

## COACH'S WELCOME

Thomas C. Corcoran, II  
Head Coach  
Moorestown Rowing Club

Dear MRC Members,

Welcome to the Moorestown Rowing Club! You are now a member of a team that, though young, has been very successful. MRC has placed at some of the most prestigious regattas, including the New Jersey State Championships, Philadelphia City Championships, and the Stotesbury Cup Regatta. Moorestown rowers have also continued their rowing careers at schools like Harvard, Yale, Cornell, Penn, Iona, Drexel, LaSalle, Saint Joseph's, and Duquesne.

Crew, in many ways, is a unique sport among high school athletics. It is a training-heavy sport--we practice six days a week from January through May with the goal of winning four races. Crew also requires a big commitment from all involved--athletes, coaches, and parents. The athletes need to be committed to attend all practices and give their best each day. The coaches are committed to providing the best instruction possible and laying out the best path to success. The parents should be committed to helping the team through volunteering and helping organize regatta days.

Your commitment will lead to some great results. Some will walk away with hardware from races. More importantly, everyone will learn and develop skills that will serve you well in school and life. Teamwork and sportsmanship are essential to success in rowing. There is little individual glory; instead, success is built upon the relationships and cooperation among boat-mates. It seems odd, but organizational skills are also essential to success. Crew does require a time commitment unlike other sports. There are two-hour practices six days a week, day-long regattas (if not multiple-day long regattas), and the boring task of loading and unloading the trailer every week. In my experience, those most successful at this sport are those who can properly prioritize crew into their schedules.

Again, welcome to the team! This is a sport that can get under your skin and stay with you for life. I hope your time with the team is enjoyable and successful.

See you on the River,  
Tom Corcoran  
Head Coach

## COACHES CONTACTS

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If you are unable to attend practice, please contact your coach via the email listed above. Notice should be given twenty-four hours in advance. If there is an emergency, please notify the staff at the earliest time possible. Please be sure to copy the head coach to the email for record-keeping purposes. Remember that all practices are mandatory.

## COMMUNICATION

At MRC, communication is a two-way street. The coaches will communicate all necessary information to you in a timely manner and in such a way that is comprehensible. It is expected that if you do not understand, you will ask for clarification.

When a dispute arises, the first person you should talk to is your squad coach. If a solution cannot be found, or you are unhappy with the solution, then you should talk to the head coach. The head coach, squad coach, and you will try to find a solution together. If a solution still cannot be found, or you are unhappy with the solution, the head coach will meet with you and a parent to find a solution. Only then, if a solution cannot be found, or you are unhappy, will the parents board become involved.

## TEAM SCHEDULE

### PRACTICE:

#### Varsity girls:

- Monday through Friday 3:30pm to 5:30pm
- Saturday 10:00am to 12:00pm

#### Varsity boys:

- Monday through Friday 3:30pm to 5:30pm
- Saturday 10:00am to 12:00pm

#### Novice girls:

- Monday through Friday 5:00pm to 7:00pm
- Saturday 8:00am to 10:00am

#### Novice Boys

- Monday through Friday 5:00pm to 7:00pm
- Saturday 8:00am to 10:00am

### RACES:

- 02/06 - Main Line Slide
- 02/28 - Haddon Hammer
- 03/14 - Flick 1
- 03/15 - trailer unloading
- 03/21 - Flick 2
- 03/22 - trailer unloading
- 03/28 - Flick 3
- 03/29 - trailer unloading
- 04/11 - Flick 4
- 04/12 - trailer unloading
- 04/18 - Flick 5
- 04/19 - trailer unloading
- 04/24 - Garden State Championships
- 04/25 - Cooper Cup
- 05/02 - Philadelphia City Championships
- 05/03 - trailer unloading
- 05/09 - Dr. White Regatta (novice only)
- 05/14-15 - Stotbury Cup Regatta
- 05/17 - trailer unloading

### IMPORTANT DATES:

- 01/09 - team meeting
- 01/11 - practice starts
- 01/23 - SATs
- 03/06 - Women's ID Camp
- 03/13 - SATs
- 03/20 - Men's ID Camp
- 04/05 - spring training starts
- 04/09 - spring training ends
- 05/01 - SATs

## IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

WINTER TRAINING FACILITY - 120 East King's Highway, Maple Shade, New Jersey 08052. We are right next door to Iron Hill Brewery and across the street from BJ's

CAMDEN COUNTY BOATHOUSE - 7050 North Park Drive, Pennsauken, New Jersey 08109. The Boathouse is located on the Cooper River between Route 130 and Cuthbert Boulevard.

