

SHAKER CREW HANDBOOK

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Shaker Crew was formed in 1989 under Pat Whalen whose daughter was a rower. By 1995, enthusiasm for crew had waned and the club had diminished to less than 20 members. Due to the nearly single-handed efforts of Mr. Tom Lily, Shaker Crew was revitalized in the 90's. In May of 1998, Shaker Rowing Association, Inc. (an IRS 501(c) 3, not-for-profit organization) was formed to support Shaker Crew. Shaker Rowing Association is a totally self-supporting organization. Crew is not part of the formal sports program offered at Shaker High School - it follows a club structure within the school. Shaker High School contributes a small amount toward the salary of a Head Coach and provides use of the high school training facilities. Shaker High School also provides bus transportation to the river at the Corning Preserve each season. We maintain and nurture on-going good relations with Shaker Junior and Senior High School.

Dues cover coaching fees, maintenance & repair of equipment, insurance, entry fees for competitions, transportation of boats & equipment to races, and membership in the U.S. Rowing Association. Dues do not cover uniforms, special race fees, or travel/lodging /food for out of town races.

Only rowers in good standing (i.e., dues paid, medical/health forms submitted, swim test completed, waivers signed and submitted) will be allowed to row.

We rely entirely on parental involvement and support in order to keep Shaker Crew alive. It is mandatory for a family representative to help on one of the various committees that operate (i.e., food, fundraising, equipment, etc.). Fundraising is a vital part of this organization and participation in certain fundraisers will be required.

SECTION 2

OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

Shaker Crew is co-ed operates three (3) seasons of rowing.

The scholastic Fall season consists mainly of "Head Races." Head races are traditionally long races (usually 3 miles in length) and require a great deal of endurance and stamina. The Fall season of crew usually begins during the first full week of school in September and runs through the end of October.

Winter training (indoor rowing, endurance, and strength training) will be expected to begin sometime in January to prepare for the Spring rowing season and continue until water practice begins sometime in March.

The scholastic Spring season will consist primarily of sprint races (usually 1500 meters in length). The Spring rowing season begins with the onset of water training in March and continues through the end of May or early June.

The Summer Learn to Row programs begin after the end of the school year is completed and run through mid-August. In addition to Shaker Junior and Senior High School students, our Summer programs are opened to all Town of Colonie residents.

SECTION 3

WHAT IS CREW?

Crew is the ultimate team sport requiring the highest degree of dedication and commitment. Eight (8) or four (4) rowers and one (1) coxswain (pronounced cox-in) must work almost flawlessly to make the boats move quickly through the water. Rowers appear as though they are moving backwards as their seats slide on a set of tracks within the boat frame. The coxswain's job is not only to steer the boat, but also to motivate the crew and keep them working together at a prescribed pace.

There are two types of rowing: sweep rowing and sculling. Sweep rowers use only one oar each while scullers have two oars. Shaker rowers participate mainly in sweep events, but on occasion may row in a few sculling events.

VARSITY LETTER POLICY

- Be a member in good standing having satisfied crew academic grade and school attendance requirements;
- Competes in at least two (2) competitive races in the 1st Varsity boat during the Spring scholastic season, or rows in the Varsity 8+ at the State Championship, or who has competed for three (3) years with Shaker;
- Participates in 90% of all scheduled water practices during the season;
- Participates in club fundraising activities;
- Complies with the behavioral requirements of the North Colonie Code of Conduct;
- Payments must be current;
- Eligibility for Spring Season letter includes involvement in an approved winter sport at the high school OR participation in 90% of indoor land training with Shaker Crew;
- A Varsity Letter will be awarded to any qualified rower at the end of year Spring Banquet.

SECTION 4

COACHES BIOGRAPHIES

- Varsity Boys Coach: Brandon Murray
- Varsity Girls Coach: Rachel Bowen
- Modified Coaches:

SECTION 5

CREW CAPTAINS

Shaker Crew is currently reviewing the Crew Captain policy.

