

**TEAM
HANDBOOK**

Welcome Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Team Members and Families,

Welcome to the Freedom Rowers Club!. We are looking forward to working with you as we build a winning team on the water as well as land. We are excited to know the families that that have chosen to join us in supporting our tremendous program.

Rowing is an amazing sport that is challenging and demanding, but more importantly, it is rewarding and fun! This sport, at any level, requires hard work, dedication, mental toughness and safety awareness. In return, rowing will give you so much more - a successful team, a fit body, and a healthier mind.

The central thing to understand is that rowers are endurance athletes. In addition to the skill the new oarsmen will develop with oars and shell, he/she is undertaking a highly competitive sport that also requires great strength and fitness. A beginner's first few days of training are strenuous, uncomfortable, requires spontaneous cooperation with people they don't know and takes place in an alien environment. Practices will be exhausting and will not always go well. The first days may convince your youngster that this sport is not for them. If they express this doubt, hear them. Most youngsters will soon find the joy in the sense of speed and strength and grace that is the essence of our sport. They will soon begin to look towards their time in the boat as the best part of their day.

Please take the time to read over the information available in this book. It has details on team policies, requirements and terminology which everyone should be familiar with. I also encourage you to check out the website (www.freedomrowers.org) as well as "friend" us on facebook, all are good ways to keep current with the group.

Being a part of Freedom Rowers is a tremendous source of pride for us. I hope that all of you, parents as well as rowers, will enjoy the thrill of being involved in this outstanding program. Work hard, but most importantly, be safe and have fun!

See you on the water!
Chris Gill, Executive Director

Coaching Staff

Varsity Coaches – David Hillman
Sarah McKenzie
Novice Coaches – Chris Gill
Kevin White

Team Captains

Each year we carefully choose rising seniors to be our Team Captains and Co-Captains. These choices are made through observances of leadership ability, positive outlook, knowledge of boats and equipment as well as attendance. Becoming a team captain is not given, it is earned, and will be a great addition to a future college or job resume.

Board of Directors

Executive Director	Christine Gill
President	Chris Walsh
Vice President	JoRoy Lizewski
Treasurer	Alison Sanford
Fundraising/Development	Robert Billings (Past President) Sandy Brown
Secretary	Amanda David
Media and Advertising	Karena Dixon

Practice Schedule

Freedom Rowers practices are Tuesdays - Friday from 3:30 to 6:00pm. (Mondays will be optional strength and conditioning training at the Y from 3:30 – 4:30) All youth are to meet at the back pavilion of the Easton YMCA between 3:00 and 3:20, where attendance will be taken and daily instructions provided. We will leave the Y for Evergreen Cove at 3:30 sharp. Rowers with their drivers licenses will be permitted to drive to Evergreen Cove *after meeting at the Y*. All other team members will be transported to EC in either coach or volunteer parent cars. Driving **with** a licensed rower will require a signed consent form.

Rowers participating in regattas will need to be at Friday practices to help load boats and equipment for transport. It's a huge job!

Program Schedule and Fees

Our program fee is \$550.00 per rower, per season that is used to cover the costs of the team operations. A team sweatshirt is included in the fee. Race Jerseys will be handed out at the beginning of each season and collected at the end of the season. We then handle all costs associated with the program including, equipment and maintenance (racing shells, oars, rigging, cox boxes, safety equipment, tools, ect.), regatta entrance fees, regatta transportation (trailing of shells), coaches' stipend, insurance, chase boat and gas. It takes a lot to build a team, and some of our costs are made possible through donations and grants.

Full team program fees are due at the start of each season. Payment plans can be arranged, (please speak to our treasurer) Limited scholarships are granted through the Board of Directors. (Forms are available upon request.)

Note that if a family has more than one participant in the Freedom Rowers Program, the registration fee for each rower beyond the first will be reduced by \$100.00

Team Guidelines

Eligibility

Freedom Rowers is a coeducational rowing program open to all students in junior high and high school, ages 13 - 18 in Talbot, Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne and Dorchester counties. Eligible rowers must pass a swim test and have a current medical history available.

Attendance Policy

Teamwork is paramount to success in crew. Absences are extremely disruptive to the team's progress and overall success. All rowers and coxswains are expected to attend each practice and report on time. If a rower is late, they miss practice. Anyone who is unable to attend a scheduled practice for any reason, must notify the head coach 24 hours in advance if possible. **We understand that things come up, so please, call or text the coach out of courtesy to your team.** The coach will attempt to announce boat line-ups 2 weeks before each regatta. All rowers must try to attend regular scheduled practices for that time. We'll also mention again here, if you are participating in a regatta, attendance is mandatory the Friday prior to the regatta, to unrig and pack boats.

Regattas

By far, the most exciting part of Crew participation is the regatta racing. As a team sport we look for the rowers and parents to support every event entered. The team stays for the entire regatta and we encourage the parents to do the same.

