

## Spring 2017 - Novice Crew – What to Expect

Learning to row with Yarmouth Youth Crew is a fun, exhilarating experience with a steep learning curve! It requires serious commitment, focus and dedication.

It does NOT require any prior athletic experience, talent or coordination to get started. Individuals who have never been “good at sports” sometimes turn into amazing rowers! Kids that excel at other sports sometimes struggle with mastering the rowing technique. But, rowing is a lifelong sport that anyone can learn.

*Parents – we are offering an adult learn-to-row and a return-to-rowing clinic in June! Check out our website at [www.YarmouthRowing.com](http://www.YarmouthRowing.com) to learn more.*

If you're on the small side, you may be coxswain material. (*pronounced cox'in, also called a "cox"*) Not sure if coxing or rowing is right for you? You can learn to row and decide later.

We've had a number of kids start out as rowers and switch to coxing after a few weeks. We've also had kids start as coxswains and switch to rowing. Don't worry...we'll help you find your place on the team!

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### First Things First

**The Yarmouth Youth Rowing Program is the youth division of the Yarmouth Rowing Club**, an independent community non-profit organization with rowers of all ages and abilities from a number of surrounding towns.

<http://yarmouthrowingclub.com>.

It is important to note that **we are NOT a Yarmouth High School sport**. We do not get any funding from the school or town and have to manage all of our races, transportation, equipment, safety launches, gas, boat trailer, and coaching costs, etc. from participation fees, Booster support and fundraising events. We do our best to stretch our budget but the sport of rowing is expensive.

*While crew is expensive, it is not an elitist sport. Everyone is welcome!*

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### Fees for Spring 2017

**Novice: Per student total: \$550.**

*(\$500 participation fee + \$25 Space fee + \$25 Rowing Tank fee.)* Once you have submitted your sign-up forms, we'll invoice you via email for payment. You may use a credit card, debit card or have the funds deducted directly from a bank account of your choice. We also accept checks *made payable to Yarmouth Rowing Club*.

**Easy Payment Plan:** 3 payments of \$184, *due March 3, April 7 and May 5.*

**We want any student who wants to row to be able to do so regardless of the family's ability to pay. Scholarship** is available. You can find the application on the last page of the sign-up form PDF. Please submit the financial aid request form by mail to Amy Smith, 19 Kellogg St., Portland, Maine 04101 or via email to our treasurer, [AmyBWSmith@gmail.com](mailto:AmyBWSmith@gmail.com). **Postmarked by March 1, 2017.**

## Setting Expectations

**100% Attendance is expected – you are allowed just 1 un-excused absence– but we hope you never need to use it. You get 1 warning. After that you will be asked to leave the crew, no fees refunded.**

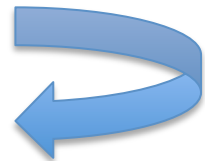
Unlike track, soccer or basketball, if a rower is absent from practice, their boat CANNOT go out unless we find a sub. With a short season, extremely limited water time, a large crew and a busy boatyard, finding a sub at the last minute is disruptive to the entire crew and unfair to your boat mates.

We expect 100% attendance unless you have an EXCUSED absence.

If in doubt, email *ahead of time* to get excused.

Use this and only this email! Put it in your phone!

[hscoach@yarmouth-rowing.org](mailto:hscoach@yarmouth-rowing.org)



- [Do not call or email Chris](#)
- [Do not send word with a friend](#)
- [Do not expect the school to tell us](#)

Please email before NOON to get excused. After 12 noon, call or text your coach.

### Excused Absences (get excused first)

- Illness (out sick from school – or sent home from school) **The school does not share any info with us about kids out sick.**
- Physical Therapy or Dr. appointment (try to schedule on OFF days)
- Emergency, funeral, unavoidable family travel plans
- Make-up test, teacher conference
- College visits, interviews

### These are NOT excused absences

- Babysitting
- Your birthday
- Can't get a ride (call, text or email a coach)
- Music, dance, voice lessons or other extracurricular activity
- Work (talk to your coach about scheduling crew and work)
- Too much homework
- Didn't bring the right clothes, shoes, etc.
- Injured - you need to come anyway (within reason – check with coach)
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*Bottom line - we expect full attendance at all practices, even if injured - you can always help out somewhere.*

## The Google Doc Schedule – Check Your Email 3x a Day!

The Royal River is tidal and we must plan our practice times accordingly. A draft schedule is put together pre-season to map out which weeks we have water and which weeks we have dryland. Please print and post this so you know where to be!

