



www.bccrowing.net

THIRTEEN THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT ROWING FOR B-CC!

Above all, be supportive, be flexible and pitch in. Remember, B-CC Crew is a volunteer organization working with many other volunteer organizations to create safe, competitive and positive rowing experiences for our high school athletes.

Who does B-CC Crew row against?

B-CC Crew competes against scores of local high school teams, both public and private, located in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia. In addition, B-CC Crew is invited to participate in one-day away regattas, such as those hosted by St. Andrew's School in Middletown, Delaware, where it competes against teams from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York and the Manny Flicks in Philadelphia. At post-season championship regattas, such as the Stotesbury Cup Regatta on the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia and the Scholastic Rowing Association of America's Nationals (which is held in a different location each year), B-CC Crew races against teams from throughout the United States. The season's schedule and directions to all competitive events are posted at www.bccrowing.net.

When are the racing events and how long do they last?

Dual meets (against one other team) and triple meets (against two other teams) are usually held on a Saturday morning, beginning at 9 or 10 am, and last two to three hours. Regattas, which involve multiple local teams, are also usually held on a Saturday and run from morning to mid-afternoon—typically from 9 am to 3 pm. Coaches will always let team members know what time to arrive for a particular racing event, although generally it is two hours before the event. Coxswains generally must arrive earlier than the rowers to attend a coaches and coxswains meeting before the first race of the event.

Post-season away championship regattas (Stotesbury and Nationals), begin early morning on a Friday and conclude late afternoon on a Saturday. B-CC Crew arrives on a Thursday afternoon. The team works with B-CC school administration to secure excused absences for the students who are participating in these races. Only selected boats (i.e. selected students) travel to these post-season regattas and only if the coaches believe that the boats are competitive enough to justify the expense of time, energy and money to attend.

How long is each race?

High school rowing is a 1,500 meter course, generally divided into five or six lanes. At some racing venues (the Occoquan Reservoir in Fairfax County, VA, the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia), the course is visibly divided into lanes by buoys. The numbering of lanes generally starts from shoreline closest to the judges viewing stand. Lane 1 is closest to where the judges are viewing the race. In regattas where boats are seeded based on past performance, the most competitive boats are in Lanes 3 and 4.

For dual and triple meets and smaller regattas, there are a series of single races for each of the different boat classifications (see below) and a rower races only once to determine the outcome. The larger regattas have heats to determine which boats advance to a final race. In the course of a day, a rower could race twice to determine the outcome. At championship regattas, which draw hundreds of teams, heats or time trials are used to determine which boats advance into the semi-final races. In time trials, boats are individually racing down a 1,500 meter course. The boats with the best times (typically the top 12 or 18) advance to the semi-final races. Over a two-day period, a rower could race three times to determine the outcome.

An individual race varies, but can take anywhere from 4 ½ to 8 ½ minutes depending on the weather conditions, water current, experience of the rowers and skill of the coxswain.

How are rowing competitions organized?

B-CC Crew is a sweep program (each rower pulls with a single oar) as opposed to a sculling program (each rower pulls with two oars). B-CC Crew owns two 4+s (each boat has a coxswain and four rowers) and seven 8s (each boat has a coxswain and eight rowers). There is a men's division and a women's division, although a female coxswain can steer a men's boat and vice versa.

Each division is further separated into different boat classifications: 1st boats (the most experienced varsity rowers who are generally upper classmen); 2nd boats (varsity rowers who are generally sophomores and juniors); 3rd boats (varsity rowers who are generally sophomores and juniors); lightweight boats (women who weigh 130 lbs or less and boys who weigh 150 lbs or less); novice boats (first-year rowers regardless of their grade in school year); and freshmen boats (first-year rowers and coxswains who are in 9th grade).

Over the years, B-CC Crew has raced competitively in each of the above-mentioned classifications. Each year, the team tries to field at a minimum a 1st 8 boat, a 2nd 8 boat and a novice and/or freshmen 8 boat for both men and women and sometimes one 4+ boat for both men and women.

What are the different seats in a boat?

Rowers row either port (left side of the boat) or starboard (right side of the boat) based on which side they prefer. Seats are numbered from 1 to 8, from bow (front of the boat) to stern (rear of the boat). Generally, the heaviest rowers are in the middle of a boat (seats 3, 4, 5, 6). The lighter rowers are in the bow (seats 1 and 2). The rowers with the strongest and most consistent rowing techniques are in the stern (seats 7 and 8). The rower who sits directly in front of the coxswain in the 8 seat is also known as the “stroke” rower. The stroke is the person who sets the pace from the coxswain’s directions, the pace that all other rowers must follow in unison to propel the boat forward in the water. In 8s, the coxswain is always at the stern of the boat. In 4+ boats, a coxswain sits at the stern or at the bow (referred to as a bow-loader boat).

How is it determined which boat/what seat my child is in?

Coaches make boat and seat assignments based on power, technique and teamwork. Creating a line-up for a particular boat is a combination of many factors, not just the fastest erg times. Rowers will be moved from boat to boat and from seat to seat during practices leading up to a race as the coach determines the best fit. Freshman/novice coaches try to rotate everyone through the boats so everyone gets a chance to gain race experience. All coaches inform team members who will race and in what seat before the race day. For local racing events, regardless of whether an athlete is racing or not, each team member is expected to be at the event to offer support to the team and back-up, if needed.

