

Yankee Rowing Club Rowing Guide

Yankee Rowing Club
P.O. Box 2913
Amherst, MA 01004-2913

www.yankeerowing.org

Updated: March 2008

Yankee Rowing Club

Rowing Guide

Page 1

SAFETY:

Yankee Rowing Club's first priority is safety. It is an integral part of good rowing and requires constant attention. You must take responsibility for your own safety as well as that of your rowing partners. Use common sense whenever around the water.

SAFETY GUIDELINES:

1. Let a friend know your rowing plans as well as your expected time of return.
2. Row with a partner. The buddy system may save your life.
3. Log in and out of the logbook for each trip on the water.
4. Observe the daylight and give yourself enough time to row and return to the dock while the sun is still up. The river can get dark quickly when the sun goes down.
5. Know your limits. This depends on your stamina and the conditions. Rowing downstream with a fast current and wind can be exhilarating, but fatigue and error can set in quickly upon the much longer return trip home.
6. Be careful when using the dock. The dock can get tipsy with the slightest weight shift.
7. Do not tie your feet into the stretchers, you want them free if you capsize.
8. Maintain control over both oars at all times to maintain balance and to prevent capsizing. Holding the blades provides support.
9. Row on the 'right' side of the river; Hadley side going upstream and the Northampton side going downstream.
10. Stay out of the middle of the river where the motorboats roam wildly.
11. Watch for stationary objects such as bridge abutments and semi submerged logs.
12. Observe the weather, the temperature, the wind and the current.
13. Hypothermia. When the sum of the water temperature and the air temperature in Fahrenheit is less than 100 the risk of suffering hypothermia starts to increase. Most deaths occur above freezing. Cold and dampness can lead quickly to exhaustion. Consider the worst, are you ready to go swimming if the boat capsizes?
14. In the warm weather the danger is dehydration and heat exhaustion. Rowing heats the body. Bring enough water to drink in order to replenish fluids lost and wear a white hat to keep cool.
15. Observe the current. If the water is high, the current will be fast. This can be especially tricky when leaving and returning to the dock. Be wary going downstream, the trip back may be too much.
16. Know your limits.

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Emergency 911
Hadley Police (413) 584-0883
Northampton Police (413) 584-0205
State Police (413) 584-3000
Environmental Police (413) 586-3247

Club Contact Information

Leslie Smith (413) 549-5691
Or
Yankeerowing@aol.com
Or
www.yankeerowing.org

Possible Emergencies:

Capsizing (boat overturning or the rower falling out): **Stay with the boat.** There are two options of what to do: 1) Bring the boat to shore using it as a flotation device. Swim pulling the bow or the stern and look for a shallow area to land. 2) Climb back into the boat (grace is not involved with this maneuver). To do so, right the boat and spread the oars out as if you were rowing. Hold the two oars firmly in one hand to maintain balance and use the other arm to lift yourself out of the water onto the area between the slide. Sit down and bring your legs in last.

Swamping (the boat takes on water): Bail the water out using your hands, water bottle or any other method that works. Stay with the boat and go slowly to shore where it is easier to drain the boat. Remember that water is VERY heavy so be careful and take your time.

Missing Rower: Check the logbook as well as the area around the dock. If the person is overdue, notify the Hadley Police and Environmental Police.

