



Welcome to the St. Catharines Rowing Club (SCRC)!

We're excited to welcome you to one of Canada's most historic and accomplished rowing clubs. Whether you're new to the sport or looking to get more involved, this guide provides an introduction to rowing, our programs, and how you can be part of the SCRC community.

About the Club

Founded: 1903

Incorporated: 1977 (Not-for-Profit)

2025: Marks 122 years of continuous rowing!

Our Facilities include: Main Boathouse - 10 bays, built in 1966 & Workshop/Secondary Boathouse - Built in 1986, shared with Brock University and Ridley College.

Introduction to Rowing

What is Rowing?

Rowing is a water sport in which athletes race long, narrow boats—often called *shells*—using oars (never referred to as paddles).

There are two main styles of rowing:

- **Sculling:** Each rower uses two oars.
 - **Sweep Rowing:** Each rower uses one oar.
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Types of Boats

Rowing shells vary in size, from single-person boats to larger ones with eight rowers and a coxswain (also known as a *coxie*). All rowers sit on sliding seats that move along tracks, with adjustable footplates and built-in shoes.

Sculling Boats (each rower uses two oars):

- **1x (Single)** – 1 rower
- **2x (Double)** – 2 rowers
- **4x (Quad)** – 4 rowers
- **4x+ (Coxed Quad)** – 4 rowers and a coxswain (*the only sculling boat with a coxie*)

Sweep Boats (each rower uses one oar):

- **2- (Pair)** – 2 rowers, no coxie
- **4- (Four)** – 4 rowers, no coxie
- **4+ (Coxed Four)** – 4 rowers and a coxie
- **8+ (Eight)** – 8 rowers and a coxie





Rowing Equipment

Oars

Oars are secured in swivel oarlocks connected to *riggers*. Sweep oars are longer (12–13 feet) and heavier than sculling oars (9–10 feet).

Riggers

These are metal arms mounted to the boat, extending out to hold the oars in place.

Who's in the Boat?

Coxswain (Coxie)

- Present in 4+ and 8+ boats (sweep) and 4x+ (sculling).
- Only the coxie may speak during a race.
- Responsible for steering, strategy, motivation, and safety.
- May be male or female, and must meet minimum weight requirements (45 kg for under-19; 55 kg for others). Lighter coxies must carry additional weight.

The Crew

- Seats are numbered from **bow** (front of the boat) to **stroke** (last rower).
 - The **stroke** sets the rhythm for the boat; others match their pace.
 - In boats without a coxie, the **bow seat** gives commands and steers.
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Rowing Categories

Weight Classes

- **Lightweight Men:** ≤ 72 kg (159 lbs)
 - **Lightweight Women:** ≤ 59 kg (130 lbs)
 - **Open Weight:** No restriction
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Crew Selection Criteria

Selections are made by coaches and may be based on:

- Seat racing (comparing rowers in different boat combinations)
 - Ergometer test results (2,000m or 6,000m indoor rows)
 - Technical skill and fitness
 - Attitude and attendance
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Types of Races

Sprint Races

- Held in spring/summer
- Distance: 2,000 metres
- Typically 5–10 minutes long
- Races may have up to 6 boats per heat

Head Races

- Held in fall
 - Distance: 4,000–6,000 metres
 - Time trials with staggered starts
 - Can last 30 minutes and feature up to 80 boats
 - Famous example: **Head of the Charles** in Boston
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Race Start & Finish

Start

- Boats are aligned and held by boat holders
- The umpire conducts roll call, calls “ATTENTION,” then signals “GO” (via horn or flag)

Finish

- A horn sounds for each boat crossing
 - Photo-finish technology ensures accurate results
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Common Race Incidents

- **False Start:** Boat leaves early; race is restarted and penalties may apply
 - **Crab:** Oar gets stuck under water, possibly causing a stop
 - **Jump the Slide:** Rower slips off the seat
 - **Lane Violation:** Interfering with other boats
 - **Yellow Cards:** Issued for infractions like lateness or poor conduct; two cards = disqualification from the event
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Coaches & Umpires

Coaches

- Certified by Rowing Canada Aviron
- Ensure rower safety, equipment readiness, and crew development
- Make objective, performance-based decisions





Umpires

- Present at all regattas (in blue shirts)
 - Oversee race safety and fairness
 - Monitor starts, finishes, and course conduct
 - Licensed by Rowing Canada Aviron
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SCRC Programs

- **Youth Rowing Camp** (ages 10–15)
- **Junior Development** (Grade 7+)
- **Junior Competitive** (U17, U19)
- **Senior Competitive** (U23, Senior)
- **Masters Rowing** (ages 21 to 80+)
- **Rowing League** (Adult recreational)

View calendar: [SCRC Calendar](#)

Regatta Day – Parent Information

Before the Race

- Coaches will provide prep tips: hydrate, eat well, rest, and arrive early.

What to Bring

- Chair, sunscreen, rain gear, layers, snacks, water, binoculars, umbrella, bike (especially for Welland)

On-Site Etiquette

- Stay clear of boats and docks
 - Respect coaches' authority and space
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What to Watch During a Race

- Are all oars entering the water simultaneously?
 - Is the crew rowing in sync?
 - Is the boat gliding smoothly?
 - Are they leading the race?
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Rowing Terminology Guide

- **Bow:** Front of the boat
 - **Stern:** Rear of the boat
 - **Blade:** Painted part of the oar
 - **Catch:** When the oar enters the water
 - **Drive:** Power phase using legs, back, arms
 - **Finish/Release:** Blade exits the water
 - **Feathering:** Rotating the blade flat post-stroke
 - **Recovery:** Slide forward for next stroke
 - **Stroke Rate:** Strokes per minute
 - **Hard 10:** Command to give 10 powerful strokes
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Regatta Locations

- **Henley Island (St. Catharines)**
 - **Welland (South Niagara Rowing Club)**
 - **Buffalo (Westside Rowing Club)**
 - **Boston (Head of the Charles)**
 - **Philadelphia (Head of the Schuylkill)**
 - **Toronto (Dominion Day Regatta)**
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How to Get Involved

Volunteer or Sponsor

- **Dave Derry** – derry@vaxxine.com
- **Kate Hingston** – khingston@me.com
- **Louise Hastings** – muskoka@sympatico.ca

Financial Assistance

- Canadian Tire Jumpstart
 - Participaction
 - RBC Learn to Play
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Useful Resources

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| *Rowing Canada | *Row Ontario |
| *US Rowing | *CSSRA |
| *Regatta Central – website / app | *Regatta Masters - website |
| * St. Catharines Rowing Club Website | *Follow us on Facebook and Instagram |
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Thank you for supporting the St. Catharines Rowing Club and the sport of rowing!

