

# WBHS Rowing Terminology 101



## Basic Rowing Terminology

Types of Rowing – SWEEP & SCULLING. Sweep Rowing is one oar per person and Sculling is two oars per person. Westlake do a mix of both types of Rowing, but traditionally have favoured Sweep Rowing. There are multiple boat classes/types:

1x = Single scull (1 person, two sculling oars), Note: the “x” means sculling

2x = Double scull (two people with two sculling oars each)

4x = Quad scull (four people with two sculling oars each)

8x = Octuple scull (eight people with two sculling oars each)

2 = Pair (two people with one sweep oar each)

4 = Four (four people with one sweep oar each)

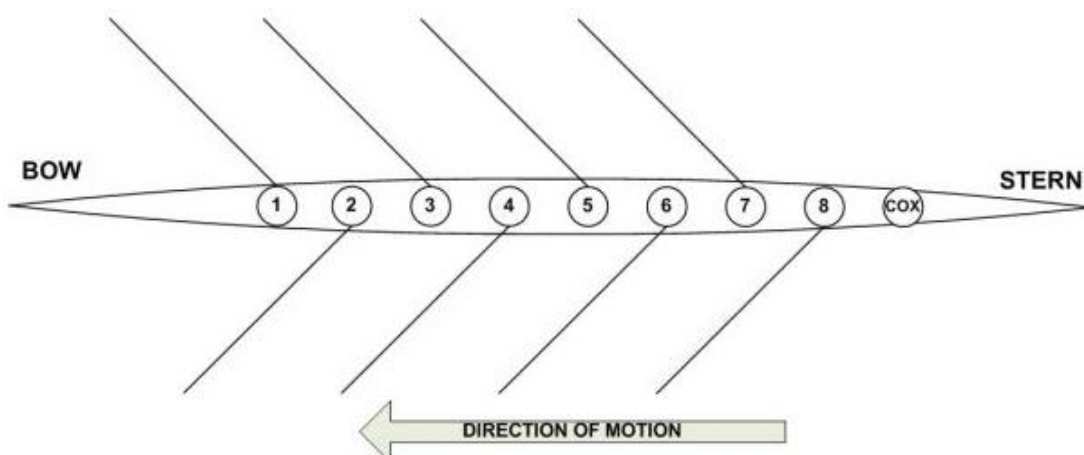
8 = Eight (eight people with one sweep oar each)

+ or – after the x or number means the boat is coxed or coxless (pairs, doubles or single). 8s are always coxed. Coxed boats can be either bow coxed (cox lying down in bow) or stern coxed (sitting up at stern).

4x/4+ and 8x/8+ boats are more normal for the younger/novice rowers, small boats are for experienced rowers or schools who have smaller squads. Crews are further defined by age group and sex, so “B U16 2x” would be a boys U16 double scull.

Boat Orientation - the boat usually travels forward and the forward end of the boat is the BOW. The trailing end of the boat is called the STERN. When facing forward in the boat (like the coxswain, but not the rowers), the left side is STROKE side and the right side is BOW side. A rower just beginning to row may get switched from side to side, but at some point will row/develop better skill on one side. The side chosen has nothing to do with a person being righthanded or left-handed.

Seat Numbers - The positions in the boat are numbered according to the seating. The seat closest to the BOW is #1 or BOW seat, next #2, and so on. The seat closest to the stern is #8 in an eight or #4 in a four and is also called STROKE seat. The person rowing in this seat is the stroke of the boat, who sets the rowing rhythm. A cox often calls seats by groups, for example Seats #1 & #2 are the “bow pair” while seats #5 to #8 are the “stern four”.



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Coxswain/Cox - plays a unique sporting role as a key member of the boat, but one that is not actually exercising physically. They are very light so that the crew need not carry extra weight on the race course. If a coxswain is below a minimum weight (55kg), extra weights must be carried in the boat to compensate. The cox uses an electronic amplifier system called a CoxBox™. It not only amplifies the cox's voice through a speaker system, but it has a built-in stroke rate meter and a timer. Mentally and tactically, coxswains are vital, as they have to:

- Steer a \$50,000, 18m boat with just one small rudder.
- Pace & motivate upto 8 team-mates as/when required over 1,000 to 2,000m races.
- Execute the coach's pre-arranged and practiced race plan to perfection.
- Make instantaneous real-time decisions and adjustments to the plan throughout the race.
- Be ready for a short flight and a swift bath, once victorious.

Within each race, the success of every boat depends on the coxswain acting as the coach, while the coach can only look on – rowing has no time outs/substitutions/half-time adjustments and no coaching allowed during the race by anyone other than the coxswain. Remind your rower to value & respect their coxswain!

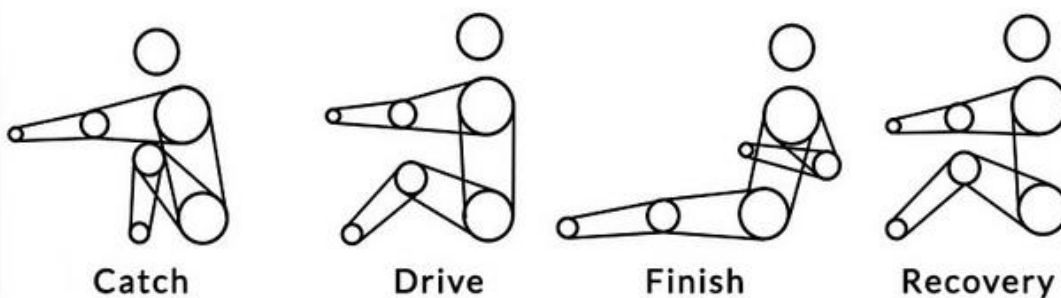
## What are the Components of a Rowing Stroke?

