat row shortened strokes (i.e. arms only) to straighten the boat. Full strokes are not advised, especially if on a starting dock, full strokes make it very difficult for the person holding the stern to hold on. When using a stake dock, it is advised to have either 2 row with 1's oar or 3 row with 2's oar to straighten the boat. This is called "pinching it" sometimes it's also called "sculling it".

If there is no stake dock, the official will give commands to the boats racing in order to get them

aligned. If the official says “touch it up stern pair”, the crew should row lightly 7 & 8. If the official says, “check it down”, the crew should angle the oars into the water to slow the boat’s forward movement.

When the official asks the crew if they are ready, the coxswain should raise his hand briefly and have the crew sit ready to row. If there is a problem at the start, the coxswain must raise his hand and keep it up, and must also tell the bowman to raise his hand. This makes it more clear to the officials that there is a problem. Keep you hand up until the problem is fixed. Hands down to an official means you are ready.

Sprint races are started by an official who will give starting commands to the crews. Most sprint races begin with either a countdown start or a two command start. An example of a countdown start is “5...4...3...2...1...ATTENTION! ROW!” A two command start would just be “ATTENTION! ROW!”

The coxswain should pay attention in the morning coach/cox meeting as to what start will be used in the race. The cox should then tell their boat what the start will sound like so they aren’t surprised.

THE BODY

Sprint races are a straight shot from the starting line to the finish line. Coxswains should steer as straight as possible.

What commands should one use in a sprint race? There are some very basic commands like calling the racing start, calling 5s, and 10s, and calling the sprint. All coxswains should know these commands before racing. Besides these basic commands a coxswain should be able to motivate the crew. The coxswain should tell them where they are in a race, “300 meters left”. Tell them where the competition is, “We’re even with our opponent, let’s take a 10 to walk through ‘em.” The coxswain should give encouragement to the rowers, tell them that they can do it. It is important the coxswain stay positive. The coxswain should also try to stay relaxed, yet confident and aggressive. Sometimes if a coxswain goes wild and starts to yell like a madman, especially in inexperienced crews, the crew can get overexcited and lose control which can slow the boat down. Keep that wild fire saved away for when the crew gets experienced, it can work wonders then.

The coxswain should know the race plan and be able to control the crew to stick to it. Adhere to

the rates and strategies worked on in practice. The cox should know what the crew is capable of, and be able to keep the crew within their abilities.

THE FINISH

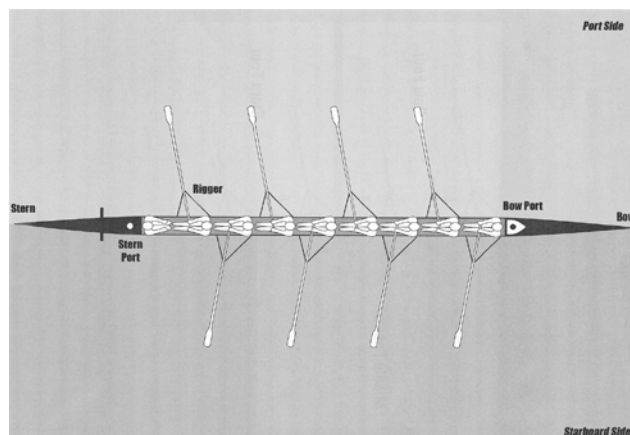
However, a race is a fast and dynamic thing. The cox will most likely need to adapt the plan to fit the circumstances, but always within the abilities of the crew.

The finish is a very important part of a race, especially in a very close race. During the last 500 meters, the crew's power will be used up. The coxswain should give them technical reminders to sit-up, breathe, relax, and to keep rowing full strokes. And although technique is certainly important here, there is nothing wrong with calling for more power during the sprint. Motivation from the cox is very important here – crew is all about pushing your body past its limits, and it is the coxswain's job to make sure their rowers do that.

A very important part of the finish is the sprint. Many races have been lost by boat that had the lead for the whole body of the race because a boat behind them had a better sprint. Sprints are fast and the rowers must give everything that they have. They should push themselves past their limits. All that matters is getting over the line first. The coxswain should make sure that the boat is together and at the same rate. Inexperienced crews can fall apart very easily during the final sprint.

Something to avoid is calling a specific number of strokes to the finish line. Far too often you may underestimate. A crew that has just been asked to give you their “last 10!” will not appreciate, nor perhaps be able to, give you ten more because you guessed wrong.

After the race, congratulate the winner (if it's not you), and thank the losers for a good race. You should not sit there and celebrate/cry/recover/die. There will likely be more races coming down shortly after, and the boats that have finished should move out of the way and head back to the dock.



Head racing

Head races are usually 3 miles and contain turns. They are more of a challenge for a coxswain's steering abilities. Coxswains have to steer the shortest course possible. Coxswains should watch for obstacles, other boats, and they should pay attention to their course.

THE START

Head races begin with a rowing start. The boats are lined up in order of their bow numbers (numbers assigned to each crew before the race begins). There is usually about a 10 second space between each boat's start.

As the crew approaches the line they should be rowing with all oarsmen, entering what is known as the chute. This is a buoyed lane about 100m long in which the boats come up to speed gradually as the marshals are calling you up. By the time you cross the line you will have been at race pace for 5 or so strokes. You should start your cox clock as you cross the line, and you will hear the official calling "you are on the clock."

THE BODY

Unlike sprint races, there is no sure way to tell how good a boat is doing. The coxswain and oarsmen should be concerned if a boat closes in from behind. This means they are faster. If a boat is passing, the coxswain should steer out of their way. This generally means giving way by moving towards the shore to be passed, towards the center of the river to overtake. The objective of most crews during a head race is to pass other boats.

Technique is more of an issue in head races. The coxswain most likely will have up to 15 minutes or more to talk during the race. He must make sure that he reminds the oarsmen about their technique. Technique is very important during a head race.

The coxswain should also not forget to motivate the crew during head races, this is very important. The coxswain does not have to talk the whole race. If everything is going well and he doesn't have anything to say, he should keep quiet. Silence can help the oarsmen focus and feel what the boat is doing. Silence can be very valuable. The coxswain should just make sure that he

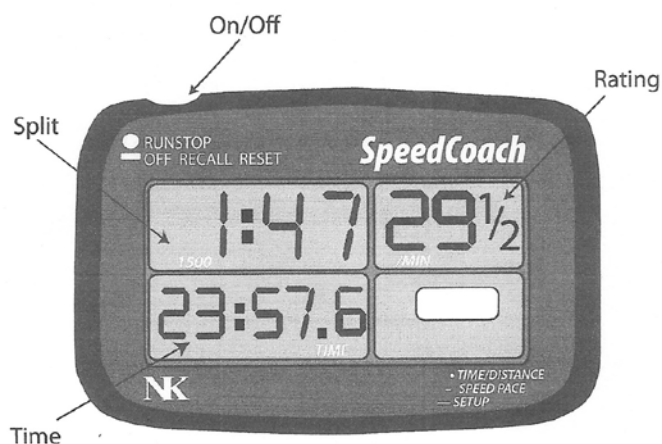
Before the race is not the time to add anything new or to try and fix problems which were unable to be fixed in practice. The crew must focus on doing the best they can with what they have and should not expect any major changes or improvements just moments before the race.

does talk when needed. He shouldn't let a severe problem with an oarsman's technique go unnoticed, he'll regret it when he finds out he lost the race.

The cox must make sure to know the rules and penalties for the particular course they are on. They must know which side to pass on, when they have to move over to be passed, whether the oars or shell marks out of bounds, and a variety of other things. Head races tend to have more variation on rules than sprint races, so coach/cox meetings – and the coxswain's memory – become very important.

THE FINISH

The sprint in a head race can be strange for new crews. Their opponents aren't next to them, and there is no way of telling what place they are in. This is where the coxswain becomes very important. The cox needs to create that competitive drive of the sprint at the end of the race in order to get that final push out of the rowers.



GENERAL CALLS AND IDEAS FOR RACING

This is just a quick guide for some basic calls for coxes within a race. If you're unsure of what to do in times of a race revert back to this.

- The most important point to make sure of is that at all times during the race you stay CALM and rhythmic. Your voice is a good tool to help the crew set a rhythm and row controlled. Screaming is not an effective tool.
- Don't be afraid to stay quiet when the crew is rowing well to let them feel and listen for it.
- Keep them informed of where they are compared to the rest of the field. The more informed they are the less looking they will do.
- When steering make sure you have a straight course from the start, find a landmark to aim for. A straight course will get them there faster.
- If you're passing a boat do it seat by seat:

Ex: 'I'm in line with the stroke, I want to be in line with the 3 seat using the legs in 5 strokes; push 1, push 2 etc.'

