

Big Red Crew Book

Spring Crew Edition



WELCOME TO BIG RED CREW

Suddenly you find your son or daughter is:

Gone

Tired

Getting up at dawn...without complaining

Eating like a horse, or eating only salad

Producing sweaty, wet piles of clothing

Talking a strange language

Or all of the above

Congratulations!!! You have a rower in the family.

Your child has been captured by a wonderful, lifelong sport. He or she will build muscles and endurance...and character, by learning the value of persistence, dedication and teamwork.

This booklet of information is intended to help you get a handle on what is happening. It describes the sport of rowing, the Big Red Crew rowing program, and the community of parents, friends, and supporters that makes it all possible. A community, by the way, that is delighted to WELCOME you.

The Big Red Crew Boosters, coaches, and team members welcome you !! Crew is more than a sport...it is a lifelong experience. Whether you are a novice to the

sport or an “old oar”, there is a place for you. Students will find a sport to challenge them, and parents will find a new world to share with their sons and daughters. Rowing offers many opportunities for making friends, getting into shape, learning new things, and even getting into college. We hope this booklet will be helpful as you delve into the new and sometimes mysterious culture of rowing. Don't worry if your son or daughter comes home talking about quads, riggers, and high tens....you will have this booklet to help you communicate.

Please take some time to go through it carefully as it includes important information for both rowers and parents and will answer many of your questions.

Good Luck and see you on the water !!

INTRODUCTION TO BIG RED CREW

What is Crew?

Crew is the ultimate team sport that is also one of the most challenging physically. Rowers must train to a high aerobic level and also weight train to build power and strength. High School rowers compete in the spring over a 1500 m or 2000m course. It takes between 4 and 8 minutes to complete a race, depending on the class of boat.

Crew is the sport of competitive rowing. Boys and girls in long, narrow boats (called shells) race against each other, and the clock. They race against other rowers of similar age, weight or ability, and the boat with the fastest time over a prescribed course (usually 1500 m or 2000m) is the winner.

The concept is simple, and it's easy to learn the basics. However, there's an enormous amount of skill involved in propelling that foot-wide craft through choppy waters with 12 foot oars, and it takes more teamwork than practically any other sport. It takes strength, endurance, balance, concentration, coordination, and the will to win that makes you push through the pain to be the fastest boat on the water. In fact, many say that rowers are the world's finest athletes.

Crew is often called the ultimate Team Sport that is because in Crew there are no single star athletes...it takes everyone in a shell to win a race. Everyone in a shell is totally dependent on the other rowers in the shell to win. We have no bench warmers or substitutes, so it takes a very high level of commitment on a athlete to be in Crew as they significantly impact everyone else. So time management and commitment are very important. Athletes need to maintain 2.0 grade point average as this is the athletic department ruling. If they fall below this, they cannot attend practice, or travel with the team or attend regattas until the next grading period. So it's imperative that they stay healthy, get plenty of rest, eat right, keep up on their

school work and manage their time well so they can be at every practice and regatta.

A QUICK COURSE

The term “boat” refers to a team. It can be eight, four, or two rowers, or even a single rower. In addition, most boats have a coxswain, the on-board coach who steers the boat (being the only one in the boat who faces forward) and communicates to the rowers through an on-board PA system (the coxbox). Boats are classified by the number of rowers. With the cox, an eight will actually have nine members on the team.

The vessel they sit in is a “shell”, a lightweight, streamlined boat with sliding seats and oarlocks extending over the side. It’s a craft built for speed.

Rowers will either control a single oar (sweep rowing) or two oars (sculling), and the class of boat depends on the number of rowers and the way they are handling the oars.

Sweep rowers come in twos, fours and eights. Scullers row alone, by twos, or fours. All eights have a coxswain; twos and fours may or may not have a cox. All Big Red Crew boats are sweep eights or fours, although we occasionally lease a double or single for sculling.

Boys and Girls row separately in competition. In each class there is a varsity eight and there may be a second eight, third eight, etc; The junior eight is a class in which all the rowers must be younger than 17. The freshman eight, as the name implies can only be 9th graders. There also are weight-classified boats, which may be lightweight, midweight, and which require a specified average weight for each participant.

Individual rowers are identified by the seat they occupy, starting at the bow (front) with the 1 seat. Occupying the 8 seat, commonly known as the “stroke” is an experienced rower who sets the cadence for the boat.

There are lots of other terms to learn. Don’t worry. You’ll be speaking fluent “crew” in no time.

HISTORY OF BIG RED CREW

Parkersburg High School has the earliest crew team in West Virginia still in existence today. It is one of only two high schools in the state with a crew team. The other one is also from Parkersburg (Parkersburg South High School Patriot

Crew) which is why you will often see Red and White cheering for Blue and White and vice versa.