**An updated weekly calendar will be posted as a google doc on Sunday.** All participants must enter YES for each and every practice they will be attending. **If you cannot make a practice due to a valid reason (see excused absences above) you must put NO in the google doc, add a reason in the note section AND email [hiscoach@yarmouth-rowing.org](mailto:hiscoach@yarmouth-rowing.org). DO ALL 3! Get in the habit of checking your email!!**

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## Begin at the Beginning

We start novices off with a few intro videos and live demonstrations from coaches to teach you the parts of the stroke, the correct form, common beginner mistakes to avoid and how to put it all together. It's simple but not easy!

We then move onto the “ergs”, or ergometers, which are indoor rowing machines. Here we learn how to blend the “parts” of the stroke together to create a smooth rowing motion with balance, proper form and the correct rhythm – or “ratio”.

We'll also introduce you to a few rowing drills. Some of these drills are the exact same ones that top crews - even Olympians - use to warm up and improve their technique. Some are unique to us. They are all aimed at improving your form and technique. They may seem a bit wacky at first but they work!

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## Catching a crab...wait...what?

There is language that is unique to crew and it can be confusing at first. Terms such as “quick catch”, “clean finish”, “on the feather”, “square blades”, “pick drill”, “hands down and away”, “catching a grab”, and “on the recovery” will soon become second nature to you. We provide a handy cheat sheet to get you started.

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## Coxswain Commands

We'll also teach you the commands that will be used by the coxswains.

***Coxswain:** pronounced cox'in - the small person in charge who steers the boat, helps runs the practice, keeps the crew stay safe and working together both on and off the water. They tend to be small, smart, loud and bossy - but in a good way! On the quiet side? No worries, we can train you!*

These are the universal commands crews use to safely move the delicate and expensive boats from the boat rack to the dock, out for practice or a race and back again. We make sure you know these commands so that when we get to real boats, you will be completely comfortable with what the coach or cox is asking you to do.

## **Pre-Season and Dryland Practices: 3:00-4:15 pm**

**Novices will have pre-season dryland practice on the ergs (indoor rowing machines) Monday through Thursday, starting Monday, March 6 until April 3** and then whenever the tides and/or weather is unfavorable. As the temperatures rise, we may add running and other outdoor activities to build endurance, etc. Be prepared by packing your sports bag with running shoes, water bottle & a light jacket. (*see “what to pack in your sports bag”.*)

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## **Mandatory Swim Test and Safety Review – Fri, March 24, 3-4:30**

All members of the crew – veteran and novice – must participate in an annual swim test and safety review. We begin by reviewing a couple cold-water safety videos and what to do in the event of a flip. We then move to the pool where we practice what to do if a boat flips (in full rowing gear) and complete a 3-length swim test: one length in full gear and 2 lengths in a bathing suit.

**Team Captains** will also be announced at this event. (*See page on how captains are chosen.*) *Novices are not eligible to be captains.*

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## **Novice Day in Rowing Tanks – Saturday, April 1**

We will be taking a trip to down to Boston to Simmons College to learn to row in their indoor rowing tanks. This special facility provides a safe, stable, and comfortable environment in which to learn to handle an oar and apply the rowing stroke in a simulated boat. An amazing experience for any rower!

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## **Boat Moving, Boatyard Orientation & Water Practices**

The last Friday in march has the veterans moving the shells to the yard and getting them rigged, a boatyard orientation for the novices, and some team-building fun. Check the schedule for details.

