

SAMMAMISH ROWING HANDBOOK
We Survived Practices, Regattas, Stress and You Will Too!
by Experienced SRA Parents

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WHY ROW?

“The trick would be to find which few of them had the potential for raw power, the nearly superhuman stamina, the indomitable willpower, and the intellectual capacity necessary to master the details of technique. And which of them, coupled improbably with all those other qualities, had the most important one: the ability to disregard his own ambitions, to throw his ego over the gunwales, to leave it swirling in the wake of his shell, and to pull, not just for himself, not just for glory, but for the other boys in the boat.”

Daniel James Brown, *The Boys in the Boat*

Welcome to Sammamish.

Your child has taken the first step in what will be one of the most rewarding and enriching experiences of his or her life.

Why?

Rowing is fun. You're outside in a beautiful environment, even on the grayest, coldest days in the Pacific Northwest. Rowing friendships will be lifelong friendships. It is the perfect mix of ballet and brawn...technical perfection matched with raw strength. No matter how long you've been rowing, no two days on the water are ever the same.

It feels like flying. Once a rower feels the power of all eight rowers sync together and they hear the “run” of the water underneath the boat, the satisfying snap of the oarlock when the blades rotate in perfect sync, and they feel the tempo of all eight are swinging together, they will come back day after day hoping to repeat the experience.

It's a total body workout, and though upper body strength is important, power in rowing comes from the legs. The sport demands endurance, strength, willpower and the ability to keep going when your mind and body say stop.

It is the ultimate team sport. One person cannot make a boat win, but one error by a single rower can cost the boat an entire race. A rower develops a sense of obligation to and dependence on the other members of the team in a way that is unmatched by other sports. All eight rowers and the coxswain have to arrive on time to get out on the water. There is no singular moment of glory for one rower the way there is when an athlete scores a goal. Rowers must be motivated by teamwork.

It's been said that people perform better when they are working for something other than themselves. For a high school student, there is no better place to learn and experience this than rowing.

Being a high school rower can create opportunities to compete collegiately and beyond. Scholarships are available, but even if you do not compete at the next level, many admissions offices will note that your athlete had the discipline, stamina and mental toughness to compete

in rowing. A young rower signals to any institution or organization that she/he knows about sacrificing to achieve a greater good.

Yet as a parent, this is one of the worst spectator sports in the world. You might see 15 seconds of your rower flying by and struggle to figure out which bobbing head belongs to you.

It's not like soccer or basketball, where you can see your child at the beginning and end of practice and have some sense of what happened. At Sammamish, your child disappears around the bend in the gravel path and the next 2.5 hours are largely a mystery.

So what does happen in those 2.5 hours?

First, they stash their gear in a giant set of gray cubbies in the erg room. This is probably the most social part of their day. They are thinking about the weather and their workout and what gear they may or may not need.

Then they go downstairs into the boathouse and find their line-ups (boat assignment) for the day. They wait for their coach to give them instructions. Most days they will do some sort of a warm up, a run or a short "piece" on the erg.

Then the coxswain directs them to take the boat out of the boathouse and walk it down to the dock. They are encouraged to "be quick getting off the dock" as Sammamish has a lot of boats to launch and rowers want as much time on the water as possible.

Once they launch, they take turns doing the "pick drill" to get out of the slough and onto the lake. The "pick drill" is when they pick apart the rowing stroke into its different elements and put them back together until they are rowing a full stroke. They row by six, instead of eight, so there are two oars flat on the water "setting" the boat, or keeping it level for the other six to row as technically correct as possible.

For many rowers, this is where their focus kicks in. They shut out everything else they are thinking or worried about and begin to focus on nothing other than the blade in their hands. The zen of the slough is magic in that way...other than the occasional heron or beaver to distract, it's a peaceful, meditative ride out to the lake.

When all the boats are out of the slough and on the lake, they wait for their coach to give them instructions for the day. Some practices focus on technical elements of the stroke, some on building fitness, while other practices focus on training for specific elements of a race. Some days they run as "race day," where boats race against each other as if in a regatta.

Some videos:

2017-2018 Year in Review

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCj_SJO7KTY

2016-2017 Year in Review

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Wd_MYhz12M

2015-2016 Year in Review

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JIXTJdjNtg>

Sammamish Summer Promo 2014

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALIt41VhLr0>

You can learn more about your child's new passion by following some rowing sites online or reading a few books on the sport:

www.usrowing.com

www.row2k.com

www.rowingnews.com

www.row-360.com

Books:

The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Olympics
by Daniel James Brown

Small Puddles: The Triumphant Story of Yale's Worst Oarsman. Ever.
By Michael Danziger

Will it Make the Boat Go Faster? Olympic Winning Strategies for Everyday Success
By Ben Hunt-Davis

The Red Rose Crew: A True Story of Women, Winning and the Water
By Daniel J. Boyne

The Eight: A Season in the Tradition of the Harvard Crew
By Susan Saint Sing

Course Correction: A Story of Rowing and Resilience in the Wake of Title IX
By Ginny Gilder

Rowing Against the Current
By Barry Strauss

2018-2019 COACHES AND CONTACTS

“Rowing is perhaps the toughest of sports. Once the race starts, there are no time-outs, no substitutions. It calls upon the limits of human endurance. The coach must therefore impart the secrets of the special kind of endurance that comes from mind, heart, and body.”