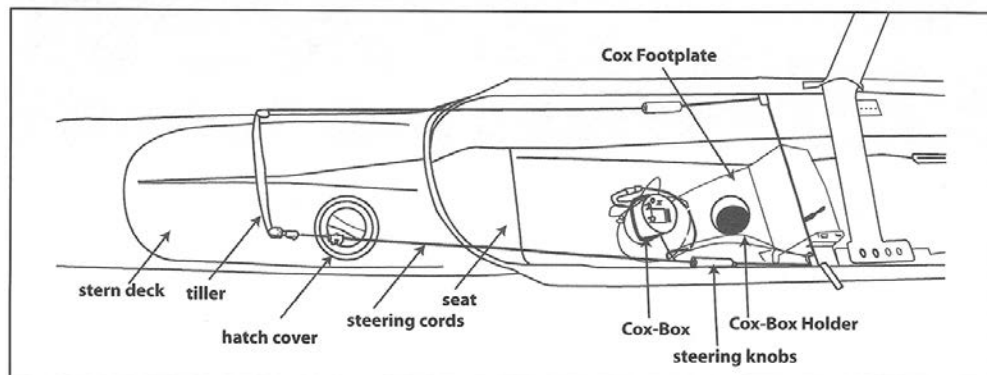
Note: Don't just focus on the legs for every seat. You can focus on backs, arms, catches etc.

- On your way down do sets of 10 where you focus on the aspects of the stroke that you know the crew needs to think about.
 - Heads up and straight
 - Bodies steady
 - Shoulders up
 - Sitting back
 - Drawing up
 - Finishing stroke
 - Smooth Acceleration
 - Timing
 - Quick Catches

- Place and Push
- Clean Finishes
- If you're going to do pushes for 10 focus on something within the drive:
 - 'Legs 10' 'Push'
 - 'Backs 10' 'Back set'
 - 'Arms 10' 'Arm set'
 - 'Finish 10' 'Pull there'
- The last 250 meters of the race are an important part of the race where the crew is expected not just to wind it up, but also to wind it together, while rowing efficiently. Is the boat controlled and moving faster? Also this is the time when the girls are tired so focus on basics, such as heads, bodies and breathing. Make that when you get to the end you row through the finish line.

Remember this is just a guide. Following your coach's plan is the important part of your job as you are the coach within the race.

G. The Coxswain Seat and How to Sit in It



ADVICE FOR A NEW COXSWAIN

- Keep a journal. Write down everything and look at it often. Write down workouts, head race courses, technical tips, what worked, what didn't, what rowers say, what the coach says ...
- Cox as much as possible. Cox during the summer, cox for other boats, volunteer to cox whenever you can.
- Row as much as possible. Convince your coach to hold a coxswain camp where he coaches a four with all coxswains rowing. Erg. Erg correctly. These lessons can be invaluable.
- Watch rowing as much as possible. Take home video, ask to ride in the launch even when you don't have to. Ask to ride in the other squads' coach's launches.
- Work out with the team. The coach might not like it or encourage it, but you can learn a lot about yourself, your teammates, and you can earn a great deal of respect.
- Running into things sucks. Don't do it.
- Ask questions. Especially in the Fall. Ask them privately so you can still appear confident but try to balance confidence with learning.
- Learn how to steer the straightest damn course ever. Make sure that your rowers get on you if you waver or else you will never get better. Steering is the most direct way to influence speed. Learn how to take any turn at any speed.
- Get a bad-ass pair of sunglasses.
- Put together a very small bag that you carry with you in the boat. Carry a 7/16th or 10mm straight handle wrench, an adjustable, some electrical and medical tape, spare bolts and Pocock spacer if you use them, a cough drop, spare pair of glasses if you wear contacts, and a small notepad.
- Buy a small mini cassette recorder or GoPro. Carry it around and try making calls into it – play it back and see how they sound. Bring your recorder with you in the boat and tape drills, practice pieces, and especially races. Listen to your tapes often.
- Write down the workout for the day and write down who's in your boat. If you don't want to be called coxie, cox, or coxswain then learn the rower's names and don't call them bow, 1, 2, etc.
- Dress like an athlete.

- Knowledge is power, so find out all you can about boat makers, workouts, the national team, other crews, different courses, other races. The more you know the more confident you'll be, and confidence is the foundation for good coxing.
- Always be on time. On time to practice, on time to the line, on time back to the dock,
- Strive to be a great coxswain. Not just a good coxswain. Of all the coxswains in the world, probably 50% are just plain bad, 30% are decent, 15% are good, and only 5% are great. Strive to be great.
- And finally, be yourself. Develop your own style. Be creative. Coxing is a way to find out who you are and what you're made of.

FURTHER READING

<http://www.usrowing.org/rules-of-rowing/>

http://archive.usrowing.org/docs/default-source/coaching/Coaching_the_Coxswain.pdf?sfvrsn=0

<https://www.rowperfect.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Coaching-the-Coxswain-EXTRACT.pdf>

http://archive.usrowing.org/news/details/13-06-11/Coaching_the_Coxswain.aspx

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<http://wwcrew.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/athlete-handbook-fall14.pdf>



APPENDIX

Common WWR Drills

PICK DRILL

Most common drill, used every row as a warm-up. Half boat setting, half drilling. All square blade: quick pick- arms only, swing pick- arms and back, 1/4 slide, 1/2 slide, 3/4 slide, full slide, then add the feather. Allows crew to focus on the individual elements of the stroke.

REVERSE PICK DRILL

Legs only, moving to legs and back, then legs back and arms (full stroke). Emphasizes proper drive sequence and good front-end suspension.

OUTSIDE ARM ONLY

Rowing with the inside arm behind the back, blade squared. Focuses on the leverage of the outside arm, drawing of the blade into the body, and control of handle height during recovery. Helps the set throughout as well as catch and finish precision.

WIDE GRIP

Generally done on the square, but not necessary. Inside hand moves toward the oarlock, holing the oar on the carbon-fiber shaft. Forces good lean around the pin, proper pivot towards the rigger, lower inside shoulder.

PAUSE DRILLS

One- or two-pause drills every 'x' strokes, pausing at various positions, depending on the portion of the recovery needing the most attention; finish, arms away, body prep, 1/4 slide, 1/2 slide. Works set, timing, and slide control.

CUT THE CAKE

Blades feather and recover to either hands away, body prep, 1/4 slide, or 1/2 slide before returning to the finish a second time, then continuing to normal recovery—blade height remains constant. This will help with all aspects of the set being off, as well as working quick hands away, stroke length, and rate.

EYES CLOSED

Continuous rowing with eyes closed (rowers only). Forces crew to listen for slide and catch timing, and to feel the body positioning. Helps timing, slide rush, catch, and lean problems.

The Cox-Box – Basic Care

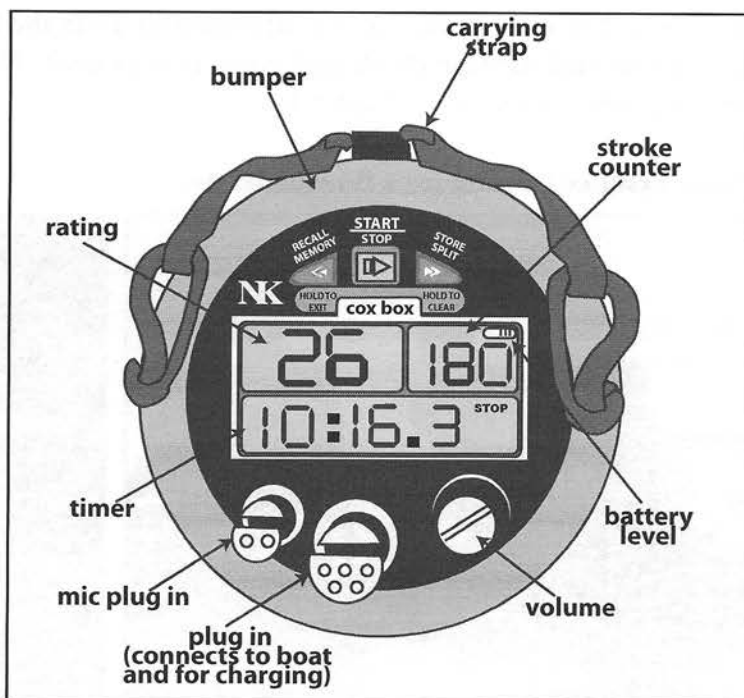
Each cox-box is different, especially between novice and varsity. However, it is always important to take good care of the microphone, charger and box itself. Here are basic tips for Cox-Box Care:

- Always make sure you pull out the charger by the main piece, and not by the wire! Same goes for the microphone.
- Unplug the microphone at the end of practice to keep the wire nice.
- Take the battery out every once and a while to make sure the inside is clean.
- Don't throw the microphone around, be careful with the mouth piece!
- Try to keep sand or dirt out of the plugs on the cox-box.
- Sometimes the microphone doesn't work, the charger doesn't work, the microphone doesn't work in a boat or something else happens to it. The biggest tip to prevent this from happening is to be careful with the wires and to be gentle with all parts of the cox-box.
- **ALSO DON'T FORGET TO TEST THE COX-BOX IN THE BOAT YOU WILL BE USING FOR RACES, BEFORE THE RACE!** The worst thing is getting into the boat as you launch and the cox-box not working!