The first few weeks of water practice have the novices rowing by pairs in boats with experienced rowers. We slowly fill the boats with all novices as their skills improve. Finally, we add in a novice coxswains until we have a “novice crew”. Some crews take longer than others to get to this point. Safety is always our primary concern.

## Race Prep Day – Saturday, May 6, 9 am – 2 pm

This is a **mandatory Saturday double-practice day** that gives us extra time on the water to get the novices up to speed, work on coxswain steering skills, learn and practice racing starts, determine boat lineups, hold seat races and generally get ready for our first race the following weekend. We set up 2 water practices and 2 off-water sessions for all crews that include videotaping and reviews, drills and techniques, advanced adjustment techniques for rigging, foot stretchers and oars and a snack break. A full day but fun!

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## The Regattas

We have 3 regattas this season: **Attendance is expected at ALL regattas even if you are not racing.** We will assign you a key support role for your crew.

**The Lowell Invitational in Lowell, Mass, Saturday May 13**

**The Moose on the Malden, in Malden, Mass, Sunday, May 21**

**MYRA (Maine Youth Rowing Association), Monday, May 29 at Waynflete in Portland.**

*We will send details about these events as we get closer.*

*For Lowell and Malden, please plan to drop off your rower at the Yarmouth Visitors' Center on Rte 1 to meet the bus for a 6 am departure. Coxswains should plan to depart earlier in cars with coaches to attend the early morning coach & cox meetings.*

*After each race, we carpool the team over from the Visitors' Center to meet the boat trailer at the boat yard, rig and put the boats away and then carpool back to the Visitors' Center to be ready for pick up around 6 p.m.*

***Crew families are encouraged to attend these events and cheer on our racers! We provide a fabulous hot lunch for everyone. Bring a chair, camera and spirit!***

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## Post Season

**Fun Row & Decommissioning the Fleet** - Tues, May 30, where we mix things up a bit. Tons of fun + swimming! Afterward, we clean the equipment and put the boats away for the summer.

**Banquet**– Wed, May 31, end-of-the-season awards and recognition evening event.

## What to Wear

Dressing for crew is a delicate balancing act as the temperature on the water can be significantly cooler than on dry land and can change over the course of practice as the sun gets weaker or stronger, wind picks up, etc. Once you get working, however, you need to be able to cool off. The solution is smart, hard-working **LAYERS!**

### Tops

Layer 1 – Under Armour or similar moisture-wicking top, short or long sleeve

Layer 2 – Performance fabric top, long-sleeve - **NO COTTON!!!**

Layer 3 – Fleece jacket or vest or similar – light but warm – **NO COTTON!!**

Layer 4 – wind breaker or light jacket

### Bottoms

Under Armour or spandex – long in early season, shorter spandex later on.

You may add a pair of shorts over your spandex shorts (optional) – **NO LONG, BAGGY SHORTS OR BULKY SWEATS!** *They can get caught in the wheels of the slide.*

### Other

Water bottle (or 2!) **MANDATORY!! – we don't have drinking water on site.**

Warm hat and/or ball cap, especially if sunny

Thin Gloves

Sunglasses

2-3 pairs of socks, smart wool or cotton blend

sports watch if you have one

### Shoes

Crocs, boots, sandals, slip on sneakers or other easy-to-get-on-or-off shoes. We don't wear shoes in the boats as they have them built-in already. You'll be removing your shoes on the dock into designated "shoe bins", labeled by boat. You'll retrieve them upon landing and have to be able to get them on and off **FAST**. These shoes will get wet and muddy and dusty so choose rubber, plastic, etc. You do wear socks in the boat and these will get wet too so always pack spares! Your cold feet will thank you!

### Coxswains

You need extra layers to make sure you stay warm and dry. Follow the list above but make the jacket a bit heavier and add waterproof/wind pants over the spandex. You may also want a hood, neck warmer or scarf to keep warm. You **CAN** wear shoes in the boat so sneakers or boots are fine. A jacket with zipper pockets is best.

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## What to Pack in Your Sports Bag

Practice can be cold and wet – either from the weather or just from your splashing boat mates – so **ALWAYS bring a sports bag with a *complete change of clothes*.** These items **CAN** be cotton.

