



DURHAM ROWING CLUB

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS THE DURHAM ROWING CLUB?

The Durham Rowing Club (DRC) is a non-profit sport and recreation club with the objective of making the sport of rowing available in Durham Region. The Club was started on McLaughlin Bay, Oshawa, in 1988 and moved to Port Perry in 1993. It places its main emphasis on youth and operates a high school, university, club and masters competitive programs and summer rowing camps for children. The Club also provides Learn-to-Row, corporate rowing and recreational rowing. It also runs a program for people with disabilities. The Club has a permanent boathouse at 8 Old Rail Lane, Port Perry (just north of the public boat launch). This is the base for all on-water training. Coach/safety boats are provided from nearby Port Perry Marina. DRC is a member of Rowing Canada Aviron and RowOntario.

WHAT BOATS ARE USED?

The Durham Rowing Club provides all the required equipment (boats and oars) for training and competition. There are two basic types of rowing, "sweep" rowing where each rower uses one oar and "sculling" where each rower has two oars. The main sweep rowing shells are eights (8+), fours (4+ and 4-) and pairs (2-). The "+" sign is used to indicate that the boat has a coxswain in addition to the rowing crew. The "-" sign indicates that there is no coxswain and one of the rowing crew is responsible for steering the shell. In sculling there are quad sculls (4X), double sculls (2X) and single sculls (1X). The Learn to Row training is in eights (8+) and fours (4+). The Club also has single sculls (1X), pairs (2-), doubles (2X), straight fours (4-) and quad sculls (4X) available for more experienced and competitive crews.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR WHEN I ROW?

We usually suggest the "onion" principle so that you can shed some layers, depending on weather and as you get warmed up during the practice. This is particularly important for spring and fall rowing. Shorts and T-shirt are typical or track pants and sweatshirt. Wear "older" clothes, as the grease from the seat slides will cause a stain. We row in the rain, so bring a light rain jacket and plan on getting wet. It is a good idea to keep a spare set of clothes in your car in case of an emergency. When in the rowing shell make sure all clothing is tucked in, as loose clothing can get caught in the slides. Shoes are not worn in the rowing shell, so bring a pair of heavy socks, such as old work socks, as the 'clogs' in the boat where you place your feet have rough edges. Your runners will be left on the dock, so don't bring anything that someone might be interested in stealing!

DO YOU ROW IN ANY WEATHER?

No, safety of participants and equipment is of prime importance. We do not row in windy conditions, especially with inexperienced crews. Typically we will not take the boats out if there are white-caps on the water. We do not row in thunder storms or when there is danger of lightening. We do, however row in the rain. The decision on whether to take the boats out is made by the coach on the dock just prior to practice. It is usually not practical to inform people in advance. If we cannot take the boats out, you can work out on the rowing ergometers or dock-side trainer, watch some training videos or go for a run. If a session is cancelled it does not count towards your learn-to-row sessions.

IS THERE MUCH POTENTIAL FOR INJURIES?

Rowing is a physically demanding and strenuous sport. It requires a wide range of body motion and involves all the main muscle groups. However, at the learn-to-row stage, participants can work within their own limits and should inform the coach or cox'n immediately if they feel any discomfort. Because it is a non-contact sport and does not involve impact, the record of injuries is extremely low. Blisters on the hand from the oar handle are an occupational hazard but they can be minimized by keeping a light grip on the oar handle. The Club adheres to a written Standard Operating Procedure that is reviewed annually and is endorsed by RowOntario and Rowing Canada Aviron (RCA). All participants are provided with training in water safety and boat handling. A coach/safety boat with life jackets and all safety equipment in accordance with Coast Guard requirements, accompanies the rowing shells during training.

IS THERE ANY SPECIAL TERMINOLOGY I NEED TO BE AWARE OF?

Yes, lots, but the coach will explain the terms during the first few training sessions. The most important ones to be aware of are:

- "Cox'n" (coxswain) is the person who sits in the stern of the boat and is responsible for giving commands to the crew and for steering the boat.
- "Sweep" rowing is where each person has one oar, as opposed to "Sculling", where each person has two oars.
- Rowing seating positions are numbered from the bow as 1,2, 3 and 4 (or 1 to 8 in an 8+). 4 seat (or 8 seat) is also referred to as "Stroke" and 1 seat as "Bow".
- "Port" and "Starboard": even numbered seats row on port side, odd numbered seats row on starboard side.
- "Hatchet" is the term for the modern asymmetrical oar. The traditional symmetrical oar blade is called a "Macon".
- "Let it run" means stop rowing.
- "Squared blade" is when the oar blade is perpendicular to the water surface.
- "Feathered blade" is when the oar blade is parallel to the water surface.
- "Hold Water" means lift up on the oar handle with the blade squared to stop the boat quickly.
- "Touch it Bow" is the command for the person in Bow (or 1) seat to take a stroke (used to adjust the direction of the boat before starting).
- "Back it" is the command to take a reverse stroke and is used either to reverse the boat or turn it around.
- "Catch" is the point in the stroke when the blade is immersed in the water and the pressure is applied.
- For simplicity and to avoid confusion, when on the water, the coach and cox'n will refer to you by your seat number.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO LEARN HOW TO ROW?

Rowing requires a combination of coordination, dexterity, balance, flexibility and an understanding of the stroke mechanics. Some people pick up the basics in one or two sessions, others may need eight sessions or more. However, you will see a noticeable improvement after every practice. To improve to competitive level requires a combination of aerobic capacity, strength, endurance and power. At the learn-to-row stage, we request that all participants be patient, since it is a team sport and there will be a range of abilities and skill levels in every boat. Participants may be asked to take a turn at "coxing" occasionally. Sitting in the cox'n's seat provides a great view of the crew timing and hand levels. Since the training is in 4's and 8's, at some training sessions, we may have up to three extra people. In these cases we usually take the extra people out in the coach boats (another great opportunity to observe and learn) and then do a crew change on the water.

CAN I PROGRESS IN ROWING BEYOND LEARN-TO-ROW?

Very definitely! The Club provides a range of membership options, including recreational and competitive. Recreational members can row up to three times per week while competitive members train a minimum of three times per week and attend regattas at weekends.

"Great Challenges offer the greatest rewards. How we meet them reveals the truth in all of us."