

# *Cape Cod Maritime Museum*

## *Rowers' Guide*



### *Glossary of Terms*

**SWEEP** - Rowing with one oar on one side of the boat. The oar is 12 feet long.

**BOW** – Forward end of the boat closest to the direction of travel.

**STERN** – Aft end of the boat farthest from the direction of travel.

**PORT**- Side of the boat to the coxswain's left and the rowers' right. Can also be called the "bow side" since the #1 rower rows on that side.

**STARBOARD** - Side of the boat to the coxswain's right and the rowers' left. Can also be called the "stroke side" since the stroke, #4 rower, rows on that side.

**FOOTSTRETCHER** - The support that braces the rower's feet.

**RUDDER** - Used by the coxswain to steer the boat.

**YOKE** - Attached to the rudder, gives the coxswain the leverage needed to turn the rudder by pulling on the "Yoke lines".

**THWART** - The cross member you sit on to row.

**DRAIN PLUG** - Located at the bow just forward of rower #1. Must be checked before launching the boat.

**THOLE PINS** - The fulcrum used when rowing. The oars are held to the thole pin by a loop of line.

**GIG** - Our 27' Whitehall rowing boat. Also known as a "coxed 4".

**OARS** - Numbered to match the rowing positions.

### *Stroke Terminology*

**STROKE:** One full cycle of the oar, consisting of the catch, drive, finish and recovery.

**CATCH:** From the Ready-all position for pulling, the rower raises their oar handle to drop the blade into the water.

**DRIVE:** The part of the stroke where the rower pulls the blade through the water. The rower pulls first with their back, then with their arms when nearing the end of the stroke.

**FINISH:** The part of the stroke after the drive when the blade comes out of the water. The rower removes the oar from the water ,by first pushing downward and then aft.

**RECOVERY:** The part of the stroke where the oar handle is pushed aft and the rower bends forward preparing for the next Catch. The blade should just clear the water.

**BACKWATER (PUSH):** This is the reverse of the forward stroke. Start with the oar handle at your chest and raise your hands to drop the blade into the water for the catch. Push by leaning forward and then extending your arms . Push down on the handle to raise the blade out of the water to finish the stroke and return to the Ready-all position for pushing.

**LEG DRIVE:** Term used for pushing the legs against the foot stretcher during the drive.

**LAYBACK:** Term used for how much you lean back at the finish.

**MOVEMENT OF THE BLADE:** When preparing to catch and when pulling/pushing, the blade must be perpendicular to the water's surface. For the most efficiency, the pattern the blade

travels is rectangular, not circular. The blade should travel just under the surface on the drive and just above the surface during the recovery.

**CATCHING A CRAB:** Crabs happen when you catch your blade in the water and the oar pulls you backwards off your seat. Common causes are: not reaching far enough forward on the catch, and therefore ending the stroke too far aft without enough power to finish; blades under squared and therefore pulled to deep during the Drive; boat not trimmed so the blades on the low side do not clear the water on the Recovery; and failure to keep time with the stroke.

When you "Catch a Crab" press down on the handle of your oar quickly and firmly to get the blade out of the water.

## *Crew*

**COXSWAIN** - Also known as the "Cox". The "captain" of the boat, to be obeyed at all times. Responsible for steering the boat and the safety of all on board.

**ROWERS POSITIONS** - Rowing positions are numbered, starting at the bow with #1.

**STROKE** - The rower sitting in the #4 position who sets the pace.

## *Coxswain's Commands*

### **Getting Underway:**

Oars are located along the center of the boat on the thwarts and rowers sit on either side of the oars, depending on seat assignment.

**OAR UP #1:** Starting at the bow the rowers raise their oars to the vertical position, one at a time, followed by OAR UP #2 and then OAR UP #3 and OAR UP #4.

**OAR TO GUNWALE:** puts the oar in position in the oarlock or against the thole pin. The cox determines the sequence depending on situation or can have all four lowered at the same time.

**READY ALL:** All rowers lean forward and position themselves for the catch. If getting ready to push, the position is leaning slightly back.

**ROW:** The rowers start rowing, matching the Stroke oar.

**ARMS ONLY:** Row with minimum power, sitting up and using arms only, usually when maneuvering.

**Underway:**

**AIRSTROKE:** The rower continues the motion of the oar without applying any power.

**HOLD WATER:** The rower inserts his blade into the water and holds it from moving fore or aft. Used to slow down or stop the boat.