Pack sunscreen, bug stuff, bandaids, antibacterial gel, rowing gloves or tape for wrapping your hands, granola bars or other healthy snack that won't spoil, spare water bottle (full), cell phone, extra socks, hats, gloves and running shoes!

*If you need an inhaler or other medical item, make sure you bring that too and give it to your coach or cox to carry in the boat!*

For dry land practice, T-shirt, spandex shorts and optional top shorts (not baggy!) and running shoes will be just fine. **BUT – always be prepared to run outside too!**

## Choosing Captains – The Policy

Our goal with the Captains Selection Policy is to be transparent, eliminate undue peer pressure and open the selection process up to any and all interested participants, regardless of grade. We will select up to 5 captains – veterans only. We are looking for a balance of boys and girls, both rowers and coxswains.

### Here's the plan...

Any veteran who is interested in being considered for a captain role will submit a brief written statement – **an open letter to the crew** - on why they feel they should be considered and detail what makes them good captain material. Please note that the content, not the writing ability, is the key here. *This is not an English assignment but a heartfelt statement to your coaches and fellow rowers/coxswains.* The crew will read the letters and vote (anonymously) for their top 5 choices. The coaches will review the results and make the final determination, which is final. Invitations will be sent to finalists and the Captains will be announced at the swim test.

### Some of the qualities we would be looking for include:

- Prior leadership experience (not a requirement!)
- Listening ability
- Time management skills
- Leading by example
- Comfortable communicating with peers/coaches
- Comfortable asking questions when unclear about something
- Willing to assist with novice practices
- Willing to teach novices or veterans how to tie down, rig, adjust, wash, wrap, etc.
- Willing and able to come early, stay late and do “other duties as assigned”
- Willing to coordinate car pooling efforts and shuttling (if able to drive others)
- Willing to plan captains’ practices & spirit days
- High Team spirit
- Friendly and helpful (in a quiet OR outgoing manner)
- Sense of humor
- Patient and kind
- Healthy competitive spirit
- Grace under pressure
- Glass half-full attitude
- Willing to help other crews as needed
- Willing to row any seat, any side, any boat as needed (within reason)
- Ability to diffuse tense situations with calm reasoning
- Ability to minimize gossip, bullying or unsportsmanlike conduct
- Open to constructive criticism, and honest feedback
- Willing to get the launches set up and put away
- Willing to double check tie downs, safety locker gear and boat trailer gear

We do not expect anyone to have ALL these qualities...this is just to get you started thinking. Provide examples when possible. Use your unique voice to add other qualities or skills you feel are important to being a crew captain. Good luck!



## Participant Code of Conduct

The sport of rowing is one which requires an unusual amount of close interaction and cooperation between teammates who often have varying degrees of experience and leadership skills. There are times, especially during race events, where coaches are not on site to adjudicate conflicts or referee disputes. There are instances where a parent or parents may not understand why a decision has been made. It is with these points in mind that we have put together a list of guidelines, expectations and resources for team members and parents.

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### Guidelines for Yarmouth Rowing Behavior

Yarmouth Rowing is committed to helping all students succeed in becoming disciplined individuals who act with integrity and respect, and recognizes that a strong club/school/home partnership is essential in achieving this goal.

The strength and quality of the rowing program rests upon a foundation of trust, consideration, compassion, respect and personal integrity. Accordingly, all students are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous manner, whether at school, at the boatyard, on the water, at Fitness Success, the Simmons Tanks, at a fundraiser, at a workday, on the bus or at a regatta.

Obscene gestures, foul language and/or racist, sexist, intimidating, belittling, demeaning or other offensive comments, *even in jest*, are unacceptable and have no place on crew. Hurtful, exclusionary or demeaning speech or action can have damaging consequences for individuals and for the community, particularly when they take the form of persistent patterns of behavior such as bullying and/or harassment.

All students are expected to respect the rights and individuality of others, and to demonstrate care for themselves, for others, for the quality of their athletic endeavors, for their gear, as well as club equipment and property.