George Pocock, master boat builder, 1891-1976

Staff:

Steven Freygang, Executive Director: steven.freygang@srarowing.com

Liza Dickson, Boys Head Coach: eliza.dickson@srarowing.com

Ethan Currie, Assistant Boys Coach: ethan.currie@srarowing.com

Simon Williams, Novice Boys Coach: simon.williams@srarowing.com

Elizabeth Wilson, Assistant Novice Boys Coach: elizabeth.wilson@srarowing.com

Kelley Pope, Girls Head Coach: kelley.pope@srarowing.com

Dennis Ferrer, Assistant Girls Coach: dennis.ferrer@srarowing.com

David deWinter, Assistant Girls Coach: david.dewinter@srarowing.com

Molly Lawrence, Novice Girls Coach: molly.lawrence@srarowing.com

Lisa Caldwell, Assistant Novice Girls Coach: lisa.caldwell@srarowing.com

Elle Starr, Assistant Coach: elle.starr@srarowing.com

Anne Corley, Sammamish Registrar: anne.corley@srarowing.com

Volunteers:

Junior Parent Coordinator: Heidi Kelly, heidikelly@msn.com

Food Tent Coordinators: Vanessa and Dave Harder, vanessa.harder@live.com

Coach Appreciation: Denise Rockett, dmrockett@gmail.com

Senior Send Off and Team Pictures: Danielle Epp, depp@me.com

End of the Year Banquet: Mary-Ann Daves, stahlschmidts@hotmail.com

Food Allergy Coordinator: Pam Halvorson, loernandpam@comcast.net

Novice Parent Mentorship: Pam Halvorson (Boys), loernandpam@comcast.net; Katie Surbeck (Girls), katiesurbeck@yahoo.com

Uniform Coordinator: Kristine Anania, kmanania@msn.com

Lost and Found: TBD

Team Historian: Dave Epp, depp@me.com

Sammamish Mission, Values, Strategic Plan

Mission: Our mission is to be a national model in community rowing through purposeful inclusion and excellence in action.

Values: Thoughtful Stewardship. Personal Discovery. Team Success. Safety.

[Strategic Plan](#)

Sammamish History

In 1994, a group of masters (adults) rowers with knowledge of an old abandoned boathouse in Marymoor Park proposed their idea of a community rowing facility during a public parks meeting just weeks before it was scheduled to be demolished. While the Marymoor building was being renovated, rowers spent their first two years in a temporary one-bay boathouse in Idylwood Park where SRA grew to about 40 members, both masters and juniors. In 1997, Sammamish moved from Idylwood to Marymoor.

As Sammamish continued to grow, a new boathouse was needed to help continue to provide quality rowing experiences for the community. In 2000, the search began for a new site, and in 2005 the permit was given to begin construction just west of where the old boathouse stood. Construction began in 2010, and with the help of generous donations from King County Parks and members of the community, the new boathouse was fully completed in the summer of 2016. Today, the new boathouse stands with nearly 300 current members and an opportunity for all to row with Sammamish.

Now that we enjoy one of the most beautiful boathouses in the country, we're working to fill it with boats just as amazing. We are currently in the middle of a 7 year campaign to overhaul our boat fleet. New boats are fast boats. The better the boats, the better the experience for your rower!

SAMMAMISH BASICS

Practice

We practice M-F from 3:45 – 6:30 with regular Saturday practices and races. Exact practice schedules may change slightly from season to season based on coach discretion and logistical limitations.

Fall season begins at the end of August and ends in mid December. Rowers have three weeks off in between fall and winter.

Winter/Spring season begins in mid January and runs through mid May.

Due to the lack of uniformity in spring break schedules and the fact that it is so close to NW Regionals, our rowers row straight through the various weeks of spring break. For a rower to be most competitive, this is how they spend their break.

Summer season is July and August. Summer rowing is optional.

Transportation -- Drop Off/Pick Up

One of our biggest team challenges is parking and drop off/pick up. We move 150-plus junior rowers in and out of the parking lot in a short amount of time. We do not have enough parking spaces for parents to park and wait for their rower. Coaches stagger the release times of the teams, so if everyone follows the rules, pick up goes smoothly and safely.

Rowers Who Drive: Rowers meet at Marymoor and form carpools to get to practice. A solo driving rower is not allowed to park at Sammamish as we don't have enough parking. They *must* arrive in a carpool.

Parents Driving Rowers:

Drop Off: Pull into the south entrance of the parking lot and take an immediate left. The area along side the trees is our official drop off/pick up area. Pull over to the right, allowing cars to pass on the left, to drop off your rower. *Pull all the way forward.* Do not let your rower get out of your car until you are in the pick up zone. When you let your rower out prematurely, people cannot pull in behind you and you tie up traffic.

Pick Up: We do not have enough space for parents to park and wait at Sammamish. There are additional groups of rowers who come to practice in the evening and they need parking spaces too.

Think of it like the cell phone waiting lot at the airport. Park off-site, at Marymoor for instance, and wait for your rower to call and tell you they are ready for pick up. If your rower is not at the designated pick up spot when you arrive, make a loop out of the parking lot and come back.

Allow parents to pick up rowers who are already standing there waiting (keep in mind they are cold and wet!).

You may only turn right out of our parking lot. If you need to go left, you can travel one block north to the neighborhood entrance and easily turn around. Turning left is discouraged by the City of Redmond and King County Parks.

It takes only one parent who parks and waits in the pick up line without their rower present to hold up dozens of other parents and rowers who are also eager to get home.

Clothing

Rowers wear bright, high-visibility (hi-viz) clothing. Hi-viz clothing is important for several reasons. Rowing shells are low and close to the surface of the water, making it difficult for other boaters to see. Hi-viz clothing makes our rowers much more visible. More importantly, on the extremely rare chance that our rowers end up in the water on a dark evening, hi-viz clothing makes it much easier to see them and get them out of the water.

Rowers wear clothing that is snug to the body but flexible and layered for warmth. Look for Polypro, CoolMax, and Drywick fabrics that keep a rower warm when wet and dry quickly. Oversized clothes can get stuck in the wheels underneath the seat, or caught on their hands/oar as they are rowing. They don't wear shoes in the boat but need them for warm ups and land workouts.