Rowing Guide

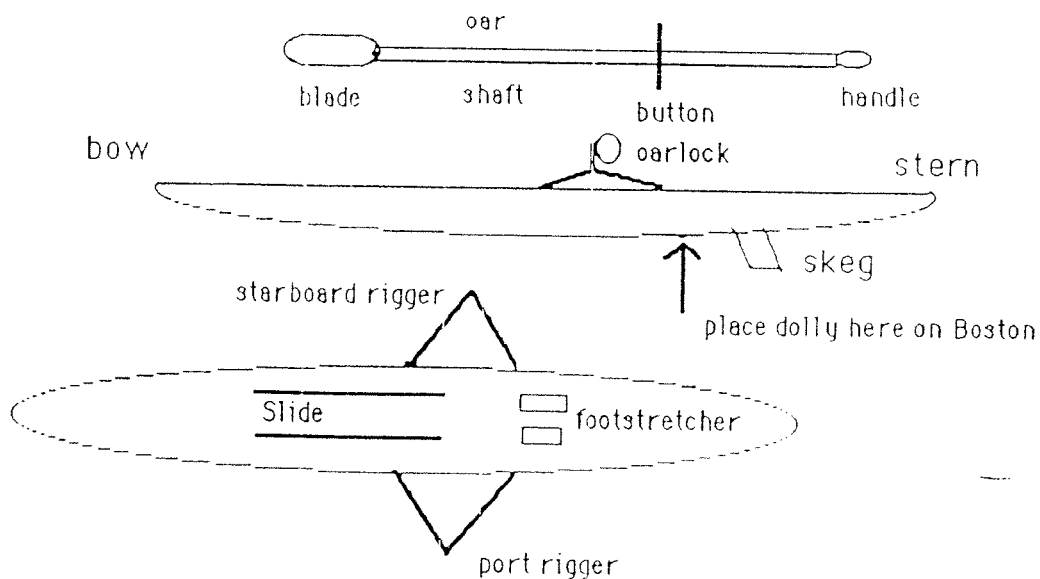
Boathouse Etiquette:

1. Be careful when moving boats in and out of the boathouse, they are fragile.
2. Watch out for other boats on the racks and in slings within the boathouse, they too are fragile.
3. Use the correct oars (blades) with the each boat, they are labeled. Do not borrow private blades.
4. Notify one of the club officers if there are problems with the equipment.
5. Turn off the lights as well as the water whenever you do not need them.
6. Shut the door to the boathouse, but don't lock it, whenever you are out on the river.
7. Use the sign-up sheets for boat reservations to minimize conflicts. If there are disputes, they will be settled by one or more members of the rowing committee.
8. Leave the boat stretchers out if there is someone out on the river.
9. Always lock the boathouse if you are the last to leave for the day.

Dock Etiquette:

1. Keep clutter on the dock to a minimum, leave only what you don't mind losing.
2. Launch the boat with the bow (front of boat) facing downstream. If the current is strong, launch in very shallow water by the ramp.
3. Land the boat by approaching the dock with the bow facing upstream... land against the current.
4. Yield to larger boats, both powered and non-powered (fours and eights) alike.

Rowing shell/equipment anatomy:



Rowing Guide

Page 4

Training Boat Checkout:

1. Open the garage door with the key found within the lock box to the right of the door (combination _____). Place key back in box immediately after opening door.
2. Sign out in the logbook: identify name, time of departure, estimated time of return, boat used, direction (upstream or downstream).
3. Select either trainer boat – Volks shell or Phantom - the accompanying seat if not already installed in the boat and a set of club blades (oars). Take the blades down to the dock first and place them on the shore side of the dock.
4. Place the dolly under the stern of the boat. Be careful of the skeg as it breaks easily. Tighten the straps from the dolly around the hull of the boat.
5. Roll the boat out of the boathouse. Pushing works best. Inspect the equipment one more time before heading to the water.
6. Turn off the lights and close the door behind you.
7. Take the boat down the ramp and roll it right to the water's edge. Place bow of boat in the water and slide boat off dolly into shallow water... yes you will get your feet wet. Watch the skeg.
8. Place empty dolly to the extreme right or left of the ramp, out of the way of trailer/truck traffic.

Training Boat Checkout Approved By: _____ Date: _____

Dock Checkout:

1. Point the bow (front) of the boat upstream. This will bring the starboard side of the boat dockside.
2. Place the seat into the tracks within the boat if not already done so. The curved cutout should face the bow.
3. Place the blades into the oarlocks. The button (round ring that surrounds the blade shaft) should be on the inside of the oarlock. Put the starboard blade in first, this will help hold the boat to the dock. Match colored stripes (red is port/left and green is starboard/right when facing the bow) found on the blades with the colors of the stripes found on the oarlocks. Be sure the oarlock swings to the stern (rear) of the pivot pin. Fasten the gate.
4. Slide each oar out so that the button pushes up against the oarlock. The blades should be flat on the water for balance with the cupped side up.
5. Hold the butt ends of the blades in your right hand and balance with your left hand on both the riggers as well as the dock.