FLICK/HORVAT RACING SERIES - Schuylkill River on Kelly Drive in Philadelphia, PA. Most of our races take place on the Schuylkill River between Strawberry Mansion Bridge and Columbia Bridge. The course is located about three miles west of Boathouse Row.

## RULES

- I. You are required to attend every practice, including Spring Break. It is unacceptable to leave early from practice, unless for a family reason or for a school-sponsored activity. Excessive absences will result in removal from the team.
- II. You are required to attend all races, especially the Garden State Championships, Philadelphia City Championships, and the Stotesbury Cup Regatta.
- III. You are required to inform the head coach of absences twenty-four hours in advance, via email. Should an emergency arrive the day of a practice, the head coach should be informed by the end of school.
- IV. You are not able to participate in training until all paperwork and tests are completed.
- V. You are required to arrive at practice and races at the assigned time and are not allowed to leave until you are dismissed by the Head Coach. This holds true for trailer unloadings.
- VI. You are not allowed to touch, tinker with, or in any way abuse all equipment owned by the team unless under the supervision of your squad coach or have specific permission from the head coach.
- VII. You are in no way allowed to physically or emotional harm or abuse another member of the team in any way. Such actions will result in immediate removal from the team.
- VIII. The coaching staff determine boat line-ups. Line-ups are solely based on performance with the goal of making the best 8+ or 4+. Some factors in determining line-ups are - attendance, attitude, technical skill, strength, and competition. No input will be taken from anyone other than the coaching staff.
- IX. Extended absences due to illness or injury require a doctor's clearance before training can resume. Clearance can be in the form of a doctor's note given to the Head Coach

## EXPECTATIONS

### OUTSIDE OF THE BOATHOUSE

- I. It is expected that you be successful in both your curricular and extra-curricular activities. I do not mean be the best. I expect you to have your other endeavors under control so it does not affect your performance during training. I demand that you leave rowing at the boathouse, so please leave your schoolwork at school and your homework at home.
- II. It is expected that you keep yourself healthy and fit outside of training. I expect you to eat well and fully during the day. I also expect that you be careful and aware of what you are doing. Stupid injuries will not just ruin your season but the season of all of your teammates.
- III. It is expected that you treat all members of the Moorestown Rowing community with respect. This includes teammates, coaches, and parents. I also expect you to treat all members of the rowing community with the same respect. This includes other rowers, coaches, parents, and officials
- IV. It is expected that you talk to your parents about what is going on at practice. I expect you to tell your parents how practice is going and what you are doing at practice.

### INSIDE THE BOATHOUSE

- I. It is expected that you attend every practice and every race. I expect you to be on time and at the right location each day MRC is training or racing.
- II. It is expected that you are focused at every practice and race. I expect you to understand and complete each workout to the best of your ability. While it may seem like a great deal of time, you are only training for 90 minutes a day, six days a week for 5 months.
- III. It is expected that you act in a sportsmanlike-manner during training. I expect you to listen to the coaching staff and support your fellow teammates (not just squad-mates) as we all train toward a common goal

### DURING RACES

- I. It is expected that you are successful on race day. I expect that you perform to the best of your ability with what you have during each race.
- II. It is expected that you act in a sportsmanlike-manner on race day. I expect you to show nothing but support to your teammates and boat-mates and respect to your opponents and coaches

## DRESS

To compete for MRC, you are required to purchase a racing shirt and a unisuit. Sweats, jackets, and other MRC merchandise can be purchased, but are not required.

During winter training, it is highly suggested that you bring a bag with the following:

- hat
- gloves
- extra socks
- extra shirt
- extra sweats

You should also have appropriate workout clothes - a shirt and shorts or racing shorts, socks, and sweats. Shoes are required, as you will not be allowed to practice unless there are shoes on your feet.

During water workouts, it is highly suggested that you bring a bag with the following:

- hat
- gloves
- two pairs of socks
- extra shirt
- extra sweats
- extra shorts

You should also have the appropriate workout clothes - shirt and racing shorts, socks, sweats, and a waterproof outer layer. Shoes are required, as you will not be allowed to practice unless there are shoes on your feet.

## NEW TO ROWING?

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Bow:** 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.

**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.

**Button:** A wide collar on the oar that keeps it from slipping through the oarlock.

**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.

**FISA:** Short for Federation Internationale des Societes d'Aviron. The international governing body for the sport of rowing in the world, established in 1892.

**Gate:** The bar across the oarlock that keeps the oar in place.

**German rigging:** A different way of setting up which side of the boat the oars are on in a sweep boat. Instead of alternating from side to side all the way down, in a German rigged boat, two consecutive rowers have oars on the same side.

