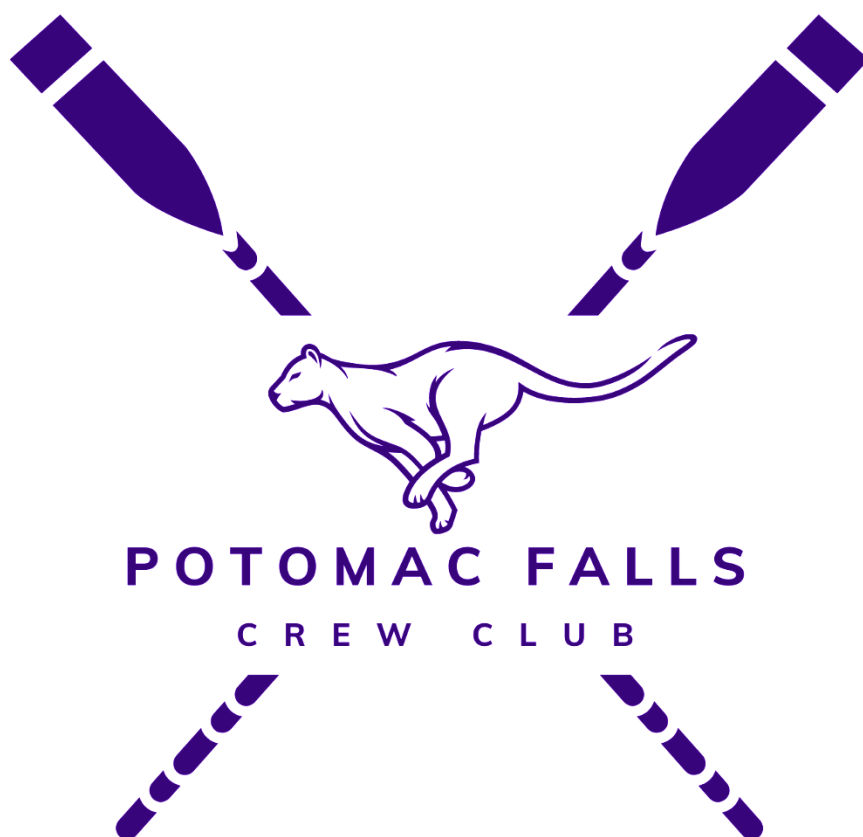


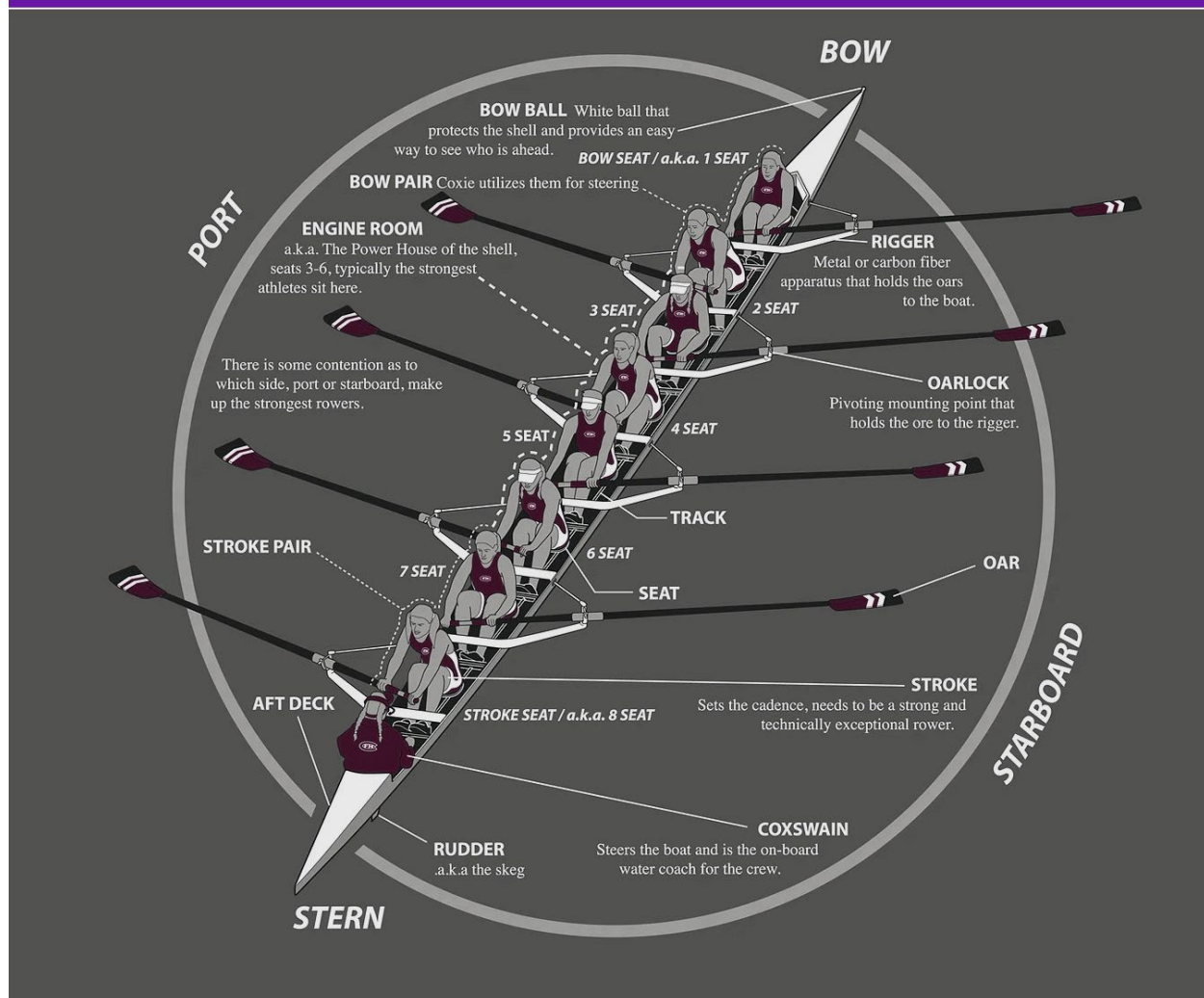
# Potomac Falls Crew Club (PFCC) 24/25 Parent and Athlete Manual