SECTION 6

GENERAL RACE AND ROWING INFORMATION

- Participation in all practices and races is required.
- Conflicts with race dates should be IMMEDIATELY discussed with coaches upon receipt of the season's racing schedule.
- Racing schedules are subject to change to maximize athletes experience.
- Each crew will be required to arrive at the race location at a specific time determined by the coach. Be punctual - your crew will not row if you are late. If you are unable to attend the race for any reason, notify your coach immediately.

- All rowers are required to wear the same designated Shaker Crew uniform. Shaker rowers/coxswains are expected to exhibit the highest standard of sportsmanship and support for the team at competitions.
- Exemplary conduct is expected of Shaker rowers at all races. Coaches will set additional rules for behavior and curfews.
- Races (and practices) are held in nearly all-weather conditions. However, coaches have no control if races are delayed or cancelled due to unsafe conditions.
- Sneakers are necessary every day for practice, and socks are mandatory for all practices and races.
- After races, rowers are expected to return to the SRA home boat location to unload and de-rig boats and to take care of all equipment used in races.
- Parents will be asked to assist with supervision for some away races.
- It is imperative that rowers eat to replenish lost energy and KEEP HYDRATED. Every athlete should bring his/her OWN water bottle. There will be NO sharing of water bottles!
- It is often cooler at the river - be sure to dress appropriately including a dry shirt to change into after practice.
- Rowers with fevers should NOT practice.
- Blisters are common and should be treated early. Parents should be aware of the potential for infection on hands and occasionally on the back of calves. [Keep clean](#) and see coaches for treatment advice.

SECTION 7

TEAM RULES AND REGULATIONS

All rowers are subject to the guidelines and penalties as outlined in the [Shaker Jr. - Sr. High School Interscholastic Athletic Guide](#) relative to academic and athletic performance. Specifically, Shaker Rowing Association training rules include a zero-tolerance policy for all drugs including, but not limited to, alcohol and tobacco products. Those who choose to violate this policy are subject to removal from participation for a period of one (1) year from the date of their removal.

Discipline infractions involving safety will be regulated and enforced immediately by coach. Discipline infractions which involve violation of the [Shaker Rowing Association Handbook](#) and/or North Colonie Code of Conduct will be reviewed by the Head Coach and the Board for enforcement.

Any behavior that reflects unfavorably on Shaker Crew constitutes unsportsmanlike behavior. If you are suspended from school, you will be ineligible to practice or compete during the time of your suspension. You will also forfeit the opportunity to row at the race immediately following your suspension.

Insubordination by a rower to a coach - or disruptive behavior to the team, or any disrespect displayed by a Shaker rower, constitutes a discipline infraction and will be subject to discipline or removal from the program based on a review made by the Shaker Rowing Association board and peers.

Rowers are expected to attend practices daily and on Saturday based on each season's schedule of practices. April vacation practices are crucial to Spring success. Missing these practices (2x daily for Varsity; 1x daily for Novices) may affect boat placement. All rowers/coxswains are expected to be present. Unexcused absences are unacceptable. Excused absences must be minimized. Rowers are expected to show initiative and dedication to self-improvement when not assigned to a team activity.

Shaker Crew strives to be number one in all aspects of rowing - particularly with respect to displaying good sportsmanship at all times. Row hard, row to win, but do so within the rules of the sport. Respect all members of your crew. Your crew is depending on you to be there for them in all aspects of this sport. That includes eating and sleeping properly, working as hard as possible to maintain positive attitudes,

being a good winner by congratulating other boats at the end of races, by supporting fellow teammates regardless of their level of accomplishments, by being role models to less experienced rowers, and by respecting the integrity and judgement of all race officials and coaches.
Rowing equipment is very expensive and must be handled with care.

