

REGATTA DAYS 101

A quick guide to crew



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REGATTA DAYS 101

OFFICIALS

- Regattas are designed to follow the rules and procedures of the United States Rowing Association (USRA) and the Florida State Rowing Association (FSRA). It is expected that all coaches, rowers, and spectators exhibit sportsmanlike conduct throughout a regatta. If circumstances arise where a coach, rower, or spectator abuses this expectation, including the use of inappropriate language, the officials have the right to disqualify or exclude an individual rower and/or the team from participating in events.
- **Who are those in blue?** – They are individuals licensed by the USRA with the main objective of fairness and safety. At a race, there are approximately 10+ officials: head official, a starter, an aligner, an official at the docks, a finish line judge, and officials on the water to follow each race down the course.

PRE-RACE

- At practice, the team will participate in securing all equipment to the trailer in preparation for travel.
- **Regatta Day begins the day before with a Pre-Race dinner (PRD).** PRD's achieve several things such as: team-bonding, proper athletic diet (carbohydrates), boat meetings and friendship. The PRDs take place at a designated location and everyone is expected to contribute to the pot-luck dinner.

REGATTA DAY

- **Regatta Days start early and end when the last race is finished (sun up to sun down). There is not a set timeframe for a regatta as many factors play a part in getting each event off in a safe manner such as a wind, rain, and other unforeseen circumstances.**
- **ALL rowers are required to stay throughout the entire regatta, which means till all equipment is secure for transportation.**
- **Coaches and Coxswains meeting** – At this meeting, all coaches and coxswains meet to review the rules and procedures of race days by the officials. **Coaches** will announce changes such as scratches (withdrawals), schedule changes, and medical issues of rowers. **Coxswains** will be given information on the course layout and instructions, rules, and guidelines of USRA.
- **Rowers** will meet at the trailer around 45 minutes to an hour to prepare the boats, stretch, and go over any last-minute instructions for the race (Coach's Pep Talk).
- **Launch Dock** – A **dock master** will complete a safety check of each boat for: bow balls, heel ties, and lane numbers. Once the boat is passed, the boats will be allowed to launch and head to the start line. From this point, there can be NO communication with the boats during the race from the coaches.
- **Start Line** – When the race event is called by the official to the start line, boats will approach in assigned lane order, stern first to the platform for person (Stake Boat Holder) to hold the boat in place.

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- **Alignment** – A licensed official will align request with the stake boat holder to move the boat forward or backward until all boats are in line.
- **Start** – The official starter holds a red flag high in the air and says “ATTENTION, GO!” as the flag drops. This is the start of the race and time watches will be started. Two (2) officials will be in launches and following behind the racing boats watching for safety issues, such as the rower’s health, boat collisions, equipment breakage, or any other distress issues.
- **Down the Course** – During this time, you could see a white flag being waived by the official on the water. This is a signal to the crew to move one way or the other to avoid collision. Occasionally, an official will use a red flag and siren immediately for a false start, broken equipment with the first 20 seconds or a major collision of several crews.
- **Finish Line** – A large orange flag will be raised once the finish line officials have the race in view. A horn will sound at each bow crossing and the flag will go up or down. Once all boats have crossed the finish line, the on-water officials will look for any distressed rowers and contact paramedics and the Head official if needed. The lead official of that event will give the time of first place to the finish line officials. The time for second place and there on will be determined by splits from the first boat crossing.

AFTER THE RACE

- Once boats are secured at the trailer site, rowers need to return to the team tent to re-hydrate and get necessary nourishment to refuel their body. This also means if a rower has an additional race, they should stay at the tent, rested out of the sun, and continue to hydrate themselves.
- After the last race, all rowers will be expected to clean up ten are and to return to the trailer to secure all of the equipment to the trailer in preparation for travel.

CREW CATERGORIES

- V8/V4 (Varsity 8 or 4) – fastest boat
- JV8/JV4 (Junior Varsity 8 or 4) – second fastest boat
- 3rd 8 – third fastest boat
- Freshmen – either an 8 or 4 boat of all 9th graders
- Novice – either an 8 or 4 boat of all first-year rowers in grades 9-12
- Senior 8 – a boat of all rowers who are a senior in high school and no older than 18 years, 9 months of age
- Junior – a boat of rowers under the age of 17 years, 9 months of age
- 4+ - a boat of four rowers and a coxswain
- 4x – a boat with four rowers sculling and no coxswain
- 2- - a boat with two rowers with one oar each and no coxswain
- 2x – also known as a double, two rowers each with two oars
- Single (1x) – an individual rower sculling

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COMMON REGATTA TERMS

(Source: USRowing)