**BACKWATER:** The rower reverses his stroke.

**ROW HARD:** Instruction to row at full power.

**Starboard SIDE:** Instruction to rowers 2 and 4 on what to do, as in “stroke side take a stroke”.

**Port SIDE:** Instruction to rowers 1 and 3 on what to do, as in “bow side takes a stroke”.

**TAKE A STROKE:** All rowers are to take one stroke.

**LET IT RUN:** Rowers to stop rowing and allow the boat to glide without the blades touching the water.

**Landing:**

**OAR UP #1:** Starting at the bow the rowers raise their oars to the vertical position, same as getting underway.

**LOWER OAR #1:** The oar is lowered to rest on the thwarts along the center of the boat. This is repeated for the other three rowers one at a time.

## *Safety Gear*

Personal floatation devices for each person

Throw able life ring with a line attached

Noise makers – air horn and whistle

First aid kit

Bailers

VHF radio

Flash light

Extra thole pins and oar ties

Charts of the area

Emergency phone list

### *Rower's Personal Gear*

Gloves

Water/sports drink

Water shoes or boots with a stiff sole to push against the foot stretchers

Hat

Sun glasses

Sun screen/ SPF clothing

Layered clothing during cool weather

# Fixed Seat

## Rowing Technique

This poster outlines fixed seat rowing technique.



CYMRITHAS RHWYFO  
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WELSH SEA ROWING  
ASSOCIATION

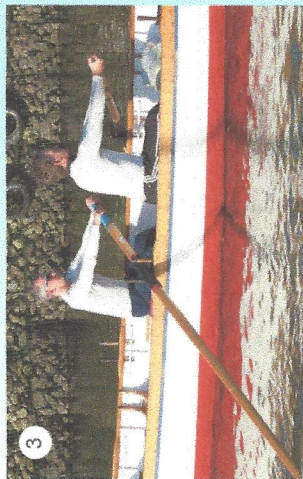


BRITISH ROWING



scouts  
be prepared

### The Drive



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- Push off equally with both legs, then open the body using arms as linkage



4

- Maintain a strong body posture



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- The legs, upper body, shoulders and arms accelerate the handle throughout the drive



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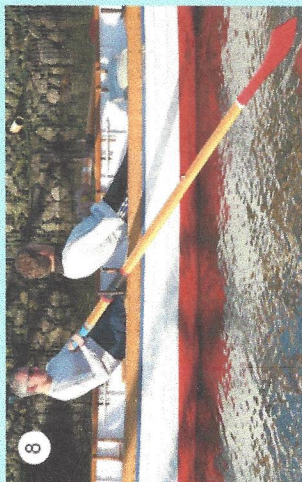
- Equal pressure through feet during the drive
- Keep the blade square for as long as possible

### The Finish



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- Maintain acceleration until the hands reach the body
- Tap the blade out square with outside hand, feather with inside hand
- Hands down and away at the same speed they come in



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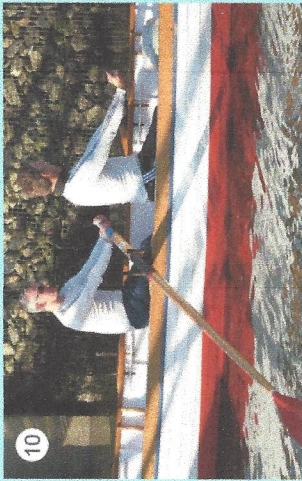
- The body movement forward should be smooth and controlled
- Hands, body, legs
- Retain good posture

### The Recovery



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- Hands lead the body forward, keep the arms straight
- Maintain balance through the feet

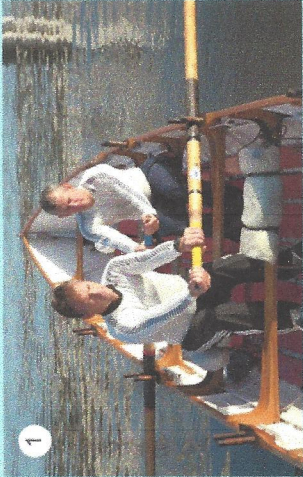


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- Body prepared and ready for the catch on the last part of the recovery
- Prepare the blade for the catch by starting to square as the handle passes the knees

