



PARENT HANDBOOK/BEGINNERS GUIDE TO ROWING

Welcome to Bainbridge Island Rowing. You are about to become involved with the only organized sports organization in Kitsap County that offers an equal participation opportunity for young people and adults together and a dynamic community organization that fosters the wide-ranging benefits of competitive and recreational rowing for all ages.

Rowing has a storied international history and a long tradition of building individual character and team cohesion like no other sport. It values hard work, commitment, team loyalty and goal-setting, and fosters trust and tight camaraderie between teammates. Rowing becomes a lifetime sport for many who have had the opportunity to be introduced to it as a high school student, and many more who were first introduced as adults and parents.

While both demanding and richly rewarding, rowing is also potentially confusing to those new to the sport. We hope this handbook will help both parents and rowers by providing essential information to familiarize you with the BIR programs and also the sport of rowing itself.

This document is a quick reference guide containing basic information and instant answers to the most commonly asked questions that occur throughout the rowing year.

For many, many more specific details about all the aspects of rowing and BIR, please go to the BIR website. It is BIR's central information hub, updated frequently throughout the season with information about fees, registration requirements, dates and deadlines, regattas, parties and more...

In the About Us Section:

- ✓ Coaches, Parent Leadership and Board Members (including contact information)
- ✓ BIR History & General Information

In the Programs Section:

- ✓ Policies, procedures and online help for registering + all the forms you could ever need
- ✓ Scholarships and application procedures
- ✓ Details of all rowing seasons and regatta schedules
- ✓ A full glossary and guidebook to continue your crash course in rowing

In the Stores Section:

- ✓ Team Uniforms & Race Gear (while the twice-yearly purchase window is open)
- ✓ Spiritwear (for you to be suitably attired when supporting BIR!)

Help is always waiting for you at <https://bainbridgerowing.org>

Overview Of A Rowing Season

The rowing year here in the Northwest extends from early or mid February through early November. Summer rowing season runs from June through August and is not only the shortest, least competitive season, but also a great time to start rowing and learn the basics. Summer ends with the Green Lake Summer Extravaganza, usually the first Saturday in August - a perfect time for a first competitive race.

Fall rowing season, September through November, is the long-distance training season for crews. Most fall races consist of long-distance "head races" (between 2.5 and 4 miles) and results are based on elapsed time, rather than head-to-head competition. Starts are staggered, with boats crossing the starting line one at a time, on a fixed interval, allowing many crews to compete simultaneously. The fall season culminates in races at the Head of the Snohomish (in Everett) and the Head of the Lake (at UW).

Winter training takes place indoors from November through January.

Spring rowing season runs from early February through June and is the most competitive season for juniors rowing. Races are sprints from 1,500 to 2,000 meters long, and boats race in lanes, up to six boats across. To accommodate all the competitors, heats are often necessary, with faster boats moving on to race in finals. There are various regattas during this season, which culminates with the NW Junior Regional Championships, usually held in Vancouver, Washington in May. This is a three-day regatta with a very high level of competition and all BIR Juniors are expected to participate. Winning varsity boats are invited to attend the U. S. Rowing Youth National championships held in Florida, Ohio, Tennessee, New Jersey or California in rotation.

Training

Rowers who participate in the program are expected to attend practice every day unless they have an urgent excuse or are ill. All athletes are expected to train seriously, build their fitness, improve their rowing skills, and work collaboratively with their teammates and coaches. Attendance at regattas is expected. Most importantly, with such a large team, it is vital that all rowers listen and follow the directions given by coaches and coxswain during practices. The coaches and Board of BIR wish this team to remain a no-cut sport, but we simply cannot run a safe program for more than 108 Junior rowers. We encourage rowers who do not make the team to work on fitness levels, particularly erging, and to try again the following season. We will provide workout suggestions upon request.

Expectations from Coaches

Participation and commitment at practice directly contributes to the entire team's success. Seat assignments are set up in advance of each practice -- so, if you don't show up, you affect the entire boat. If you have a conflict and need an excused absence, contact your coach, preferably 24 hours in advance. Rowers should check in at the boatyard by pegging-in on the attendance/ boating by 3:30 p.m. or they will be considered absent. Late rowers may not be boated and assigned a land workout.

What to Expect at Practice

During the spring and fall seasons, practices run Monday through Friday from 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the BIR boatyard at Waterfront Park. Additional summer practices may also run Monday through Thursday between 6:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.

