



Three Rivers Rowing Association
Junior Program Guide
2014-2015

Three Rivers Rowing Association; 300 Waterfront Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15222; 412-231-8772
www.threeriversrowing.org

One of Three Rivers Rowing Association's (TRRA) core missions is to provide the experience of rowing to the youth of Pittsburgh. Rowing provides our young residents many life-lessons, but it also connects these future leaders of our region to our rivers in a way no other sport can. The Three Rivers Rowing Association Juniors team is open to junior high and high school students in the Pittsburgh area who do not have rowing offered at their schools.

The program has had continuous growth and success in recent years. Although the program has a goal to continue to produce very competitive boats and rowers, it is also **a program that is open to everyone**. Every young person who is willing to learn and work hard can have a place on our team, and compete. We are proud to develop individuals and a team that is very respectful of the process of being a part of a team in the ultimate team sport.

The team consists of Novice Boys, Novice Girls, Varsity Boys and Varsity Girls. The Novices are rowers in their first year on the team, regardless of age or grade. The Varsity consists of team members past their first year. The Varsity and Novice teams are coached separately, and keep slightly different schedules for a variety of reasons.

JUNIOR COACHES 2014-2015:

VARSITY BOYS/GIRLS HEAD COACH:	Steve McCarthy Smccarthy12@gmail.com 412-979-2977
VARSITY BOYS/GIRLS COACH: *TRRA Executive Director & Program Director	Rick Brown rickbrown@threeriversrowing.org 412-735-0295
ASSISTANT COACH:	Jenn Grieb jenngrieb@threeriversrowing.org 740-334-0654
NOVICE COACH:	Catherine Wilcox Cgwilcox89@gmail.com 908-391-9023
NOVICE COACH:	Emilie Gross
VOLUNTEER TEAM DIETICIAN	Robin Brown Robinbrown898@yahoo.com 412-735-0296

TEAM PRACTICE SCHEDULE

Fall Practice Schedule

Novice Boys/Girls: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 4:00 to 6:30pm; Saturday 7:00 – 9:30am

Varsity Boys/Girls: Monday- Friday 4:00 to 6:30pm; Saturday 7:00 – 9:30am

Winter Training Schedule (January and February, indoors)

Full Team: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 4:00 to 6:00pm; Saturday time TBD

Spring Practice Schedule

Full Team: Monday - Friday 4:00 to 6:30pm; Saturday 7:00 – 9:30am

Parents are invited to attend a practice with advanced notice and coordination with coaches.

The coaches are not available to answer questions or confer with parents during practice times, but all of the coaches respond to e-mail very quickly. If you need to meet with a coach, it can be scheduled in advance.

HOW THE TEAM WORKS

***SAFETY:**

We need a completed swim test form before a rower can go out on the water.

The coaches carefully monitor the weather forecasts and the river conditions before every practice.

It is important that the rowers be prepared for inclement weather. We go on the river in many different weather conditions, and we constantly remind the rowers to pack warm clothing. Please remind them at home, also.

***PAYMENT**

Everyone is allowed to try the team for a week or two before making a commitment.

The fee for September - January is \$425. The fee for February – May is also \$425 (less a \$50 discount if you row during both). Payments are made through Regatta Central, which can be accessed through the TRRA website. Fees for races are additional – see the race schedule for details. In addition, each rower must purchase a uniform (about \$75). All other team spirit gear is optional.

There are scholarships available. We make it a goal to never turn anyone away due to financial need.

***VACATIONS:**

With the exception of Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks, rowing continues September through May. There is no Spring Break. Please keep this in mind as you plan your vacations. Remember that the success of your rowers in crew depends greatly on attendance.

***MISSING PRACTICE:**

Please encourage your athlete to communicate with the coaches in advance when missing a practice. A lot of planning goes into each practice, and the more notice we can have about absences the better.

If practice has to be canceled due to poor road conditions, you will be notified via e-mail.

***CONTRACTS**

Each member of the Varsity team will be expected to sign a “contract” with expectations for the year.

