



Parent / Rower Handbook

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Welcome

Welcome to Black Swamp Rowing, also referred to as BSR. The purpose of this handbook is to provide all rowers, parents, and/or guardian, with information regarding the club and the sport of rowing. It provides a description of what the rowers and parents/guardians can expect and what is expected of them. Please keep this handbook in a safe place as it provides a great deal of important information that we hope you will refer to often. Supplements will be provided as needed.

Black Swamp Rowing Executive Board

President: Brian Schmidt

Vice President: Bryan Agosti

Secretary: Kristi Frederick

Treasurer: Jenni Williams

Parent Liaison/Fundraiser: Alison Pierce

What Is Crew?

- The name for the sport of rowing within a club setting
- A physically and mentally challenging sport
- Works all muscle groups
- Requires endurance and strength
- Emphasizes teamwork and communication
- A major time commitment
- Financial commitment
- Practice is required 5-6 days per week.
- Regattas (races) are held each weekend of the season.
- 5 to 7 regattas per rowing season and is up to the Coach's discretion
- Regatta venues are lakes, rivers and reservoirs in- and out-of-state.
- Some overnight travel is possible.
- 2 rowing seasons (fall and spring) and 2 conditioning seasons (summer and winter)
- Winter and summer conditioning are optional but encouraged
- Rowers may participate in other sports during the off-season and/or row only one of the seasons
- Fundraising is ESSENTIAL: Racing shells cost from \$22,000 (4+ boats) to \$44,000 (8+ boats) each. Oars cost approximately \$330 each. Cox boxes and head microphones cost over \$600 each.

About Black Swamp Rowing

- BSR is a self-supporting club established in Spring, 2015
- Trevor Jones, BSR Coach, is a member of the Toledo Sailing Club (TSC) where the team practices
- BSR is recognized by U.S Rowing
- Team communication will be via email, text, and Remind App
- Rowers and Parents/Guardians are expected to participate in fundraising and community service activities

- Parents/Guardians are expected to pay seasonal dues for their rower by the designated deadlines.
- **BSR dues cover a portion of the following:**
 - Toledo Sailing Club dues
 - US Rowing Dues
 - Insurance for equipment and the club
 - Boat maintenance and storage
 - Regatta entry fees
 - Coach travel expenses (pulling of trailer, gas, etc.)
 - Due to insurance liability and regatta eligibility, no rower shall be allowed on the water until dues are paid or a payment plan has been established
- Our current contract with Toledo Sailing Club states the team has a limit of 24 rowers plus coxswains on site. If we exceed this number, we may have tryouts/cuts to stay within our contract limits.
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for their child's transportation to and from practice and regattas
- Carpool arrangements are encouraged and will need to be made by rowers and parents/guardians
- Rowers may drive to practices, but they may **NOT** drive to regattas without an adult present.
- Parents need to let the coach do the coaching. The coach will decide practice schedules and regatta lineups
- Contact a board member with any questions or concerns
- Parents will make their own hotel reservations and heed deadline for reservations of blocked rooms
- BSR has several important documents, including, but not limited to:
 - Club Bylaws
 - Parent / Rower Handbook
 - OHSAA Sports Physical Form
 - Rower Code of Conduct
 - Liability Waiver
 - Emergency Medical Form
 - Parent Contact List
 - Regatta Schedule

Important websites:

- Black Swamp Rowing – www.blackswamprowing.net
- Regatta Central Website - <http://www.regattacentral.com>
- US Rowing - <http://www.usrowing.org>
- HereNOW - <https://www.herenow.com/results/#/races>
- FaceBook - <https://www.facebook.com/blackswamprowing/>
- Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/blackswamprowin/?hl=en>
- Twitter - <https://twitter.com/BlackSwampRowin>