## Key Facts About Rowing

1. **Rowers are Among the World's Top Athletes:** The sport requires stamina, strength, and the ability to endure the muscle pain in the final 500 meters of a race.
2. **Leg Power:** Although rowing appears to be an upper-body sport, the main power comes from strong legs. Rowing utilizes all major muscle groups.
3. **Meters:** Rowing races are 2000 meters in college and 1500 meters in high school, roughly equivalent to 1.25 miles and 1 mile. Rowers break the race into 500-meter segments.
4. **Sweep vs. Sculling:** Sweep rowing involves each athlete using one oar with both hands, while in sculling, each athlete uses two oars.
5. **Even Numbers:** Sweep rowers are in pairs, fours, and eights. Scullers can row solo, in doubles, or in quads. Scullers steer with a foot-operated rudder, while sweep rowers may have a coxswain.
6. **The Illusion of Ease:** Rowing looks smooth and effortless but is a challenging sport requiring coordination and strength to balance narrow boats and pull long oars effectively.
7. **Modern Equipment:** Today's rowing boats, known as shells, are made of strong, lightweight carbon fiber. Oars have also evolved, with sweep oars being longer and having wooden handles, while sculling oars are shorter with rubber grips.
8. **Strokes Per Minute (SPM):** Rowers measure speed in strokes per minute (SPM). Stroke rates vary during a race, with higher rates at the start and finish. A "Power 10" is a call for the crew's best ten strokes.
9. **Timing and Competitions.** Races are usually conducted on six-lane courses with a double-elimination format to find the fastest six crews. The boat that crosses the finish line first wins.
10. **Ultimate Teamwork.** Rowing is the epitome of teamwork, requiring every athlete to synchronize perfectly. The best teams are those where individuals sacrifice personal goals for the team's success.

# BOAT BASICS



## Boat Anatomy

**Blade:** The part of the oar that enters the water.

**Bow:** front section of the boat, the first section to cross the finish line.

**Bowball:** small rubber ball attached to the front of the boat, used for safety and determining finishing order of boats in a race.

**Cox box:** voice amplifier used by coxswain, may also give readout of boat speed, stroke rate, and time.

**Foot stretcher/footboard:** adjustable footboard to which shoes are attached and can be moved closer to the front stop of tracks on which the seats slide.

**Oar:** a pole used by rowers to propel the boat. Held in place by oarlocks and consists of a 'handle' end (held by rowers) and a 'blade' end (placed in the water when moving the boat).