**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.

**Oar:** Used to drive the boat forward: rowers do not use paddles.

**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.

**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.

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

**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.

**Stretcher or Footstretcher:** 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. 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.

## QUICK FACTS

Rowing is one of the original sports in the modern Olympic Games.

Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympics, was a rower.

Rowers were the third largest U.S. delegation (48 athletes) to the Olympic Games in 2000.

Eight-oared shells are about 60-feet long - that's 20 yards on a football field.

Rowing was the first intercollegiate sport contested in the United States. The first rowing race was between Harvard and Yale in 1852.

Physiologically, rowers are superb examples of physical conditioning. Cross-country skiers and long distance speed skaters are comparable in terms of the physical demands the sport places on the athletes.

An eight, which carries more than three-quarters of a ton (1,750 pounds), may weigh as little as 200 pounds. The boats are made of fiberglass composite material.

Singles may be as narrow as 10 inches across, weigh only 23 pounds, and stretch nearly 27-feet long.

The first rowing club in the U.S. was the Detroit Boat Club, founded in 1839.

The first amateur sport organization was a rowing club - Philadelphia's Schuylkill Navy, founded in 1858.

From 1920 until 1956, the USA won the gold medal in the men's eight at every Olympic Games.

The first national governing body for a sport in the United States was for rowing. Founded as the National Association for Amateur Oarsmen in 1872, it was changed in 1982 to the United States Rowing Association.

Yale College founded the first collegiate boat club in the U.S. in 1843.

FISA, the first international sports federation, was founded in 1892.

Dr. Benjamin Spock, the famous baby doctor, was an Olympic rower in 1924 and won a gold medal in the eight. Gregory Peck rowed at the University of California in 1937.

Physiologists claim that rowing a 2,000-meter race - equivalent to 1.25 miles - is equal to playing back-to-back basketball games.

In 1997, Jamie Koven became the first American to win the men's single sculls at the world championships since 1966.

In 1999, the U.S. men's eight won its third consecutive gold medal at the world championships, a first in U.S. history.

## INSIGHTS INTO ROWING

1. Rowing is a total body workout. Rowing only looks like an upper body sport. Although upper body strength is important, the strength of the rowing stroke comes from the legs. Rowing is one of the few athletic activities that involves all of the body's major muscle groups. It is a great aerobic workout, in the same vein as cross-country skiing, and is a low-impact sport on the joints.

2. Rowers are among the world's best athletes. Rowing looks graceful, elegant and sometimes effortless when it is done well. Don't be fooled. Rowers haven't been called the world's most physically fit athletes for nothing. The sport demands endurance, strength, balance, mental discipline, and an ability to continue on when your body is demanding that you stop.

3. Sweep (like a broom) and Sculling (with a "c"). There are two basic types of rowing: sweep rowing and sculling. In sweep rowing, athletes hold one oar with both hands. In sculling, the athletes have two oars, one in each hand.

4. The boat. Although spectators will see hundreds of different races at a rowing event, there are only six basic boat configurations. Sweep rowers come in pairs (2s), fours (4s) and eights (8s). Scullers row in singles (1x), doubles (2x) and quads (4x). Sweep rowers may or may not carry a coxswain (cox-n), the person who steers the boat and serves as the on-the-water coach. All eights have coxswains, but pairs and fours may or may not. In all sculling boats and sweep boats without coxswains, a rower steers the boat by using a rudder moved with the foot.

5. The categories. Rowers are categorized by sex, age and weight. Events are offered for men and women, as well as for mixed crews containing an equal number of men and women. There are junior events for rowers 18 or under or who spent the previous year in high school, and there are masters events for rowers 21 and older. There are two weight categories: lightweight and open weight.

6. The equipment. Today's rowing boats are called shells, and they're made of lightweight carbon fiber. The smallest boat on the water is the single scull, which is only 27-30 feet long, a foot wide and approximately 30 pounds. Eights are the largest boats at 60 feet and a little over 200 pounds. Rowers use oars to propel their shells. Sweep oars are longer than sculling oars, typically with carbon fiber handles and rubber grips (although some sweepers still prefer wooden handles). Sculling oars are almost never wood.

7. The crew. Athletes are identified by their position in the boat. The athlete sitting in the bow, the part of the boat that crosses the finish line first, is the bow seat or No. 1 seat. The person in front of the bow is No. 2, then No. 3 and so on. The rower closest to the stern that crosses the finish line last is known as the stroke. The stroke of the boat must be a strong rower with excellent technique, as the stroke is the person who sets the rhythm of the boat for the rest of the rowers.