Parent/Rower Responsibilities

- Register online for US Rowing membership - you will be notified when and how via email.
- Abide by the Rower Code of Conduct
- Practice 5-6 days a week at Toledo Sailing Club
- Practice times are at the Head Coach's discretion and subject to change depending on the size and needs of the team
- Maintain their uniforms
- Be punctual to practices and regattas
- Assist in de-rigging loading the boats/equipment the day before regattas and at the end of regattas/assist in unloading and rigging the boats when the team returns home from regattas either the same day or the following day
- Pre-regatta preparation is needed prior to putting boats in the water
- Arrival time is determined by the Head Coach prior to each regatta
- Complete and submit all required forms/paperwork by the designated deadlines:
 - Emergency Medical Form
 - OHSAA annual sports physical to be kept on file
 - Rower contact information
 - Athletic Code of Conduct
 - Liability Waiver
 - Swim Test Certificate
 - Some regattas require an additional waiver to be completed prior to the event
- Pay all fees as scheduled. Payment plans are available
 - Failure to adhere to payment schedules will result in a late fee. A **\$50 late fee** will be assessed to dues after a 5 day grace period from the due date.
 - If the family opts for the 3 payment plan without speaking to a board member to determine a different payment plan option, a \$50 fee will be assessed for EACH late payment
 - If the family opts for the 1 payment plan without speaking to a board member to determine a different payment plan option, a \$50 fee will be assessed
 - Dues will be reviewed each season and may vary based on the overhead costs for that season and will be communicated by the board at the parent/rower kick off meeting before the start of each season
 - **Payment schedule for Fall Season**
 - 1 payment option – August 1
 - 2 payment option (*New Rowers Only*) – September 1, October 1
 - 3 payment option – August 1, September 1, October 1
 - **Payment schedule for Spring Season**
 - 1 payment option – February 1
 - 2 payment option (*New Rowers Only*) – March 1, April 1
 - 3 payment option – February 1, March 1, April 1
- Arrange for transportation to regattas and practices. Rowers CANNOT drive themselves to Regattas
- Fundraise and participate in community service events

- Attend monthly meetings or meetings as scheduled if not monthly
- Parents/Guardians meet when meetings are scheduled
- Support the disciplinary efforts of the coaches and officials
- Come dressed to for the weather. Any rower that is not dressed appropriately for the weather will be sent home especially during cold weather months

Rower Expectations

- Personal
 - Lead by example in appearance and behavior at all times
 - Be an example of dedication and positive work ethic
 - Exhibit positive sportsmanship and character
 - Work to your ability in the classroom
 - Be a positive example in class, in school, and our community
 - Be chemically free
 - Be willing to stay after practice to work on little things
- Toward your Teammates
 - Encourage positive practice intensity and enthusiasm
 - Accept all team members and help make BSR a positive team experience
 - Support and show interest in BSR novice teammates
 - Maintain morale and team spirit
 - Communicate any concerns, ideas, or problems to the Board Members
 - Be supportive and respectful of the coaching staff.
 - Be respectful in the community
 - **Try to recruit whenever you can**
 - Be dependable and prompt for practice
 - Help set a positive and enthusiastic atmosphere at practice
 - Help set the standard of great intensity and competitiveness
- Regatta Expectations
 - Be dependable and prompt for regattas
 - Have a positive pre-regatta atmosphere and promote and cheer for teammates
 - Help set an intense and enthusiastic atmosphere during the regatta
 - Display good sportsmanship during and after the regatta

BSR Fundraising and Community Service

- Organize fundraising events in which all rowers must participate unless there is a need for limited number of rowers
- Coordinate the organized solicitation of private and corporate donations
- Submit suggested fundraising and community service activities to the BSR Board for prior approval
- Seek out grants for which BSR is eligible
- Seek out corporate and private sponsorships
- All rowers will expected to fundraise throughout the year. If there is a need to opt out of fundraising as a parent, please speak to one of the board members.

Regatta Information

A regatta is an organized series of boat races. They are usually named for the town or venue where the event takes place. There are three basic types of races in rowing:

- **Head Races:** typically held in the fall on a 3000 – 6000 meter racecourse and are raced for time. The boats are stagger-started and the boat with the fastest time is the winner. The courses often have turns and bends and take 15 – 25 minutes to complete.
- **Indoor Races:** are usually held during the winter and are on rowing machines called ergometers (ergs). At an indoor race, multiple ergs are set up side-by-side and rowers race for the fastest time for 2000 meters.
- **Sprint Races:** are usually held in the spring. These races are 2000 meters, but the boats line up side-by-side in lanes. A specified number of boats from each heat will move on to finals.

