

# Mercer Rowing Club

## Coxswain Handbook

*(updated October 2008)*

*This handbook is designed to introduce you to boat handling at Mercer Rowing Club and assist you in navigating your way around the boatshed and the river. Not all information will be immediately relevant to new coxes (see the appendix for more introductory material), but with time you should learn more and be able to contribute more to your boat during practices and races. The more you learn, the more fun it can be!*

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## 1. The Role of the Coxswain

The coxswain leads their crew on and off the water as well as steers the boat. A crew's performance is as dependent on a well-prepared coxswain as it is on the technical and athletic abilities of the rowers. The coxswain also plays an essential role in the psychology of the team, maintenance of the equipment, and the effectiveness and efficiency of a practice session.

If you are a new cox, you have a lot to think about and your coach will expect you to concentrate on learning how to steer. Always listen to what he or she says both to you and to the rowers, so

that you learn about rowing together with the rowers. Always ask the coach if there is something you don't understand. Sometimes it can be easier to talk to the coach after the practice and ask them to explain, rather than on the water.

### **Specific coxswain roles listed below**

- Maintain a calm and purposeful manner when working with your crew. You set the tone for the practice or race.
- If you are focused and confident of your job, your crew will respond to your leadership. Even if you are not confident, fake it! Get all the information you can from your coach, then do your job the best you can.
- Ensure the safety of the rowers and the boat both on and off the water.
- Maximize practice time by motivating your crew to be quick and efficient in the boatshed and on the beach. Know where your coach expects you to meet him/her on the water.
- Steering, Launching, and Landing.
- General care of the equipment you use. Report any damage to your coach.

When you become more confident and experienced at coxing you should:

- Provide the leadership needed to maintain the attention and focus of the rowers.
- Communicate with the coach regarding the practice. The coach depends on you to assist in practice management and for feedback from your perspective in the boat. Express difficulties you may be having (i.e., steering, docking, motivation, crew member, etc.). Also report all boat successes (i.e., set, drill execution, etc.)
- Maximize the quality of the practice by filling "down" time with drills (if you are not sure which drills are appropriate for your crew, ask your coach before practice).
- Give specific direction to individual rowers for better oar handling, matching and blade work.

## **2. Steering, Stopping, and Turning**

### **Steering Basics**

- Push the steering mechanism or steering cable in the direction you want to turn.
- Keep on course by picking and maintaining a point high enough on the horizon, so that you can always see it over your rowers (when in a stern-coxed boat).
- Make small adjustments to keep the boat on course.
- Be aware that sharp steering will affect the set of the boat and may disrupt the rowers' focus.
- The coxswain may ask for more pressure on one side to assist in steering around a turn. However, this should not be a frequent request.
- Do not lean to either side. Keep your body weight centered and low in the boat.
- To steer the boat to one side when it has momentum and is coming to a stop, have one side check or drag their blades.

## Advanced Steering

- The lag time between rudder application and hull response is from 3/4 of a stroke to 1 1/2 full strokes.
- Fours are more responsive, making them more difficult to keep straight.
- The rudder mechanism needs to be tight otherwise coxswains can unintentionally move the rudder in trying to stabilize their own bodies. Keep even pressure on the steering cables until you want to adjust your course. This will keep the rudder Movement of the coxswain can cause rowers to continually adjust to variables they cannot control. You can increase your stability by grasping both gunwales and the steering cable simultaneously. Hold the steering cable with 2 fingers only.

## When to Steer

- Turning slows the boat because of rudder drag and because the rowers have a harder time setting the boat.
- Try to minimize your turning.
- Anticipate the need to steer, as the boat begins to move off course and make small corrections early.
- A shell is more stable when the blades are in the water. Try to steer while the blades are in the water.
- A shell is less stable when the blades are out of the water. Try not to steer when the blades are out of the water.
- The boat accelerates on the drive and decelerates on the recovery. Steering is less responsive the slower the boat is moving.