- Unnecessary talking and horseplay is not permitted when handling equipment.
- All rowers/coxswains must participate in routine cleaning and maintenance of equipment.
- Rowers are expected to remain after practices to ensure all boats, oars, and launches are properly stored and secured.
- Report any equipment problems to your coaches immediately.

Shaker Crew takes pride in the scholastic accomplishments of our rowers.

- Be on time for all classes.
- If you have an unexcused tardy or are absent, you will not be allowed to practice on that day.
- Keep things in perspective - school and family come before crew!
- At the same time, however, you have an important commitment to your crew teammates that will require discipline and sacrifices on your part.
- Contact your coach immediately if you need time away from crew.
- Do not use crew as an excuse for neglecting your studies. However, you should schedule optional activities around crew.
- Time management of your schedule is very important.

SECTION 8 BOAT STRUCTURE

Program Structure

Varsity Program:

- 1st Varsity - A Boat
- 2nd Varsity - B Boat (Junior Varsity)
- 3rd Varsity - C Boat (Junior Varsity)

Novice Program:

Less than one (1) year of rowing experience

- Novice - mix of grades

- Freshmen - 8th & 9th grades only

Competitive Program:

The A level boats represent our most competitive and 'fastest' boats. The 2nd and 3rd level Varsity boats will focus on training rowers who are interested in competing at the 1st Varsity level. The following applies to all Varsity athletes who have reached this level of rowing ability:

- Must possess the highest level of physical fitness (i.e., proven strength and endurance, ergometer score, etc.), and possess the talent and dedication required to train and race at this high level of competition;
- Coaches will assess rower's attitude, consistency, racing experience & past performances, seat racing results, as well as a subjective analysis of boat moving ability;
- Attendance at daily practices is required;
- Follows all guidelines as outlined in [Varsity Letter Criteria](#);
- Possess an understanding that maintaining a seat in a Varsity level boat will require ongoing seasonal performance and excellence;
- Rowers at this high level of competition will have the opportunity to participate in indoor rowing competitions usually held in February each year (i.e., Crash B's).

Novice Program - 1st Year Rowers

- A Novice rower is defined by U.S. Rowing as any rower who has not yet completed one full year of rowing in competitions. Therefore, Spring Novice rowers can still be considered Novices when they row in the Fall of that same year. Usually, your first 2 scholastic seasons of competitive rowing will be as a Novice.
- 9th Grade Novice rowers may also be considered 'freshmen' rowers and may be entered into particular race as such based-on coaches' discretion. Rowers who have not competed are still considered Novice until they compete in a race.

Modified Program - 7th and 8th Grade Rowers

- This program class allows 7th and 8th grade Novice rowers to participate in a non-competitive way and begin the training process. Following U.S. Rowing rules, 8th graders are also allowed to race as a 'freshman' if race warrants that type of boat.

Program Notes

Coaches will be making boat selections during the first several weeks of water practices for each season but is an on-going process throughout each season. On occasion, there may be novice rowers who are selected to participate in the Varsity level program based on their overall athletic ability. This is solely the discretion of the coaches.

Various competition races offer differing boat structures in which to compete. Our coaches will take every opportunity to allow for all rowers to participate and maximize the potential of Shaker Crew. This can sometimes be very confusing to parents. Please do not hesitate to ask if you are unsure why something is being done. Communication is very important!

SECTION 9

BOAT SELECTION

One strength of the Shaker Crew is our depth of talent. Each year coaches struggle with the difficult decisions of which athletes to put into which boats. Along with the information outlined in the [Boat Structure](#) section, the following also applies to this process.

Coaches are Expected to

- Maintain a safe environment for practice and competition;
- Provide Spring Season athletes with a written assessment of skills and boat placement after three (3) weeks of practice on the water;
- Make fair assessments of fitness level, motivation, attendance, technical ability, etc. to achieve fastest lineups;
- Should athletes have questions concerning their boat placement, they should arrange to speak with the coach;
- Provide athletes with feedback throughout the rowing season so rowers know their individual strengths and weaknesses;
- Will attempt to provide Spring Schedule of races no later than mid-March for the Spring season;
- Will attempt provide Fall Schedule of races no later than mid-September for the Fall season;
- Coaches will provide lineups mid-week for any scheduled race; alternates will be notified as to their status for the race in a timely fashion.