H. Cox-Box and How to Use It

The Cox-Box is a voice amplification system used in rowing shells. We should note that 'Cox-Box' is a proprietary trademark of NK Electronics. You will see the classic blue-and-white NK logo on the headbands of coxswains globally. NK maintains a tidy monopoly on rowing electronics in North America and elsewhere. Australian brand Cox-Mate and other systems are also used by rowing clubs and teams. For the purposes of this book, we use the term 'Cox-Box' to refer to all voice amplification systems.

The Cox-Box headband is attached to a mic which positions near the wearer's face, allowing what the coxswain says to be amplified. The Cox-Box not only projects your voice to speakers inside of the boat, but also gives you some important data including elapsed time, stroke count, and strokes per minute. Let us examine how to read your Cox-Box.



Rating. The big number at the top left is your strokes per minute, also known as your 'stroke rate,' 'stroke rating,' 'rate,' or 'rating.' (All of these terms mean essentially the same thing and are used interchangeably. We have seen certain clubs favor one term over the other, but any of these are correct to use.) This means just what you think it means—the rate is the number of strokes per minute taken by your crew. For example, if your crew is pulling 28 strokes per minute, the stroke rating is 28. This data is generated by a small magnet on the bottom of the stroke seat, which passes over a magnetized sensor attached to the hull. Your Cox-Box plugin contains a wire attached to this sensor. Note that it usually takes three strokes to get an accurate rate reading on the Cox-Box.

Stroke Counter. The number in the top left corner of the Cox-Box is the number of strokes taken since the Cox-Box was last zeroed out. You can clear it by holding down the clear button or, on older models of Cox-Boxes, holding down the silver lever for several seconds.

Timer. This number in the bottom part of your Cox-Box screen is the elapsed time since the Cox-Box was last zeroed out. Like the stroke counter, it can be reset by zeroing the Cox-Box out.

Volume. All Cox-Boxes have a volume knob. The natural tendency for some coxswains is to turn the volume up to maximum and blast the crew out. We do not recommend this. Each crew will have a different volume tolerance. We encourage you to ask your crew what works for them. Older speaker systems will require higher volume (as will senior masters rowers). Turning down your volume strategically can make your rowers listen more closely. Often the most effective coxswain is not the loudest one.

Plugin. Cox-Boxes are equipped with a plugin system, unlike any you have ever seen before, where several tiny prongs on the boat connector will be inserted into the Cox-Box. Each tiny prong has a corresponding wire in the boat. Some connect to speakers and others to the stroke counter. As a result, you should be very careful to plug in the Cox-Box correctly.

I. Care of Your Cox-Box and Mic

Cox-Boxes are a pretty amazing invention and can last for decades if cared for correctly. They float (sort of), are waterproof, and work even in the worst downpour, blazing heat, and freezing temperatures. During the season, you should plug in your Cox-Box when you are not using it. A fully charged Cox-Box will last for about 4+ hours of use. We highly recommend following the directions on the NK website for charging and off-season storage, cleaning, and servicing advice. We learned the hard way that you should not store them in an outdoor space where the temperatures roast in the summer or freeze in the winter. Cox-Boxes can only be serviced by NK and should be sent in regularly for maintenance. As far as the mics go, they should be stored over hooks or loosely coiled. Curling or rolling up the mic cords in tight coils will lead to wires breaking, resulting over time in a bad crackling over your speakers. Whatever you do, never carry the Cox-Box by the mic cord. Also note that on the older Cox-Box mics, the metal connector that plugs the mic into the box is the weakest part of the system—take good care of it or you will be buying a new mic in short order.

J. Ergometers and How to Use Them

Ergometers, more commonly known as ergs (or in Europe ergos), are the premier off-the-water training tool for rowers. The rowing stroke on an erg is basically the same as in a rowing shell. Rowers pull on the handles of the erg, which drives a flywheel. While there are a number of manufacturers, ergs manufactured by Concept2 are by far the most popular worldwide. Concept2 comes out with new models periodically, so rowing clubs and teams will likely have a diversity of models. Screens are slightly different among the models, but all will share the same data, just in slightly different configurations.

Coxswains should not be scared of ergs. Do your best to familiarize yourself with them, including learning how to row on them. Learn what the data means and how you can use the ergs as a teaching and training tool for your rowers. The four major numbers on any erg screen will be time, rating, split, and meters (shown either as elapsed meters or as meters left in the piece). Here we cover these in a bit more detail:

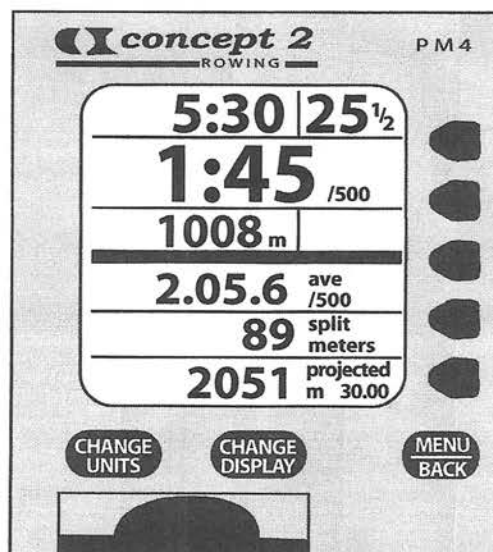
Rating. The number at the top right is your strokes per minute, also known as 'stroke rate,' 'stroke rating,' 'rate,' or 'rating.' (See Cox-Box information above.) This is the number of strokes taken by a rower in one minute. Generally this number will be between 18 and 40.

Time. This timer can be set to show either elapsed time or time remaining in the workout. This is typically easy to spot because it looks like a stopwatch and is generally in the top left part of the screen.

Split. This is the largest number in the middle of the screen. Split is shown in time, so 2:05 would equate to two minutes and five seconds. Split is the amount of time it takes for the rower to pull 500 meters.

Meters. This can be set to show either meters that the rower has already pulled or meters left to pull in the workout.

We highly recommend that you visit Concept2's website for more information on using, maintaining, and storing ergs.



2. Tools of the Trade

Gear doesn't make the coxswain, but it sure can make coxing easier. In this chapter, we'll take a look at the physical tools of the trade. Having the right tools is a key aspect of being prepared. All right, let's run down what you will need.

"Soft-wear"

The most important item you can bring to practice with you is appropriate clothing. There is little chance you are going to be able to concentrate if your teeth are chattering until they are ready to fracture, and your goose bumps have goose bumps. Neither will it be easy to steer if you are squinting into the sun because you forgot your sunglasses. You want to overdress for any weather. Why? Because you can always take clothes off if it gets too hot, but you can't put on what you don't have. Sitting in a coxswain's seat for an hour can turn into an eternity when you are cold or wet. That eternity can lead to hypothermia, a potentially life threatening condition where the body cannot keep itself warm. If you start to shiver uncontrollably, begin to feel "fuzzy headed" or disoriented, and feel in any way numb from the cold, you may have the beginnings of hypothermia.

So what do you want to wear? If it is cold start by layering. Layers trap heat better than just one large jacket. Follow the three layer rule which calls for a light first layer close to the skin, a medium to heavy second layer for warmth, and a wind breaking third layer. Loose fitting clothing is best. That first layer of long underwear made of polypropylene or silk will help move moisture away from your body to keep you dry and comfortable. A turtle neck and pants come next. A good sweater finishes out the second layer. Wool, and some of the man made fibers (fleece) you find in outdoor clothing stores are really good for trapping heat and keeping you warm, even when they get wet. Keep in

mind that once cotton clothes get wet, they stop insulating and only help to keep you cold. Make sure you have a good pair of gloves, preferably waterproof. Several light pairs of socks in a roomy pair of boots or shoes is important also. Again wool and moisture wicking fibers are better than cotton. A good hat is essential. You can lose as much as 30% of your body heat through your head in cold weather. Keep in mind that no one cares if you have "hat head" at the boat house, but they will care if you can't do your job right because you are frozen stiff as a board.