## Coxing Style

- Always raise your hand when you have understood your coach's instruction. If you do not understand, signal your coach by putting your hand to your ear, or ask for clarification if your coach is close to you.
- If you are using a coxbox, turn it OFF if you need to yell to your coach or others outside of your boat.
- When adjusting a point have your 7 or 8 seat back while your 1 or 2 seat rows (this is for an 8 of course). This will let you spin your boat without moving forward or backwards.
- When making a gradual turn, steer during the drive and straighten the rudder during the recovery.
- When making a sharp turn it is OK to keep the rudder to one side. However, it is helpful tell your rowers when you are "on the tiller" and again when you're "off the tiller".

## Steering Practice

- Refrain from steering for a given number of strokes. If your boat naturally steers straight, you will see how little you need to steer. If your boat tends to pull to one side you may need to work with the coach to find which rower(s) is being out-pulled. Over-steering may hide what is really happening in the boat.

## Stopping

- When having a crew stop you can give the command, “In two.... easy all” or “on this one, easy all”. Always say when you want your crew to stop before you say easy all. Say “easy all” as the blades go through the water.
- You can stop your boat by checking all eight. Once stopped, you can keep your boat from drifting by having all eight square their blades and hold water.
- Always have your crew “glide” after they easy all. Rowers should stop with their “hands away” and their blades off the water, and feathered.
- Maintain your point while stopped. You should always be adjusting your point even if the coach is talking (use your stern or bow pair, make brief comments, trying not to interrupt the coach), so that you are ready to go when the practice is ready to continue. Communicate to other coxswains what you are doing and if you need their help. Do not wait for the coach to tell you to “get your point”.

## Turning Around

- In general, turn away from the bank.
- Always begin the turn by backing first.
- Maintain a set boat during the entire turn.
- Unless otherwise directed, turn your boat one side at a time (i.e., strokeside to back, bowside to row, ready back, row, back”, etc...).
- If two or more boats are turning, stagger the boats so that all boats can turn without collision.

## 3. Commands

Your voice, execution of drills and workouts set the tone for your boat. A coxswain with a confident voice and precise calling of commands will ensure the focus of your rowers and the quality of your row.

### Attitude

- Have confidence in your ability to make accurate decisions and in correcting mistakes. Do not apologize. Just make the change in your command and then continue.
- Demand attention and focus from your rowers on and off the water.
- Treat the rowers with respect.

### Voice

- Use a deep voice versus a high/shrill squeal.

- Don't be afraid to be quiet as you assess a situation and then make a decision. Try not to think out loud.
- If you anticipate a tight situation, or there is a wake coming, give the rowers a calm warning. "Bowside, we're passing another crew on your side, heads up." Or "Wake coming from the stroke side in 3 strokes."
- As the intensity of a practice or race increases, your voice needs to remain calm and relaxed. Do not increase the volume or speed of your voice unless it is for specific emphasis (i.e., power ten, passing a boat, etc...). Increase the intensity of your voice rather than the volume.
- Your voice affects your rowers. If you talk fast, the slide will tend to increase. If you panic, your rowers will panic. When you're nervous, your rowers will be nervous. It is very important that you remain clam under stress whether you are lining up for a race or trying to maneuver your boat in a tricky situation during practice.
- Use a strong and assertive speaking voice. Never yell or scream at your rowers. Remember that just because you speak loudly in the shed, you do not have to take an angry tone.

## Timing

- Always count your strokes at precisely the same moment as the stroke's catch. Calling the count before or after the catch will confuse your rowers and can lead to unmatched rowing. Never count at the release.
- Always tell your crew what they are supposed to do and then say "in two...", or "on this one..." depending on the situation.

## Miscellaneous

- Always raise your hand after a coach gives you instruction, to acknowledge that you understand. Keep your hand in the air or signal the coach if you do not understand and always ask questions if you do not understand an instruction.
- Contribute your ideas to the coach. Communicate problems/concerns (i.e., not understanding instructions, internal boat conflicts, etc...) to your coach.
- There should be no talking in the boat other than from you or unless rowers are responding to a question or have an emergency (i.e., broken equipment, injury, etc...).
- Do not speak when the coach is talking. Keep the count in your head and then continue calling the piece when the coach has stopped talking. Use silence to your benefit by letting the rowers hear the rhythm and listen for the bubbles, while giving yourself a break too. If you talk nonstop, rowers will tune you out.
- Your coach will often ask you to do something particular for, say, 30 strokes. Never count directly up to 30, as that gets very boring. If you want to count all 30 strokes, then do it in 3 sets of 10. Never count above 10 – always break higher counts down.