RACES

***LINE-UPS**

Decisions about who is in which boat for the races (“line-ups”) are often made at the last minute. Your rower can expect to find out a day or so before the race. If a rower wants to discuss line-up decisions, the rower should schedule a time to talk to a coach. If needed, a parent meeting can be arranged.

***RACE TRAVEL:**

Athletes ALWAYS travel TO races together in a combination of 12-passenger vans and coach buses. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this rule. Traveling to a race is part of the race preparation and it is very important that all members of the team participate in the team travel. We do allow athletes to leave a race (at the end of the day) with an adult as long as it is cleared by a coach. If an athlete is not traveling home with the team they are still responsible for staying and helping load the trailer at the end of the day. After the trailer is loaded and the team has met, the athlete may ask to be excused by a coach and released to the adult.

The vans are driven by parent volunteers/chaperones. Please look for volunteer sign-ups via e-mail before each race.

***RACE DAYS:**

TRJR Boosters sets up tents at Head of the Ohio and all of the out-of-town races. The tents provide shelter from the elements, as well as meals for the rowers and all of their families and supporters. Some of the races are in remote locations – you do not have to pack meals for your family. Your support of the Boosters has helped to provide our race day meals. Do bring a chair!

Your rower should get plenty of sleep leading up to races and should fuel and hydrate according to his or her coach’s instructions.

What to bring to races:

uniform	extra socks	change of clothes
water bottle	rain jacket	towel & blanket
warm jacket and/or sweatshirt	sunscreen	sunglasses & hat

Coaches are not readily accessible to the parents on race day. They are focused on the safety, organization and speed of the team. Logistical issues that arise can usually taken care of by the Boosters board members at the race. Coaches should be considered to be in “coach” mode for the duration of the racing day, and non-emergency issues should be dealt with after racing is over for the day.

THREE RIVERS JUNIORS BOOSTERS

The mission of the Three Rivers Rowing Association Juniors Boosters Organization is to provide financial and logistical support to the TRRA Juniors rowing program in its goal of teaching the sport of rowing and in fostering a lifelong dedication to physical fitness among Pittsburgh area youth.

Rowing demands a great deal of commitment, not just from junior rowers, but also from their parents. As a parent, you can support your rower by understanding both the day-to-day and the racing requirements that your rower must meet in order to succeed.

The best way for parents to learn and experience what it takes to succeed at the sport of rowing is to volunteer to participate in the Juniors Program's Boosters Organizations activities. From driving rowers to regattas to helping coordinate race food to raising funds, there are plenty of opportunities for parents to get involved and help their rowers to the finish line!

The Boosters Organization assists youth rowing in a variety of capacities. One important responsibility is fundraising. As boats and other equipment age, they wear out and must be replaced. This equipment can be very expensive; in fact, just one boat may cost in excess of \$30,000. The Boosters support our rowers by providing them with the tools and equipment they need to engage in the sport. The Boosters Organization also lends logistical support to rowers at races - making sure that they are fed and sheltered while they compete - and assists with transportation.

To find out more about volunteer opportunities, please contact the Boosters Board President, Laura Summers at laurellasummers@gmail.com

www.trrajuniorsboosters.org

OFFICERS:

President:	Laura Summers
Vice President:	Everett Petronick
Secretary:	Holly Merriman
Treasurer:	Holly Merriman

ABOUT THREE RIVERS ROWING ASSOCIATION

Three Rivers Rowing Association is a membership organization offering rowing, dragon boating and kayaking programs in the Pittsburgh region.

Founded in October 1984, TRRA grew into one of the largest community-based rowing and paddling clubs in the United States. From the beginning, its programs served people of all skill levels from a broad range of social and economic backgrounds, and participants range in age from teenagers to senior citizens. TRRA offers lessons for beginners in rowing, kayaking and dragon boating, and provides coached programs for more advanced rowers and paddlers.

Other offerings include a Corporate Rowing program for team-building purposes, a Diversity program to make rowing and paddling more accessible to the region's minority communities, a Masters rowing program for post-college adults, and Adaptive programs for persons with disabilities and the blind.