**Oarlock:** rectangular lock at the end of the rigger, used to attach the oar to the boat

**Port:** left side of the boat (when facing forward)

**Rigger:** projection from the side of the boat on which the oarlock is located at the end of.

**Rudder:** used by the coxswain to steer the boat using cables, located adjacent to the skeg

**Seat:** rolling seat on which rowers sit upon while rowing

**Shell:** another word for row boat

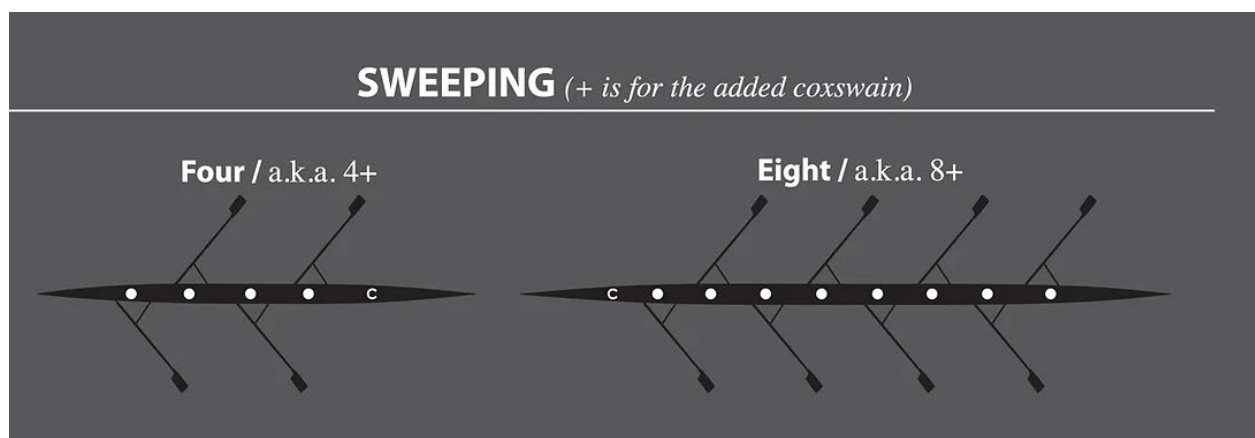
**Skeg:** thin piece of metal used to stabilize the boat

**Starboard:** right side of the boat (when facing forward)

**Stern:** rear section of the boat

**Tracks:** rails on which seats roll

**PFCC will row using 4 and 8 sweeping boats.**



## Crew Members / Seat Position

Rowers move the boat using oars and are ordered according to numbers starting from the bow seat up to the stern seat (see Boat Anatomy section or diagram for positions and terminology).

**Seat #8 (Stroke):** the rower in the highest numbered seat closest to the stern is called the 'stroke'. Sets the rhythm and stroke length, leading the boat.

- In an 8+ boat, the stern pair (the stroke seat and the seat behind it) are responsible for setting the rhythm and stroke rate for the rest of the rowers in the boat to follow.

**Seat #7:** Mirrors the stroke rower's movements, crucial for timing.

**Seats #6 to #3:** The middle four of the 8+ boat take on a less technical role as they follow the pace set by the stern pair. Middle four rowers tend to be the more powerful rowers of the boat and are commonly referred to as the 'engine room' or 'powerhouse' of the boat.

**Seats #2 and #1 (Bow):** Support the boat's movement and finish the race first. In an 8+ the rower seated in the first seat is referred to as the 'bow seat' or 'bowman'. The bow pair take on a more technical role, as they are responsible for setting the balance of the boat and setting the line in which the boat steers.

**Coxswain:** The coxswain takes on a critical role in the boat as they are in charge of steering the boat, and telling the rowers at what rate, rhythm, and level of power they need to row at.

- Coxswains are commonly seated in front of the stern seat facing the rowers, although they can also be found sitting behind bow seat in bowloaders facing away from the rowers (common in coxed four and coxed pair boats).
- Coxswains sit in their seats (or lay in bowloaders) and instruct rowers using a cox box and speakers.

*The minimum weight requirement for coxswains in the U.S. is 120 lbs. for men's boats and 110 lbs. for women's boats. The lighter the coxswain is, the less effort rowers have to put in to move the boat.*

## Glossary of Rowing Terms

- **Catch:** The moment the oar blade enters the water.
- **Coxswain (Cox):** The person who steers and commands the boat.
- **Crab:** When an oar gets stuck in the water, potentially causing the rower to lose balance.