The last layer is a wind breaker/rain gear. It is very important to have a rain coat and, if possible, rain pants. Being wet only makes you feel uncomfortable and much worse if it is cold out. Even when it is warm, being wet will make you feel cold because the water helps draw the heat out of you faster. Wind, with or without rain, draws heat away from you and makes the air feel many degrees cooler. You will be that much more uncomfortable if you are wet. Wind and water can be a deadly combination that brings on hypothermia. Gortex® and similar materials are the best fabrics for rain protection. They are waterproof on the outside but at the same time allow moisture to escape from inside. Jackets and pants made with Gortex® have nylon outer layers that block the wind. If these specialty fabrics are too expensive, a rubber coated jacket and pants work well also. A simple nylon jacket by itself makes a respectable outer layer when there is no rain present.

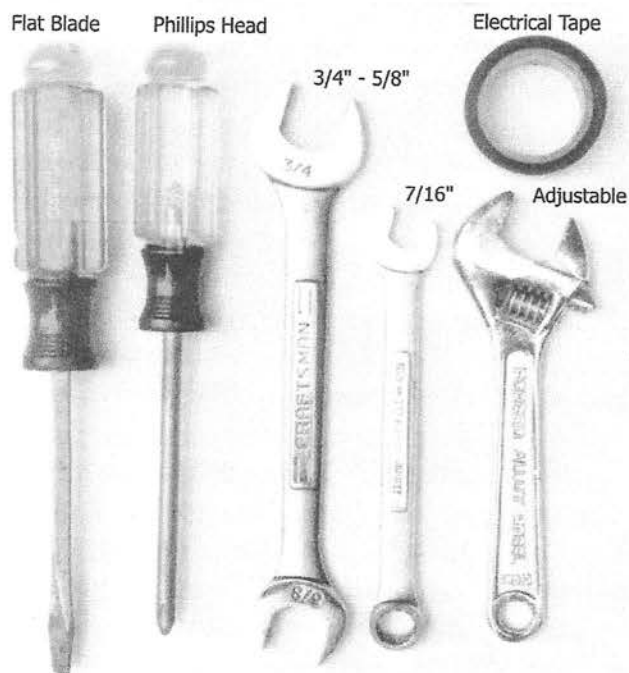
If it is hot out, you just substitute the layers of clothing for a layer of sunblock, spf 15 or better. Sun burn hurts, and it can lead to skin cancer later in life. Play it safe. Light colored clothing that breathes can make practicing in hot weather more bearable. Sport sandals like Tevas™, will also help keep you cool and will save you in the wet shoes and socks department.



Just remember to bring your running shoes with you to the boathouse for when you get off the water. The last, but not least, important piece of clothing is a good pair of sunglasses (preferably with polarized lens). The sun on the water can be blinding, and can make it very dangerous. You have to be able to see what is going on around you. Besides, they make you look cool and give you that coxswain's attitude. In closing, remember to bring extra clothing with you to practice and regattas, even if you don't think you will need it, because invariably you will get wet or someone else will need it instead.

Hardware

*Items followed by an asterisk are not pictured below.



Okay, we have our fashion problems taken care of, now let's make a list of the tools you'll need. All coxswains should have certain tools with them anytime they come to the boat house.

They are:

- flat blade screwdriver
- phillips head screwdriver
- 3/4"-5/8" open end wrench
- 7/16" open end /box end wrench
- 1.5" adjustable wrench
- wing nut wrench*
- a hip pack* to carry it all in.

These are the basic tools needed to work on any shell, and you never know when something is going to be loose. You should carry these tools in a fanny pack. They make reversible screw drivers that have a straight blade on one end and a Phillips blade on the other. Just pull the shaft out of the handle, flip it over, and plug it back in. Voila! A wing nut wrench is used for loosening or tightening the nuts that hold a rowers foot stretchers in place. You can't buy one of these wrenches, so ask your coach if he/she has made any that you can use. Anything else? Black electrical tape is handy. I suggest having a pen and pad of paper in your pack. A few bandages, a tube of Neosporin®, and a small bottle of Tylenol® or Advil® are also handy things to have.

Common Problems and the Tools to fix them

Adjusting Footstretchers — 7/16" wrench or wing nut tool

Loose Riggers — 7/16" wrench (10mm on European Boats)

Top Nuts — Adjustable or 3/4"-5/8" wrench

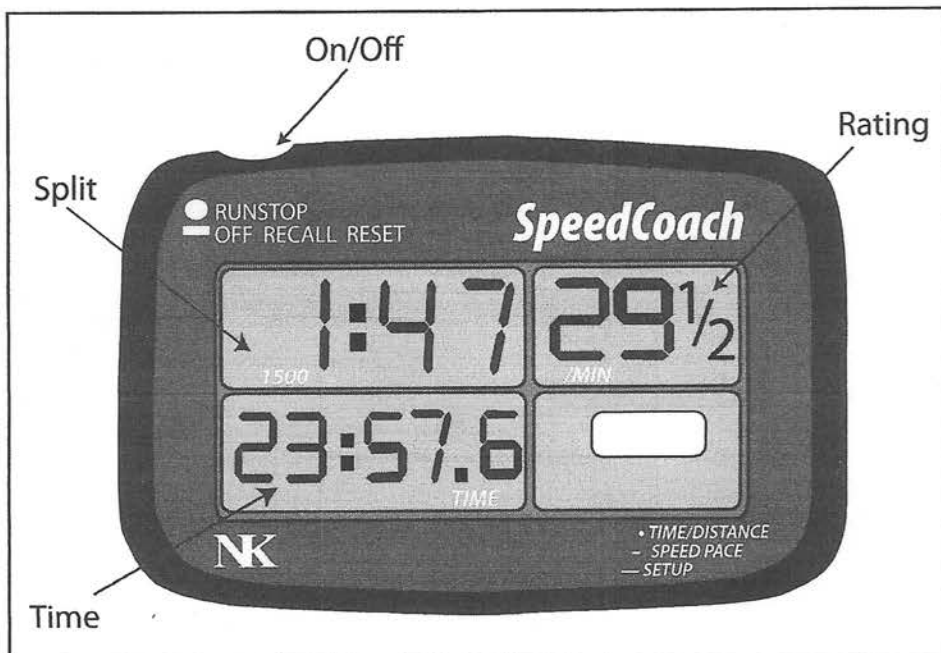
Trackbite — electrical tape or athletic tape

Squeaky Seats or Oar Locks — Water or lubricant

Loose Shoes — Tighten wingnuts by hand

K. Other Equipment and Basic Data

Tools like the SpeedCoach, also made by NK Electronics, are slowly going by the wayside as better and better rowing apps for mobile devices have been introduced. SpeedCoach and apps like it generally provide the same type of data as an erg. Most will show splits, ratings, time, and other data and also have recall functions so you can go back and track progress. We have found that the rowing apps are highly accurate especially for measuring meters and splits because they rely on pin-point satellite data from your mobile device. These apps are lifesavers in the event that your Cox-Box



Speed Coach

fails you. There are many other free or inexpensive apps that function as stroke rating counters or help you organize your lineups, take notes, or record your calls. If you are going to rely heavily on your mobile device, make sure to invest in a good waterproof case with a lanyard that goes around your neck.

L. Keeping Your Equipment in Good Working Order

As a coxswain, it is very important for you to make sure your equipment is in good working order at all times. You should routinely remind your crew to check for function and report all breakage to coaches. Before every practice, check for loose skegs, bowballs, and top nuts especially. Rowers should be checking that foot stretchers are in proper working order, that seats, wheels, and tracks function properly, and that oar collars are in the right place and tightened. Even more importantly, as a coxswain, you should be keeping an eye out for how your rowers treat the equipment. For newer crews, this means not banging the equipment around, dropping boats or oars, or stepping into the wrong spot in the boats. For more experienced crews, this means not adjusting equipment without checking with the coach or getting sloppy about maintenance. Keep in mind that this stuff is expensive, and when something does break, you can't always just run down to the hardware store for a replacement.

Boathouse Safety Plan

Emergency Care Procedures

In the event that an athlete is injured:

LIFETHREATENING – 3 STEP

Check

Injuries of this nature are considered medical emergencies and should be treated as such. These include but are not limited to:

Cessation of breathing

Cessation of heartbeat

Severe bleeding

Serious fracture/dislocation

Possible spinal injury

Heat illness (heat exhaustion, heatstroke)

Call

When there is little or no time to consult a doctor, immediate care for the athlete is critical.

Instruct nearby adult (another coach, etc.) to make phone calls to EMS and proper team personnel.