## 4. Boat Handling

### Carrying boats

- There should be no talking other than from you in the boatshed or as you walk your boat.
- Tell the rowers where to carry the boat (e.g., at their shoulders, or just above if they are not as tall as others).
- Have rowers split opposite their riggers (i.e., strokeside split right, bowside split left). People helping carry a heavier boat should split so that sides are equal (have rowers tip their heads in the direction they are going to go, while the boat is still overheads).

### Launching

- Stand and face your rowers as you call your commands. They cannot hear you if you turn your face away from them.
- Always launch with your bowball pointing upstream (to your right on the bank).
- As the boat is rolled into the water, make sure the fin does not hit the bottom.
- Designate, for example, bowside to carry oars and have strokeside undo the oarlocks. Make sure rowers hustle as they retrieve the oars.
- When your crew is placing the oars in the boat or removing them use the following order.
  - a. Launching: Put beachside oars in first. Hold the boat for waterside oar placement.
  - b. Docking: Waterside oars removed first.
- When rowers are ready to get in, have the water side rowers push out their oars (“outside oars across”). Make sure this motion occurs at the same time. Hands should not leave the oars after this point.
- Make sure the boat is held a couple of inches away from the beach to protect the fin.
- Call for the rowers to enter the boat “one foot in, and down” and get them to push away at the same time. You should enter before them (for a bowloading boat) or at the same time (in a sternloader).
- Always make sure rowers keep their hands on their oars.
- Use bow pair to pull away from the shore.
- Once you are sufficiently clear of the bank, stop and let the rowers tie in their feet. Get them to number off from bow seat when they are ready to row.
- If there is another boat waiting, hustle!

### Landing

- Always approach the beach slowly by pairs (sometimes fours works, but use good judgment).
- Always approach the beach going upstream, never downstream, as you will not have enough control to slow down. Approach at roughly a 15 degree angle, and when you are

nearly there, get the rowers to lean away from the beach side and the boat should swing around so it is parallel to the beach. Take it slow!

- Hop out of the boat and then instruct the rowers when to get out.
- Once oars are removed, count the boat out of the water: “Hands on the boat. Swing it up and out of the water on three. One, two, three. Split to shoulders”.
- Guide the rowers as they carry the boat back up onto the slings onshore.
- Make sure the oars are put down on a set of slings, not on the ground. The oars and the boat must be washed down well, so ensure that happens too.
- Guide the boat safely back into the shed.

## 5. Safety

### Boat handling

- Always tell your rowers what it is you want them to do before you ask them to do. Stand facing the rowers so that everyone can hear you.
- Make sure everyone on your boat is ready and quiet before you ask for adjustments to make sure rowers synchronize their movements. For example, when setting the boat in the water or picking it up, make sure that everyone does so at the same time.
- Make sure everyone is carrying the boat at his or her shoulders or above.
- When pressing the boat “up and over heads” or setting the boat into the water, make sure everyone in your boat is working and contributing.
- There should be no talking during boat handling procedures.

### Steering

- You must stay within the correct traffic pattern at all times. This means STAY RIGHT! Coxswains should always stay to their right and close to shore unless otherwise instructed by their coach.
- When turning your boat around, turn only 90 degrees and then pull your boat across the water before finishing the remaining 90-degree of your turn.
- Act quickly. Anticipate what will be asked of you next. Never let yourself drift into an undesired position. If your decision is wrong, at least you will know and can quickly change your command.
- Periodically check behind you to see what traffic is coming up. In the summer in particular, there can be many other boats out on the river.
- If you are stopping, pull the boat over to the right and out of the way of other boats that may be coming up behind you later.

### Rowing

- Rowers should remain quiet while on the water.
- Rowers should synchronize their motions so that the boat remains set at all times.
- Never let the boat ride or sit in an unset position. If it is down to the same side 2 strokes in a row, call for the rowers to set the boat immediately.

- Give clear commands so that the rowers know what is expected of them.
- Always raise your hand after a coach gives you an instruction to acknowledge.