8. SPM not MPH. Rowers speak in terms of strokes per minute (SPM), literally the number of strokes the boat completes in a minute's time. The stroke rate at the start is high – 38-45, even into the 50s for an eight – and then “settles” to a race cadence typically in the 30s. Crews sprint to the finish, taking the rate up once again. Crews may call for a “Power 10” during the race – a demand for the crew's most intense 10 strokes.

9. Race watching. The crew that's making it look easy is most likely the one doing the best job. When watching a race, look for a continuous, fluid motion from the rowers; synchronization in the boat; clean catches, i.e. oars entering the water with little splash; and the boat with the most consistent speed.

10. Teamwork is number one. Rowing isn't a great sport for athletes looking for MVP status. It is, however, teamwork's best teacher. The athlete trying to stand out in an eight will only make the boat slower. The crew made up of individuals willing to sacrifice their personal goals for the team will be on the medal stand together. Winning teammates successfully match their desire, talent and bladework with one another.

## VIEWERS' GUIDE

### The Events

Events are divided into two disciplines: sweep rowing and sculling, and two categories within those: lightweight and open.

#### Sculling and Sweep Rowing

Athletes with two oars – one in each hand – are scullers. There are three sculling events: the single – 1x (one person), the double – 2x (two) and the quad – 4x (four).

Athletes with only one oar are sweep rowers. Sweep boats may or may not carry a coxswain (pronounced cox-n) to steer and be the on-the-water coach. In boats without coxswains, one of the rowers steers by moving the rudder with his or her foot. Sweep rowers come in pairs with a coxswain (2+) and pairs without (2-), fours with a coxswain (4+) and fours without (4-) and the eight (8+), which always carries a coxswain. The eight is the fastest boat on the water. A world-level men's eight is capable of moving almost 14 miles per hour.

The pairs and fours with coxswain are sometimes the hardest to recognize because of where the coxswain is sitting. Although the coxswain is almost always facing the rowers in an eight, in pairs and fours the coxswain may be facing the rowers in the stern or looking down the course, lying down in the bow, where he or she is difficult to see.

Athletes are identified by their seat in the boat. The athlete in bow is seat No. 1. That's the person who crosses the finish line first (which makes it easy to remember – first across the line is No. 1 seat). The person in front of the bow is No. 2, then No. 3, No. 4, No. 5, No. 6, No. 7 and No. 8, a.k.a. the stroke. The stroke of the boat must be a strong rower with excellent technique, since the stroke sets the rhythm and number of strokes per minute the rest of the crew must follow.

#### Lightweight and Open Weight

An athlete of any weight can enter the open categories, although the average woman in an open race will approach 6' in height and an average open weight man 6'6".

Lightweight Men cannot weigh more than 160 pounds and the average weight in the entire boat cannot exceed 155 pounds. Lightweight Women cannot weigh more than 130 pounds and the average weight in the entire boat cannot exceed 125 pounds.

Lightweights row the same events as open weight athletes, except that other than the men's lightweight eight, they do not carry coxswains, so there is no lightweight 2+ or 4+.

#### The Race

All events at the FISA World Championships and Olympic Games are 2,000 meters, or approximately 1.25 miles. The racecourse is divided into six lanes and each 500-meter section is marked with buoys.

The race begins with all boats aligned at the start in the lanes they've been assigned. Individuals in each lane hold the stern of each boat steady while an official, known as the aligner, ensures that each boat is even with the others and squarely facing the course.

Each crew is allowed one false start; two means disqualification. If within the first 100 meters there is legitimate equipment breakage (e.g., an oar snaps in two), the race will be stopped and restarted with repaired equipment.

The stroke rate (the number of rowing strokes per minute that a crew is taking ) is high at the start – maybe 45 to even 50 for an eight; 38 to 42 for a single scull. Then, the crew will "settle" into the body of the race and drop the rating back – 38 to 40 for an eight; 32-36 for a single. The coach and the way the race is going determine when the crew will sprint but finishing stroke rates of 46+ in the last 200 meters aren't unheard of. However, higher stroke rates are not always indicative of speed. A strong, technically talented crew may be able to cover more water faster than a less-capable crew rowing a high stroke rate.

Unlike canoe/kayak competitions, rowers are allowed to leave their lanes without penalty, so long as they do not interfere with anyone else's opportunity to win. An official follows the crews to ensure safety and fairness.

Despite the exhaustion of the race, the crew will row for five to 10 minutes afterwards in order to cool down. In rowing, the medals ceremonies include the shells. The three medal-winning crews row to the awards dock, climb out of their shells and receive their medals before rowing away.