BSR attends 5 – 7 regattas each season on various lakes and rivers. Most regatta locations are in, but not limited to IN, MI, PA, OH, and TN. The regatta schedule is decided on by the Coach. It is recommended that you verify directions, travel time and parking ahead of time. All regatta information is located at www.regattacentral.com.

What To Expect At Regattas:

- **Arrival:** Some families will stay in a hotel the night before the regatta, while others will get up early and drive in the morning. Some might “follow-along” in a caravan and some might carpool. One parent or an entire family may attend. If you are not able to attend, please make arrangements with another parent to transport your rower to and from the regatta. Rowers may not drive to out-of-town regattas. Keep in mind that your rower must be at the regatta on time
- **Day of:** We arrive at the regatta site between 6 and 7am, when it is usually dark and the grass is still wet. Rowers will unload boats and get ready for racing. Races usually start around 8 am, and boats launch 45-60 minutes prior to the official start of each race. There are usually T-shirts, food and other items for sale. We usually watch and cheer for the team in a centralized location.
- We are a team, which means all rowers will stay at the regatta until our last boat is on the trailer.
- **Weather:** can vary greatly throughout the day, so dress in layers and remember rain gear and sunscreen.
- **Parking:** varies by venue, be prepared to ride a shuttle bus and carry your belongings. (Be prepared but pack light.)

What to Bring to Regattas:

Rowers:

- Uniform (with name written in all pieces)
- Complete change of clothes, including extra shoes
- Lightweight jacket or winter coat depending on weather
- Extra socks (several pairs, preferably dark-colored, as they will get dirty)
- Rain gear and boots

- Sunscreen, lip balm
- Cold Gear: Gloves/mittens, hat, Sweatshirt/Sweatpants, Blanket and pillow
- Spending money (kept in a secure, safe place)
- Plastic bag to keep wet clothes in
- A duffle bag to keep all your stuff together
- Healthy Snacks and water

Parents / Guardians:

- Rain gear and umbrellas
- Camping chairs
- Cold Gear: Blankets, warm clothing, and waterproof footwear
- Binoculars and/or Cameras
- Food and non-alcoholic beverages for your family and your rower (breakfast, lunch, snacks)
- Wagon for carrying all of the above

The Role of the Coach

Head Coach - Trevor Jones

- **Safety**
 - The safety of the rowers is every coach's primary concern and responsibility
 - Coaches will learn and consistently abide by the safety and weather policies of The United States Coast Guard and US Rowing
 - Coaches will be aware of the weather and environmental conditions on the water and will not put rowers in situations where they are subject to injury. Potential safety hazards include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Weather
 - Temperatures
 - Supervision of rowers on the water before, during and after practices
 - Rowers' and coxswains' skill levels
 - Condition of launch boats and safety equipment
 - Coaches will ensure safety equipment in launches is complete and rowing shells are properly equipped by:
 - Periodically examining equipment and making sure that routine maintenance is completed
 - Making recommendations when equipment needs to be repaired or replaced
 - Presenting formal requests for additional equipment, and relevant information as needed, at board meetings for a vote by the majority of board members present
 - Coaches will teach rowers proper rowing, transport and erg technique to avoid injuries
- **Competitiveness**
 - The coaches' goal is to configure fast, competitive boats.
 - The coaches will set high standards and hold rowers accountable for performance and behavior
 - Due to the competitiveness of this sport, being cut from the team is a possibility.
- **Fairness and impartiality**