## **Obstruction in the water**

- Look out for logs and other debris in the water at all times. They can often be difficult to spot, so be careful. After rain, there can be lots of logs around so be extra aware at those times.
- When something wraps around the fin and/or rudder, you will feel a vibration in the stern. You may also not be able to steer effectively. You (or stroke in a bow-loader) should be able to clear it quickly by reaching under the boat and pulling the debris off.
- If you have snagged a line or other large objects on your fin, stop immediately so that it does not rip off your fin. Then reach under the boat and clear it.
- Do not push down on an object under the hull since it may push back up through the hull.
- If you run over a solid object you will probably hear a loud thunk. If the fin is ripped off, your boat will veer from side to side. The fin could also be bent or it could be pushed up through the hull of the boat. In any case, you must row back to the shed immediately. Remember, if there is damage to, or loss of the fin, your ability to steer will be greatly impaired so row back with great caution. One way to do this is to row with stern 6, and have either bow or 2 seat row as needed for steering.

## **Miscellaneous**

- Command: “Heads Up” - pay attention, something to watch out for is near you. This command should always be used when someone may not see your shell coming at him or her such as when leaving the shed or launching/carrying boats at a regatta.
- Always have one person at each end of the boat when launching/carrying at a regatta.

# **6. Equipment**

## **Oars**

- Oars should be carried tips up and set on the ground tips down.
- Make sure everyone has the correct oar and that it is placed in its oarlock correctly before launching.

## **Foot stretchers**

- Foot stretchers should be set at “the catch”, meaning: When the rowers sits in the catch position, the center of the rower’s seat and the pin (the part of the rigger that holds the oarlock in place) of the rigger should be in the same line.

## **Cox Boxes**

- If you are using a coxbox, know where it is at all times. Always replace your Cox box immediately after you row and make sure it is plugged into its charger. Cox box **MUST** be turned off before plugging it into the charger.
- Always carry your Cox box by the handle and head-set (together).
- Never leave a Cox box on the beach or sitting in the boatshed.
- Cox box maker Nielsen Kellerman has published the following dos and don'ts list.

### ***CoxBox DOs and DON'Ts by Nielsen Kellerman***

DO: Put the CoxBox on charge whenever it is not in use. The charging light to the right of the rubber plug will come on as soon as the charger is connected. If this light is NOT on the CoxBox is not being charged.

DO: Inspect the toggle switch seal daily for signs of tearing.

DO: Charge for at least 16 hours should the "BAT" warning come on.

DO: Wash well in fresh water after salt water use.

DO: Wash away grit before cleaning front panel.

DO: Use the mounting cup provided.

DO: Occasionally apply silicone (available from N/K) to the outside of the rubber plug.

DO: Occasionally apply Nyogel (available from N/K) inside the metal sockets only.

DO: Be sure to turn the CoxBox OFF when not in use and store in a cool, dry place.

DO: Contact N/K with questions or problems.

DON'T: Ignore the "BAT" warning on the display. Repeated or extended use with a low battery will shorten life.

DON'T: Pull on the microphone cable. The cable and connector will withstand a steady pull of 60 lbs. – neither will withstand the impact created by yanking the cable or dropping the CoxBox and catching it with the cable.

DON'T: Leave the CoxBox anywhere the temperature might exceed 120° F for an extended time.

DON'T: Fully lock the microphone connector to the CoxBox unless necessary – locking the connector will increase wear & tear and cause damage if the CoxBox is dropped.

DON'T: Leave the CoxBox on while charging.

DON'T: Leave the CoxBox on charge for extended periods, (more than a day or two) – this will shorten battery life.

DON'T: Attempt to open the CoxBox – there are no user-serviceable parts inside and the device uses sophisticated sealing procedures. Any attempt by untrained individuals to open the CoxBox to open the CoxBox will almost certainly cause damage to the equipment and will void the warranty.

DON'T: Use solvents on the front panel as they will cause stress cracks.

## **Clothing**

- Always have rain gear accessible in case the weather is nasty or you are in a bow loader.
- Dress warmly at all times if the weather is less than perfect. Cold coxswains are less effective.
- Bring a spare set of clothes at the shed to change into in case you get wet during practice.

## **Rigging Boats**

- You should be able to take riggers off and put riggers back on. Be aware of the nuts and bolts required to hold a rigger onto the boat and know which order they go.

