



# QUICK CREW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

## overview

The concept is simple, and it's easy to learn the basics. However, there's an enormous amount of skill involved in propelling that foot-wide craft through choppy waters with 12-foot oars, and it takes more teamwork than practically any other sport. Below is a quick reference guide to decipher what your kids are talking about over dinner or on the ride back from practice!

The term “**boat**” refers to a team. It can be eight, four, or two rowers, or even a single rower. In addition, most boats have a coxswain (pronounced “**cox-n**”), the on-board coach who steers the boat (being the only one in the boat who faces forward) and communicates to the rowers through an on-board speaker system (the “cox box”). Boats are classified by the number of rowers and whether or not they have a coxswain.

The vessel they sit in is a “**shell**,” a lightweight, streamlined boat with sliding seats and oarlocks extending over the side. It's a craft built for speed.

Rowers will either control a single oar (**sweep rowing**) or two oars (**sculling**), and the class of boat depends on the number of rowers and the way they're handling the oars. Sweep rowers come in twos, fours and eights. Scullers row alone (singles), by twos (pairs), or fours (quads). All eights have a coxswain; twos and fours may or may not have a cox. **B-CC boats are sweep eights or fours.**

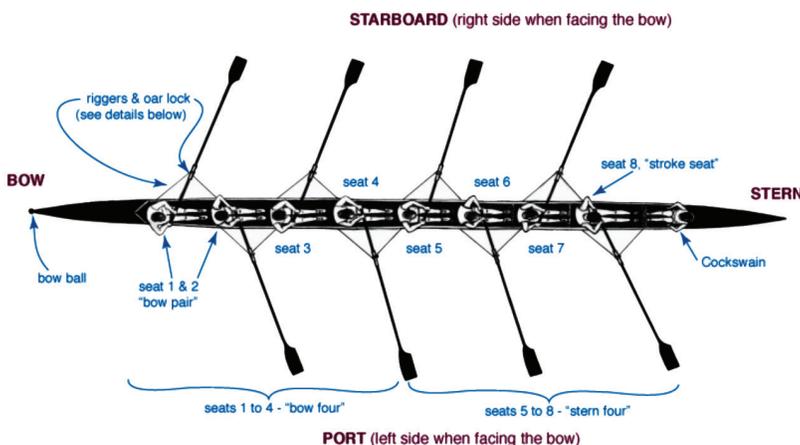
Boys and girls row separately in competition. In each class there is a **varsity eight** (a.k.a. 1V), and there may be a second varsity eight (2v), third varsity eight (3v), etc. The **junior varsity eight** (JV) is a class in which none of the rowers can be seniors. The **freshman eight (1F)**, as the name implies, can only be 9th graders. **Novices** are rowers who have been rowing for less than a year.

Individual rowers are identified by the seat they occupy, starting at the bow (front) with the 1 seat. Occupying the 8 seat, commonly known as the “**stroke**,” is an experienced rower who sets the cadence for the boat.

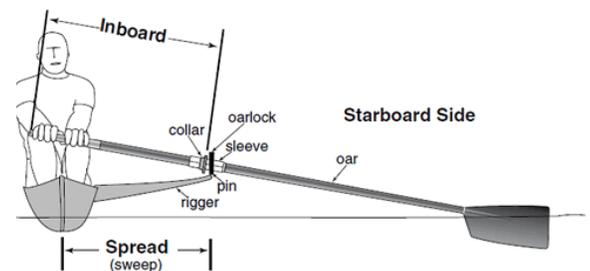
There are primarily two types of Regattas/Races:

1. “**Head races**” (Fall): Head races are run over a course, generally 3 miles in length. Instead of being a distance race, it's raced against the clock, with the goal being to have the fastest overall time. Crews are started 10-15 seconds apart, allowing for faster crews to overtake slower ones along the course. Due to the length of the race, the cadence is much lower when compared to a sprint race.
2. “**Sprint races**” (Spring): rowers cover a course of 1500 m. They're rowed at a much higher stroke rate than head races. Usually 4-6 boats are lined up at the starting line, either through a floating start or on stake boats, after which the starting marshal will utilize one of the various starting calls followed by “Attention, GO” to begin the race. The end of the race (250-300m) is an all out sprint.