EMS 911 (25 Parkland Dr, Wayland, MA)

Program Director/Women's Varsity Head Coach (Mike Baker)

Chairman of WWR Board Member (Adam Schayowitz)

Parent - Be sure to have someone in the parking lot to direct the ambulance upon arrival

Care

Perform the necessary and appropriate first aid

NON-LIFE THREATENING

Injuries of this nature will require medical attention but are not an immediate threat to the athlete's life. These include but are not limited to:

Lacerations which may require stitches

Sickness

Orthopedic Injury (subluxation/ dislocation/fracture)

Be sure to comfort the athlete, present a calm, logical approach to the problem

Perform the necessary and appropriate first aid

If need be, transport athlete to Framingham Union Hospital; 115 Lincoln St, Framingham, MA 01702

Lake CochituateTraffic Plan

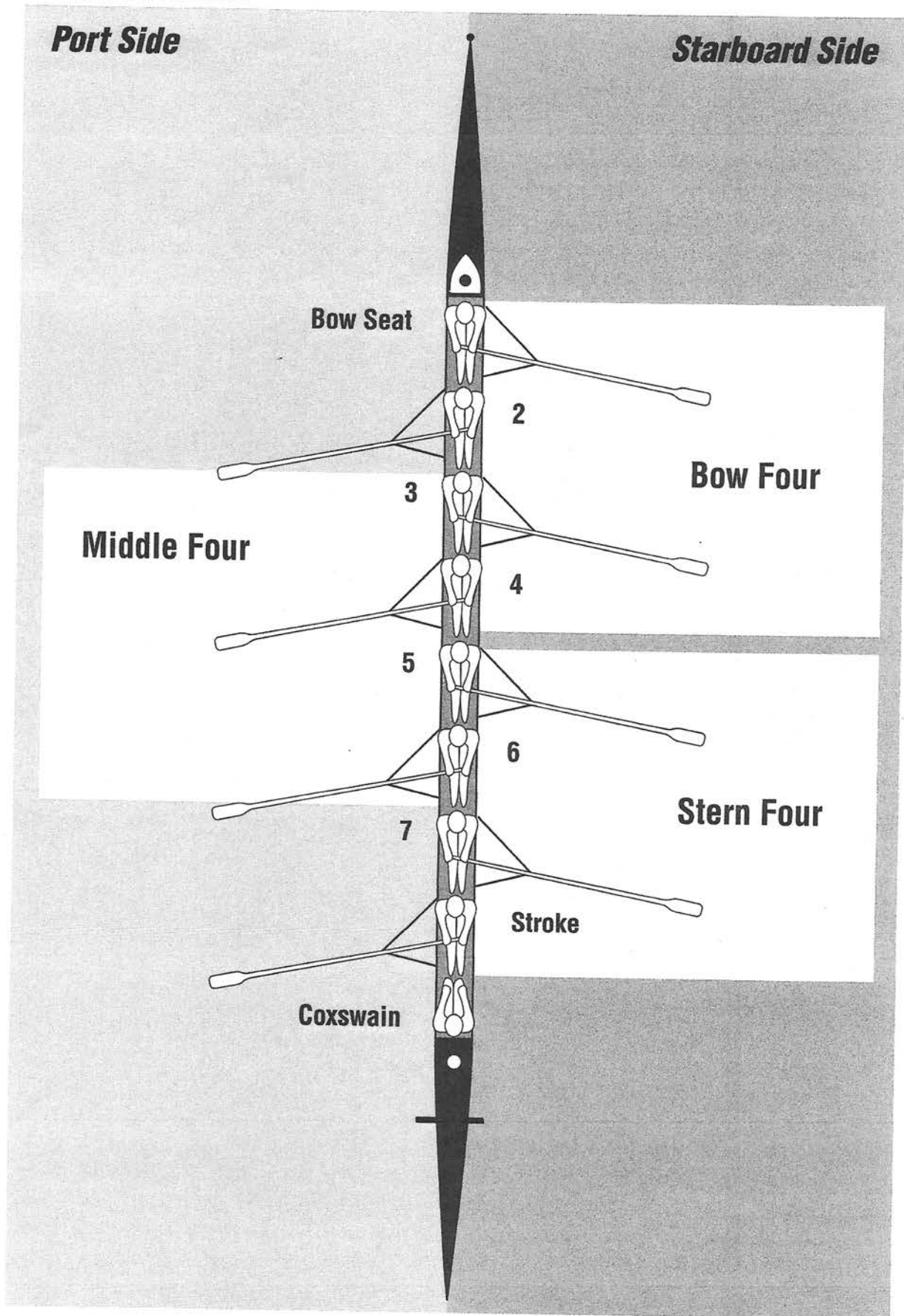
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Seat Numbers

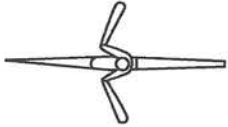
Port Side

Starboard Side



C. Types of Boats

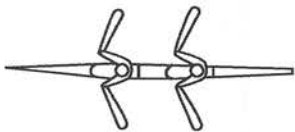
Boats without Coxswains



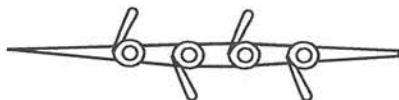
SINGLE (1x): The smallest boat used in rowing, where one rower uses two sculling oars.



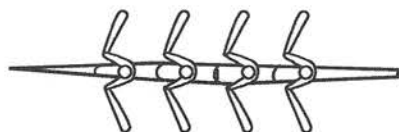
PAIR (2-): A boat rowed by two rowers, each with one sweep oar.



DOUBLE (2x): A boat rowed by two rowers, each with two sculling oars.

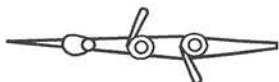


STRAIGHT FOUR (4-): A rowing shell with four rowers, each with a sweep oar. This boat does not have a coxswain.



QUAD (4x): A boat with four rowers, each with two sculling oars. This boat does not have a coxswain and is instead steered by the rowers.

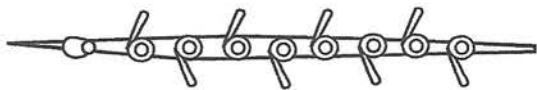
Boats with Coxswains



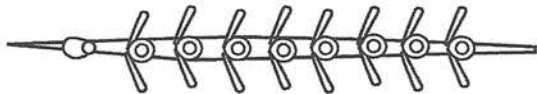
COXED PAIR (2+): A boat with two rowers, each with a sweep oar, and a coxswain. This boat configuration was formerly rowed in the Olympics, but is uncommon in North America, and is not raced on the junior, college, or masters level.



FOUR (4+): A boat with four rowers, each with one sweep oar, steered by a coxswain.