- Coaches will make rowers' boat assignments based on several factors, including, but not limited to:
 - Erg testing
 - Seat racing
 - Technical skill evaluation
 - Practice attendance
- Coaches will assign coxswains based on several factors, including, but not limited to:
 - Ability to motivate and encourage a crew
 - Ability to make good decisions that keep his or her rowers and equipment safe
 - Level of knowledge of rowing
 - Ability to convey to the crew the important aspects of drills and techniques
- **Time Management**
 - Coaches will do their best to start and finish practice on time
 - They will come to practice with a specific plan for the day and a general plan for the week and month
- **Communication**
 - Coaches will maintain open lines of communication with Rowers, Parents/ Guardians, other coaches and the BSR Executive Board. In situations of concern or conflict, the lines of communication should start with the Executive Board and Parents / Guardians and not directly between the Coach and Parents / Guardians
- **Coach will:**
 - Know, abide by and enforce all USRA and USCG safety rules and guidelines.
 - Educate and inform rowers regarding the above guidelines.
 - Verify that rowers have passed the swim/float test before allowing them out on the water
 - Ensure rowers follow all safety rules when on and off the water.
 - Forward any inappropriate electronic communication from rowers to the rowers' parents and the Executive Board, if deemed necessary.
 - Establish and enforce guidelines regarding:
 - Punctuality
 - Attendance
 - Attitude
 - Land training
 - Water training
- **Regatta Participation**
 - Post regatta lineups no later than the Thursday prior to the event.
 - Attend all Coach and Coxswain Meetings prior to regattas as required.
 - Make sure that rigging and de-rigging procedures and times are known in advance and coordinated with all participating teams.
 - Report potential hazards to the appropriate authorities.
 - Help rowers set and achieve challenging, yet realistic short- and long-term goals for themselves.
 - Encourage healthy eating and sleeping habits to maximize health and athletic performance.
 - Promote team spirit, cohesion, and enthusiasm
 - Ask for help when and if needed

BSR Weather Policy

The Head Coach will consult the weather forecast that is headed toward Toledo, check air and water conditions on the Maumee River website and confer with the Board as needed. The Head Coach will make the determination if practice will continue as scheduled and communicate any change in a regular practice to the rowers and their families via text message

- **Tornado Warning** – In the event of a Tornado Warning, all practice is cancelled. If rowers are at the Toledo Sailing Club when a Tornado Warning is declared, rowers will seek shelter inside the Toledo Sailing Club. Parents will need to notify the coach in order for them to be released from the Toledo Sailing Club.
- **Thunderstorm or Tornado Watch** – In the event of a Thunderstorm or Tornado Watch, practice will continue as planned. Be advised that this could change at any moment according to the weather.
- **Thunderstorm Warning** – In the event of a Thunderstorm Warning, no boats will be on the water. It will be at the discretion of the individual parents/guardians and / or coach to proceed to the Toledo Sailing Club for conditioning. Rowers who choose not to go to the Toledo Sailing Club must inform the coach by cell phone so all rowers are accounted for.
- **Lightning or Thunder** – In the event that lightning is spotted or thunder is heard at the Toledo Sailing Club, all boats will immediately proceed back to the sailing club. Boats will remain off the water and rowers will remain inside the sailing club for a period of 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is spotted.
- **Air Temperature** - The team will not practice on water if the temperature drops below 35 degrees.
- Water conditions will dictate if the team goes out on the water to practice.
- “Watch” means conditions are favorable and “Warning” means a tornado or severe thunderstorm has been observed by spotters or indicated on radar and is occurring in the warning area.

Issue Resolution Policy

- Rowers should address any concerns regarding practices, teammates, boat assignments with the Coach. If the issue is not resolved or the rower does not feel comfortable talking to the Coach, the rower may address the issue with the Board. All Board members will discuss the issue to determine a solution. The Board will address issues with the coach if/when it is deemed appropriate.
- **Parents should bring any issues to the Board and not to the coach directly.** All Board members will discuss the issue to determine a solution. A meeting will be scheduled in a private/neutral location with the Board and Parent Liaison and will address any parent issues with Coach if/when it is deemed appropriate. The Board’s responsibility is to act as a liaison between the coach and the parents.
- Issues should never be discussed in front of the rowers, at practice or at the Toledo Sailing Club. The Board will be responsible for scheduling meetings in a private/neutral location.