Tools & Headlamp

Your rower needs a headlamp to move around safely. In late fall, it's dark by the time they return to the dock. At regattas, our rowers often rig boats in the dark and need a headlamp. It is a vital piece of equipment. If a rower forgets their headlamp they won't be allowed to row. Your child's safety is too important.

Rowers are also responsible for rigging and deregging boats. They should have a tool kit that is clearly labeled and includes:

- 7/16th wrench
- 10mm wrench
- adjustable wrench
- allen wrench

Uniforms and Fan Gear

We organize uniform orders twice a year, once the fall and once in the spring. Rowers are required to have a unisuit, a long sleeve tech shirt and a travel polo.

Also available, but not required, are "splash jackets," an extra durable rain jacket for winter rowing that is designed specifically for rowing. Some kids like to have them for racing and for

practice. Additional items are available when the uniforms are sold, but only the three main pieces are required.

Fan gear is available year round at www.squadlocker.com.

Bad Weather Days

Weather directly affects our ability to get out on the water. Safety comes first. If conditions are unsafe due to fog, snow/ice, wind or lightning, we stay on land for our training. We rarely cancel practice entirely for weather, but if it is, we will let you know as soon as possible by email and Facebook.

Seasons at Sammamish

In the Northwest, rowing is a year round sport:

Fall: Rowers train in the fall for “head races,” which are 5k distance races. Boats start in roughly 10 second intervals, racing the clock to see who can finish the course in the fastest time. Locally, SRA usually participates in the Head of the Lake and the Tail of the Lake in Seattle. Sometimes SRA sends select crews to prestigious races which may include but are not limited to the Head of the Charles in Boston and the San Diego Fall/Winter Crew Classic. The races in which SRA will participate changes from year to year, depending on the skill and ability of the rowers, the level of competition, aligning the boat needs with the SRA masters program, cost, and the overall schedule. For some races, SRA may choose to send only our novice crews, and for others it may send only our top boats.

SRA sometimes races in the Green Lake Frostbite Regatta in Seattle, which is not a head race but a 1k sprint course.

Unfortunately, race organizers are sometimes slow to publish dates and information about the races. SRA tries to create schedules as far in advance as possible, sometimes leaving things tagged as “tentative” as we wait for the race organizers to publish information. There are often last minute changes to race schedules. Bear with our coaches. They do their best to give us scheduling information as soon as it is available.

Winter is all about training for spring sprint racing. Rowers will be working to build strength and endurance. Time on the water is reduced somewhat from wind, ice and fog, but the coaches do their best to make the most of these days for strength building. There is generally no racing over the winter.

Spring is 2k sprint season, where most of the work and racing is directed towards preparing for NW Regionals in mid May. NW Regionals features the best crews from all over the Pacific Northwest. We compete for the overall team trophy by getting the most points for our races and wins. We compete for the overall boys’ team trophy and the girls’ team trophy. NW Regionals is opportunity to earn a chance to go to nationals.

Our spring races typically include the San Diego Crew Classic, Rose City Invitational, Pac Champs, scrimmages, NW Regionals, and hopefully, nationals.

Summer: There is no racing in summer but there is a lot of fun! Rowers are able to make great gains in their technique by working in “small boats,” boats with 2-4 rowers. During our racing season, we don’t have as many opportunities to work in small boats, so summer is a great opportunity for the whole team to slow down and refine the technical elements of their stroke.

Emergency Communications

If you have an emergency and need to contact your rower during practice, contact your coach directly. Communication with coaches on their personal phones should be limited to emergencies only.

Eliza Dickson: (954) 366-8239

Ethan Currie: (603) 496-0498

Simon Williams: (425) 753-0547

Elizabeth Wilson: (407) 683-7177

Kelley Pope: (847) 630-2345

Dennis Ferrer: (425) 233-7917

Molly Lawrence: (703) 581-2217

Lisa Caldwell: (425) 802-2657

Steven Freygang: (206) 450-8679

During team travel, if our estimated arrival time from a trip changes, we will update parents via Facebook and email. Rowers will also be asked to contact their parents directly.

HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR ROWER

*"The driving effort is carefully quantified in the psyche of every practicing oarsman. Half-power is like walking up a flight of stairs; three-quarters power is the same as a steady jog up those stairs; full-power is the equivalent of running to the top of Mt. Whitney. Then comes race-power. This is a special category, reserved for the ultimate in physical expression. At the completion of the final stroke of a close race, an oarsman should collapse over his oar, having spent every possible ounce of energy. Fainting from exhaustion at the finish line, although rarely seen, is greatly respected among competitors." -- **Brad Alan Lewis** from *Assault on Lake Casitas**

Attend the Fall and Spring Parent Meetings

It helps both of you to have a better idea of what Sammamish is planning and thinking about for the upcoming season. You will feel more connected and informed about what your rower is experiencing.

More importantly, it's an opportunity for your rower's coach to meet you and for you to hear directly from your rower's coach. Help your rower by making this personal connection!

We try to announce the dates/time/location of the meetings when you register your rower so you have ample time to plan for it.

Races, Regattas and Our Awesome Food Tent

Regattas are all-day events. Rowers arrive to unload the trailer in the morning and stay to reload it once the team's last event has finished.

Parents help make these long days more pleasant by providing food and shelter from the elements! At most races, we set up a food tent for our rowers, staffed by parents. Sammamish puts together menus that are healthy and tasty, and our rowers are pretty happy with what they are served, including breakfast/snacks/drinks/lunch.

Other than seeing your rower race, working in our food tent is one of the best parts of being a rowing parent. It's a great way to meet other parents and understand this sport a little better. It gives you a chance to see our rowers in their natural environment and it's something to do in between watching races!

Sign ups will go out a few weeks before the race so you'll have a chance to get a spot. If all the work slots are taken, please come to the tent anyway!! Sometimes extra hands are needed.

More importantly, we're adding hot coffee and tea to the menu to help our parents stay warm. We post the race schedule at the tent and it's a good place to go to learn more about what's happening.