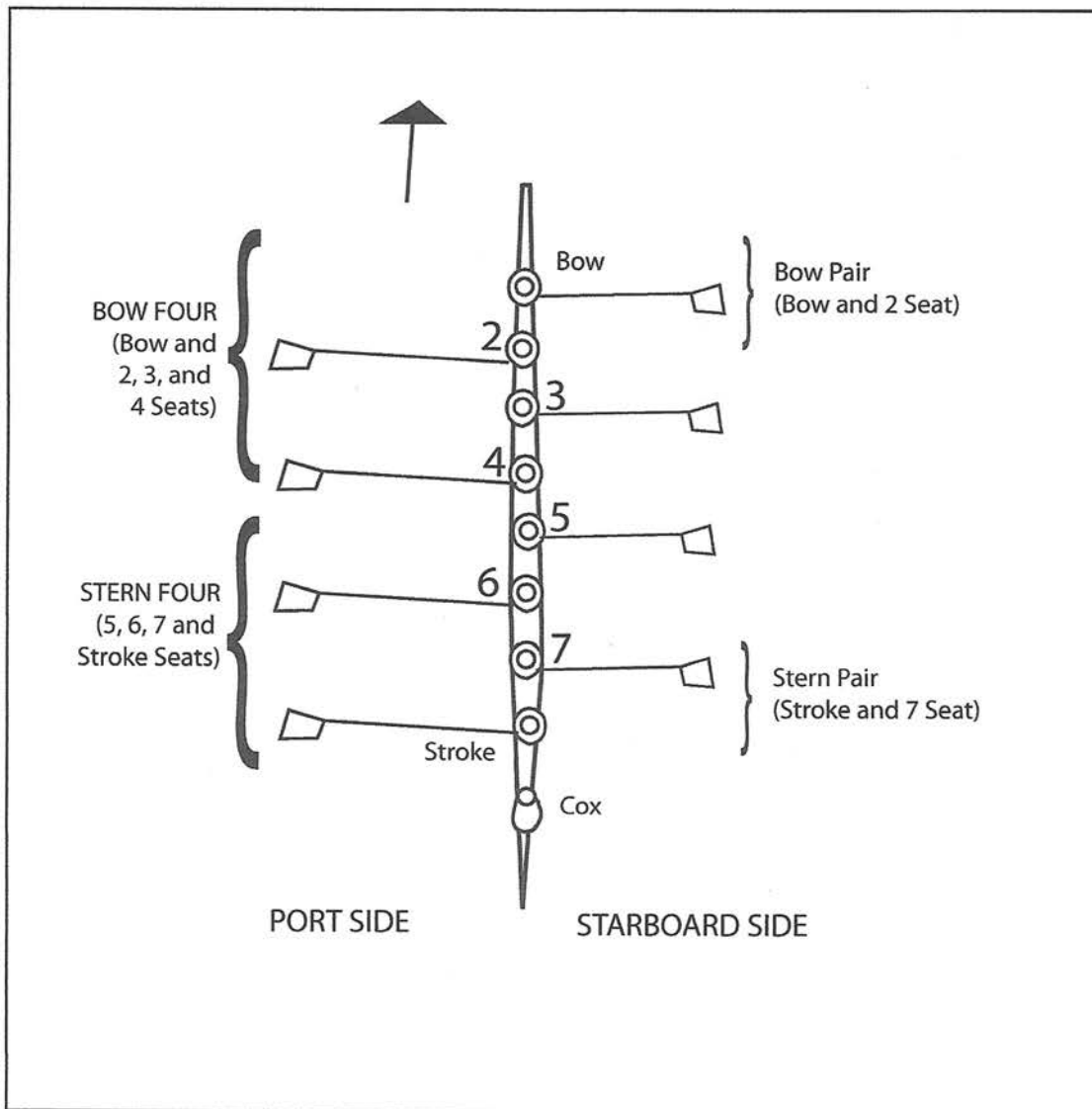


EIGHT: A boat with eight rowers, each with one sweep oar, and a coxswain.

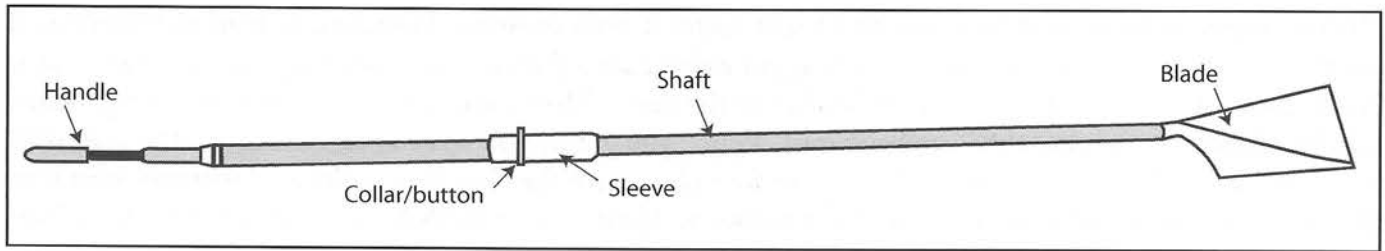


OCTUPLE: A boat with eight rowers, each with two sculling oars, and a coxswain. This configuration is very rare in North America and is not raced at the junior, college, or masters level.

