



### **Coxswain Instructions**

In 2009 we are beginning a program to train all returning members as coxswains. Since PLRA is an all volunteer organization, coxswain responsibilities and other similar roles must be shared equally among all members.

As part of this initiative, we are also looking to standardize the way coxswains command their crew so that rowers are better able to follow commands.

Here is a list of guidelines that coxswains must follow:

1. Once a boat is fully signed in the coxswain should direct their rowers to take oars for their boat down near the dock. Those rowers not carrying oars should unstrap their boat and stand ready to take it off the rack.
2. The coxswain should get a cox box, microphone, plugs and radio from the lockers and proceed down to the shell.
3. After all rowers are at the shell, the coxswain should begin with the hands on command. All commands should always be preceded with "in two ... one, two" so that everyone can anticipate when to take an action.
4. Rowers should not take any action if not commanded by the coxswain. For example, after taking a boat off the rack and side stepping towards the lake, rowers should not begin walking forward towards the dock unless directed. If they do so, the coxswain should yell "weigh enough."
5. Rowers should remain quiet after the "hands on" command is given. If they see that people or equipment are in danger, they should yell "weigh enough" or if on the water "weigh enough, hold water." At that time the rower who gave that command should advise the coxswain of the situation and the coxswain should give the next command.
6. On shore if the coxswain is in need of help, they should ask the session manager to assist with directing the crew. On the water, they should radio the session manager for assistance and can also ask the stroke seat to help. Rowers should NOT give commands.
7. When the boat is placed in the water, the rowers whose riggers are on the dock side should hold the boat and the others rowers should each get two oars from the nearby shore, one of each side for them and their pair-mate holding the boat.
8. Boats should load with the rowers whose oars are on the lakeside getting in first, then those whose riggers are dockside second. The coxswain should load last.
9. Before shoving away, the coxswain should ensure that 1) all plugs are in, 2) the radio is in a dry bag snugly fitted around their neck, 3) that the radio works by testing communication with the launch driver, 4) the safety launch should be on the water or it can be tied to the dock if the launch driver has already started it once and is on board, 5) test that the cox box is working, and 6) count down from bow to ensure all rowers are ready.
10. All adjustments do not need to be made before launching. From the time a boat is placed in the water, it should be shoving off the dock in 3 minutes.

11. Once leaving the dock, coxswains should take their crew in a counter-clockwise direction around Rex Lake. Shells are not allowed to leave visual contact with the safety launch without permission, and due to this, the first boat to launch may have to do their warm-up while circling Rex Lake while the last boat to launch may head directly for the channel to West Claw.
12. Warm-ups should be done by half of the crew at a time (bow four, stern four in an 8+ or bow pair, stern pair in a 4+). The warm-up for each group totals five minutes. It starts with hands only for 30 seconds, add in the back for the next 30 seconds, add in quarter slide for the next 30 seconds, add in half slide for 30 seconds, add in three quarter slide for 30 seconds, add in full slide for 30 seconds. This is now 3 minutes into the warm-up and you should focus the crew of maintaining proper stroke sequence and ratio for the next minute. With one minute to go you should have the crew do a power ten at a low rating and then paddle it out until five minutes is reached. Once one half of the boat completes the warm-up, repeat for the other half. For less experienced crews, the coxswain can eliminate the quarter slide and three quarter slide portion of the warm-up.
13. Throughout the practice, the coxswain should maintain communication with the session manager. A route for the practice may be communicated in advance, but this is not necessarily the case. If the coxswain has suggestions for what they would like to do, they may ask the session manager who will make a determination whether this will work for all boats on the water. The session manager is the authority for the route each boat should take.
14. The club's coaching staff will usually be the ones to determine drills and practice plans. The coxswain is able to make suggestions based on their experience and what they are seeing happen in the boat, but they should always check with the session manager to ensure it doesn't interfere with other plans.
15. When returning to the dock, listen to instructions from the session manager regarding what side of the dock to approach.
16. If the coxswain needs someone on the dock for assistance they should radio the session manager. Usually the safety launch will stay on the water for the other shells, but one person can get onto the dock to assist with docking.
17. When getting out of the boat, the coxswain should exit first, the rowers whose riggers are dockside second and the rowers whose riggers are lakeside last. No oars should be pulled in until everyone is standing on the dock.
18. Again those whose riggers are dockside should hold the boat while those whose riggers are lakeside should take two oars off the dock.
19. The coxswain should direct the boat back to the same rack they took it from unless told otherwise by the session manager.
20. Rowers should remain quiet and again not take any action if not commanded by the coxswain.
21. Once the boat is on the racks, it should be tied down, wiped down with towels, and oars should be returned to the boathouse. Assistance can be given as needed to boats docking after yours.
22. The coxswain should check with all the rowers to identify if there were any equipment issues with the shell. It is the responsibility of the coxswain to ensure these are marked down on the repair sheet on the bulletin board.
23. The coxswain should return the cox box, microphone, plugs and radio to the same places they were taken from.