It can be hard to find your fellow Sammamish parents at these large venues, so this year we have provided a red hat for each family. Hopefully this will help you find some companions to cheer with during these long days.

Some things to pack to make you and your rower more comfortable:

- Portable chair
- Binoculars
- Warm clothes (including gloves/caps)
- Rain gear
- Light-weight clothing
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Blankets or sleeping bag for you or your rower to stretch out on
- Water and healthy snacks (food tent provided by parent group for rowers at most races)
- Empty garbage bags to pack home wet clothes
- Sammamish red hat and nametag lanyard

Race schedules are often found at www.regattacentral.com. Results are often posted at www.herenow.com.

We hope you enjoy these days as much as your rower!

Gear

Your rower ordered that giant bag from Sew Sporty for a reason. They have a ton of gear.

Layers: They pack layers of clothing so they can assess the weather and training plan for the day and dress accordingly, and some rowers like to change into dry clothes before they go home. It's not uncommon in cold months for rowers to start practice with 4-5 layers and end up in only a t-shirt by the time practice is over. They work that hard. Then, they need to put all those layers back on again before they go home. For winter, wool socks help keep feet warm even when wet.

Uniform: Your rower will need all their uniform pieces when they go to regattas. When we travel as a team to regattas, rowers wear their "travel uniform," their Sammamish polo and khaki pants. We are always amazed at how impressive our rowers are when they travel together, we get a lot of compliments from fellow travelers about their positive, courteous demeanor.

Tools: Your rower knows how to take our boats apart and put them back together. We take the boats apart at the boathouse so we can load them on our trailer. When we arrive at the race course, we have to put them back together. Sometimes rowers are asked to "rig" and "derig" boats at practice. They should have a tool kit in their bag at all times that includes:

7/16th wrench
10mm wrench
adjustable wrench
headlamp
allen wrench

Water Bottle: Help keep your rower hydrated. Experienced rowers generally pack an extra large water bottle for practices.

Nutrition & Sleep

Your rower is burning an unbelievable amount of calories at practice. Coach Liza recommends a chocolate milk immediately after practice to begin refueling. US Rowing has a resource vault with a lot of good information to help you help your rower fuel properly:

<http://www.usrowing.org/nutrition/>

You can also help your rower by helping them get enough sleep. Well-rested, well-fed rowers are stronger rowers.

Dealing with Disappointment: The nature of competition means there will be disappointment. They may not make the boat they wanted, they may not do well on their erg test and they may lose their seat race.

Be empathetic and encouraging. Rowing builds resilience and character. You can help your rower by helping them overcome disappointment, chart a path forward, and find successes big and small. People who have rowed value other rowers highly because they understand the physical and mental challenge of navigating the highs and lows of this sport. They know it has given them valuable life skills that will help them succeed throughout life. Rowers are infused with strong character, determination, independence, team spirit, resilience and a limitless capacity for hard work.

Encourage your rower to talk with their coach and find out what they could be doing to improve. Our coaches are eager to help kids who want to improve, and they have lots of good advice to offer.

Remind your rower of the small things they do every day that make them faster and stronger, such as a technical skill they are fighting to improve or small gains in fitness. They are working really hard and it is often difficult for them to recognize their own progress.

Importantly, help your rower keep things in perspective. They are a valuable part of one of the strongest rowing programs in the country. They have made a commitment that requires an amount of discipline, commitment and hard work that is uncommon for most teens. No matter their erg score, the outcome of their seat race, or where they crossed the finish line, they are an important part of this team. Every rower is adding value.

They are “winning” when they walk down that gravel path every day of the week and commit to something bigger than themselves.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who can answer my questions about rowing, practices, schedules, and racing?

- 1) Your rower.
- 2) Your rower's coach.
- 3) Fellow parents.
- 4) The junior parent coordinator.

What types of communication does SRA use?

Facebook and email are our primary tools for communication.

Please join our Sammamish High School Parents Facebook page or you will feel out of the loop. We regularly post tips and articles on rowing to help you better connect with your child's experience, in addition to basic logistical information. Parents share pictures and videos. Coaches share articles that will help you better understand your rower's challenges. You are missing out if you aren't a member:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/281284002236597/>

If you aren't receiving emails, please contact our registrar, Anne Corley at anne.corley@sammamishrowing.com.

Follow Sammamish on Instagram and Facebook.

We send out a newsletter by email several times a year. Steven Freygang, our director, also sends out information when needed, by email.

Coaches communicate directly with parents by email as necessary.

If practice starts at 3:45 why does my rower insist on getting there so much earlier?

First, it takes a few minutes to walk from the parking lot to the boathouse. Second, they want to get their gear stashed and figure out what clothes and items they will need for whatever the weather conditions and training plans are for the day. Third, they may want to use the restroom. Fourth, it's probably the most social time of the practice. But finally, and most importantly, no one wants to be late. Late rowers mess up everything because everyone has to stand around and wait for them.

Why isn't my rower ready to go at 6:30?

Sometimes your rower will stay to talk to their coach, sometimes the coach will ask to talk to them about something that happened in practice, or something to prepare them for their next race. Sometimes when they are practicing on the water, it can be challenging to get them back perfectly on time. If a headwind kicks up, it will take longer to get back. If the dock gets

crowded with everyone getting out at the same time, it can take longer. Our coaches watch the clock like hawks and do their best to get the kids back on time, but occasionally things happen that cause delays.

Why is it such a big deal to miss practice?

Unlike most high school sports, kids are doing this sport for the first time. They go from learning basic skills to competing at the regional and possibly national level in a relatively short amount of time. The rate of growth in speed and skill in these rowers at this age is fast and it doesn't take much to fall behind. It's a competitive sport.

What do I do when my rower is sick?