## parts of an eight

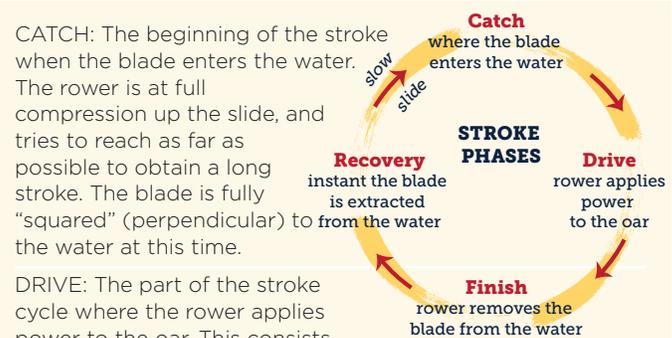


## the rowing workspace



# glossary of rowing terms

- ❖ **Bow** (rhymes with cow) The forward section of the boat; the first part of the boat to cross the finish line; the person in the seat closest to the bow, who crosses the finish line first.
- ❖ **Coxswain** Person who steers the shell and is the on-the-water coach for the crew.
- ❖ **Crab** An accident that occurs when a rower loses control of his or her oar. The rower's blade gets trapped in the water by the momentum of the shell, and the oar handle flies backwards, going over the rower's head or striking the rower's chest. Often the handle ends up behind the rower. In extreme cases, the rower may be thrown overboard. It's called "catching a crab," and sooner or later it happens to everyone.
- ❖ **Deck** The part of the shell at the bow and stern that is covered with fiberglass.
- ❖ **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 their "strokes per minute" and the distance covered.
- ❖ **Oar** Used to drive the boat forward: rowers do not use paddles.
- ❖ **Piece** A term referring to any period of work performed in the shell or in training on the ergs: a «ten minute piece," a "500 meter piece," or a "20 stroke piece," for example.
- ❖ **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.
- ❖ **(Stroke) Rate** The number of strokes rowed per minute.
- ❖ **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.
- ❖ **Rushing the Slide (rushing)** A technical error caused by sliding too quickly and abruptly toward the stern.
- ❖ **Sculls** One of the two disciplines of rowing – the one where scullers use two oars or sculls.
- ❖ **Set** The balance of the boat.
- ❖ **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.
- ❖ **Straight** Refers to a shell without a coxswain i.e. a straight four or straight pair.
- ❖ **(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** one fluid motion where a rower uses their legs, back, and arms to generate power and propel the boat. It has 4 phases:
- ❖ **(The) Stroke** The rower who sits closest to the stern. The stroke sets the rhythm for the boat; others behind him/her must follow his/her cadence.



**CATCH:** The beginning of the stroke when the blade enters the water. The rower is at full compression up the slide, and tries to reach as far as possible to obtain a long stroke. The blade is fully "squared" (perpendicular) to the water at this time.

**DRIVE:** The part of the stroke cycle where the rower applies power to the oar. This consists primarily of the leg drive, then straightening the back, and finally pulling in the arms. Most of the power in the stroke is accomplished during the leg drive.

**FINISH (and release):** At the finish, the rower is leaning back and pushing down on the oar handle to make it come out of the water. Remove the blade from the water by pushing the oar in a downward and away motion with the outside hand. As the oar's blade comes out of the water turn it so it is flat - this is called "feathering." When an oar blade is feathered, it is parallel to the surface of the water.

**RECOVERY:** After the finish at the point when the blade is feathered, the rower executes a quick "All hands away" followed by a swing forward with the upper body to an upright position. Then, the rower moves slowly back up the slide towards the catch.

- ❖ **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. Pairs and fours may or may not have a coxswain. Eights always have a coxswain.
- ❖ **Swing** The hard-to-define feeling when near-perfect synchronization of motion occurs in the shell, enhancing the performance and speed.