Rowers are Expected to

- Maintain safe conditions for themselves and fellow rowers;
- Attend all practices. Unexcused absences are not acceptable; Less than full attendance at all practices will jeopardize your seating and/or may affect your racing eligibility;
- Be supportive of team by accepting coaching decisions; be flexible;
- Treat all teammates, opponents, coaches, officers, and parents with respect;
- Insubordination by a rower to a coach, or disruptive behavior to the team, constitutes a discipline infraction and will be subject to discipline or removal from the program;
- Rowers are expected to begin practices as soon as they arrive at the water by securing oars, launch, etc. without waiting for coaches to give directions;
- Display good sportsmanship at ALL times;
- Help with development of all Shaker rowers no matter what level boat they participate in - foster TEAM spirit;

- Seek feedback - if you are unsure of your placement or progress, ASK.

Parents are Expected to

- Respect the coaches as the final authorities on boat selection and rowing matters.
- Be courteous and respectful in discussions with coaches. Remember to treat them as you would want them to treat you. Abusive, harassing or confrontational behavior by a parent to a coach will be reported by the coach and will result in an immediate dismissal of the rower from the program;
- Recognize that one of the coaches' goals is to create the fastest possible lineups. While these decisions may be subjective, they are not personal;
- If parents have questions or concerns involving safety or rower performance, they are asked to set arrange a time for discussion with the coach. This must not take place during practice times.
- Support your athlete by helping them understand the importance of eating balanced meals, getting the proper amount of sleep, the need for extra hydration, and is properly dressed for all weather conditions. Prepare the rower with water bottles and extra food for race days;
- Understand that when your rower is at practice or races, they are under the direction of their coach and should not leave until dismissed by coach;
- Make every effort to be timely with drop off/pick up. Coaches will never leave a rower alone, but please be courteous of their time.

Commitment is an integral part of Shaker Crew, and is required to withstand the physical demands of the sport, to raise the large amount of money needed to sustain the team, and to keep Shaker Crew on the forefront of visibility at [Shaker High School](#). Shaker Crew exists not only because the athletes are committed to their sport, but also because the parents are committed to their rowers. All Crew families participate in fundraising, races, and other club activities throughout the year, and in so doing, establish a bond and share unique experiences - an often-uncommon occurrence between teens and parents today!

SECTION 10

SAFETY PROGRAM

I. First Aid

- All coaches are required to be certified in basic CPR/First Aid on a yearly basis consistent with guidelines of the American Red Cross.
- At least one First Aid kit will be inventoried and restocked at the beginning of each season and should travel with the teams.
- Each coach is responsible for checking the medical release book for any medical conditions. However, the coach is not responsible for administering any medicine.
- The medical release book shall accompany the team whenever it travels.

- Any incident will be documented by filling out a US Rowing Incident Report and the President of Shaker Rowing Association shall be informed following completion of immediate actions to stabilize the event.
- Local authorities shall be notified if needed.
- Shaker Crew will make every effort to have a parent volunteer RN or LPN serve as Nurse Liaison.