Basic regatta Day tips:

Plan on a full day from early morning to late afternoon. We usually meet at the Y parking lot in the morning and arrange volunteer drivers and caravan to the location.

Know your child's boat assignment and race time so that you can give yourself plenty of time because it is easy to miss a race.

Rowers/Coxswains are required to arrive at the race location at a specific time set by the coach. The team will not row if members are not there on time.

◆ Regatta participants are responsible for rigging the boats at regattas as well as de-rigging and getting the boats back on the trailer before departing.

Rowers/coxswains are expected to exhibit the highest standard of sportsmanship and support for the team at competitions.

If you need to leave a regatta before the end....please let your coaches know so we are not looking for you. We do not want to leave anyone behind!

Safety Rules

1. All team members must pass a swim test (a one-time requirement), view the US Rowing safety video, and read and sign off on the team's safety guidelines before going on the water for the first time.
2. All boats will be accompanied by a coaching launch after moving out of the designated docking area. DO NOT row past Easton Point if a coach is not in sight.
3. All coaches' launches must be outfitted with life vests and other safety equipment.
4. If your boat swamps (boat fills up with water) or turns over, stay with the boat. The boats are designed to float and you should stay with it until you can be picked up by the accompanying launch. **NEVER** leave the boat.
5. When the boat is on the water, follow the instructions of the coxswain and coach. Excessive talking in the boat may interfere with instructions from the coxswain or coach, just keep that in mind.
6. If you or someone else is injured, notify the coach immediately by stopping the boat and raising your hand.
7. Team members who drive cars and who provide rides to other team members have a legal responsibility to drive maturely and responsibly at all times. **UNSAFE DRIVING BEHAVIOR MAY BE GROUNDS FOR IMMEDIATE EXPULSION FROM THE TEAM.**
8. Team safety is paramount. One of Freedom Rowers overall goals is to field highly competitive boats. Successful programs operate under the sport's tradition of a coach seeking out his or her "best eight" not "eight best". Consequently, the boat and seat selection are two of the most difficult decisions a crew coach faces. Each week of practice, the coach must consider many factors when determining a participant's boat and seat assignment. Don't be surprised (or offended) by boat line-up changes or rowers being switched from the port to starboard and vice versa: those changes are part of the sport in determining what works best for each boat.

Equipment Rules

- 1. Rowing equipment is very expensive and must be handled with care.** Follow all directions regarding the handling of equipment.
2. There will be no talking while carrying boats to launch dock, you must be able to hear the coxswains directions!
3. All rowers must participate in routine cleaning and maintenance of equipment. Please report any equipment problems to a coach immediately.

And we encourage you to:

4. Treat all teammates, opponents, coaches, spectators, officials and Freedom Rower crew members with respect.
5. Refrain from displaying inappropriate behavior and/or use of foul language. Violations of this rule can lead to disqualification.
6. Participate fully in all aspects of the training.
7. Participate fully in all fund raising activities.
8. Support the team and yourself by accepting coaching decisions.
9. Seek feedback from the coaches. If you as a team member don't know where you stand, ask.
10. Realize that team goals come before the needs or desires of any individual.
11. Enjoy being a member of a successful and competitive rowing team!

Rowing Attire

Rowing will put your athlete out in all sorts of weather. They will need to pay attention to predictions of temperature, wind, sun and rain. They should dress appropriately, in layers, preferable in fabrics that wick perspiration away from the skin. Spandex shorts or longer tights are best. (Spandex shorts are required for racing, no excuses)! Loose clothing can become entangled in the oar or in the wheels of the seat which will bring a boat to an immediate stop. A wind resistant jacket is very useful as well.

The members of the team that are coxing the shells (steering the boat) should dress in layers to keep warm. A water resistant wind breaker is advisable. Warm hat and gloves are also a good idea for coxens as they are not moving around as much. It is colder on the water than on land.

Heat and sun are the main issues. Light colored wicking fabrics are very helpful, as are hats, sunblock and sunglasses. The latter should not be seen as a fashion item, but in an investment in long-term vision health. Water bottles are likewise essential, year round: refillable polycarbonate bottles work well.

Remember that our team consists of boys and girls. Our policy is that NO LINES show. That means that we do not want any exposed cleavage, butt cracks, underwear or bra strap lines. Rowers reach forward for EVERY stroke AND spread their legs – get that image in your mind. Trial your clothes at home before getting in the boat. If rowers can not abide by that policy, they will be asked to leave the practice. We hold ROWERS AND PARENTS PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE for having the correct clothing. **You do NOT want the coach calling.**

Blisters

Though you may be anticipating complaints about sore muscles and exhaustion, you should be warned about blisters. For the first few weeks of the season, new rowers are invariably alarmed by the many blisters that turn into open wounds on their hands. Eventually these will skin over and become protective calluses. Until then, a topical disinfectant such as witch hazel and cleanliness should suffice. Trainer's tape can be helpful during practice while the blisters heal, but tape and gloves are to be avoided in the long term.