- **Crew:** Term for competitive rowing.
- **Drive:** The phase where rowers push with their legs and pull with their arms.
- **Eight:** A boat for eight sweep rowers plus a coxswain.
- **Erg:** Rowing machine for training.
- **Four:** A boat for four sweep rowers, with or without a coxswain.
- **Lightweight:** A category based on rowers' weight.
- **Recovery:** The phase between the finish and the catch.
- **Scull:** An oar for rowing with one hand; also, rowing with two oars.
- **Single:** A boat for one sculler.
- **Slide:** Tracks on which the rower's seat moves.

## About Potomac Falls Crew Club (PFCC)

### PFCC Programs

Potomac Falls Crew Club offers various rowing programs for competitive high school rowers and beginners through its learn-to-row initiatives.

### The High School Team

Potomac Falls Crew Club ([www.pfrowing.com](http://www.pfrowing.com)) is an independent high school rowing program that includes rigorous indoor and outdoor training sessions. Rowers participate in six to eight regional and national regattas each year. PFCC is dedicated to developing both the physical and mental strength of its athletes, emphasizing informed healthcare decisions and promoting a lifestyle that avoids alcohol, drugs, and tobacco while ensuring proper nutrition throughout the training season. Every athlete, along with their parent or guardian, must read and sign a Code of Conduct upon registration each season.

Competitive rowing is an exceptional sport that cultivates successful and dedicated athletes. It demands the highest level of teamwork, relying on the mental and physical strength of each participant. Comparable to marathon running or cross-country skiing, rowing is an endurance-based sport that requires cardiovascular strength and mental focus. PFCC prioritizes teamwork, physical exercise, and health awareness for high school students in the Northern Virginia area.

### Diversity

PFCC is committed to supporting diversity by providing opportunities for teenagers from various socio-economic backgrounds to row. The team includes members from diverse races, religions, and income levels.

### Contacting the Coaches

At PFCC, communication primarily occurs between the coach and the rower. Rowers are encouraged to discuss their schedules, expectations, and improvement suggestions with their coach. Parents should contact the coach if they have concerns about their athlete's well-being. Contact information for the coaches is available on the website.

### **Vacation Days and School Absences**

Attendance is essential in rowing. If you are sick, please stay home. Inform the head coach if you will be absent from practice or a regatta for any reason. If you anticipate missing days during the season, provide your schedule as far in advance as possible to assist the coaches in planning accordingly.

### **PFCC Organization**

Potomac Falls Crew Club is a non-profit organization. The PFCC board comprises parents of current rowers and individuals from the rowing and boating community.

### **PFCC Boosters**

All parents or guardians of PFCC rowers automatically become Parent Volunteers when their child joins the team. Parent Volunteers are expected to contribute their time, whether by serving on the Parent Committee, chaperoning at regattas, or assisting with various tasks necessary to manage a team of around 40 rowers. The Parent Committee consists of parents who are actively involved in supporting the team. If you are interested in serving on the Committee, please contact one of the coaches.

### **The Four Rowing Seasons at Potomac Falls Crew Club (PFCC)**

#### **Fall Season**

The fall season at PFCC starts in late August, around Labor Day, and runs until Thanksgiving. Practices are held every weekday from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM when not attending a regatta. (Times Subject to Change) Attendance is crucial as the absence of one rower can prevent the whole boat from going out. Rowers should communicate their schedules directly with their coach. PFCC emphasizes direct communication between the coach and the rower. A mandatory parent/guardian meeting will be held at the beginning of both the fall and spring seasons.

During the fall, coaches focus on refining rowing techniques. PFCC typically participates in three to four regattas in the Virginia area.

## **Winter Season**

The winter season begins after a short break following Thanksgiving. During this time, rowers move indoors for practice, utilizing various “off-water” training techniques, primarily on indoor rowing machines (ergometers or “ergs”). Practices occur every weekday and are slightly shorter than on-water sessions. Winter training also includes weight training, running, stretching, and sport-specific drills.

Winter training is essential for conditioning in preparation for the spring season, which is the primary competitive season. Erg scores obtained during winter training are critical for collegiate rowing prospects. If a rower participates in a winter sport that maintains their fitness, this can be an acceptable alternative to winter training with PFCC. However, if not engaged in another competitive sport during winter, it is highly recommended to participate in rowing. The winter season concludes at the end of February.