II. Water Safety

- Before any athlete is allowed to row, he/she must submit a medical release form, and US Rowing waiver and demonstrate that he/she is a capable swimmer, by passing a swim test performed by the coaching staff or by presenting certified Life Guard cards to attest to level of swimming ability. This is to be documented.
- During the swim test the athlete must prove that he/she can swim 150 yards, be able to tread water for ten minutes and put on a life jacket in the water.
- Before any rower is allowed to row, he/she must watch the safety video and show complete understanding of what to do in the event of an incident. This is to be documented.
- Rowers will attend any/all safety workshops as deemed necessary and appropriate by coaching staff throughout the season.
- The Head Coach will determine if the water is safe for rowing, considering wind, current, debris, air temperature, water temperature, and experience level. In addition, the weather radio should be monitored for the threat of inclement weather.
- All coxswains are instructed on the docking traffic pattern, and the 'rules of the river'. This will also be documented. Each coxswain is required to have a whistle and instructed on when and how to use it.
- All crews are informed that in the event that they can no longer see their coach, they are to STOP immediately, and after a few moments they should head back towards their coach.
- **ROWERS ARE INSTRUCTED TO ALWAYS REMAIN WITH THEIR BOAT IN THE EVENT OF AN INCIDENT!**
- No coach is permitted to work with more than four (4) boats at any given time.
- Each launch shall carry one (1) Kippy Liddle Bag which contains eleven (11) adult personal floatation devices, a rescue throw bag, a waterproof flashlight, an air horn, nine (9) emergency rescue blankets, and a first aid kit in a waterproof box.
- All engines will be inspected seasonally.
- Launch operators must meet the State requirement of being at least 18 years of age or possess a NYS Boating Safety Certificate. In addition, if the operator is going to use the launch by his/herself (i.e., new coach, rower), he/she must demonstrate complete understanding of the given launch to the Head Coach. All coaches should be familiar with each launch.

III. Equipment Maintenance and Repair

- All equipment, including launches, shall be serviced prior to the start of each rowing season to ensure everything is in safe working order. Records of this shall be maintained.
- The launches are to be cleaned out on a daily basis.
- Procedures for the safe handling of potentially hazardous materials shall be conspicuously displayed in the appropriate places.
- Oars will be cleaned and disinfected daily.

IV. Rowing Shells

- All boats should have properly sealed bow and stern compartments.
- All shoes should be equipped with heel tie downs.
- All shells should be equipped with bow balls.

V. Inclement Weather

- Coaches should be cognizant of the weather forecasts prior to practice.
- The Head Coach shall determine if the water is safe for rowing, considering wind, current, debris, air temperature, water temperature, and experience level. In addition, the weather radio should be monitored for the threat of inclement weather.
- If thunder or lightning is detected before practice, crews should wait at least thirty (30) minutes after the last thunderclap before launching.

VI. Incident Procedures

(It is understood that every incident has different circumstances and may call for different protocols and actions. See [Forms for the Incident Reporting Form.](#))

If boat should take on water and begin to sink, coaches should

- Send the other crews they are responsible for directly into the dock under the supervision of other coaches.
- Call for help.
- Approach the swamped shell from downwind/stream.
- Coaches should immediately hand out life jackets to every rower and coxswain while taking a head count.
- Coach should instruct the rowers to untie, sit easy and relaxed, stay with the boat, and watch out for his/her pair (coxswains should be paired with stern pair).

If the boat has completely swamped and the rowers are in the water, the coach should remove the rowers from the water over the Gunwales using a 1-2 'dip and haul', being careful to keep passengers evenly loaded in the launch. Coach then:

- Should call for help and have someone contact authorities if needed.
- Taking only the recommended number for the launch, rowers should be shuttled to land. If needed, transfer removed rowers to another launch that is helping with the rescue to speed return to dock.
- If threat of hypothermia exists, have rowers huddle together on floor of launch (wrapped in emergency blankets) - check for signs of hypothermia. If positive, or if other injuries exist, call for ambulance as soon as possible.
- Once back at the launch site, treat hypothermic rowers according to first aid guidelines (warm trunk separately from limbs). Wait for ambulance. One coach or parent, and medical release from, should accompany rower(s) to the hospital.
- The boat should be left in order to tend to the rowers first.
- If cold, the rowers should be escorted to a warm area as soon as possible.
- File Incident Report form.

If a rower is injured:

- Call or radio for help.
- Remove rower from shell.
- Take rower to nearest emergency access facility.
- File Incident Report form.