- The Board's first responsibility is to the BSR club and to determine what is best for the club. The Board's priority is to protect its members, coaches, rowers, finances, equipment and relationship with the Toledo Sailing Club.
- Should any parent or rower not adhere to the policies of the club, the rower will be put on probation. If there is a second circumstance of non-adherence, the rower will be removed from the team.

The Sport of Rowing

At first impression, rowing appears to be a simple activity. With experienced crews, the boat moves smoothly and quickly through the water, known as swing. There is a rhythmic cadence of motion as the rowers lean forward for the catch, drive through the stroke, recover, and then repeat the pattern. The coxswain steers and calls out instructions to keep the boat on track and preferably ahead of any competitors. The same basic motions are also used by novice rowers, but with subtle, and occasionally not so subtle, differences. To the careful observer, the novice boat may wobble more from side to side, its rowers' strokes may not be as synchronized, the blades of the oars may cause a lot of splashing, the path along the course may be more snake-like and the coxswain much more vocal. Occasionally, a rower may "catch a crab" and literally be ejected from the boat by the oar if he/she is not quick enough to duck or strong enough to force the blade out of the water. Rowing is truly as much art as it is sport.

For the novice rower, coxswain and parents, understanding what rowing is all about first requires learning a new language.

- **The Boat (Shell)**

The word shell is often used to reference the boats used because the hull is only about 1/8" to 1/4" thick to make it as light as possible. Most shells today are made of composite materials such as carbon fiber, fiberglass, or Kevlar. There are two types of boats or shells used in rowing, sweep and sculling. In sweep rowing each rower handles a single oar, and in sculling a rower uses two oars. The sub-types of rowing shells are classified according to the number of rowers in the shell and if the shell is equipped for a coxswain + has a coxswain and x does not. For example: 1 (single), 2 (pair/ double), 4, or 8. Our boats would look like this: 4+, 8+. Each seat in the boat is numbered from the bow (front) to the stern (rear). Each rower has his back to the direction the shell is moving and power is generated using a blended sequence of movement of the rower's legs, back and arms. The rower sits on a sliding seat with wheels on a track called the slide.

- **The Rowing Stroke**

The rowing stroke is a precise movement. In one fluid motion, a rower uses their legs, back, and arms to generate power. Perfecting the stroke requires practice, dedication, and more practice. The stroke begins with the placing of the oar in the water and ends when the oar has reemerged and is poised to begin another cycle. A good technique is based on the work of the legs to create most of the total power. The rowing stroke can be broken down into individual components or phases: the catch, drive, finish (or release) and recovery. These phases must flow into each other, producing a continuous and fluid movement. The catch is the beginning of the stroke when the fully "squared" (perpendicular) blade enters the water. The rower is fully compressed (knees bent directly above ankles, back straight and leaning slightly forward at the hips, arms straight and reaching forward) and the seat is

forward on the slide. The drive is the part of the stroke cycle where the rower applies power to the oar and pulls it through the water. This consists primarily of driving with the legs, leaning back slightly at the hips (with back still straight), and finally pulling in the arms with wrists flat and hands touching to the bottom of the rib cage. At the finish the rower's legs are straight, the hands have finished pulling the oar into the body, and the rower is pushing down on the oar handle to pull it out of the water. When the blade comes out of the water, it is immediately feathered (turned parallel to water) with the inside hand. On the recovery the rower extends the arms, leans forward, bends the knees and moves slowly back on the slide towards the catch.