It's the rower's responsibility to let the coach know if he or she is missing practice as soon as possible. Your child should text their coach as early as possible to give the coach a chance to fix the boat line-ups. If your child is too sick to do so, you should text the coach.

Why can't I wait in the parking lot, or the pick up line?

There are roughly 150 junior rowers in our program, and another 60 or more adult rowers beginning their practice immediately following the juniors. We don't have a large enough parking lot to accommodate all of these cars. Further, if cars park and wait in the pick up line, there is nowhere for parents to pick up rowers who are already there waiting and ready to go.

If you park and wait in the pick up line before your child is there, you are making everyone else wait for your child too.

Coaches try to stagger the release times to even out the flow of traffic in our parking lot, and your child may not be out first. You can help your rower by playing by the rules so we can all get home sooner.

I need to talk to the coach, should I just grab a few minutes before or after practice?

No. Those are the busiest times of day for our coaches, who are prioritizing conversations with rowers. Some of our coaches have been coaching since 4:30 am and are eager to get home. Email or text the coach and ask for a good time to talk.

But also, please ask yourself if what you want to talk about should be handled by your rower. You can help your rower by giving him or her a chance to address it first.

Our kids aren't rowing just for the athletic benefits, they're rowing for the character and life skills as well. Give your child a chance to work through things with their coach. Help them, coach them, and know that our coaches understand they are teenagers and it isn't easy for them to have these conversations. Our coaches will be responsive and receptive. Someday they will need to have similar performance conversations with a boss or manager, and they will be better prepared for having this experience.

Many questions can be answered by our handbook, through other parents, our Facebook page or our junior parent coordinator.

That said, our coaches want you to know they are available to talk to you to answer your questions. It is an unusual sport in that you don't get to see as much of it as other sports! Coaches spend a great deal of time with your child and are as interested in their success as you are.

How can rowing practice be on land?

Rowing involves stamina, strength, and technique. Running, weightlifting and rowing on an ergometer help to build these. The work done on land helps to maximize the experience on the water. A lot of team bonding happens during land days also. Coaches try to mix it up and include "fun" land days such as an All-Team 2k or Rowing Olympics.

Why is my child freaking out about erg tests?

Erg tests are a way of comparing the power of various rowers. There are various distances that are tested, the 2k, 5k and 6k. It is one factor that is considered when coaches are building their boat line-ups. However, a good erg score does not guarantee that someone will be a good rower on the water, it is only one element of their fitness, skill and ability. It is not unusual to have a very fit and strong rower who crushes erg tests but doesn't have the skill or ability to make the boat go fast. Technique and timing are just as important.

It is dreaded because it is HARD. Rowers are expected to give everything they have. Imagine sprinting for seven to ten minutes! Second, it is fairly public. Teammates know how well or how poorly they are doing.

The erg test isn't everything. It's only one factor. The idea is to show growth and progress, so remind them they are only competing with themselves. Sammamish works hard to celebrate "PRs," or personal records. The power of positive thinking will help! Their mental stamina is as important as their physical stamina as they get closer to the end of the test. If they believe they can get where they want to be, they will.

Every sport has some form of objective measurement to assess their athletes. Volleyball has jump tests. Soccer has sprints. Basketball has free throws. Rowing has the erg test.

You can help your rower by reminding them that the hard work they put in every day is helping them get closer and closer to their erg goals.

Does a "seat race" determine the boat line-ups?

Coaches use seat races to find out how rowers work together and which rowers make a boat go faster. They set line ups, race the boats for roughly four minutes, and record the results. Then they switch rowers in and out of seats in different boats, re-racing, making note of the times. Rowers know that it's not just about which line up won head-to-head, but the margin of the

win. When a new rower gets in a boat and the margin of victory increases, the new rower made the winning boat go faster.

They are hard because everyone needs to be pulling their hardest for every single race, rowers can't always tell when they are being compared, and sometimes it's hard to tell how you are doing. It's challenging for our coxswains, because they have to cox as fairly as possible during each race, trying to not influence the outcome.

Like an erg test, it's one factor. It helps coaches know how well a rower is moving a boat and working with the other rowers in the boat. However, winning a seat race isn't a guarantee of a certain seat in a certain boat, much like having a top erg score isn't a guarantee. Coaches consider many factors when making boat line-ups, including how to maximize the entire team's success across all boats.

You can help your rower by reminding them to be humble in victory and gracious in defeat. Seat racing can cause tension between those being raced. Teammates are suddenly competitors. What happens during seat racing should stay on the water. A boastful rower talking about winning a seat race is also pointing out that a fellow teammate just lost. Being both humble and gracious is an important part of building team spirit and rower character.

You can help your rower by reminding them that all they can do is relax and do their best. That's all anyone expects, and it's all they should expect of themselves.

My kid's erg scores are great and my kid is doing great in seat races. Why are they not in top boats?

There could be a lot of reasons. They may not have won their seat race by a large enough margin. They may not be working as hard as their teammates at practice. Their technique may not match the other rowers. They may disrupt the camaraderie of the boat with a bad attitude.

Further, the team goal for each regatta may be different. Sammamish may be trying to win a team trophy versus the top varsity race. Rowers get moved around in different boats to make the entire team strong for specific races and needs.

If your child wants to know why they aren't in a boat they believe they should be in, they should talk to their coach about what they can do to improve.

Why does my child row in a different seat or boat every day?

In rowing, the idea is for all eight rowers to be in perfect unison, with no motions that interfere with the forward motion of the boat. The different positions in the boat have slightly different roles to play. Though any rower should be able to row any position, coaches will switch rowers around to find out which rowers excel in which positions and which combination of rowers can move the boat the fastest.

How come my rower is working out on land today and others were on the water?

There are many reasons why a rower may not be “boated” on any given day. First, there are only a certain number of seats. Second, for safety reasons, there needs to be a certain number of coaches out on the water per number of boats. Finally, coaches will use their discretion in whom to place in a boat, taking into consideration someone who misses practice, is chronically late or slacks off during practice.