Bainbridge High School students walk, bicycle, or informally carpool to the boatyard. Rowers' rides home after practice should be waiting for them promptly at 6:00 p.m., or families should arrange for a late pickup location such as the entry to Town and Country Market.

Most practices consist of land conditioning (running on sidewalks near downtown Winslow, rowing on ergs, or doing calisthenics and light weights) and rowing on Eagle Harbor. Rowers carry shells from the boatyard and launch from the beach between the City dock and Queen City Yacht Club dock. At the end of practice, the rower is ready to leave only after the rowing shells and other equipment are rinsed and put away as directed.

To every practice, be sure to bring:

- Appropriate clothing (details below)
- Running shoes
- Water shoes
- Filled water bottle

Remember -- “ABC: Anything But Cotton”! The best clothing for rowing and land workouts is soft, stretchy, and fairly form-fitting. Polypro, CoolMax, and other synthetic fabrics are best because they keep the rower relatively warm, even when wet and they dry quickly. Loose clothing can get caught in the slides, so avoid basketball style shorts or warm-ups. Form-fitting material such as Spandex shorts work best. Bike-style lycra shorts, without the padding, for instance, can be found at most sporting good stores.

Running shoes and socks are needed every day for land workouts. Good running shoes are essential and should be replaced after every 300 or 400 miles of use. The website at www.jlracing.com may be helpful to you when purchasing practice clothing for your rower. The on-line store (when open) on the BIR website also offers basic black practice shorts, as well as a splash jacket, long-sleeved tech shirt, and baseball cap in team colors.

In the early spring and late fall, a fleece or wool stocking-style hat should be brought to every practice. Layers are very important to keep muscles warm.

Water shoes are essential for all rowers because boats are walked into Eagle Harbor. Shells and broken glass along the muddy shoreline are hazards, and the water is very cold all year. Neoprene (5mm without straps) ankle booties are best, but crocs, teva style sandals and other water shoes work well too. Flip-flop style sandals often fall off or break, so they are not recommended.

Nutrition

Rowing is a demanding sport, and the athletes will be burning many calories over the course of a workout. You should be encouraging your athlete to carry a water bottle and drink lots of water during the day, as well as to eat a good lunch. Most athletes bring a healthy snack -- fruit or an energy bar -- to eat between school and practice. At dinnertime, dinners should include protein, fat, and carbohydrates. The energy systems that the athletes use require that they have water and carbs to generate the energy they need during a workout.

Uniform Requirements

For the spring regattas, all rowers must have either a team unisuit or a team tank and “rowing trou” shorts. A long sleeved racing shirt is highly recommended. Official team uniform orders are placed at the beginning of the fall and spring seasons (check website and Facebook groups for updates). During the summer and fall seasons, most Varsity rowers race in their team unis, but novices may race in a team t-shirt, allowing them a chance to try competing before spending money on full uniforms. Please help your rower to see that all belongings are labeled, especially uniforms, so that they may be easily returned if lost.

The Varsity and Novice Teams

BIR is committed to supporting the athletic development of all youth rowers. Kitsap County High school rowing is growing in popularity by leaps and bounds. Bainbridge Island Rowing would ideally like to include every student in our Junior program, but we are sometimes challenged to accommodate the growing interest in rowing with the limitations of our equipment, facilities and coaching staff, as well as safety considerations on our busy waterway. The creation of the Stan Pocock Legacy Rowing Center is, in part, a direct effort to remove our current size restrictions and make rowing a true no-cut sport.

In the meantime, the Junior rowing program at BIR is capped at a maximum of 120 high school athletes. Participation is ideally 30-32 Varsity-level boys, 30-32 Varsity-level girls, 20-22 Novice-level boys, and 20-22 Novice-level girls.

Should registration exceed these participation levels, coaches will make decisions on team members during the first two weeks of practice, announcing the selected rowers via e-mail. Selections will be based on some or all of the following criteria:

- Raw and/or weight adjusted ergometer scores (20 minutes for the Fall season, 2000 meters for the Spring season),
- Running times (2.5 miles in the fall, 1 mile in the spring),
- Technical ability in the boat,
- Seat racing in the Varsity program,
- Strength to size ratio,
- Coxing ability/temperament/capacity to project voice and authority,

- Body size (a balance of larger and smaller body sizes is needed to have the right proportion of rowers -- open weight and lightweight in the Varsity program -- and coxswains), and
- Positive attitude, sportsmanship and general cooperative can-do spirit.

