



A Parent's Guide to Evesham Rowing Club

Welcome to Evesham Rowing Club (ERC). We hope you and your family enjoy being part of our club.

This parent's guide is designed to let you know what to expect at ERC. We recognise that some parents will know a lot about rowing, and others will know very little. If you have no prior experience, rowing can be a very confusing sport, so we have included some basic information to help.¹

As with all sports and activities children take part in, parental support is really vital. There are many opportunities for parents to become involved with the junior rowing section and ERC more generally, and we rely on your support.

We are incredibly lucky at ERC to have the Boathouse Café and Bar. It is a great place to have a coffee, read a paper and watch the activity on the river. Opening times are: Saturday 9am - 1pm and Sunday 9am - 2pm with food available until 12 each day. (Subject to change, so please check.)

Coaches

All of the coaches at the club are **volunteers**. They have been trained to different levels through British Rowing and are usually rowers themselves. They will also have attended health and safety and safeguarding training. All coaches are DBS checked in line with British Rowing expectations. They give up their own time for coaching, training and to run the club. This keeps the costs down significantly and we are grateful for all they do.

The current coaching team are listed on the notice board in the club, along with their contact details. When your child moves into or between squads an induction with the existing and new coach will be offered.

Please make sure the coaches are aware of any special needs or medical conditions that your child has. You will be asked to fill out a form with details of this, with emergency contact details, and providing consent for emergency medical treatment and photography/videoing for training purposes and club promotion. Please request the form if you have not been given one.

There may be times when we require some parent help during sessions, for example if we are short of coaches due to illness or holidays. This is likely to involve being on the river bank with a throw rope or to stay for a while after dropping off or come down a little earlier for pick up to help crews on and off the water to reduce risk of damage when the river is high or low.

Training

These can vary slightly depending on the season/weather. Your child's coach will explain the plan for your child after they have completed learn To Row and when they move up a squad.

¹ Thank you to Stuart Bird for writing 'The parent's guide to regattas and heads – useful info picked up along the way' in 2017. This guide builds on that.

It may seem a minor point, but being correctly dressed can make the rowing experience more enjoyable, safer and prevent illness. It is essential that your child has adequate appropriate clothing and equipment, as well as a spare set of clothing, a towel and shower gel in case of capsize. They need warm clothes during the winter and appropriate sun protection in the summer. A water bottle is also essential. (ERC is committed to avoiding all single use plastic.) All rowers need to wear high visibility tops and we strongly advise you to have one available for your child, they are available widely and are reasonably priced.

Our boats

Looking after the boats at the club is a key part of rowing. Your children will be taught boat care when they are learning to row. It is always useful if parents and athletes have a “rigger jigger” handy whenever they’re at the club or a rowing event (this is a short spanner with a 10mm opening at one end and a 13mm opening at the other). Don’t use a long spanner or a ratchet as they make it too easy to damage boats. Carry your rigger jigger even if you don’t know exactly what to do with it - there will often be someone who wants to borrow one and they will then show you what goes where.

Competitions

The club juniors have the opportunity to compete in competitions locally, regionally and even nationally. Coaches will put out a list of events we are attending, you will be asked to let the coach know your child’s availability on an electronic poll by a certain date. Some events can open and close for entries very quickly so it is vital to have filled in the poll by the date advised otherwise your child and their boat will miss out on being entered. The coach will select crews and boats considering availability from the poll responses then advise athletes and parents of the entries made.

In the summer we enter regattas (side by side racing with a knockout format usually with heats, semis & Final) and in the winter we enter heads (time trial racing format). The club may also enter indoor rowing competitions on rowing machines.

Squads are organised according to gender and school age i.e. J13s = boys in Y8. WJ14 = girls in Y9. The three ERC junior squads are Beginners (Up to & Including J13), Girls (WJ14-WJ18) and Boys (J14-J18). This is subject to change in the future (following consultation) depending on the number of juniors and coaches availability.

Whilst rowers may purchase as much or as little of the kit as they want, from W/J14+ they have to compete in an ERC ‘all in one’ as part of British Rowing Rules. Please see the notice board or website for details of how to buy/order these. Occasionally there are second hand ones on sale.

Each squad has someone looking after the money to be used for competition entries. They keep money in a specific bank account. Each athlete needs to keep at least £30 in this account to fund entries and towing costs. You will get regular updates and requests for top ups through the season. Entry fees for races are usually “per seat” rather than per boat. (i.e. you pay for each competition you enter.) If you do a knockout type event with multiple rounds you get the opportunity to race more than once for your money, at heads it is just the one row. Entry costs are usually £10 to £15 per seat/event depending on the event. Sometimes your child will do 4 or 5 events over the course of a weekend regatta. Please contact the person responsible for your child’s squads account for more details.

Towing costs are charged per event rather than per seat. Amounts can seem quite random (usually £3, £5 or £10) and are based on how far away the event is. The towing costs cover the expenses (petrol and parking, on occasion vehicle hire and for the maintenance of the trailers) of the club member or parent who has volunteered to tow the boats on a trailer. The club doesn’t have a towing vehicle and relies on volunteers

(with suitable cars and tow bars) to get boats to events. If you have a large suitable car and would be willing to tow, please let us know. Make sure you check your licence and insurance if you're going to volunteer – and the maximum towing weight of your car.

Please note that once you have committed to an event and your entry has been made you will still have to pay for the seats/events even if you then choose not to or cannot attend.