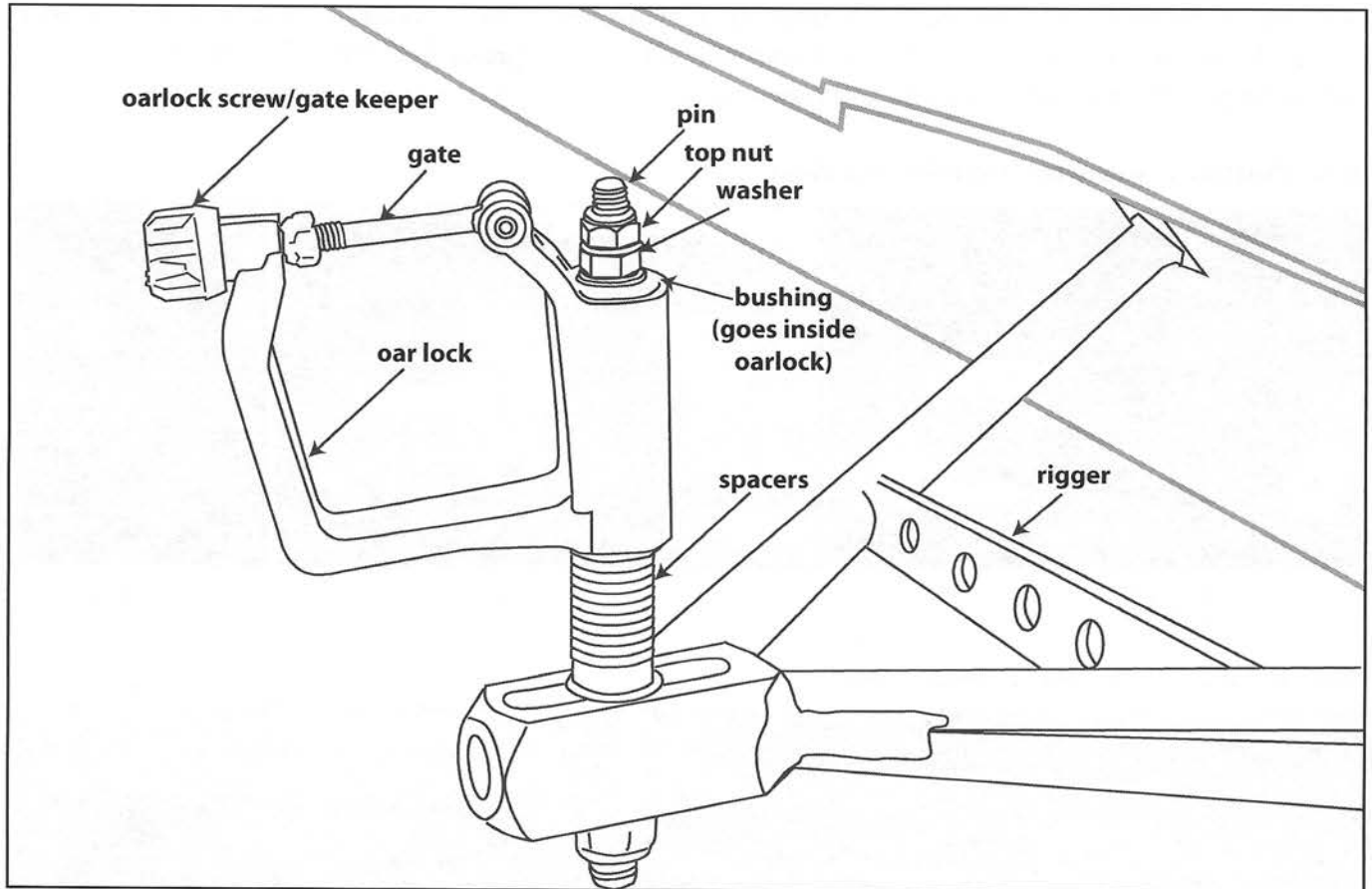
D. Rower Position/Seats in an 8+



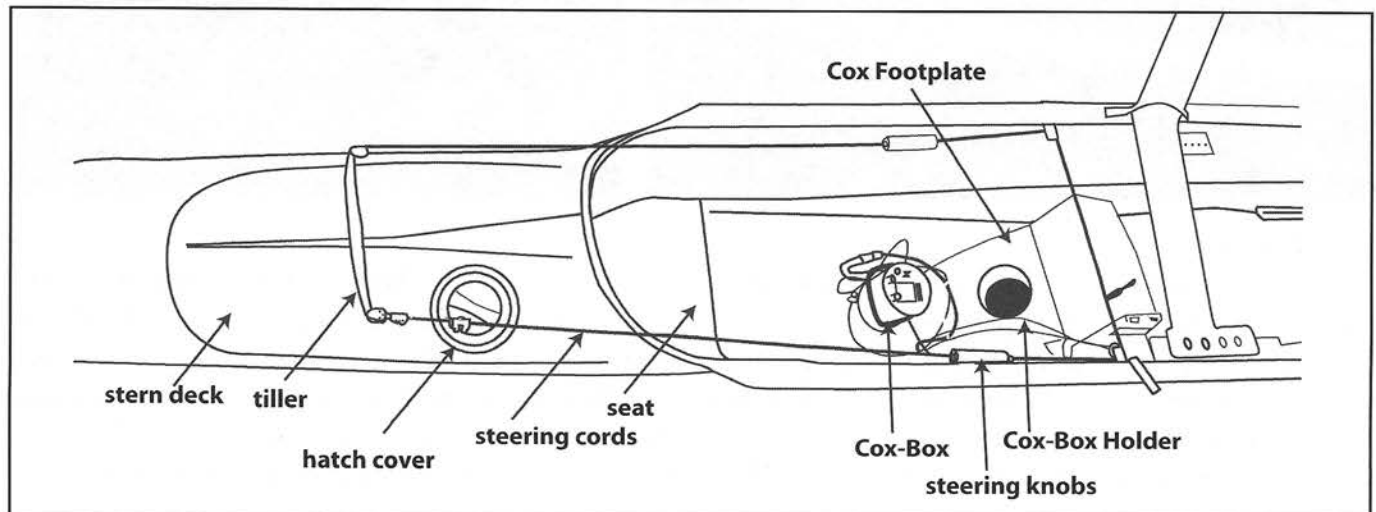
E. Parts of an Oar



F. Parts of an Oarlock



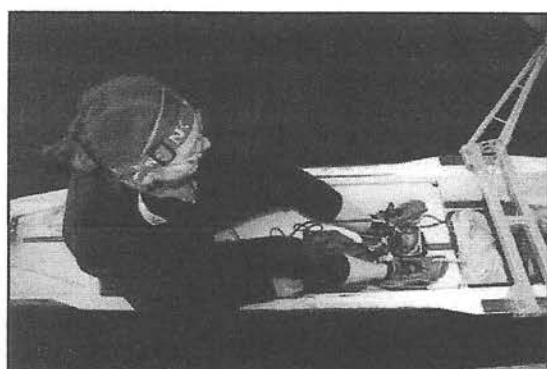
G. The Coxswain Seat and How to Sit in It



Stern-loaded Boats

Telling someone how to sit in a coxswain's seat seems a little obvious. However, as hard to believe as it might seem, we have seen people do it wrong, so we've added this section. Generally the coxswain seat is in the stern of the boat. It is several inches below the deck. Most coxswain seats have a back strap, which can be adjusted to comfortably lean back into. When you get in, you want to sit directly on the seat, with your rear end as far back as possible, feet on the foot plate, with the Cox-Box positioned between your feet. Brace yourself against the gunwales with your elbows. Most rowing shells have a holder for the Cox-Box, but if your boat does not have one, you should hold it between your feet. During practices it is appropriate to sit in an upright position, or lean slightly forward, with your rear end back in the seat as far as it will go. Adjust the back strap so that it comfortably holds you in position. You should never lean back, as in an easy chair, or you will screw up your back, possibly permanently. Plus, it looks like you have no idea what you are doing. In races, you should be bent over forward in a compressed position. For more information on how to position the steering cords and how to hold them, see Chapter 5.

Basic Practice Posture for Stern-loaded Boat:



Top View



Side View



Front View

Basic Racing Posture Stern-loaded Boat:



Bow-loaders

Bow-loaded rowing shells only come in 4+ varieties, not 8+ varieties. In a bow-loader, the coxswain does not have a seat, but instead puts his or her legs and torso down below the bow deck. For bow-loader 4+ boats, you should sit up in practices, bracing yourself against the gunwales with your elbows, just as you would in a stern-loaded 4+ boat, and keep your head and shoulders up and out of the boat. Turn around frequently, so you can see what is going on in the boat. Racing a bow-loader boat requires you to lie down, keeping all but your head inside of the boat. Many bow-loaders come with a very uncomfortable neck/

CHAPTER 4

BASIC BOAT HANDLING ON LAND AND DOCKS FOR COXSWAINS

- A. Giving Commands on Land**
- B. Moving Boats on Land**
- C. Walking a Boat Down to the Dock (Or Anywhere Else)**
- D. Getting a Boat Into the Water and Launching**
- E. Putting a Boat Into the Water from a Dock**
- F. Launching from a Dock**
- G. Landing at a Dock**
- H. Taking a Boat Out of the Water from a Dock**
- I. Putting a Boat in the Water from a Water launch**
- J. Taking a Boat Out of the Water from a Water launch Situation**
- K. Docking Tips and Tricks**

A. Giving Commands on Land

Whether you are giving commands on land or on the water, your primary goal is to protect people from injury and keep the equipment from getting damaged. (Both are expensive!) When you are moving equipment on land, the following are critical to success:

- You are doing things that are safe and that make sense.
- You have the attention of your entire crew before you start moving anything.
- Your rowers are focused on you and are not talking or offering divergent opinions. (If they are routinely not listening, consider enforcing penalties like extra erg pieces or squat jumps to get their attention.)
- Everyone knows the plan before getting hands on.

As a newer coxswain, the best thing you can do is watch and listen to experienced coxswains moving boats on land. Listen to what they say and how things are done at your boathouse. Every boathouse has its own little quirks, procedures, and rules related to moving boats. Ask questions, and write down appropriate sequences. Ask about typical obstacles like the rogue lamppost by the dock, boat-eating trees, tight corners, and the one rack that doesn't quite fit a certain boat. Every boathouse has something. If your boathouse straps down its boats on the racks, make sure someone shows you how to do this properly, and after your crew stores a boat, you check to make sure it is strapped correctly. (If they do it wrong, you will be the one who gets yelled at!)

B. Moving Boats on Land

Getting a Boat off a Shoulder Height Rack



"Hands on, reach across"



"Up an inch, READY, UP"



"Take it out of the rack, slowly, READY OUT"



"Up and over heads, READY UP"



"Split to Shoulders, READY SPLIT"



"Walk it out of house, READY GO"

Putting a Boat Back into a Shoulder Height Rack



*"Walk it forward into the house, READY GO"
[as soon as you get lined up, say...]*



"WEIGH ENOUGH and reach across"



"Up to low overheads, READY UP"



"Walk it into the rack, slowly, READY IN"



"Set it on racks together, READY DOWN"

Getting a Boat off a Waist High Rack



"Hands on and reach across"



"Up an inch, READY UP"



"Out of the racks, READY OUT"



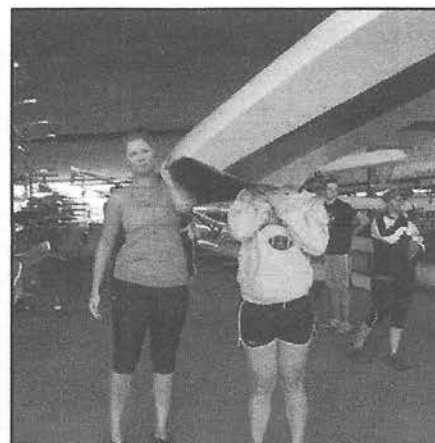
*[indicate which rowers are going around, and do it one or two at a time] For example:
"Starboards HOLD, Ports go under"*



"Everyone holding on their own sides"



"Up to shoulders, READY UP"



"Walk it out of house, READY OUT"

Putting a Boat Back into a Waist High Rack



*"Walk it forward into the house,
WEIGH ENOUGH"*



"Down to waists, READY DOWN"



*"Ports reach across, Starboards come
under one at a time"*



"Everyone reaching across"



"Walk it into the rack, slowly, READY IN"



"Set it on racks together, READY DOWN"

Getting a Boat Off High Rack or Boat Trailer.

To move boats off high racks, you need two sets of sturdy stairs and tall, strong rowers. If you are dealing with crews other than young, strong, tall, capable rowers, or moving heavy, older boats, you should have as many extra people on hand to help as possible. If you have extra people around, ask a few tall, strong rowers to climb up on the racks or boat trailer to help guide the boat. Send your four tallest rowers up to the top step (two on each end of the boat), and your four remaining rowers on the ground.



"Hands on"



"Up an inch, READY UP"



"Take it off the racks, READY OUT"



"Start angling down, rowers on the ground, arms up, ready to grab"



"Down a step together, READY DOWN"



*"Next step down together, READY DOWN"
"Everyone on the ground, READY TO GRAB"*



"Last step, READY DOWN"



Getting a Boat Back Up to a High Rack or Boat Trailer

Again, designate your four tallest, strongest rowers (two on each end of the boat) to go up the stairs first. Those rowers should start on the side of the boat closest to the rack, with the boat at shoulder height. The other four rowers will go up the steps just below. If you have extra people around, ask a few tall, strong rowers to climb up on the racks or boat trailer to help guide the boat.