Catch – The beginning of stroke with the oar blade set upright/vertical (squared) in the water.

Drive – The blade is pulled through the water by the rower to propel the boat.

Finish – The oar handle is moved down, drawing the blade up and out of the water, while the rower also turns the handle so that the blade changes from a vertical to a horizontal (feathered) position.

Recovery – The oar remains out of the water as the rower begins recovery, moving their hands away from the body and past the knees, pushing the oar backwards. The body follows the hands and the sliding seat moves forward, until, knees bent, the rower is ready for the next catch.



## Rowing Technique Explanations

Rushing The Slide – Coming up the slide to the catch too fast (throwing the rower's weight toward the stern and causing the boat to slow down).

Missing Water – a late catch (not getting the blade into the water and losing power at the beginning of the stroke).

Washing Out – Raising the blade out of the water too soon, before the finish of the stroke (and losing power).

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Skying – Coming to the catch with the blade too high in the air above the water’s surface (then skimming the water during the slide, losing power).

Catching a Crab – When the oar is not released cleanly from the water (rowers “catch a crab” when their oar gets stuck in the water at the finish, actively slowing the boat). This can happen when a rower loses grip of the handle, makes an error in judging when to extract the blade from the water, or if the boat tips to the side and there’s nowhere for the rower to lower his/her hands to extract the blade. However, there are two types of crab rowers try to avoid:

- an over-the head crab - when the oar handle forces the rower onto their back and the handle goes over their head. This usually causes a great deal of disruption in the boat and in most cases the crew must stop rowing, recover the oar, and then proceed.
- an ejector crab - may happen when racing and the boat is moving very fast. The rower catches a crab and the oar handle gets caught in the stomach causing the rower to be catapulted out of the boat. The crew must stop to collect the swimmer and then go on.

## A Basic Rowing Glossary:

- The Boat:
  - Skiff – The type of narrow, long boat used in competitive rowing.
  - Stern – The back end of the boat.
  - Bow – The front end of the boat (where the bow ball is located).
  - Strokeside – The left side of the boat from the coxswain’s bow-facing view (the right side from the stern-facing rower’s perspective).
  - Bowside – the right side of the boat from the coxswain’s bow-facing view (the left side from the stern-facing rower’s perspective).
- The Oar:
  - Blade – The flat part of the oar that enters/displaces water to propel the boat.
  - Handle – The end of the oar, where it is held by the rower.
  - Shaft – The long main section of an oar, between the blade and the handle.
  - Sleeve – Pink plastic around the shaft that goes into the oarlock.
  - Collar – A ring around the sleeve, designed to correctly position the oar and prevent slippage.
  - C.L.A.M. – A ring that fits over the sleeve and against the collar to adjust the load on the oar for using the same oar in different types of boats (stands for Clip-on Load Adjusting Mechanism).

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- Around each Rower in the Boat:
  - Seat – The sliding seat each rower sits upon, mounted on wheels to allow movement.
  - Slides – A set of two runner tracks in which each seat's wheels roll.
  - Foot Stretcher – An adjustable plate to which the rower's shoes are attached.
  - Gunwales – The top edges of the sides of the boat, where the riggers attach.
  - Rigger – A triangular arm attached to the exterior of the boat that holds the oarlock.
  - Oarlock – A "U" shaped plastic part in which the oar is placed, acting as a pivot.
  - Gate – A metal bar & screw knob across the oarlock that keeps the oar in place.
  - Cox Box – An electronic device combining a digital stroke rate monitor/elapsed time readout with a voice amplifier. The coxswain uses the cox box to manage the race and to make their commands more audible to the crew, typically via wears a headband-mounted microphone.
- Indoor Rowing:
  - Erg – Short for ergometer, a piece of exercise equipment that provides an excellent land-based simulation of the motion and physical stresses of rowing.
  - Erg Test – A timed distance race simulation performed by an individual rower on an erg. Erg tests measure strength and conditioning progress, and aid coaches in selecting rowers for specific boats and seat positions.
- At Training:
  - Warmup – dynamic stretching exercises done before rowing (erg, gym or on-water)
  - Home Exercises – strength & conditioning exercises done at coaches discretion (e.g. circuits of run shuttles, plus burpees, pressups, high knees, crunches, etc)
  - Warm-down – yoga type stretching for post row mobility
- During a Race:
  - Racing Start – The opening strokes of a race, typically rowed at a high cadence to accelerate the boat.
  - Cadence – The rowing stroke tempo, usually expressed in strokes per minute.
  - Check It – A coxswain's call for all rowers to square their blades and drag them through the water in order to slow down or stop the boat.
  - Easy Oar – A coxswain's call for all rowers to stop rowing, permitting the boat to glide through the water.
  - Power 10 – A coxswain's call for the rowers to give it everything they can for a certain number of strokes.
- At a Regatta:
  - Long Distance Race – A timed event of around 5000m, held generally in the autumn/winter, with each crew starting in single file and negotiating the race course as quickly as possible. The start time and finish times are recorded, the elapsed time calculated, and the fastest time wins.
  - 1km Race – Regional sprint competition of 1000m, The race course is divided into 6 to 8 lanes, and typically at Lake Pupuke for us.
  - 2km Race – Regional or National sprint competition of 2000m, and held in spring/summer. The race course is divided into 6 to 8 lanes and each 500-meter section is marked with buoys. All boats start the race in assigned lanes at the same time and race to the finish line.
  - Repêchage – A French term (pronounced rep-eh-shahj from repêcher, "to finish up again"). The repêchage is a second qualifying heat for boats that have already lost an initial race, providing a second (and last) chance to advance to the finals.