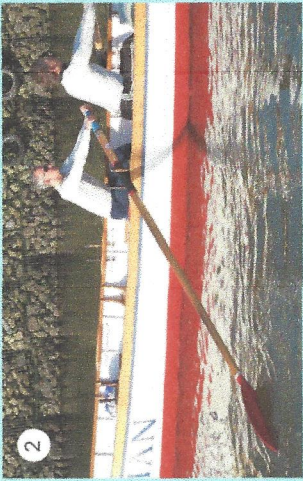
### The Catch

- Sit symmetrically on the seat in a comfortable and strong position
- Keep the head facing forwards, looking towards the stern
- Pelvis rocking over from the finish



1

- Back should be set at the catch
- Body in a pre-stretched position
- Hands over feet



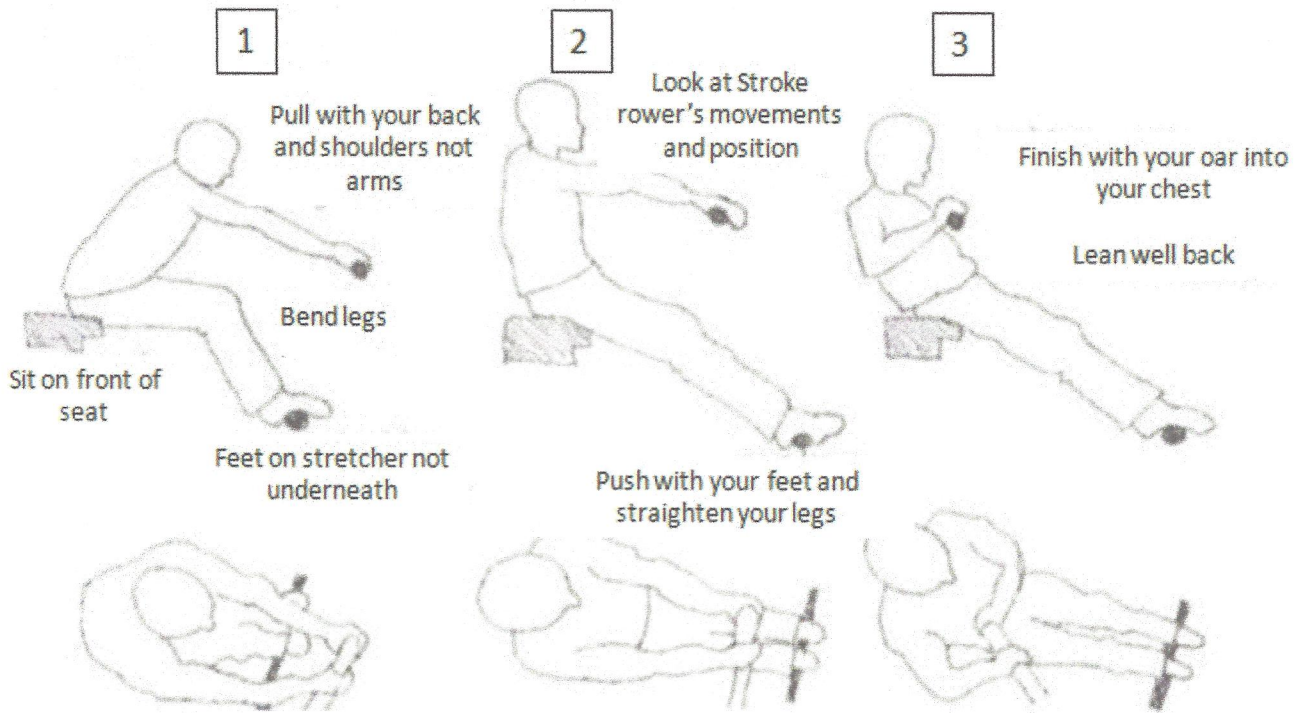
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- Lock the face of blade square in the water
- The catch is taken with one smooth continuous movement of the hands (no pause)



BRITISH ROWING

# The Stroke



(Bowside rowers mirror the movements of the stroke side)

The Return— Take the blade cleanly from the water, at the same time as the stroke rowers, feather your oar and come back slowly for the next stroke leading with your hands. RELAX, this is when your muscles can rest. Remember to relax your grip. A relaxed return is the secret to a good rowing technique.