How likely is the boat to tip over?

Not at all likely. Most people go years without having a boat flip! Our rowers are primarily in eights, the most stable boat of all.

Why does my rower refuse to wear gloves when it’s cold?

Rowing requires extraordinary balance and timing, and anything that comes between the rower and the oar can impact that. The oar is to a rower what a basketball is to a basketball player. Rowers say gloves ruins the feel and connection with the water. This is one of many reasons why rowing is hard!

Most rowers find they are working so hard that their hands don’t get cold until after practice. This is one reason why they pack so much gear for practice, so they have whatever they need afterwards to stay warm. On really cold days, some rowers will tuck hand warmers in their pockets to use when the boat is resting. And, as we all know, we lose most of our body heat through the top of our head. A good hat can help a lot.

What should my child do about their blisters?

Blisters are part of rowing and comparing them is a common rowing activity. The best thing is to keep them clean, leave them uncovered during the school day so they dry out, then cover them for rowing. Blisters usually turn into callouses after your child has been rowing for a while. Most rowers prefer to put a spray style anti-bacterial treatment on their blisters, rather than ointment (which makes it hard for the blister to dry out).

Ask your rower to look around and see what other rowers are using to cover their blisters during rowing. Some use regular band aids, some use Nexcare waterproof tape, others use Spenco New Skin on raw blisters they then cover with tape and band aids. After a while rowers tend to develop their own favorite way of dealing with their blisters.

You can help your rower by making sure they don’t run out of blister care supplies!

Why do you keep bugging me about labeling my rower’s stuff? It’s their problem, not yours.

We have 150-plus rowers moving through the boathouse every day and at least a third of them leave something behind almost every day. We don’t have the space or capacity to store all the gear that is left behind. If rowers have a label on their clothes/shoes/gear **with their phone number**, we will call them and let them know their item is on the rack, and we have close to a 100% effectiveness rate in reuniting rowers with their lost gear. This allows us to reduce the amount of wet, smelly gear we are effectively “storing.” It’s a big job.

We highly recommend the iron on labels from Label Land, you can order them online. The stick on labels don't work with the amount of water we deal with. Get the iron-on labels.

My rower was reprimanded for talking in the boat. Why would this happen?

Unless it's an emergency, there is no talking in the boat while the boat is in motion. The only person who should be talking is the cox and the coach, and everyone needs to be able to hear the cox and the coach. Some would say that if a rower can talk and row at the same time, they aren't rowing hard enough.

Rowers are also discouraged from coaching each other, and especially from commenting on the row during seat racing. The only instruction rowers need comes from the coach or the cox. Rowers trying to coach each other in the boat creates tension and mistrust and can distract from what the coach is trying to focus on. If a rower needs to comment on another rower in the boat, it should only be positive feedback.

Why do the clothes have to be so tight and why can't my child wear regular athletic gear, like basketball shorts?

The rower sits on a seat that moves on four wheels on two tracks. If anything interferes with the movement of the wheels on the tracks, it can break the equipment and/or interfere in a dangerous way with the movement of the boat. Second, the oar has to come up into the body and quickly away at the end of the stroke, and thumbs/fingers getting trapped on loose clothing can interfere with the motion of the stroke. Therefore, as in bicycling, gymnastics, or wrestling, it's critical that the clothes fit tightly to avoid injury or interference.

Can my rower bring a cell phone on the boat?

Digital devices are prohibited on the water. They will be destroyed by the water. If you have an emergency and need to reach your rower, contact the coach or call the office.

WHERE TO FIND ANSWERS

So you've read this entire handbook and you still have questions? That's okay!

Concerns about how your rower is doing? Talk to your rower. You might be surprised at how much they know. Make sure what you're asking isn't something that your rower should be asking the coach themselves. Rowing should be giving your child some independence, and managing their own struggles is part of that. You can help your rower by helping him or her develop confidence and resiliency by learning how to work through things with their coach.

But, you can also talk to the coach. It's not a good idea to blindside our coaches before or after practice, rather, ask for a good time to talk or meet. They are as interested in your child's success as you are. They want to help you.

General concerns about how to help your rower or better understand what's happening? Ask other parents. Parents who've been at Sammamish for a while might be able to help you out. If you don't know who to ask, try our junior parent coordinator.

Concerns about safety? We're pretty proud of our safety record, but Sammamish got there by thinking through every eventuality. If there is something you think needs to be addressed, you can contact either your rower's coach, or, the Board of Directors Safety Committee.

Concerns about coaching? If you have a concern about one of our coaches, you can reach out to our executive director, Steven Freygang.

Concerns about scheduling and logistics? If your rower doesn't know the answer, ask our junior parent coordinator.

SPEAK YOUR ROWER'S LANGUAGE: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

4, 8: A four is a boat rowed by four rowers. An eight is rowed by eight.

Boat Positions: From the bow to the stern, rowers are seated in positions 1-8. Seat #1 is the "bow," and is often the most influential rower for the "set" of the boat. Seat #8 is the "stroke," the rower responsible for setting the pace of the row. The middle seats are known as the "engine room."

Bow: The forward section of the boat. The person in the seat closest to the bow, who crosses the finish line first.

Bow coxed boat: A shell in which the coxswain is near the bow instead of the stern. It's hard to see the coxswain in this type of boat, because only his head is visible. Having the coxswain virtually lying down in the bow reduces wind resistance, and the weight distribution is better.

Catching a Crab: When a rower finishes the stroke but can't get the blade out of the water. They have to wait for the boat to slow to dig their oar out of the water. An "ejector crab" is when the oar is so deep and difficult to get out of the water that the motion of the boat propels the rower into the water. Catching a crab is dreaded because it can cost precious seconds in a race. Ejector crabs are dreaded, but relatively uncommon.