Parts of a Boat/Equipment

- **Blade** – The end of the oar, often painted in a club's or country's colors. This part of the oar should be just beneath the surface when the rower is pulling the oar through the water.
- **Bow** – The front of the boat, which is behind the rowers while sitting in the boat. The bow crosses the finish line first.
- **Bow Ball** – A small white rubber ball attached to the bow designed to protect a rower in the event of a collision.
- **Cox Box** – A speaker system that runs through the boat with a microphone so the coxswain does not have to yell. The cox box also displays the crew's stroke rate, which is measured by a magnet under the stroke seat.
- **Ergometer** – An indoor torture device that best simulates the rowing motion without any of the pleasantness. The most common tool used for dry-land training is the Concept II, which uses a flywheel and digital readout showing your strokes per minute, power output, speed, and distance "travelled."
- **Foot Stretcher** – Where the rower places their feet in flexible shoes.
- **Port** – The right-hand side of the shell while sitting in the boat. Port side riggers and oars are indicated by red paint or tape.
- **Rigger** – An attachment to the gunwale to hold the oar in place as it rotates through the stroke. Modern shells use out-riggers that hold the oar away from the gunwale (upper edge of the side of the boat) and provide greater leverage than one would have in a fishing boat.
- **Rudder** – Steering device at the stern of the shell controlled through cables and ropes.
- **Shell** – The correct term for a rowing boat.
- **Slide** – The rower's seat that moves forward and backward on a track as the rower takes a stroke
- **Starboard** – The left-hand side of the shell while sitting in the boat. Starboard riggers and oars are indicated by green paint or tape.
- **Stakeboat** – A structure at the starting line of the race. The shell is "backed" into the starting gate. Once in the gates, a mechanism, or person lying on the starting gate, holds the stern of the shell.

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- **Stern** – The rear of the shell. While in the boat, rowers face the stern.

Coxswain Terms

- **“Backing”** – A backwards stroke used to turn a boat or back a boat into starting blocks. Coxswain will call for picking, touching, or any length of backwards strokes.
- **“Check it”** – A command sometimes used to get all oars on starboard or port to hold water, causing the boat to turn.
- **“Count down”** – The command the coxswain uses to confirm with each rower that they are ready to row. From bow to stern, each rower calls their number when they’re ready.
- **“Hold water”** – The command used to stop the boat quickly. Each rower squares their blade in the water, creating drag. Like putting on the brakes. Also known as “Kill the Run.”
- **“Let it run”** – The command used to have a crew stop rowing. Good crews will keep their blades in the air and let the boat coast to a stop.
- **“Swing it”** – A command used when carrying a boat to start turning either bow or stern.

Boat Terms

- **Bow Loader** – A shell with four rowers, each using one sweep oar, and a cox laying down in the bow.
- **Bowman** – The rower seated closest to the bow of the boat.
- **Coxswain (Cox)** – Member of the crew who sits stationary in the boat facing the bow. While the coxswain’s main job is to steer the shell with a tiny rudder, he or she also calls the race strategy and helps motivate the crew.
- **Double** – A boat with two rowers, where each one uses two sculling oars (sculls).
- **Eights** – A shell with eight rowers, each using one sweep oar, and a cox.
- **Hot Seat** – A rower or shell which will be in an upcoming event and has to be at the start line within 30 minutes.
- **Pair** – A shell with two rowers, each using one sweep oar. Steered with a rudder attached to a rower’s foot.
- **Scullers/Sculling** – Rowers who row with two oars each.
- **Single** – A shell with one rowing using two sculling oars (sculls).

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- **Stroke/Stroke Seat** – The rower sitting closest to the stern. The stroke sets the rhythm for the rest of the crew.
- **Sweep** – Boats in which the rowers each use a single sweep oar. A sweep oar is longer than a sculling oar and has a bigger blade.

On the Water/Stroke Cycle Terms

- **Body Angle** – Amount of forward lean of a rower's body from hips at the catch.
- **Broken Equipment** – Referred to when a fixed part of the racing shell breaks within the first 20 seconds of the race. A "jumped-seat" or a "crab" does NOT constitute broken equipment.
- **Catch** – The point in the stroke cycle at which the blade enters the water.
- **Crab** – A dastardly accident when a rower loses control of his or her oar. The blade gets trapped in the water by the momentum of the boat and the oar handle flies backwards either over the rower's head or striking the rower's chest. In extreme cases, the rower can be thrown from the boat. Known as "catching a crab".
- **Feathering** – The turning of the oar after the blade is extracted, making it parallel to the water.
- **Finish** – The last part of the drive in the stroke cycle. The point when the rower pulls the oar to the body with the arms and then extracts the blade from the water.
- **Jumped-Seat** – When the rower comes off the seat or the rower forces the seat out of the tracks with improper technique.
- **Lane Violation** – When a crew moves into another lane and impedes the crew from advancing. If this violation occurs, the official can change the order of finish.
- **Layback** – Amount of backward lean of a rower's body at the finish of the drive. Optimally 15°.
- **Leg Drive** – Power applied to the stroke, at the catch, by the force of driving the legs down. Often heard being yelled from the coach boat.
- **Making a Move** – A coxswain using a race strategy to move the boat up on the other crews.
- **Puddles** – "Footprints" in the water made by the oars. Little whirlpools.
- **Pull Through** – When the blade pulls through the water.
- **Rate** – Number of strokes per minute being rowed by the crew. This usually varies from 36 to 42 on the start, 32 to 38 during the body, and 34 to 40 at the finish. Smaller shells do not rate as high as eights.

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- **Recovery** - The phase of the stroke cycle from release to catch when the rower is moving towards the stern of the shell in preparation for the next stroke.
- **Release** - Part of the stroke cycle when the blade is extracted from the water.
- **Run** - The distance the shell moves during one stroke. Measured by looking for the distance between puddles made by the same oar.
- **Rushing the Slide** - When a crew or rower moves too quickly towards the catch after a rushed finish. Very bad yet very common technique that causes check in a boat.
- **Sprint** - The last 20 strokes at a high rating such as at the start.
- **Swing** - That hard-to-define feeling when perfect synchronization of motion occurs thus enhancing performance. When a crew "gels."
- **Washing Out** - When the blade comes out of the water early causing the blade to miss water. The blade should remain in the water from catch to release.