## Appendix. More information for novice coxes

### I. Rowing Terms

There are a lot of things to remember when coxing. How to steer and where to be on the river are fairly simple tasks initially, when compared to the problem of remembering what the name of everything is.

Coxing is like driving a car by voice control. You have to know the names of each part if you want it to work properly. Let's start with the basics. The front of the boat is called the **bow**. There must always be a bow ball. The back end of the boat (where you sit in some **shells**, like eights) is called the **stern**. In other boats, the cox lies down at the front (**front-** or **bow-loaders**).

Let's look now at how you talk to the rowers. Instead of using the names of the rowers, there is a numbering system starting from the bows. The only quirk in the system is that the person closest to the bows is called "**bow**", not "1", and the person closest to you is called "**stroke**", not "8". In a smaller boat the numbering starts the same way from bow, so the rowers in a four-place boat are called, in order, **Bow, 2, 3 and Stroke**.

All the rowers with blades on your left are called **stroke side**, and all the rowers blades on your right are called **bow side**. In most boats, the strokesiders have even numbers and the bowsiders odd numbers. You can talk to individual rowers by using their number, or by grouping them together in pairs, fours or sides. **Bow pair** is the pair of rowers closest to the bow (bow and 2), and **stern pair** is the pair nearest you. Similarly for **bow four** and **stern four**. You may also refer to **middle four** (3,4,5,6), **bow side** and **stroke side**.

See the full glossary later for more details and the rest of the rowing terms in common use.

### II. Manoeuvring the Boat

Your boat can be moved around when stationary by using individual rowers or groups of rowers. If you want to move forward or backward slowly, then use "bow pair", "stern pair", "bow four" or "stern four".

Being able to stop the boat is also of the utmost importance. "Check the boat!" or "Check it" is the command to use, or in emergencies, "CHECK IT DOWN HARD" shouted at top volume. The rowers will stop rowing and square their blades in the water to slow the boat down rapidly. If you had been rowing along at full speed before saying this, it will take you 1-3 lengths to come to a halt, so LOOK AHEAD. When the boat has stopped, you can no longer steer with the rudder, but you still need to move the boat around. To do this, rowers can either "row on" or "back down".

**ROWING ON:** This is taking a normal stroke in the water with one or more people. When you

get someone to do this, the bows of their boat move away from their blade. For example, if you get the bowman in the boat to row on for one stroke, the bows will swing to the left. If you use the 2-man, the bows will swing to the right. It is very important to notice that the boat will also move forward a little way, so don't row on if you are going to hit anything!

**BACKING DOWN:** To do this, the rower should sit with his or her blade-handle close to the chest, the blade turned around the wrong way from normal and in the water. Pushing the handle away towards the toes causes the reverse of a normal stroke. If you "back down" with your stoker or 7-man, it has a similar effect to "rowing on" with bow or 2, respectively. This will also move the boat slightly backwards. If you get tangled in a tree or another boat, back down with your stern pair or stern four to get out of trouble, rather than continuing to row on. You must have your wits about you and be decisive. Call the name of the person you want to use, and tell them what to do: it's simple when you have learnt the numbers. For instance, commands you might use are "Bow, take a stroke!" or "7, back it down!." If they don't do it straight away, say it again and be forceful - remember you are in charge.

If you want the boat to turn but not move forward or backward, then get diagonally opposite rowers to move together. For example, asking 2 to row on and stroke to back down will pivot the boat about its centre. You can get a bigger effect and a quicker turn by using more rowers, for example bow and 3 rowing on, stroke and 6 backing down.

Turning the boat around completely then becomes an extension of these methods. You can get the whole of bow side to row on and the whole of stroke side to back down. You can do it the other way round, but this method is more usual, since boats tend to stick to the right side of the river and therefore need to turn their bows to the left to spin round. For novice boats, you will find that each side has to take it in turns with the other side, so that each rower has enough space to move in. As you become more experienced, you can use shorter strokes and begin to move together, since each rower needs less space. The ultimate "show-off" manoeuvre is a "tap-turn", where the blades just chop up and down in unison, one side turned as if for backing down. But whatever the skill of the crew, the fastest turn is half-strokes in unison, so use this in strong stream or wind.