Rollovers

- Rollovers are handled in the same manner as any swamped boats, the obvious difference is that the head count becomes extremely crucial, and the rowers are instructed to make sure that their pair has safely released from the foot stretchers and resurfaces.
- Again, the athletes are instructed to stay with the boat until they are pulled from the water.
- Rowers should be checked for signs of hypothermia and appropriate actions (as stated above) should be taken.
- The boat should be rolled right side up, and 'towed' to the nearest appropriate location for safe removal.
- In smaller boats, such as singles and doubles, it is very often easy to flip the boat, bail it, and put the rowers back in.

SECTION 11

ROWING TERMS

BLADE (Hatchet or Spoon)

The end of the oar that is in the water.

BOW

The front of the boat. Bow-pair refers to seats two and one.

CATCH

The part of the stroke where the oar enters the water.

CHECK

Bad technique that slows the boat down usually caused by rushing the slide.

"CHECK IT DOWN"

Coxswain call that makes all the rowers drag their oar blades through the water perpendicularly, effectively stopping the boat.

COX BOX

A small electronic device which aids the coxswain by amplifying his/her voice and giving a readout of various information.

COXSWAIN

An athlete who sits in the stern and does not row but is responsible for steering, strategy and motivation. (pronounced cox-in)

CRAB

When the blade gets caught under the surface of the water.

DRIVE

Part of the stroke where the rower pulls the blade through the water to propel the boat.

ERG (Ergometer/Erg Machine)

Rowing machine that is used for land training.

FEATHERING

Rotating the oar in the oarlock so that the blade is parallel to the surface of the water.

FINISH

The end of the drive.

FOOT STRETCHER

Part of the boat where the shoes are attached and where the rower pushes his/her legs against on the drive.

'HOLD WATER'

Coxswain call which is another way of saying "Check it Down".

LAYBACK

Term for how much you lean back at the finish.

"LET IT RUN"

Coxswain call for all rowers to stop rowing and to pause at the finish, letting the boat glide through the water and coast to a stop.

LEG DRIVE

Term used for driving the legs against the foot stretchers on the drive.

OARLOCK

Square latch to hold the oar and provide a fulcrum for the stroke against the rigger.

PORT

Side of the boat to the coxswain's left and the rower's right.

POWER 10 (or 20 or 30, etc.)

Coxswain call to take a certain number of power strokes. A power stroke is a stroke that musters all the strength you can give.

RATIO

Speed of the slide on the recovery relative to the speed on the drive. Optimal ratio is 2:1.

RECOVERY

Part of the stroke where the rower comes back up the slide slowly towards the catch.

RELEASE

At the finish when the blade comes out of the water.

RIGGER

Made of metal attached to the side of the boat.

RUDDER

A steering mechanism under the boat.

SCULLING

Sculling is rowing with two oars (an oar on each side of the boat).

SHELL

Another term for boat. Specifically, a boat used in racing.

SKYING

When the blade is too high off of the surface of the water at the catch.

SLIDE

Rolling seat in tracks in the boat.

SPRINT

The last 20-30 strokes of the race

STARBOARD

Side of the boat to the coxswain's right and to the rower's left.

STERN

The back end of the boat.

STROKE

One full motion to move a boat. Consists of the catch, drive, finish and recovery.

STROKE RATE

Strokes per minute.

SWEEP

Rowing with one oar on one side of the boat.

"WEIGH-ENOUGH!"

Coxswain call to have all rowers stop rowing. (sounds like "way-nuff".)

List any injuries sustained; who treated them and where:

List any damage sustained to boat(s), equipment or property:

Add or attach any further comments or additional information you think could be useful, e.g. list of witnesses with addresses:

What further actions have been or will be implemented to avoid repetition of incident:

Signatures

Officer of the Club:

Date: [dd/mm/yyyy]

Club Safety Advisor:

Date: [dd/mm/yyyy]

Have you sent the original to the President?

Yes / No