

# General Rowing Terminology

## Boat Types:

**Sweep Boats:** Shells where each rower uses only one oar.

**Pair:** 2-person shell, some pairs may have a coxswain.

**Four:** 4-person shell. These boats may or may not have a coxswain.

**Eight:** 8-person shell. The crew of an 8 consists of 9 people, 8 rowers and 1 coxswain.

**Sculling Boats:** Shells where each rower uses 2 oars (called sculls).

**Single:** 1-person sculling shell.

**Double:** 2-person sculling shell with no coxswain.

**Quad:** 4-person sculling shell, usually without a coxswain.

**Straight Boat:** Shells without a coxswain.

**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. Many *fours* are designed as bow-coxed boats.

## Boat Equipment:

**Bow:** The forward section of the boat that crosses the finish line first. It is also the person in the seat closest to the bow.

**Bow Ball:** The ball right on the very tip of the bow.

**Coxswain (“Cox’n”):** Person who steers the shell and is the on-the-water coach for the crew.

**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.

**Gunwale (“Gunnel”):** The top edge of a boat's side walls.

**Oarlock:** The “U” shaped frame, which holds the oar on the rigger.

**Port:** Left side of the boat, while facing forward, in the direction of the movement.

**Rigger:** The triangular shaped metal device that is bolted onto the side of the boat and holds the oarlocks and oars.

**Rudder:** a small, square plate (attached to the skeg) that can swing right or left. It is used by the coxswain to steer the boat.

**Shell/Hull:** The boat.

**Skeg:** A small, fiberglass blade projecting from the shell near the stern. It helps keep the shell moving in a straight line.

**Slide/Track:** The set of runners for the wheels of each seat in the boat.

**Sling:** Wood or metal frame with a fabric strap support, which holds the shells.

**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.

**Stroke:** The rower who sits closest to the stern. The stroke sets the rhythm for the boat; other rowers must follow their cadence.

#### *Oar Equipment:*

**Blade:** The flat end of the oar.

**Collar:** The plastic fitting around the oar, which prevents the oar from sliding through the oarlock.

**Shaft:** The portion of the oar between the blade and the handle.

#### *Technical Terms:*

**Catch:** The first part of the stroke right when the blade enters the water.

**Crab:** Getting the oar stuck in the water at the end of the drive is called “catching a crab”. This may happen as a result of the oar being too deep during the pull-through or because the blade is not completely squared up when it enters the water.

**Drive:** The part of the rowing stroke when the oar is moving through the water “driving” the boat forward.

**Feather:** The act of turning the oar blade parallel to the water’s surface as it is released from the water. Feathering is used to help set the boat and to cut down on wind resistance on the oar.

**Handle Heights:** How high or low the rower holds the oar relative to the gunnel. Ideally, everyone should have the same handle height in order to maintain the set of the boat.

**Inside Hand:** The hand closest to the oarlock. This hand is responsible for feathering the blade.

**Lateral Pressure:** The idea is to keep the collar of the oar solidly against the oarlock throughout the stroke by exerting a slight outward pressure on the oar handle.

**Layback:** The backward swing of your body from the hips at the release of the stroke.

**Outside Hand:** The hand closest to the end of the oar. This hand controls the motion of the oar handle.

**Rating:** The number of strokes per minute.

**Recovery:** The portion of the stroke where the oar is out of the water.

**Release/Finish:** The act of removing the blade from the water at the end of the drive.

**Roll-Up/Square-Up:** The motion of the blade changing from feathered (flat) to perpendicular on the recovery in preparation for the catch.

**Run:** The run is the distance the shell moves during one stroke. You can see it by looking for the distance between the puddles made by the same oar.

**Seat:** The moving seat where rowers sit. Each seat is numbered from the bow seat (1).

**Set:** The side-to-side balance of a shell. A shell is said to be “down to port” when the port side is lower than the starboard side. The opposite is said when the shell is “down to starboard”.

**Skying:** When the rowers hands dip down at the catch causing the blade to raise too high off the water right as it should be entering the water.

**Slide Control:** The ability to control the speed of the seat rolling towards the stern on the recovery. This is a very important concept when trying to maximize the efficiency of the rowing stroke.

**Suspension:** The act of hanging off the oar handle during the drive phase of the stroke. It is achieved as your legs push against the footstretchers and the arms and back pull on the oar handle.

**Swing:** The feeling when near-perfect synchronization of motion occurs in the shell by all rowers, enhancing the performance and speed.

**Washing-Out:** When the blade comes out of the water prematurely on the pull-through (drive).

Rowing Commands:

**Back it:** To propel the shell backwards by turning the concave side of the blade towards the bow of the shell and pushing the handle away.

**Check it down / Hold water:** The crew squares their blades and slowly drags them into the water. Used to slow down/or stop the boat.

**Count Down from bow:** The crew counts aloud from bow signifying their readiness.

**Hands-On:** Each rower grabs the boat on the gunnels to be ready to lift it on the coxswain's call.

**Let It Run:** Stop rowing and let the boat glide, oars off the water.

**Paddle:** Light pressure, easy rowing.

**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.

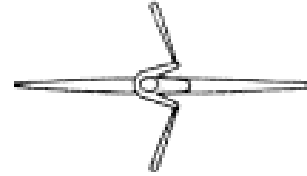
**Ready...Row:** This means, "GO" in rowing lingo.

**Sit Ready:** This means to get ready to row. **Sit ready at the catch** means blades should be buried completely in the water at the catch ready to begin the drive. **Sit ready at the release** means blades are flat on the water at the release.

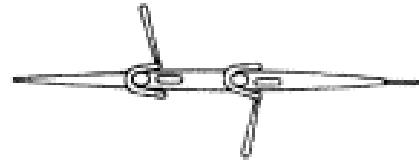
**Way Enough (Way 'nuff):** Stop rowing immediately.

## Most Common Boating Arrangements:

SINGLE (1x) One rower with 2 oars,  
no coxswain.



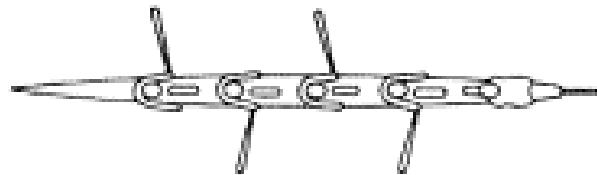
PAIR (2-) Two rowers each with one oar,  
no coxswain.



DOUBLE (2x) Two rowers each with two oars,  
no coxswain.



FOUR (4+) Four rowers each with one oar,  
with coxswain



QUAD (4x) Four rowers each with two oars,  
no coxswain



EIGHT (8+) Eight rowers each with one oar,  
with coxswain