## The Stroke

The whole body is involved in moving a shell through the water. Although rowing tends to look like an upper body sport, the strength of the rowing stroke comes from the legs.

The stroke is made up of four parts: Catch, Drive, Finish and Recovery. As the stroke begins, the rower is coiled forward on the sliding seat, with knees bent and arms outstretched. At the catch, the athlete drops the oarblade vertically into the water.

At the beginning of the drive, the body position doesn't change – all the work is done by the legs. As the upper body begins to uncoil, the arms begin their work, drawing the oarblades through the water. Continuing the drive, the rowers move their hands quickly into the body, which by this time is in a slight "layback" position, requiring strong abdominal muscles.

During the finish, the oar handle is moved down, drawing the oarblade out of the water. At the same time, the rower "feathers" the oar – turning the oar handle – so that the oarblade changes from a vertical position to a horizontal one. The oar remains out of the water as the rower begins recovery, moving the hands away from the body and past

the knees. The body follows the hands and the sliding seat moves forward, until, knees bent, the rower is ready for the next catch.

## The Equipment

### Oars

Oars move the boat through the water and act as balancers. Sweep oars are longer than sculler's oars and have wooden handles instead of rubber grips. The shaft of the oar is made of extremely lightweight carbon fiber instead of the heavier wood used years ago.

The popular "hatchet" blade – named because of its cleaver-like shape – is about 20 percent larger than previous blades. Its larger surface area has made it the almost-universal choice among world-level rowers.

### The Boats – Sculls and Shells

All rowing boats can be called shells. Rowing boats with scullers in them (each person having two oars) are called sculls, e.g., single scull, double scull, quadruple scull. So, all sculls are shells but not vice versa! Originally made of wood (and many beautifully crafted wooden boats are made today), newer boats – especially those used in competition – are made of honeycombed carbon fiber. They are light and appear fragile but are crafted to be strong and stiff in the water.

The smallest boat – the single scull – is approximately 27 feet long and as narrow as 10 inches across. At 58 feet, the eight is the longest boat on the water.

The oars are attached to the boat with riggers, which provide a fulcrum for the levering action of rowing. Generally, sweep rowers sit in configurations that have the oars alternating from side to side along the boat. But sometimes, most typically in the 4- or 4+, the coach will rig the boat so that two consecutive rowers have their oars on the same side in order to equalize individual athlete power.

## Race Watching

- The crew that's making it look easy is most likely the one doing the best job. While you're watching, look for –

Continuous, fluid motion of the rowers. The rowing motion shouldn't have a discernible end or beginning.

- Synchronization. Rowers strive for perfect synchronization in the boat.
- Clean catches of the oarblade. If you see a lot of splash, the oarblades aren't entering the water correctly. The catch should happen at the end of the recovery, when the hands are as far ahead of the rower as possible. Rowers who uncoil before they drop the oarblades are sacrificing speed and not getting a complete drive.

- Even oarblade feathering. When the blades are brought out of the water, they should all move horizontally close to the water and at the same height. It's not easy, especially if the water is rough.
- The most consistent speed. Shells don't move like a car – they're slowest at the catch, quickest at the release. The good crews time the catch at just the right moment to maintain the speed of the shell.
- Rowing looks graceful, elegant and sometimes effortless when it's done well. Don't be fooled. Rowers haven't been called the world's most physically-fit athletes for nothing. A 2,000-meter rowing race demands virtually everything a human being can physically bring to an athletic competition – aerobic ability, technical talent, exceptional mental discipline, ability to utilize oxygen efficiently and in huge amounts, balance, pain tolerance, and the ability to continue to work when the body is demanding that you stop.

#### More Race-Watching Tips

- Race times can vary considerably depending upon the course and weather conditions. Tailwinds will improve times, while headwinds and crosswinds will hamper them.
- If a crew "catches a crab," it means the oarblade has entered the water at an angle instead of perpendicularly. The oarblade gets caught under the surface and will slow or even stop a shell.
- A "Power 10" is a call by the coxswain for 10 of the crew's best, most powerful strokes. Good coxswains read the course to know how many strokes remain for their crew to count down to the finish.
- Crews are identified by their oarblade design. The USA blades are red on top and blue on the bottom, with a white triangle at the tip.
- It doesn't matter whether you win an Olympic medal or don't make the finals – each crew still carries their boat back to the rack.
- Coxswains from first-place boats worldwide are thrown into the water by their crews.
- Coxswains don't now and probably never did yell "stroke! stroke!" Similar to a jockey, their job is to implement the coach's strategy during the race, in addition to steering and letting the rowers know where they stand in the race and what they need to do to win.