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### Civil Behavior

The Yarmouth Rowing Program expects students to behave civilly toward one another, the coach staff, adult Club members and all other crews and officials. Kindness, courtesy and mutual respect should characterize behavior at all times, whether in person, on the phone or online.

Students are expected to work together with captains, coaches, staff and parent volunteers to address any incident of uncivil or otherwise inappropriate behavior in a way that seeks to resolve conflict and restore trust.

Yarmouth Youth Rowing recognizes that socially responsible attitudes and disciplines are developed over time, and that young people will make mistakes along the way as they develop both understanding and self-control. We seek to create a climate in which all community members can feel safe, secure and valued, both physically and emotionally.



## Addressing Grievances

Coaches are available to hear out and moderate any disputes and to answer questions you may have. Captains will serve as go-betweens for rowers and coxswains who have grievances either with each other or with other participants. They should be the first line of complaint – they will bring issues to the coaches. Captains are available to approach coaches if an aggrieved party does not wish to approach the coach him/herself.

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## The Captain Coach - *a parent needed!*

In an effort to assist the captains in their role as team leaders, we have created a special position: The Captain Coach will work with the captains individually, and as a group, to help them develop leadership skills, communication techniques and conflict resolution expertise. Contact Chris if you are interested

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## Parent Liaison – *a parent needed!*

In an effort to assist the parents with issues, questions and concerns, we have created a new (volunteer) position: The Parent Liaison. This individual will work with parents to answer any and all questions about practice and race protocols, parking, carpooling, clothing, expectations, scheduling Dr. appointments, etc. Please direct your questions to this person. Coaching questions should still be addressed to an individual coach, Program Director or the coaching staff.

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## Guidelines

1. When you come to crew, be present and leave your outside problems at home. The river, gym, or dryland space is NOT the place to gossip, complain about other people, whine about homework or the workout, or carry grudges. Bring a positive attitude, respect for your teammates, coaches and opponents, and a willingness to work hard.
2. Unless you are SPECIFICALLY ASKED TO CONTRIBUTE, please do not offer advice about rowing technique to your teammates (or your opponents). Coaches are hired to coach, and while a boat meeting about what is or is not working in the boat is appropriate at times, these discussions should take place with a coach present.
3. Rowing is not the place for exclusive friendships, romances, or cliques. While you are at practice or during regattas, each of you is a representative of the entire team. You must strive to make your boat as fast as it can be but also to make the team as well behaved and well meaning and friendly as possible.
4. Be flexible. Be helpful. Make an effort daily to assist other crew members with mastering crew procedures and routines such as erg storage, care of workout mats, water systems, washing boats, tie downs, safety locker key, safety gear, slings, rigging, loading and unloading the trailer, coxswain gear, cleaning up, etc.

## Choosing Novice Boats – The Policy

*We want to provide everyone with a SAFE and valuable rowing experience. We have limited water, just 3 safety launches and 6 coaches to work with. This situation dictates how many boats we can have on the water at any time.*

We will have a maximum of 6 veteran boats or 3 novice boats on the water, in split sessions - one coach/launch for every 2 veteran crews and one coach/launch for each novice crew.

Novice crews will start out rowing with a veteran rower (or 2) and cox in the boat until they are ready to row on their own. The coaches will mix up the novice rowers and coxswains to try and put together the best combination of abilities per boat based on size, skill, talent, balance, flexibility, ratio, strength, etc.

Our goal is to get everyone comfortable with the rowing stroke, to develop the correct form to prevent injury, and eventually have the boat rowing “all 4” in time to race. Some crews take longer than others. Be patient with yourself, your cox and your crew as we progress through the season. Leave the coaching to the coaches!

We will make every effort to allow every novice to race at least once. Lineups are subject to illness and injury and may change from week to week or race to race. Flexibility and a positive attitude are expected as we arrange novice boat lineups.

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***When you join the crew, you are agreeing to cooperate with this plan and abide by the coaches decisions and lineups. If you are not comfortable with this, you may want to consider another sport or rowing program.***