For post-season away championship regattas, only the strongest boats are entered in the competition. The coaches inform the rowers which boats are going and the line-up of rowers in each boat generally a week or more before the away event. Included in the lineup are one or two rowers who are designated as alternate rowers. These rowers serve as back-up in the event of illness or injury of any rower at the away venue.

Can my child leave the event after his or her race?

Generally, no, and a team member must, in all cases, notify his or her coach before leaving a race site. It is considered good sportsmanship to lend support and to cheer fellow teammates during their races. In addition, after races on the Potomac River, team members are responsible for putting the boats back on the racks at Thompson Boat Center. For racing venues not at Thompson Boat Center, B-CC athletes are responsible for de-rigging the boats and loading them onto the trailer. Team members are also expected to return to Thompson Boat Center later that day or the next day (as determined by the coaches) to unload the boats and other equipment, and to put the boats back on the racks at Thompson Boat Center, a process that generally takes about 45 minutes.

Where do I find a race schedule?

Race schedules are posted on www.bccrowing.net as soon as they become available from the coaches or the organizing sponsor of the event, which is generally a day or two before the event. The number of races in which B-CC participates in any weekend event varies and depends on the size of the event and on the composition of B-CC's team each year. Race results are also posted on the team's Web site as soon as they become available.

What do I do on race day?

Everything but the rowing! If you have a volunteer job, make sure that you arrive promptly at the team tent. If your assignment involves water or food, make sure that you bring your full allotment. Many of our athletes arrive at a racing venue as early as 7 am. At some regattas, rowers race twice. Ample food and water at the tent is of paramount importance for our athletes.

When B-CC is racing, look for the oars. The color and design of the oars distinguish each team from another. B-CC oars are blue with a gold triangular tip at the end of each oar blade. Other B-CC parents will be at the river's edge to cheer and to point out our boats as they come down the water.

B-CC Crew sets up our tent near the finish line where parents hang out with other parents between races. On the Potomac River, the tent is in the Georgetown Waterfront Park, immediately adjacent to Washington Harbour. There are no concessions stands in the park or at Thompson Boat Center, but nearby Georgetown restaurants abound. Indoor restrooms are located at Thompson Boat Center.

At the Anacostia Waterfront, two tents are set up: one for the team members at the Anacostia Community Boathouse, and one for parents on the east side of the river in the Anacostia Park. There are no food or restroom facilities on this side of the river.

At the Occoquan Reservoir, only one tent is set up—near the launch area. It is for team members only. The Occoquan, however, has a wonderful outdoor multi-tiered viewing area where parents gather at the finish line. There are also indoor restrooms and a snack bar at the finish line. Be aware however that it is a 10-15 minute hike through a wooded area from the launch area to the finish line.

What shouldn't I do on race day?

Once you drop off your son or daughter at the racing venue, proceed at your own risk to engage your child in conversation before or after a race. On race day, athletes are generally preoccupied with race matters: moving boats, checking equipment, warming up, conferring with their coaches, their coxswains or other teammates, focusing on the race itself and its results (positive or not). Under no circumstances should a parent engage a coach in conversation. Coaches are focused on preparing their athletes for the competition.

What should I bring to a race?

Always wear B-CC gear! A hat! A sweatshirt! A t-shirt! And, wear layers. Weather conditions in March, April and May can change quickly—from sunny skies to a hard rain.

Heavy winds, thunder and lightening will postpone or cancel a race, but otherwise the team races in inclement weather. If it looks like rain, bring an umbrella. If it looks like sun, bring sun screen, especially to the regattas at the Occoquan Reservoir and the Anacostia Waterfront, where there is little protection from the elements. Do not bring pets to the Anacostia Waterfront or the Occoquan Reservoir. Park personnel will ask you to leave.

Bring a folding chair. Depending on the regatta, the “down time” wait can be 20-40 minutes or more between races. Bring a pair of binoculars, especially to the regattas on the Potomac River. The river is especially wide in Georgetown. Bring water, snacks, sandwiches or money for food. Water and healthy snacks (bananas, power bars, bagels, etc) are always available at the tent for the athletes. Parents, however, should count on bringing food and drink for themselves and any other family members attending. For away/overnight regattas, parents may purchase at cost the meals that are served to the athletes at the tent.

For the post-season championship regattas, bring extra money for regatta t-shirts and programs. Purchase t-shirts early as certain sizes sell out faster than other sizes. Offer to buy (rather than have your son or daughter buy) a regatta t-shirt. In the excitement and confusion of the races at away regattas, experience has shown that commemorative t-shirts are often lost or left behind by the rowers.

What should my son or daughter bring to a race?

Always wear his or her uniform. Bring a extra pairs of socks, a change of clothes and a variety of clothes (sweat shirt, wind breaker, rain gear, etc.) and sun screen. Label all clothing with the rower's name written in permanent marker on the inside of the clothing. One person's B-CC sweat shirt looks remarkably similar to another person's sweat shirt and lost uniforms are costly and difficult to replace!

What if I have more questions?

We know that the sport of rowing and being a first-year parent on B-CC Crew can sometimes be overwhelming. If you have questions/concerns about your student athlete and how he or she is doing on the team, contact the team liaison parents who are listed in the handbook and on www.bccrowing.net. They serve as the link between the parents and the coaches. Do not bring your questions/concerns directly to the coaches. We need our coaches to focus on coaching and not on parental inquiries. If you have any other questions about B-CC Crew or the sport in general, contact any of the board members.