"Up and overheads, taller rowers up the first step together, READY UP"



"Next step up, READY UP"



"Next step, READY UP"

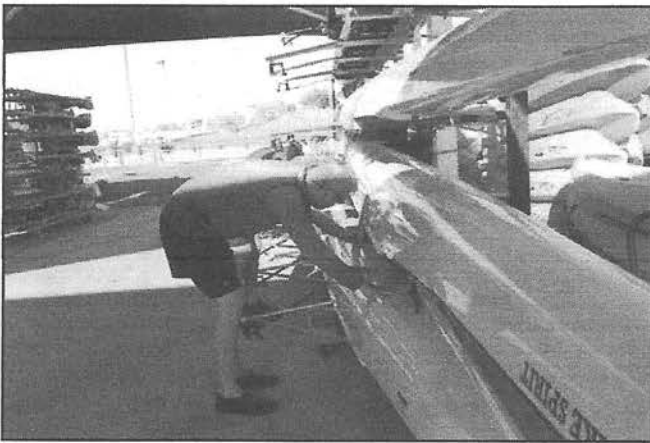


"Onto the racks, READY UP"

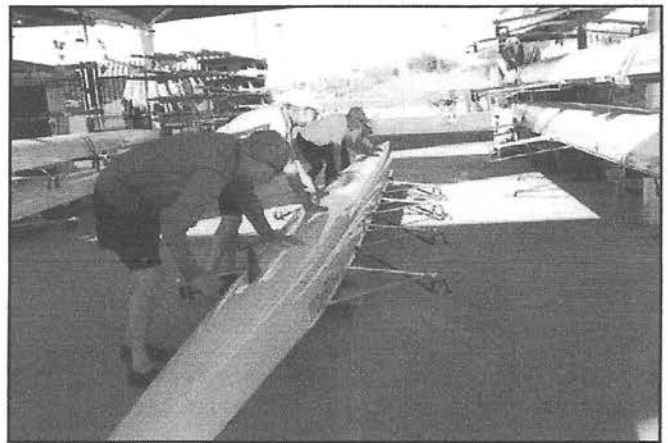


"Set it on"

Getting a Boat off Ground Rollers



"Hands on"



"Roll it out slowly, READY OUT"



"Four (or two) people walk around" (you can specify which rowers)



"Hands on"



"Up to waists, READY UP"



"Up to shoulders, READY UP"



"Walk it out of house, READY OUT"

Putting a Boat Back Onto Ground Rollers



*"Walk it forward into the house, READY GO"
[as soon as you get lined up, say...]*



*"WEIGH ENOUGH"
[as a cox you should get the rollers lined up]*



"Down to waists, READY DOWN"



*"Down to an inch above rollers, READY DOWN"
[make sure you are not on riggers]*



"Set it on rollers together, READY DOWN"



"Everyone come around to the outside"



"Push it in to racks together, READY IN"

Putting a Boat into Slings (starting at carrying on shoulders)



"Walk it forward to slings, READY GO"



"WEIGH ENOUGH" "Reach one hand across"



"Up and over heads, READY UP"



"Roll it to waists, READY DOWN"



"Down to slings, READY DOWN"

Getting a Boat Up Off Slings (With Inside Facing Upwards)

(Remind all rowers to get on one side of the boat)



"Hands on, reaching across"



"Up to waists, READY UP"



"Roll up and over heads, READY UP"



"Split to shoulders, READY SPLIT"

"Walk it forward, READY GO"

C. Walking a Boat Down to the Dock (Or Anywhere Else)

Your job here is to again be the eyes and ears of the crew. As you walk a boat forward, you want to be on one end of the boat or the other, not in the middle. Generally the coxswain should be leading and keep looking back for obstacles behind, especially when swinging the boat out or moving around corners. Posts, signs, trees, riggers from other boats, and people are typical obstacles. Do not assume bystanders, especially rowers from other crews, see you or know you are coming through with a boat. Do not hesitate to tap people on shoulders and LOUDLY ask them to move. Try to be polite, but it is better to be loud and obnoxious than to hit someone's grandmother in the head with a rigger.

Some general calls are as follows:

To move sideways:

"Side step toward [give a specific and non-confusing location], READY SIDESTEP IT"



To move backwards/change direction:

“WEIGH ENOUGH”

“Turn and face the stern/bow”

“Walk it forward, READY GO”

To stop:

“WEIGH ENOUGH”

To move the stern one direction

“WEIGH ENOUGH”

“Bow stay put, swing the stern toward [give a specific and non-confusing location],
STERN READY GO”

To move the bow one direction:

“WEIGH ENOUGH”

“Stern stay put, swing the bow toward [give a specific and non-confusing location],
BOW READY GO”

Moving boats when bystanders are around:

“Coming through behind you with a boat,
WATCH YOUR HEADS”



D. Getting a Boat Into the Water and Launching



No two rowing venues are exactly alike. Some lucky crews have floating docks (generally interlocking plastic cubes that fit together) or fixed docks. These are the easiest to navigate. In tidal areas, docks may be attached with ramps that rise and fall with the tides or currents and can be quite steep and slippery at times. In some places, you will be launching off a fixed pier situation, where the water is several inches or even feet below the dock. In other places, you will be walking the boat directly into the water. It is impor-

tant for coxswains to learn how their local club does things and what to be looking for safety wise. Here we provide you with some general scenarios.

E. Putting a Boat Into the Water from a Dock

Here we are going to assume that you are launching off a floating dock, which sits on the water's surface, without obstacles around. As a coxswain, you should be standing at the skeg with your hands on the boat as it is rolled down and in, guiding the skeg away from the dock. Your big job is to ensure that the skeg does not get ripped off while the boat is being put into the water. As you walk the boat onto the dock, if you have an option of which side to put the boat in, indicate to your crew which side they will be using.



"WEIGH ENOUGH. Up and over heads, READY UP"



"Lay hold"/"reach across" (whichever)



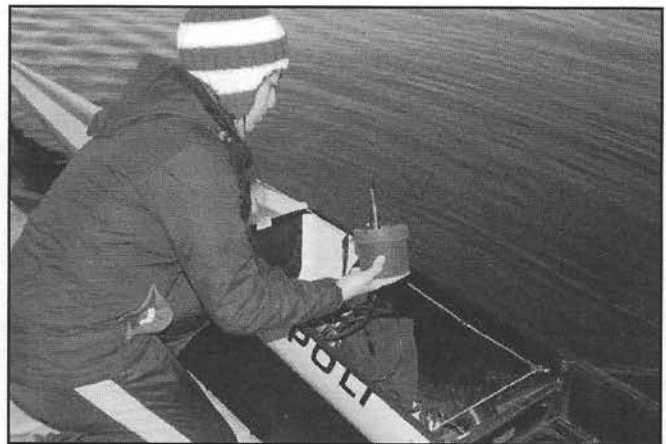
"Toes to the edge of the dock"



"Roll to waists, READY ROLL"



"Lean it away and set it in the water, READY DOWN"



"Make sure someone is standing at the dock holding the boat, and you are attaching your Cox-Box and getting your gear set up."



"Ports get oars, Starboard unlock"



"Run the blades out"

Ports will each carry two oars down to the dock while starboards are unlocking the oarlocks. Each rower will place his or her own oar in the oarlock and lock it down. As the coxswain, your job should be to supervise, making sure all oars are locked in correctly and all of the blades are shipped out correctly.



"Hold for cox!" You should then get into the boat.



"One foot in (pause for the rowers to get their feet in), AND DOWN"



"Tie in and count down from bow when ready" You should be getting your Cox-Box, mic, tool kit, and mobile device into the boat and set up at this point.

F. Launching from a Dock

Your crew is in the boat, tied in, and ready to go; you are in the boat with Cox-Box attached and working. Now you have to get off of the dock. Keep an eye on wind and weather patterns. If unusual conditions are present, let your rowers know before you leave the dock. For example, if there is a heavy head wind or current is pushing you toward the shore, they will have to compensate. Explain the plan of action before you leave the dock and ask your rowers if they have any questions about what is about to happen. Here are the basic commands:



"Lean away from the dock"



"One hand out for the dock"



*"Ready to walk it down" (or "Ready to shove it"),
"READY GO"*



As soon as you are clear of the end of the dock, assuming you are facing forward, your bow pair will row you off the dock. If you put the boat in backwards, or have an unusual set up, your stern pair will be backing your boat off the dock.



*Continue to row/add in rowers until you are comfortably clear of the dock and the shore. "WEIGH ENOUGH"
"Final adjustments, count down from bow when ready"*

G. Landing at a Dock

To the un-indoctrinated, a coxswain's worth can be gaged by his or her docking skills. To return to a dock, you want to completely STOP your crew well over two boat lengths off the dock. As you stop, take a moment to gage wind and weather conditions and communicate with other coxswains about the order of docking for your respective crews. Adjust your point, and proceed rowing by your stern pair or stern four only. As you approach the dock:



"Stern 4/Stern Pair only rowing"



*Coast in, adjusting steering as needed.
"Dock side oars up and lean away"*



"Get a hand out for the dock"



"Hold for cox" (You should then get out.)



"One foot up...AND OUT!"

Rowers will put one foot up. Give them enough time to get their feet out, and then tell them to get out.

H. Taking a Boat Out of the Water from a Dock



"Hands on"



"Up to waists...READY UP"