The PHS rowing team was started in 1963 after Dr. Brundage came here from the Philadelphia area and established a small rowing club in 1962. From that point, one boat and a handful of men, the team has grown to a continually updated fleet of boats and a very populated and excited crew of both men and women.

In 1998 the Men's Midweight 4+ became the first boat from West Virginia to win a gold Medal at Nationals. Since then, we have won several more medals at Nationals.

In 1997, Freshmen became eligible to row as long as the sport was not offered at their Junior High School. The 2001 Men's Freshman 8+ won silver at Midwest and became the first PHS Freshman boat to go to Nationals.

Over the past several years, the boosters, with the help of foundations, corporations and individual donations have invested greatly in this program with the purchase of 8 new shells, a new trailer, and most recently a new Dirigo 4+ in 2006.

It is truly *a great time* to be involved with Big Red Crew

WHO CAN ROW?

Eligibility: Students from 9th through 12th grade enrolled in Wood County Public Schools may row.

Big Red Crew requires academics first. A student needs a cumulative average of 2.0 or better in all courses combined the preceding quarter to participate. If this is not met the athlete cannot practice, travel, or take part in the regattas until this is met next grading period.

Safety: Physical, swim tests, a rowing safety video and instruction, coaches in launches with radios, cell phones, emergency kits, and communication with weathermen are standard policy. Regattas have emergency personnel on site.

Sports Physical: A physical exam is required for anyone playing a sport. A physical is good from June to June. Get a form from the Athletic Office or from a coach.

Swim Test: Swim test will be done at the Y and date and time will be announced.
This is generally done before school at 6 am.

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, ILLEGAL DRUGS; Students possessing, using, or selling these items on campus, or on school affiliated bus or on boathouse property or while participating in Big Red Crew will be reported to the appropriate authorities. And appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

WHO ARE THE COACHES?

Coaches can be teachers or members of the local community. All are experienced and trained in rowing and safety. Each coach is responsible for a maximum of two boats. They guide workouts from launches that follow the shells on the water. Launches are equipped with radios, cell phones, and safety equipment.

What do they expect: Show up, work hard, have a good attitude

If a rower has to miss practice, call the coach in advance

Bub 304-481-6641

Glen 304-210-8861

HEAD COACHES

Bub Fulton-- began his involvement with crew when his daughters rowed for PSHS in 1999. Bub was Co-Booster President with Susie in 2000-2001. Bub organized the Brundage Memorial Regatta for OVRC from 2003-2004. Bub began coaching for OVRC from 2002 through 2009 where he coached the summer and fall programs. In 2005, Bub began coaching for PHS as a Men's Asst. Coach and in 2006 took over the Men's Team as the Head Coach. He has been Head Coach of the Men's Team from 2006-2010. He also coached Ohio University Women's Team in 2007 and 2008. Bub took the PHS Men's Teams to Nationals 2007 and 2008. Bub has had medaling seasons his entire coaching career with PHS. In 2011, Bub is taking over as Head Women's Coach for the Big Red Women. Bub is a graduate of PSHS and has a Level II Coaching Certification through US Rowing. Bub is employed by Allegheny Energy and is active with the Blennerhassett Fire Department.

Glen Starcher -- is head coach for the Men's PHS Crew Team. Glenn is in his fifth season as a coach for the PHS Men's Crew Team, this his third year as head coach. He rowed three seasons (1997 - 1999) at Parkersburg South, where he competed in the Jayvee 4 race at Nationals in 1998. He also rowed in the Varsity 4's and Varsity 8's as a Patriot rower. During his competitive rowing years, Glenn attended the Summer Rowing Camp at Marietta College. He graduated college in 2003 from Washington State University, with Degrees in Electrical and Electronics Engineering.

ASSISTANT COACHES

Marilyn Moses -- Assistant Women's Coach: Marilyn is a third year coach. She is a 1979 graduate of Fort Fry High School.

Kerri Owens -- is an assistant coach for the PHS Big Red Crew team. Kerri rowed four seasons for PHS from 2002 - 2005 as a varsity rower along with four fall seasons of rowing for the Ohio Valley Rowing Club from 2001 - 2005. After graduating, Kerri continued rowing for three semesters at the University of Charleston, where she completed a degree in Chemistry. This is her third season as a coach for Big Red Crew.

Greg Buck -- is a first year assistant coach. Greg is a 1987 graduate of Sistersville High School. While attending Georgia Tech University, Greg rowed for two years during 1987 and 1988. Presently self-employed as an IT Consultant, he attended Georgia Tech and Indian River College, having previously worked as a Communications Computer Systems Operator for the USAF in 1989-1993.

SAFETY

Rowers safety is always our *FIRST* priority. Safety launches accompany shells on the water. Each launch is equipped with a cell phone, first aid kit, fire extinguisher, tool kit, life jackets for all, paddle, tow rope, blankets for all, emergency numbers. We do row in rain, but we don't row in white caps, thunder and lightning. Due to Staph infections that have become prevalent in sports over the last couple of years across the country we advise each rower to have a small bottle of hand sanitizer and a roll of first aid tape. Blisters and all cuts are to be kept covered at all times. A concentration of Bleach and water will be available to wipe down Erg handles and Oar handles after each use. This is mandatory.