## **Spring Season**

PFCC aims to be back on the water for the spring season at the beginning of March, weather permitting. Practice times remain the same as in the fall. Since the spring season is the most competitive, attendance is extremely important.

Spring regattas may involve travel, and those who qualify to participate must pay a supplemental fee to cover the costs of attending. The locations of these regattas vary each year.

## **Summer Season**

From mid-June to mid-August, PFCC may offer a summer rowing camp, providing additional training and development opportunities for rowers.

## **PFCC Team Composition**

### **What is a "Junior" Rower?**

At PFCC, "Junior" refers to all high school-aged rowers. Our competitive team focuses its training on achieving success in competitions.

### **Who is a Typical Rower?**

Rowers at PFCC are dedicated and passionate about their sport. It's common for novice rowers to quickly develop a love for rowing.

## **Coxswains**

The coxswain plays a crucial role in the crew, responsible for motivating rowers, executing racing strategies, and steering the racing shells. This position is typically held by someone



who is naturally light. There are collegiate scholarships available for talented junior coxswains.

## **Squads**

PFCC features teams for both novice boys and novice girls.

## **Novice Rowing**

According to the United States Rowing Association, rowers are considered novices for one year after they start racing. PFCC begins training novices each season and builds the team throughout the school year. Regardless of when you start, you will be considered a varsity rower the next school year. Novices have started as late as the spring of their senior year and have progressed quickly enough to earn collegiate scholarships by the following fall. While it's best to start rowing in high school or even in eighth grade, it's never too late to begin.

Beginning rowers spend about a week learning the basics on indoor rowing machines before transitioning to the water. Once on the water, there are only a few weeks before races begin.

## **Varsity Rowing**

Regardless of when you start rowing (fall, winter, or spring), you will be considered a varsity rower the following school year.

## **Attendance**

Attendance is critical in rowing. Our boats, which seat eight or four rowers, cannot operate effectively with fewer rowers. Rowers must provide their coach with a list of any days they cannot attend practice at the beginning of each season. In the event of an emergency that prevents attendance, rowers should call or text their coach as soon as possible. Avoid scheduling appointments during practice times and never on regatta days. Missing practice impacts the entire team.

## **Membership Dues**

PFCC is a non-profit club supported by membership dues and sponsorship. These fees cover daily operations, race entry fees, and equipment maintenance and repairs.

## **Sponsorship and Fundraising**

Membership fees only cover part of the costs associated with rowing. Expenses for new equipment, such as racing shells, oars, and launches, are covered through fundraising and sponsorships. Families are encouraged to participate in fundraising activities like our Ergathon held during the winter season.

### **Registration**

Rowers must complete a registration form each season, available on the PFCC website. This form includes rower and parent contact information, medical information, consent form, parent volunteer form, code of conduct contract, USRowing release of liability, and regatta waivers. Fees are due at the start of the season, with payment plans available. Offline payments must be submitted at the start of the season along with the offline payment plan form.

### **Financial Assistance**

PFCC may offer partial financial assistance to families who qualify based on economic need. Aid is need-based, and families must complete a Financial Assistance Request Form to be considered eligible. Every family is expected to contribute as much as possible to support their rower.

### **Practice Clothes**

Appropriate athletic gear is required, avoiding anything too baggy. Gym shoes are necessary. Layering clothes is recommended to be prepared for varying weather conditions. Rowers should dress appropriately for practices, which continue rain or shine, and bring a water bottle to stay hydrated.

### **Weather**

Practices occur in all weather conditions except during lightning storms or freezing temperatures, as determined by the Head Coach. On questionable weather days, rowers should call or text their coach to confirm whether practice will be indoors or on the water. Be prepared for both indoor and outdoor practices every day.

### **Safety**

PFCC is serious about safety, following comprehensive plans in accordance with United States Rowing Association guidelines. Coaches accompany rowers in safety launches (motorized skiffs) equipped with safety gear and a cell phone. No PFCC rower is allowed on the water without direct supervision from a coach in a safety launch.

## **Swimming Ability**

While you don't need to be an exceptional swimmer to row, basic swimming skills are required. In the event of a boat capsizing, rowers must be able to swim to safety or tread water until help arrives.