Care and feeding of young athletes

As your child progresses, please be aware that he/she is becoming an athlete and will need your help to succeed. Training successfully requires attention to rest and nutrition. For their health and happiness, regular well planned meals are essential, as is regular and sufficient sleep. Students are encouraged to eat filling and balanced meals with an emphasis on carbohydrates and protein and moderate amounts of fats, oils and sugar.

Rowing and Beyond

Resources available to the rowers

We will help rowers develop resumes at the end of the season if needed for college. College counseling is available from our retired coach, Sarah MacKenzie (seamack62@gmail.com) for all rowers. It is advised if you plan this route, to keep a journal of your rowing accomplishments each season, including names of races, boats and seats numbers that you raced. College coaches will want this information. The coaches will provide letters of recommendation for any rower. We will gladly contact any college or university that offers a rowing program on behalf of the youth rowers. Please consider using the regatta trips as recruiting tools. We ask that you let us know as soon as possible so that we have time to write any letter of recommendation. Several requests for letters have been submitted with less than 24 hour turnaround time. Short notice requests cannot be fulfilled.

Partnerships

Freedom Rowers leases the waterfront from Evergreen Cove. Our lease agreement is that we maintain the area that the rowers use. We agree to keep the shoreline clean, not use their parking lots AT ALL and respect their mission and programs. Evergreen Cove offers quiet meditation, yoga, therapy and massage to their clients. When walking from the parking along the driveway to the rowing area, please remember to keep voices low so as not to disturb the clients in the adjacent buildings.

Freedom Rowers is not affiliated with the YMCA. The YMCA lets us use their facility as an act of grace. The privilege is not to be abused.

Comments to the Coaches and Staff

If any parents or youth rowers have a comment or question that they want addressed in an anonymous manner, please send us a note to Freedom Rowers, P.O. Box 3086, Easton, Maryland 21601. All comments will be reviewed and will be answered in a positive manner for the entire team.

You may also contact the Coach Gill with concerns by calling:
Chris Gill, 410-253-6851

The Boat ~ “Shell”

Boats rowed: 8 (stern cox) Seats are # from bow to stroke seat bow(1),2,3,4.,5,6,7,stroke(8) -cox
4 (stern cox) Seats again bow to stroke – bow,2,3, stroke, cox
4 (with bow cox) Cox, bow,2,3,stroke
Double – 2 rowers – same as sculling
Pair – 2 rowers – sweep
Single – sculling



Bow: front of the boat (with the bowball)

Stern: back of the boat

Port: Left side of the boat (from stern view). Green.

Starboard: Right side of the boat (from stern view). Red

Scull: Rowing in which each rower has two oars

Sweep: Rowing in which each rower has one oar

Oar: Used to propel the boat by the rower

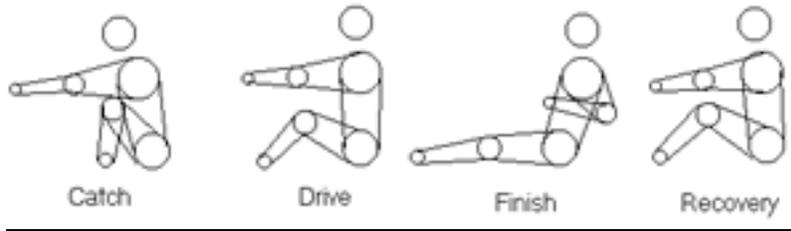
Rigger: Metal extension in which the oar is connected to by the Oarlock

Oarlock: Holds the oar in place, allows the oar to pivot

Gunwale: “Gunnel”. Top edges of the sides of the boat

Foot Stretcher: Straps a rower’s feet down in the boat

The Stroke ~



Catch: The beginning of the stroke when the oar is inserted into the water

Drive: When the rower propels the oar through the water

Finish/Release: When the oar is taken out of the water and the rower is at the bottom of the slide

Recovery: When the rower goes back up the slide before taking another stroke

Square blades - keeping the blade perpendicular to the water on the recovery.

Feathered blades - keeping the blade parallel to the water on the recovery.

Commands ~

Hold Water: Square the oar in the water to stop the boat

Back it Down: Turning the blade over and rowing from the Finish to the Catch

Paddle: No power put into the stroke

Way Enough: Stop rowing

SPM: Strokes per Minute. The number of strokes the rowers will complete in one minute

Half Slide: Taking half of a stroke, halfway up the slide

Full Slide: A full, complete stroke

Other Rowing Terms

Catch a Crab: When blade gets catch in the water during a stroke and rower can't lift blade from water

Erg: Short for Ergometer. Land based rowing machine