Rowing Guide

Page 5

Dock Checkout Continued:

6. Place your right foot into the boat and sit down onto the seat bringing your left foot in after. Place your feet into the foot stretcher. Your balance will come from your hand holding both blades.
7. When you are comfortable and ready to leave the dock, have an assistant push you out by pushing on the starboard blade with you pushing against the same blade. The person on the dock who is pushing you out should always keep the blade low to the dock during this process.
8. Land at the dock by coming upstream so that the current slows the boat. Approach the dock at a narrow angle, less than 30 degrees, so that you don't hit the dock hard. Have enough glide so that the boat will come into the dock without the need for a few last strokes. Lean away at the last stroke so that the starboard blade comes up on the dock.

Dock Checkout Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Returning to the Boathouse:

1. Reverse the entire process. Bring the boat back up the ramp on the dolly. Clean off the boat and blades with fresh water before you put them away. The hose and tap can be found to the left of the garage door.
2. Sign in the log book indicating your safe return.
3. Turn out the lights and turn off the water. Lock the boathouse up if you are the last one to leave.

Congratulations, you are ready to row !

Completed Checkout Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Racing Boat Checkout:

You are eligible to row a club racing boat after you have rowed 50 miles in a training boat.

1. Build upon the experience you have gained from the training boats.
2. Take the blades and other gear down to the dock first.
3. Place two boat slings out in front of the boathouse, about 10-15 feet apart.
4. At the rack in the boathouse, find the balance point of the boat you are going to use and lift moving the boat straight out of the boathouse. Be careful of the other boats around you as you exit the boathouse. Place the boat on the slings. Inspect the boat to be sure no nuts are loose and adjust the foot stretchers to fit your needs. Do not leave the boat unattended on the slings, a breeze or passing dog can knock the boat over causing extensive damage. These boats are very fragile so please be careful.

Racing Boat Checkout Continued:

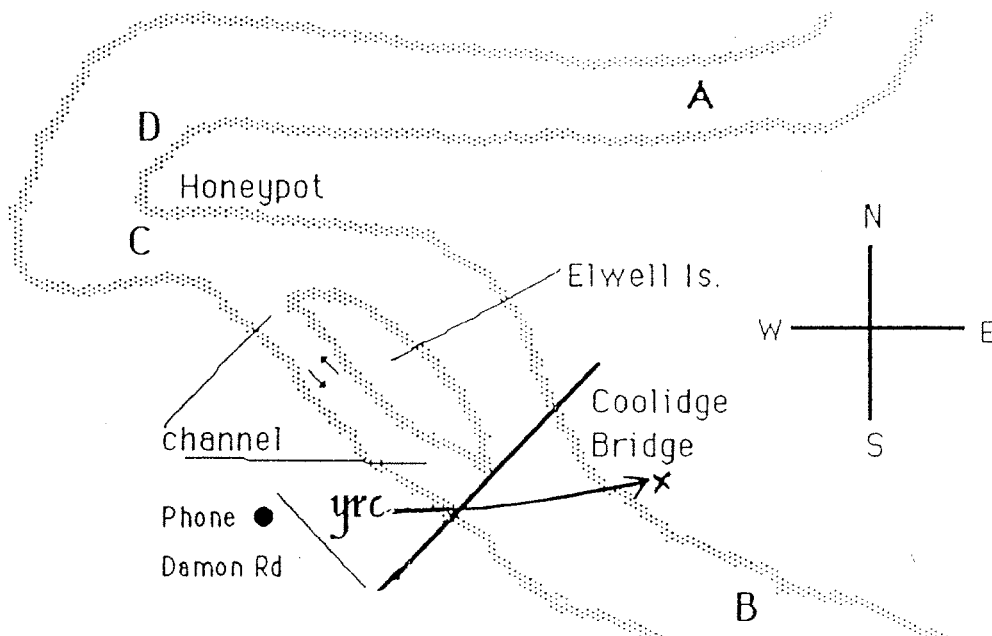
5. Turn out the lights and shut the boathouse.
6. The boat can be carried by balancing it on your head, using a small piece of foam for a cushion. This takes a bit of practice and best tried with an assistant.
7. Take the boat to the water and follow the basic dock step as listed earlier. This boat will be much more responsive than the trainers so be prepared. Remember, there are two kinds of rowers; those that have gone in the river and those that will go in the river.