Coxswain: Person who steers the shell and is the on-the-water coach for the crew.

Deck: The part of the shell at the bow and stern that is covered with fiberglass cloth or a thin plastic.

Ergometer: Rowers call it an "erg." It's a rowing machine that closely approximates the actual rowing motion. The rowers' choice is the Concept II, which utilizes a flywheel and a digital readout so that the rower can measure his "strokes per minute" and the distance covered.

Lightweight: Refers to the rowers, not the boats; there is a maximum weight for each rower in a lightweight event as well as a boat average.

Line-ups: Boat assignments, including rowing position, cox, boat and oars.

Pair: The smallest sweep boat possible, with only two rowers, one on each side. This is considered to be the most technically challenging boat to row.

Piece: One part of workout. It can be a certain distance or a certain amount of time. For instance, a rower will say, "we did three pieces today, 20 minutes each," or "we did six 1k pieces today at race pace." You can ask your rower, "how hard were your pieces today?" and they'll think you're a rowing genius.

Port: Left side of the boat, while facing forward, in the direction of the movement.

Power 10: A call for rowers to do 10 of their best, most powerful strokes. It's a strategy used to pull ahead of a competitor.

PR: Personal Record. When a rower beats their previous best score on an erg or fitness test. Often used as a verb, such as, "I PR'ed my 2k."

Repechage: The second-chance race which ensures that everyone has two chances to advance from preliminary races since there is no seeding in the heats.

Rigger: The triangular shaped metal device that is bolted onto the side of the boat and holds the oars.

Run: The run is the distance the shell moves during one stroke. You can figure it by looking for the distance between the puddles made by the same oar. When a boat is set and well powered, rowers can actually hear the water "run" underneath the boat.

Sculls: One of the two disciplines of rowing – the one where scullers use two oars or sculls.

Set: The balance of the boat. When the boat is "set," rowers get the most out of every stroke. When a boat is "unset," it slows down the boat and challenges the rowers on each stroke. Your rower may say, "it was a great row, we had a great set," or, "it was rough, we couldn't find the set. Or, "we were down to port/starboard," meaning, the boat was leaning to port or starboard, making it hard for rowers to row well.

Shell: Can be used interchangeably with boat.

Slide: The set of runners for the wheels of each seat in the boat.

Starboard: Right side of the boat, while facing forward, in the direction of movement.

Stern: The rear of the boat; the direction the rowers are facing.

Stretcher or Foot-stretcher: Where the rower's feet go. The stretcher consists of two inclined footrests that hold the rower's shoes. The rower's shoes are bolted into the footrests.

Stroke: The rower who sits closest to the stern. The stroke sets the rhythm for the boat; others behind him must follow his cadence.

StrokeCoach: A small electronic display that rowers attach in the boat to show the important race information like stroke rate and elapsed time.

Sweep: One of the two disciplines of rowing – the one where rowers use only one oar. Pairs (for two people), fours (for four people) and the eight are sweep boats.

Swing: The hard-to-define feeling when near-perfect synchronization of motion occurs in the shell, enhancing the performance and speed.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

We need volunteers and help with fundraising to build this program!

Volunteer

We send out volunteer sign ups throughout the year. Join in! Rowing parents are a friendly and welcoming bunch, and the “work” is actually a good time.

Program Chairs

Reach out to our program chairs (i.e., team pictures, lost and found) and let them know if there is something specific you want to help with.

Come to the Gala

Our primary fundraising tool is our Gala and auction, held in February of each year. We strongly encourage all parents to come and celebrate our community and this sport.

We are raising money for a complete seven-year overhaul of our fleet. New boats are fast boats. Your rower wants to row in a fast boat! The better our boat fleet, the stronger our program.

We do our best to keep our fees as low as possible and hope that parents will be a part of building the Sammamish legacy by attending our Gala and participating in the auction.

Fundraising

As our rowers become ever more competitive, we have more opportunities to race more competitively farther away from home. We are continually evaluating these opportunities with an eye on the cost and burden to our Sammamish families. Part of that is considering whether we can provide rowers an opportunity to raise money for their own travel.

Learn to Row

Many parents are inspired by their child’s experience to try this sport. You can do our popular “Row For a Day” program where you get to try it out, including some time on the water to see what it really feels like. These fill up fast, so watch the calendar. Or, you can wade in deeper and take a “Learn to Row” class where you will really learn to row. Upon completion of the Learn to Row program, you can join one of our “masters” teams at Sammamish, 5 am, mid-morning or evening.

Scholarships

We also raise money at the Gala for scholarships. We want any child with an interest to have the opportunity to row, no matter what. Contact our director, Steven Freygang, for more details.

COLLEGE ROWING

Overview

If you have rowed successfully at SRA there is a very high likelihood that you can row *somewhere* in college. If you are female, there are scholarships to balance out the high number of basketball and football scholarships given to guys (thank you Title IX!).

Being recruited is as much about being a good fit for the school as about being fast. The coach wants someone that they can get admitted *and* who will work well (speed and personality) with the team. Rowers can't be *too* far outside of the normal admission standard at many schools, as they use the "Olympic sports" (e.g. track, rowing, etc.) to bring up the overall GPA of the whole class of athletes, which has to meet an NCAA standard.

REMEMBER that there are schools OUTSIDE of Washington State, and if you apply to them you will be valued as "diversity," particularly for East Coast schools. There is rowing that is not HUSKY rowing, despite the hype!

Schools can often come up with a mixture of "merit" and other (sometimes athletic) scholarships, as well as financial aid. So don't rule anything out because it's too expensive. If you want to go there, explore it and there may be a way that the school and coach can make it work. Interestingly this often happens at smaller D3 schools.