For more information about the history of Three Rivers Rowing Association and information about the youth and adults programs, please visit the TRRA website at www.threeriversrowing.org.

For information specific to the Three Rivers Juniors Rowing Program please visit the following link: www.threeriversrowing.org/r-trrayouth.html (this can also be accessed from the TRRA homepage)

GLOSSARY OF ROWING TERMS

Blade: The “business end” of the oar or the part of the oar that goes into the water.

Bow: The forward section of the boat, which is the first part of the boat to cross the finish line; or the person in the seat closest to the bow, who crosses the finish line first.

Bowball: A rubber ball attached to the point end of the bow to protect against unintentional impact. A very, very close race is often described as “winning by a bowball.”

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.

Catch: The point of the stroke where the blade enters and “catches” the water.

Catching a crab: This is how we describe when the oar blade gets stuck in the water during the stroke. Can cause the boat to slow dramatically and may even throw the rower from the boat.

Check: An unwanted motion of the boat when it appears to momentarily stop in the water.

Coxswain: Person who steers the shell and is the on-the-water coach for the crew.

Cox box: Now a generic name for a battery powered, small amplifier that allows the coxswain to communicate with the crew and also gives the coxswain stroke rate information.

Deck: The part of the shell at the bow and stern that is covered with fiberglass cloth or a thin plastic.

Eight: A shell with eight rowers and a coxswain. Symbol is 8+

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.

Feather: The motion of turning the blade parallel to the water during the stroke

Fin: An appendage in the stern of the boat that is used to keep the boat running straight in the water.

Gunwhale: The top edge of the hull.

Head race: Head races are typically held in the fall on courses that measure from 3000 to 6000 meters, and are raced for time. Boats are stagger-started and the boat with the fastest time wins.

Heavyweight: A rowing category where there is no maximum weight for either men or women.

International distance: 2,000 meters (approx.. 1 ¼ miles)

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.

Masters: Those rowers who are post-collegiate.

Novice: Designation assigned to rowers in their first year on the team, regardless of age or grade in school.

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.

Sculling: 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.

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.

Stroke rating: The number of strokes per minute. In a sprint race, usually between 34 and 38 strokes per minute.

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

A FEW BASICS OF ROWING

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.

Rowers are probably the world's best athletes. Rowing looks graceful, elegant, and sometimes effortless when it is done well. Don't be fooled. The sport demands endurance, strength, balance, mental discipline, and an ability to continue on when your body is demanding that you stop.

SWEEP and SCULLING: 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.

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 sculling boats and sweep boats without coxswains, a rower steers the boat by using a rudder moved with the foot.

CATEGORIES: Rowers are categorized by gender, 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 that are post-collegiate and older. There are two weight categories: lightweight and open weights.

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.

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.

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.

Measuring Speed: 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 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.

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 enter the water with little splash; and the boat with the most consistent speed. Lanes usually are numbered from left to right and from one to six when facing the starting line.

****HOW TO LOOK LIKE A ROWING EXPERT****

Don't call a crew a crew team. Since crew means a rowing team, that's tantamount to say *team team*.

Do not ask if the time of the race broke a record. The length of time it takes to row 2000 meters (the length of spring sprint races) for example varies widely from course to course and is significantly affected by wind speed and direction. Instead of record times, rowers speak of a good time or a bad time at a race. If the time announced for an *eight* is announced at 5:00 (that's five minutes), it suggests a strong tailwind out there on the course. Usually, varsity boys' times for 2000 meters are about 6 minutes, while varsity girls' times are about 7 minutes.

If you are standing around the course and you hear somebody announce *heads up*, you need to get out of the way of people carrying shells (boats) from place to place.

Single rowers are *scullers*, not *skullers*; they row a *scull*, not a skull.

Remember, the word *coxswain* is pronounced **cox-n**; the *sw* in the word is silent.

You may see the coxswain carried into the boat instead of wading in the water by him/herself. This is to keep the coxswain dry and warm for the race.

Frequently, after a win, the winning boat's coxswain is thrown into the water by the rest of the crew. This is a rowing tradition!