- **Glossary of Rowing Terms**

- **Bow:** the front section of the shell; also used as the name of the rower sitting nearest to the bow
- **Catch:** one of the four stroke phases - The moment the blade first enters the water
- **Coxswain:** person who steers the shell and is the on-the-water coach for the crew using a microphone system (cox box)
- **Crab:** a stroke that goes bad. The oar blade slices the water at an angle and gets caught under the surface. The blade is not fully feathered before/squared when leaving the water. This results in the blade being stuck in the water, severely slowing the boat down and throwing off the set. This term is from the claim that "a crab grabbed the blade and wouldn't let go." Crab is also used to describe when a rower's blade jams in the water and he/she finds it impossible to get the oar out of the water at the end of the pull-through.
- **Crew:** the term used in American schools and colleges to designate the sport of rowing. When outside of the academic sphere, then the sport is known as rowing.
- **Double:** a two person sculling shell; symbol is 2x
- **Drive:** one of the four stroke phases - the part of the rowing cycle where the rower applies power to the buried blade
- **Eight:** a shell with eight rowers and a coxswain; Symbol is 8+
- **Ergometer:** often referred to as an "erg;" a rowing machine used for training and testing that closely approximates the actual rowing motion
- **Finish:** one of the four stroke phases - the oar blade leaving the water at the end of a stroke
- **Foot Stretcher:** where the rower places their feet; consists of two foot rests with shoes bolted on
- **Four:** a shell with four rowers and a coxswain; symbol is 4+
- **Full pressure:** the top level of exertion of which a rower is capable
- **Gunwale:** the top edge of the boat's die, pronounced "gunnel"
- **Head Races:** typically held in the fall on a 3000 – 6000 meter racecourse with boats stagger-started and racing for the fastest time; often have turns and bends and take 15 – 25 minutes to complete
- **Junior:** under 19 years old
- **Lightweight:** refers to the rowers, with a maximum weight for each rower participating in a lightweight event
- **Novice:** a rower with less than two seasons of experience (similar to JV)
- **Oar:** used to drive the boat forward; not to be confused with paddles

- **Oarlock:** a U-shaped swivel device that holds the oar at the end of the rigger
- **Port:** the left side of the shell when looking at the bow; oars on the port side of a standard rigged boat are 2, 4, 6, and stroke (8)
- **Power 10:** a call for rowers to do 10 of their best, most powerful strokes; a strategy used to pull ahead of a competitor
- **Quad:** a four person sculling shell; symbol is 4x
- **Racks:** tiered wood or metal structures in the boathouse used to hold the shells
- **Ready-All, Row:** starting command for most races
- **Regatta:** an organized series of boat races, usually named for the town or venue where the event takes place. There are three basic types of races: Head Races, Indoor Races and Sprint Races.
- **Recovery:** one of the four stroke phases - The time between drives, when the blade of the oar is traveling through the air in a feathered position
- **Rigger:** metal arms/tubes that are bolted to the body of the shell, in which the oarlocks are attached; acts as the fulcrum
- **Rigging:** attaching the riggers to the shell (a shell CANNOT be transported with the riggers attached)
- **Rudder:** small movable piece/fin on the bottom of the shell that is used to steer
- **Sculling:** when a single rower uses two oars
- **Seat:** where the rower sits
- **Set:** the balance of the boat
- **Shell:** can be used interchangeably with the term boat
- **Single:** a one person sculling shell; symbol is 1x
- **Skeg:** a stationary fin in the stern used for stability; not to be confused with the rudder
- **Slide:** 1) the physical rails upon which the seat rolls, and 2) the part of the stroke when the seat is moving, both during the drive and during the recovery
- **Slings:** collapsible/portable frames with straps upon which a shell can be placed
- **Sprint Races:** typically held in the spring on a 2000 meter racecourse, with boats line up side- by-side in lanes. A specified number of boats from each heat will progress to the finals, with the fastest boat in the final heat being the winner.
- **Starboard:** the right side of the shell when looking at the bow; oars on the starboard side of a standard rigged boat are the Bow (1), 3, 5, & 7
- **Stern:** the rear section of the shell
- **Stroke:** the #4 or #8 (depending on shell size) rower who sits closest to the stern; sets the rhythm or cadence for the boat, with all rowers behind him/her following his/her cadence
- **Stroke rate:** the number of strokes per minute; usually between 34 and 38 strokes per minute during a race
- **Sweep:** one of the two disciplines of rowing, where rowers use only one oar. Pairs (for two people), fours (for four people) and eights are sweep boats. Pairs and fours may or may not have a coxswain, while eights always have a coxswain.
- **Tracks:** the set of metal runners set inside the shell that accept the wheels on the bottom of each rower's seat (slide).
- **Varsity:** any rower with two or more seasons of experience