If You're a Rising/Current Junior:

- 1) Start to become clear about your favorite schools. Work with your college counsellor to identify a selection of schools that are good fits, including "reach" schools and "safety" schools.
- 2) Plan to take the SAT / ACT at least once in the fall and likely once or twice again in the spring. Make sure that any SAT II tests are also completed if they are required, along the way.
- 3) By December, prepare a "resume" specifically for rowing coaches. It should have academic, extracurriculars, test scores, and rowing stats on it. Prepare it carefully. We were told by several D1 (our son) and D3 (our daughter) coaches that this greatly simplified their lives and that they typically had to work very hard to get all of this information from other recruits. This will help the coaches assess you as a student and determine whether they feel that you a) are "recruitable," b) can get in on your own, or c) help them steer you through the process even if you're not a formal recruit. Even if you're not a formal recruit they really want to have experienced rowers admitted, and they can help.
- 4) By January, take the recruiting questionnaire of each college/university you are interested in. It is usually located somewhere on the team webpage.
- 5) At the same time, send your polished "rowing resume" to both the head coach and the assistant coach at each school that you are interested in. At almost every school we had contact with (25 schools), the assistant coach was in charge of recruiting. The rowing

resume should be sent with a nicely worded email (get your parents to read it, even if you think it's "fine"!) to the coaches. Express your interest in the school and why you would want to attend, row there, and so forth.

- 6) If you have picked your schools in the right "range," expect to get some emails back from assistant coaches. Both in D3 and D1, coaches cannot call you directly until July 1st of your "senior" year, (before your senior year) but they can ask you to call them. Both our daughter (D3) and son (D1) had multiple calls with multiple coaches. A typical call sequence included:
 - a. First coach talks about the school, gets you comfortable
 - b. They ask about your family, your school, things to get you talking
 - c. They ask you about your club, what you like about rowing
 - d. They try to sell you on their team by talking about recent recruits, recent successes
 - e. They try to figure out you as a person, talk about your motivations, see if they think you will be a contributor
 - f. They talk about the school again and offer to facilitate answering any questions you may have
 - g. Rinse and repeat.
- 7) If you are having a call and haven't been through an interview process like this before, find a college counsellor or trusted advisor to give you a dry run. Think about how you want to come across (enthusiastic, energetic, keen on the school), and practice. Those adjectives are much better than "nervous" and "unprepared," so the practice will be worth it. It's hard for rowers to talk about themselves sometimes!
- 8) Don't be discouraged if you don't hear back right away. Keep at it. We have numerous Sammamish alums rowing in great programs with great success who didn't hear back from coaches for months.

If You're a Rising Senior:

- 1) Everything above can be done in July and August if you haven't done this already. Don't panic.
- 2) As of July 1, coaches can call you directly.
- 3) Don't let erg scores define you. "Ranges" found on the internet are often much faster than the recruiting classes at even the top 10 D1 schools. If you can move a boat and have experience in the right range, and could be admissible, go for it!
- 4) Throughout July and August, D1 and D3 coaches are assembling "official visit" lists. Typically D1 schools can offer you 48 hours on campus, sometimes expenses paid. D3 schools rarely, if ever, pay expenses and I wouldn't even ask. In both cases you'll get the chance to hang out with a team liaison (usually a freshman or sophomore), go to classes, and of course, see practice. They are not allowed to have you practice with the team as this would be an illegal "evaluation," but you can ask to go to the erg room and

erg on your own. This is recommended as it keeps your fitness up over a long weekend away *and* shows that you're motivated.

- 5) Per NCAA guidelines you can go on up to 5 official visits, which are all typically in the fall. Since you're simultaneously trying to get great grades and possibly polish your standardized tests ... consider taking fewer than 5. Both of our kids took 3 and that was enough. One of them said that any more visits and they would have gone nuts. But take all that you need to in order to make a good decision.
- 6) Remember that recruiting, like admissions, is a flawed process. Trust your instincts but also don't be put off if you don't hear back right away. Another former SRA rower never heard from the D1 coach that he finally rowed for ... but he went on to be extraordinarily successful and row for the U23 national team!
- 7) Be persistent and have fun. You have picked a great sport and put a lot of energy into it. Get the most back in return that you can in the college selection process.

If You're a Parent:

Don't listen to your child when they say "it will be OK" ... read over those emails. Edit. They can carry the day and make a great first impression.

Your rower can likely go farther than they think in this process. They need your support and encouragement.

SRA coaches and parents are a great resource. If your rower is interested in rowing in college, make an appointment with the coaches. They have a network, and our parents have a network, that can help your student learn more about schools in which they are interested, and understand more about the process.

Think about your rower's "story." Schools often recruit for character and potential as much as erg scores. Be clear about why your child wants to go to a certain school so they can be "on-message" when they are talking to the coaches.

Keep track of good pictures and videos that can help sell your rower's story.

When your rower is interested in a school, make sure they are following their rowing program on social media and are aware of their races and results so the coaches know their interest is sincere.

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook was developed and written by experienced SRA parents. It is made available to help new SRA parents better understand the sport and the experiences of their rower. It does not cover everything and it is by no means a definitive answer to every question. We tried our best to use our experience to answer the questions we had when our rowers first started at Sammamish, but please consider what is said in the spirit with which it was intended. We hope it has helped you.

We also hope you and your rower enjoy your time at Sammamish, and wish for your rower a race, and hopefully an entire season, that leaves him or her feeling like this:

“It was when he tried to talk about 'the boat' that his words began to falter and tears welled up in his eyes...Finally, watching Joe struggle for composure over and over, I realized that 'the boat' was something more than just the shell or its crew. To Joe, it encompassed but transcended both - it was something mysterious and almost beyond definition. It was a shared experience - a singular thing that had unfolded in a golden sliver of time long gone, when nine good-hearted young men strove together, pulled together as one, gave everything they had for one another, bound together forever by pride and respect and love. Joe was crying, at least in part, for the loss of that vanished moment but much more, I think, for the sheer beauty of it.”

— **Daniel James Brown, *The Boys in the Boat***