The evening or day before an event it is expected that all juniors competing go to the club at an agreed time and load up the trailer. Parents are a huge help here. The coaches will create a trailer plan for loading – this spells out which boats / blades need be loaded and where each boat needs to be on the trailer so it can be towed safely. There is then a need after the event to help with unloading and putting away the boats, blades etc. A text or email usually lets us know the trailers e.t.a. after it has left the event. Many hands make light work as there are lots of jobs to do and people are usually keen to get home after a long day. Boats are usually re-rigged when we get back to the club on the day of the event. Athletes generally put the riggers back on and fit seats with parent's helping to do untying, carrying boats, putting away blades and trestles etc.

A coach will always be there to supervise loading / unloading.

For racing it is compulsory to become a member of British Rowing. This is paid annually from the anniversary of first joining (J12/13s free for first year). Race licences (the photographic membership card) are needed for all athletes and need to be bought to ALL regattas and heads we attend. We suggest that you have a picture of it on your phone too as a back-up.

Athlete/supporter parking can be a long way away from where the trailers are allowed to park and you are usually asked to be there early – general rule of thumb is to be at the trailer at least 90 minutes before boating time. Expect some very early starts and bring change for parking costs! Coaches will normally advise arrival, boating and race time by email the week before the event. Make sure you take note of your arrival time, as not everyone needs to be there at the same time.

On race day all boats need to be unloaded onto trestles and rigged (it's a great help if the athletes do this a.s.a.p. on arrival). Younger athletes will often want/need help getting boats and blades on/off the water and sorting out shoes, numbers, drinks etc. Coaches will help as much as they can but be aware there will be a lot more boats taking part than there are coaches and we rely on parents mucking in.

While the racing takes place we cheer all our athletes. There is often an Evesham Gazebo put up at a good viewing point. This is useful for bags, chairs etc and is also a grouping point for athletes, parents and supporters. Always remember sunscreen and an umbrella/waterproof and be aware that you may need both on the same day.

When watching events, it is a good idea to have binoculars and to know the number of the boat(s) you're looking out for. You will notice at events that each club has a distinctive set of colours. The best way to spot Evesham crews coming towards you is to look at the oars. Evesham blades are mostly blue with white tips.

When each race is over its good to check if the boat is now finished with and if it is it can be de-rigged and may even be able to go straight on the trailer. It is expected that each child/athlete takes responsibility for this and they may need parents help.

The winners get either a pot or a medal, depending on the event. This is quite an achievement and is celebrated by the whole club.

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Our own events

The club has three main rowing events each year. Our Regatta which is usually held on the first Saturday and Sunday in May, a Junior Head held on a Saturday in late October and a Senior Head on a Saturday in November. These are a fantastic opportunity to show off our beautiful spot on the Avon and our famous ERC hospitality. We also hope to make money to support the club through the year. We can only run the events with your help and support. The events are exhausting but fun. We expect all junior rowers and parents to help. We can't do it without you. It is a big part of being in the club.

We always hold a meeting for members and parents prior to each competition, and ask that you come along to find out what help we need. It might involve working at the start or finish, assisting an umpire, serving in the canteen, running the car park or in the administration of the event. There are many jobs and we need LOTS of help.

We also have a number of other fundraising events throughout the year that we ask you to support. They include quiz nights, cake sales and catering for events such as the folk festival. They all raise much needed money for the club.

Social Media

ERC has a website <http://www.erc.club> and a Facebook page. Communication happens via Spond. Please ask your child's coach or the Junior Coordinator to provide details of how to access this.

Welfare and safeguarding.

ERC has a Club Welfare Officer (CWO). Their name and contact details are on the notice boards in the club house. The role of the CWO is to support the club and everyone associated with it, to create a safe and inclusive environment, and to respond to concerns and disclosures. The CWO will make sure they introduce themselves to your child after they join the club. All of our welfare and safeguarding policies are available on the ERC website. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the CWO directly.

Both ERC and British Rowing are governed by clear codes of conduct for rowers, juniors, coaches, and parents. The ERC code is available on our website, and the general code of conduct is on the British Rowing website. <https://www.britishrowing.org/about-us/safeguarding/guidance-documents/>

Club Organisation

The whole club is run by an Executive Committee and the rowing section has a committee too, chaired by the rowing captain. AGMs are held to vote in the committee members each year. This is your chance to find out who's who, ask questions and find out more about the club. The Junior Coaching Coordinator is on the rowing committee and there are two junior reps as well. Parents are welcome/encouraged to stand for election onto the rowing committee. Once again all of the club's officers are volunteers.

Glossary

Rowing is the general term for the sport. It is made up of two disciplines, sculling and sweep oar rowing. Sculling refers to rowing with an oar in each hand, while in sweep oar, each person has just one bigger oar. Juniors are taught to scull initially and it is easy for a good sculler to switch to sweep oar rowing later on.

Boats have 1, 2, 4, or 8 rowers in them, sometimes with an extra person to steer the boat and give commands to the crew, known as the coxswain – or cox for short.

The cox will usually sit at the back of the boat where she/he can see the crew and better provide some coaching, however in some racing boats the coxes lie down in the front of the boat with just their heads showing just in front of bow's back.

The front of the boat goes by the nautical name "bow" and may be recognised by the small rubber ball on it (the "bow ball"), designed to protect anyone unlucky enough to be hit in a collision. The back of the boat is the "stern" and has a fin attached to aid stability as well as often a rudder, both of which will be invisible if the boat is in the water. Remember that the rowers face opposite to the direction of travel of the boat, so they sit facing the stern.

Rowers in any boat other than a single are designated by their positions. The person at the front, closest to the bow, is known as "bow" while the person at the back is called "stroke" (not "stern"). In larger boats, additional rowers are denoted by numbers counting upwards from 2, who sits just behind bow. So in an eight, the rowers are known as (starting from the front of the boat) bow, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 stroke. This saves coxes and coaches having to remember everyone's names.

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide and do not hesitate to contact any member of the club with any questions you might have.