Basic Rowing Technique:

1. Adjust your hands with the left hand over the right. You are now ready to row. The blade should be held out in the fingertips as if you were carrying a suitcase. You will be rowing correctly if blisters, and later callus, match when you place your hands in the position of prayer and should be located at the last joint of your hand. Aloe Vera lotion and baby powder prior to rowing keep blisters to a minimum.
2. While rowing, try to keep your hands at the same level on both the pull through and the recovery of the stroke. Keep the blades just under the surface of the water, it is not necessary to bury the blades deeply. Experiment by raising and lowering your blades as you sit in the boat and notice how balance is affected. It is in the above described position on the recovery that hull glide occurs. Your spine should be exactly over the center of the boat.
3. The basic stroke involved with sculling includes the following motions (hopefully in this order): while sitting in the shell, come slowly down the slide toward the stern placing the blades just into the water at the end of that movement, this is called 'the catch'. Gather the water slowly with your arms out straight. Drive quickly with the legs, 'the drive') and after your legs are straight, swing your back towards the bow while continuing to pull on the blades. While swinging your back towards the stern start and pulling on the blades, start to bend your arms and pull them closer to your body. At the end of the 'drive' when your body is stretched out, push the blades down to get them out of the water. Balance comes from removing the blades at the same time and slowly pushing the blades away from your body, past your knees and back into the initial catch position.
4. Rowing requires balance, stamina and strength. It is the horizontal pull on the oars that drives the boat forward. Other motion is extraneous and will cause up and down or back and forth motion. Movements such as these will cause the boat to move less efficiently and extra energy must be used to correct these mistakes.
5. It is highly recommended that you watch other rowers before setting out in a shell.

Local Waterway Information:

1. Beware of motorboats. They come out after the black flies and tend to swarm between Memorial Day and Labor Day. They are worse on the weekends, in the afternoons and in good weather. They can usually be avoided by rowing during the week and early in the morning (6am) on the weekend.
2. Be aware of the wind when it blows out of the northwest. As can be seen on the map below, if you go either upstream or downstream you will be going downwind. As you go down a long stretch of the river the conditions will worsen and the water will get rough and choppy (see marks A and B on the map below). When turning there is a risk that the waves will come over the sideboard and swamp the boat.
3. Be aware of the water below the Honeypot section of the river. When the river is running high and fast the water in that area can get very unsettled. Strong eddies make for an interesting situation. It is best if you choose to row in this area to shorten your strokes and relax. You can never out muscle the river so it's best to learn to use it to your advantage and appreciate it for what it is.
4. The water just above the Honeypot can be rather shallow on the Hadley side. As motorboats pass this area the size of their wake will grow as it gets closer to shore. If you are rowing in that area when this happens be aware that you will get pushed further ashore and may have to deal with rather high wake at the same time... a situation ripe for swamping. Be careful.
5. To avoid the wind try to stay on the side of the river where the wind is coming from, you may find shelter here.
6. In the summer when the morning fog burns off, the air will heat up quickly so be prepared for potential heat and strong sun.



Rowing Guide

Page 8

Interesting Rowing Related Web Sites:

Rowing - Home Page
<http://rowing.miningco.com>

The World Wide Web Virtual Library: Rowing
www.comlab.ox.ac.uk/archive/other/rowing.html

Rowing on the Internet
www.icaen.uiowa.edu/~jszydlk/trivial/sport/rowing.h..

Rowing Physiology and Performance
www.krs.hia.no/~stephens/rowing.html

United States Rowing Association
www.usrowing.org

Concept II
www.concept2.com

Vespoli
www.vespoli.com

Adirondack Rowing
www.adirondackrowing.com

Hudson Boatworks
www.hudsonboatworks.com

Sew Sporty
www.sewsporty.com

and many more to search for....