We encourage returning rowers to train on Concept II ergometers, and all interested athletes to run on a regular basis. Though great rowers are not necessarily fast runners, running is an important training tool and a good indication of fitness level. All athletes should be developing core strength as well.

Resolution Procedure

Bainbridge Island Rowing supports open and honest communication between the Director of Rowing and all rowers, coaches, and parents.

If a problem should arise during the season, the following procedure is to be followed in this order:

1. The **rower** approaches the **coach** and discusses the problem.
If this does not remedy the situation, then:
2. The **rower, coach, and Athletic Director** will discuss the issue.
If the matter is still unresolved, then:
3. The **rower, coach, Athletic Director, and parent** will meet.
As a final step:
4. The **Athletic Director** will contact the **BIR Board of Directors**.

Resolution Procedure Regarding Boat Lineups:

Any concerns having to do with boat lineups are matters for discussion between the athlete and his/her coach(es) only. Neither parents nor the Athletic Director nor any other BIR member will be involved in these discussions.

Illness/Injury:

Top priority is placed on the health and well being of each athlete. **If an athlete is ill or injured in the days or weeks leading up to a regatta, participation in that regatta must be confirmed with the coach beforehand.** For some regattas, race lineups are submitted weeks before the regatta and require significant planning. In the case of some illnesses or injuries, a physician's permission may be required before the athlete returns to the sport.

Regattas

Regatta schedules are posted on the website and communicated by the coaches and via facebook groups and/or e-mail. Athletes are expected to be at every race or regatta. Please contact your coach in the two weeks that precede a regatta if you have a conflict. Realize that if a rower suddenly drops out of a competition, he/she may pull up to 8 other teammates from a race.

Expect the day of a regatta to start early, often leaving on the first (5:20 a.m.) ferry. Upon arrival at the regatta site, there is usually much work to be done – while rowers unload the boats from the trailers, the parents set up our camp and kitchen. The number of races that each rower competes in varies, usually between one and three. Team members and parents are encouraged to cheer for every race in which any BIR boat competes.

As a parent, you may find it helpful to bring a book, binoculars, folding chair, and warm clothes.

Rowers are expected to stay at the regatta until all team members have competed, boats are loaded on the trailer, and the coach dismisses the team. Upon returning to Bainbridge, the team will immediately meet at the BIR boatyard to unload boats from the trailer.

For every regatta, please make sure your rower has the following items:

- Uniform for racing
- Running and water shoes
- Water bottle
- Warm clothing (including hat and raingear)
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Ferry and gas money
- Homework/folding chair

Transportation to regattas: Parent volunteers typically carpool the team to regattas. Rowers are not allowed to drive themselves to regattas -- ever.

Blister Care

Let's end with the three rules of something that is an inescapable part of learning how to row...

Let Blisters Heal Naturally: Blisters can occur when you damage your skin while rowing. Repeated friction across the palms from the oars commonly causes blisters to form along the areas of contact. If the blister doesn't affect your rowing, leave it alone. Leaving the blister intact prevents infections from entering the skin, and the clear liquid inside the blister pads the area. Plan on a week to 10 days without blister treatment before your body reabsorbs the fluid inside the blister. You may want to apply moleskin or use gauze padding to cover the blisters with a cushion. If you experience other symptoms, such as fever, or if you feel unwell, call your doctor.

Drain a Painful Blister: When you row, the oar may exert too much pressure on your blister. Drain any painful blisters or blisters that restrict your rowing. Wash your hands with antibacterial soap before puncturing your blister. Disinfect a small needle by heating it until it turns red and allowing it to cool or by soaking it in rubbing alcohol for three minutes. Carefully push the needle into the blister as close to your skin as possible, but don't rip your skin. You may need to soak rough areas first to allow the needle to penetrate the blister without difficulty. Most blisters release a clear liquid, but blood blisters release blood. Gently apply pressure to the top of the blister until the bubble is empty. Never drain burn blisters.

Protecting Open Blisters: Once you drain a blister, protect the exposed skin from germs. If you ripped the skin, trim the excess skin from the blister with a pair of sterilized scissors or nail clippers. Apply an antibiotic cream to the area, and then cover the blister. Unless the bandage comes loose or gets wet, you need only change it once daily. You may find blisters heal more quickly if you expose them to air when you aren't rowing or putting pressure on the area. Some people advocate making a tent in the bandage to allow air to reach the area. Keep an eye on the blister and notify your doctor if you notice any red streaks or pus.

Still Hungry for more? Start with our Rowing 101 at:

<https://bainbridgerowing.org/bir-rowing-101>