An example of stopping the boat, turning it and then rowing off again with bow four is shown below to give some examples of commands. All commands themselves are written in CAPS.

"NEXT STROKE, EASY ALL" The rowers stop rowing

"STROKE SIDE, CHECK THE BOAT" The stroke side rowers square their blades in the water. This slows the boat down on stroke side but not bow side, and it starts to swing left and decelerate. This command isn't essential, but it gets the boat halfway round without any extra effort.

"SPINNING THE BOAT, STROKE SIDE BACKING, BOW SIDE ROWING ON. STARTING STROKE SIDE. READY? GO". The rowers will turn the boat around (spinning) as described before, and will keep going until you stop by saying "EASY ALL" again. You could start with bow side, depending on your position on the river. You could also back down on bow side and row on with stroke side, in which case you would spin in the opposite direction.

"TWO, TAKE A STROKE" A slight adjustment to the angle of the boat so that you are pointing in the right direction before rowing off. You might not have to do this, or might have to do it in

the opposite direction, but always make sure you are lined up correctly down the river before moving off.

"BOW FOUR, COME FORWARD TO ROW. ARE YOU READY? GO" Bow four rowers will get ready to row, and then start rowing on your command "GO". You may need to tell them what style or pressure to row before you say "ARE YOU READY?"

### III. Steering

The cox is provided with a looped string attached to the rudder, sometimes with a handle of some kind on each side of the boat. One handle is held in each hand, and in nearly all stern-coxed boats, you steer by moving your hand forward on the side that you want to go towards. If you want to steer to the right, you move your right hand forwards, etc.

Most coxes steer too much. There are usually two reasons for this: a) they do not look far enough ahead and so have to steer suddenly to avoid obstacles and other crews, or to turn corners. b) they steer too far in one direction (because the boat turns slowly) and then have to steer back again. This often results a snaking line down the river.

Boats appear to steer very slowly. Always remember that where your bows are pointing is where you will be in about three strokes time, even though by the time you get there your bows may be pointing in a new direction. You must steer, therefore, by thinking about two or three lengths ahead of your current positions.

Sometimes you will be in a position where the boat cannot turn quickly enough. In this case you can get the rowers on the outside of the corner to pull harder by saying "STROKE SIDE, HARDEN UP" or "BOW SIDE, SHARPEN FOR TWO STROKES" or similar. This makes the boat turn quicker. Remember to go back to normal when the boat is straight again by saying "EVEN PRESSURE".

When it is very windy, you should steer to angle the boat into the wind slightly, so that you don't get blown out of control across the river.

When approaching a slower moving crew, make sure that you steer in plenty of time to be able to get round them without panic. You should try to overtake on the left if possible, but get back close to the right-hand bank as soon as possible. The only exception to this is on a very fast river, moving against the stream. In this one case, you need to stay directly behind the slower crew until you are close, and then move out to pass them. It is more important for you to learn how to steer properly than it is for you to try and coach or encourage the crew, until you are confident.

### IV. Glossary

This is as comprehensive as possible while still maintaining the basic level. Again the important words are in capitals with meanings next to them. In order of related information:

**BLADE** Another name for an oar.

**SPOON** Painted part of the blade which goes in the water.  
**LOOM** Long stem of the blade.  
**HANDLE** Wooden bit of the blade which you hold on to.  
**SQUARED** Blade perpendicular to the water.  
**FEATHERED** Blade parallel to the water.  
**PIN** Vertical metal bit onto which the swivel is mounted.  
**SWIVEL** Plastic bit of rigger which holds the blade and swivels to let the blade pivot.  
**GATE** Metal bit at the top of the swivel which holds the blade in place.  
**RIGGER** Metal stays fixed to the side of the boat that carry the blade. Riggers let the boat itself be very narrow while having a wide leverage on the blade.  
**BUTTON** The plastic ring on the blade which pushes on the inside of the swivel/gate.  
**CATCH** The part of the stroke where the blade is put into the water.  
**FINISH** The part of the stroke where the blade is taken out of the water.  
**DRAW** The part of the stroke where the spoon is pulled through the water  
**DRIVE** The phase of the stroke during the draw when the legs are driving downward.  
**STRIKE DOWN** When the rower pushes the handle down to lever the blade out of the water.  
**RECOVERY** The part of the stroke where the rower moves up the slide for the next catch.  
**FRONTSTOPS** Where you take the catch on a full slide stroke.  
**BACKSTOPS** Where you take the finish, legs flat, sitting back.  
**SLIDE** Each rower sits on a seat which moves on small wheels. These wheels run up and down the slide-runners. The slide is adjustable and there is one pair of runners for each rower.  
**SIT THE BOAT** Blade feathered/flat on the water, holding the boat steady.  
**SPINNING** Turning the boat around. **BACKING** Doing a reverse stroke to go backwards.  
**SCULLING** (in an 8) This is when 3 rows with 2's blade or 2 with bow's blade. Paddling with another rower's blade very close to the boat: moves the boat sideways very quickly.  
**SCULLING** In general this is a boat where rowers have two oars each.  
**SWEEP** A boat where each rower has one oar.  
**INSIDE HAND** The one nearest the gate (it does the squaring and feathering).  
**OUTSIDE HAND** The one away from the gate, which does the pulling and striking down.  
**HALF SLIDE** Taking the catch halfway to frontstops instead of at full slide. Also 1/4, 3/4.  
**BODY SWING** What you do with legs flat before you go up the slide during the recovery.  
**LIGHT PRESSURE** Not pulling very hard.  
**FULL PRESSURE** Pulling as hard as possible. Also **FIRM PRESSURE**.  
**HALF PRESSURE** In between (theoretically). Also quarter-pressure or three-quarter.  
**RATING** The number of strokes taken in a minute. Measured by a **RATE METER**.  
**RATIO** The ratio of time pulling the stroke against time sliding on the recovery.  
**STROKE SIDE** The left hand side of the boat when sitting in the cox's seat. All those rowers.  
**BOW SIDE** The right hand side of the boat from the cox's seat, and those rowers.  
**STROKE (1)** The person sitting nearest the cox, who sets the rhythm and rate.  
**STROKE (2)** The repeating cycle of movements made by the rower and blade.  
**TAKE A CATCH** Do a light part-stroke to straighten the boat out.  
**ROW ON** Start paddling until told to stop.  
**EASY** Stop rowing, as in **EASY ALL** or **EASY OARS**, **EASY THERE**.  
**DROP** Drop the blade back onto the water after easying.  
**CHECK IT** Blades squared in the water to slow or brake the boat.  
**CHECK IT DOWN HARD** Shouted at top volume to avoid a crash: emergency stop.

**BOW RIGGED** A boat with the stroke person on bow side.

**TANDEM** A line-up where two consecutive rowers are on the same side.

**CATCHING A CRAB** When a blade gets stuck in the water and the handle knocks the rower flat.

## V. Commands

This list is arranged so that the place in the stroke when each item is said can be seen. Always give a "GO" so that the rowers are certain when you want them to obey you. Try always to give about half a stroke between the GO and the time you want the change.

CATCH	FINISH	CATCH
LIGHT PRESSURE	GO	
QUARTER PRESSURE	GO	
HALF PRESSURE	GO	
THREE QUARTER PRESSURE	GO	
FULL PRESSURE	GO	
TEN FIRM (10 hard strokes)	GO	
WIND DOWN (after a burst)	GO	
PUSH FOR TEN	GO	
OUTSIDE HANDS ON/OFF	GO	
INSIDE HANDS DOWN LOOM	GO	
	SQUARE BLADES	GO
	FEATHERED BLADES	GO
	NORMAL SQUARING	GO
	DELAYED FEATHERING	GO
(examples of various types)		
NEXT STROKE	HANDS ONLY	GO
NEXT STROKE	BODY SWING	GO
	QUARTER SLIDE	GO
	HALF SLIDE	GO
	THREE QUARTER SLIDE	GO
FULL SLIDE	NEXT STROKE	GO
(combined commands)		
HALF PRESSURE	HALF SLIDE	GO
FULL PRESSURE	FEATHERED BLADES	GO
EEEEEAASAAAAASY	THERE!	

When stopping a piece of quarter or half pressure, you can go straight into light pressure. When stopping a piece of fast, hard firm or three quarter pressure, it is best for the rowers to wind down first, then call for light pressure.