

## Safety at Green Lake

**Summary:** The safety of our participants is of paramount importance. Our program employs a number of practices to create a safe environment, many of which are described below.

- **Float Test**-Every participant must successfully pass a float test prior to their first water session. Float tests may be taken at any swimming pool or beach under the supervision of a lifeguard certified by the American Red Cross. The test cannot be administered at the Rowing & Sailing Center. The test is as follows: In deep water, while wearing long pants and a long sleeve shirt, you must float, tread water, or swim in place for ten minutes. In the final minute of the test you must put on a life vest while continuing to tread water. (This test is a good approximation of what could happen should you end up in the water during a rowing session.) The float test is valid for three years.
- **Safety Video**-Every participant is required to view the USRowing Safety Video. The video reviews a number of safety risk factors that can arise in rowing and demonstrates methods to mitigate the risks. Expect to view the video with your teammates as part of Learn to Row class.
- **Coach Safety Training**-All Green Lake rowing coaches are required to hold certificates in First Aid and CPR. They must also hold Washington State Boater certifications.
- **Coach's (Safety) Launch**-All rowing shells must be accompanied by a coaching launch when on the water. The launch is both a platform for coaching and a safety device. The launch is equipped with a two-way radio that provides contact with the boathouse and other coaches on the water. The launch also carries a supply of PFDs and blankets that can be deployed in the event of an upset that puts rowers in the water. In an emergency the coach can summon help over the radio and provide assistance to boats and crew. It is imperative that boats stay in close contact with the coaching launches throughout practice.
- **Rowing Shell Safety Features**-Every rowing shell incorporates features to provide for the safety of its crew. There are two primary safety features: heel ties and the bow ball. **Heel Ties:** The heel tie is a strap that secures the heel of the rowing sandal or shoe to the foot board. The heel tie will allow the heel of the sandal or shoe to flex upward (away from the bottom of the boat) about an inch. It then holds the heel securely in place. This secure hold enables the rower to quickly extract his or her foot from the sandal/shoe as is imperative in the case of an upset. Absent the heel tie the heel of the sandal/shoe would flex and it will be very difficult for the rower to extract his or her foot. **Bow Ball:** On the prow of every rowing shell should be a rubberized ball. It is there to blunt the otherwise rapier like prow of the boat and to prevent injury in the case of a collision.
- **Rower Safety Features**-every rower is equipped with several safety features: eyes and ears; common sense; knowledge of safety procedures and the ability to speak up. If you see something that you believe is unsafe, speak up. Better safe than sorry.
- **Wind and Water Conditions**-We all like to row on flat calm water, but most of the time there is some wind and wind driven waves. Sometimes there is too much wind and/or the water is too rough to permit safe rowing. The coach is responsible for monitoring existing and anticipated weather conditions and for making a determination as to whether we will go on the water. The coach's decision is final and should be respected by all rowers.
- **Traffic Pattern**- at Green Lake we have established a traffic pattern for boats to insure safe rowing and to avoid head-on collisions.
- **Boat Wakes**-Boat wakes can pose a significant safety risk for rowers. Sit up, stay tall and row your way through. Get the boat parallel to the wake!

• **Pre-Dawn Rowing Procedures**-for a good part of the year our morning rowing program will be on the water before dawn. All early-morning class participants will be required to attend in person the "Pre-Dawn Rowing Clinic" that will be part of the class curriculum. Boat lights, whistles, glow-lights and the relationship of the launches to the rowing shells will be described in detail. We employ a number of specific safety procedures to guard against mishaps pre-dawn such as:

- **Running Lights**-each shell will mount and illuminate a bow and stern running light. These lights are battery powered and affixed to the deck of the shell with a suction cup. The coxswain will draw a set of lights and insure that they are mounted prior to leaving the dock. The bow light is split with one half red and the other half green. The bow rower will place the light on the bow deck with the red light to port and the green light to starboard. Tie the retention strap to the backstay of the bow rigger. The coxswain will place the clear (white) light on the stern deck. Place the retention strap underneath the coxswain's seat.
- **Light Sticks and Whistles**-each shell will carry two lanyards that hold a light stick and a whistle. The bow rower should wear one lanyard and the stern most member of the crew (often the cox) should wear the other. The light stick and whistle should be employed in case of an emergency. Use them to signal the coach or other rescue personnel. Remember to take the lanyard off and return it to the cox at the end of your row.
- **Coaching Launches**-as with all rowing sessions a coaching launch will accompany the rowing shells. The launches will have running lights that help rowers to see them. The coach will also have a spotlight which he/she can use to light up obstacles such as the buoys.

• **Accident Procedures**-What to do in case of an accident? In all cases you should remain calm and rely on guidance and assistance from your coach. Our coaches are trained in safety procedures and our coaching launches are equipped with flotation devices and other safety equipment.

- **Capsize**-stay with your boat. Signal to the coach. Follow the coach's direction. Depending on conditions you may right your boat and get back on board or get a quick trip by launch to the shore.
- **Collision**-stay with your boat. Signal to the coach. Identify any injuries. Follow the coach's direction.
- **Injury or Medical Emergency**-stop rowing and signal the coach. Identify the injury or medical emergency to the coach. Follow the coach's direction.
- **Swamping**-stop rowing and evacuate the boat with the rowers in the middle of the boat exiting first followed by rowers at the bow and stern. (A boat filled with water is very heavy and as there is flotation in the bow and stern you put massive pressure on the keel in the middle of the boat. Therefore, the rowers in the middle get out first.) Stay with the boat. Signal the coach. Follow the coach's direction.

**Clothing:** The best clothing for rowing and land workouts is soft, stretchy, and fairly form fitting. Polypro, CoolMax, and similar fabrics are best because they keep the rower relatively warm even when wet and they dry quickly. Loose clothing can get caught in the slides, so avoid basketball style shorts or warm-ups. Running shoes and socks are needed every day for land workouts. Good running shoes are essential and should be replaced after every 300 or 400 miles of use.