WHO MAKES THE TEAM?

Who makes the team? *Everybody*....The mix of boats on the Big Red Crew depends on the number of rowers that turn out each year. It's impossible to say at the beginning of the season how many boats of which type there will be on the Big Red Crew, because EVERYONE ROWS. That's right. Every student who meets the basic qualifications and comes to practice will be in a boat competing at some level during the season.

Crew is competitive. No one is cut from the team and everyone rows, but the upper boats are hard to get in. Ability and Erg times, conditioning and attitude all play a part in determining the makeup of a boat. Illness or injury can be a factor from week to week. Coaches aim for fast boats that can win on a given day.

WHERE DO THEY ROW?

In order for Big Red Crew to remain and participate as a Scholastic Rowing Team, we do winter conditioning in our new exercise rooms in the Annex building at Parkersburg High School.

We row on the Ohio River in Vienna at the lot beside Fishbones in Vienna while waiting to obtain our permanent home that is in the works.

Practice is from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday for indoor conditioning and occasionally on Saturday on the second floor of the PHS Annex.

Please pick your child up by 5:30 pm at the latest.

The practice time will change once we are on the water.

WHEN DO THEY ROW?

Scholastic rowing is a spring sport. Practice starts in January, after school 3:30 until 5:30 PM....Monday through Friday. We do practice an occasional Saturday. And we do row during Spring Break, sometimes twice a day. We have such a short time to prepare for racing season that every practice is very important.

We do participate against teams that row year round.

HOW DO ROWERS TRAIN?

Rowing is a physically demanding sport. Pre-season conditioning is necessary. This includes erg work, weight training circuits, and a great deal of running for leg strength. Rowers are always training, either on the water or in the Boathouse.

Pre-Season rowers are encouraged to play other sports or train in the off season

Erg Tests: Periodically coaches will record rowers times on the Erg. Comparing size, strength, and times helps them put together the right combination of rowers in a boat. This is called “Making a seat” in a boat.

Missed Practices: Rowers need to call a coach if they are going to miss practice. Make up for missed practices will be 6k after practice for each practice.

WHAT DO ROWERS WEAR?

Rowers wear many layers. They start with warm up suits in February and end with tank tops by June. Rowers need to bring to practice everyday tennis shoes for running, water for drinking, extra socks, extra clothes to change into when wet. And their outer wear should be weather resistant. All cotton will just absorb the water when it is raining and make them cold. For competition, rowers must purchase official uniforms, which are sold at cost. Financial assistance is available if necessary. Ask your coach.

Many of the things they wear will say Big Red Crew. The clothing available includes sweats, t shirts, sweat shirts, fleece, gym bag, totes, denim shirts, polo shirts, ear bands, spandex leggings, etc;

To Summarize

Layer One: Wicking material to keep you dry

Layer Two: Insulation, loose which will keep warm close to your body

Layer Three: Protection from Wind and Water: Lightweight

Gloves Pogies or breathable material

CLOTHING FOR COMPETITION:

The rowers are required to match when racing. In cold weather the rowers like to wear cool max long sleeve shirts and spandex leggings to keep warm. Everyone in the boat must wear these in order for them to be allowed.

WHAT DO ROWERS EAT?

Everything!! Actually, everyone except most lightweights eats lots of carbs- pasta, pizza, bagels, etc. Rowers do not like to eat prior to a race, but will be ready to eat and drink afterwards.

Many boats follow the tradition of a Friday night pasta dinner during regatta season. Some boats rotate to a different rowers house each week, while others find a warm home and never leave. Some boats will meet at a local favorite restaurant. Whichever way they do it, they load up on pasta and psych themselves for the next day's race. This fosters close friendships that can last a lifetime.

WHAT DOES CREW COST?

Big Red Crew is a school sponsored Club at Parkersburg High School. Therefore, we are totally funded by our booster organization. Coaches are hired by the Board of Education and paid by the board. Big Red Crew at present houses its equipment free of charge since moving from the Ohio Valley Rowing Club. The cost to row varies. This amount is figured by all the expenses incurred divided by the number of rowers that we have. Some of the expenses are hotel rooms, buses, food, insurance, bay rental, entry fees, Gas, equip repair, etc; Many fundraisers are held by the boosters to help rowers raise their assessment. And many rowers earn all of their money so it is possible !!! Please participate and do not wait until the last minute to come up with your assessment. PLEASE plan ahead. Having a rower quit due to money concerns midway thru the season puts a very big burden on whatever boat they are assigned to row in. Remember in Crew everyone has a seat and there are no substitutes.

AWARDS BANQUET

Be sure to come to the spring sports awards banquet. Coaches present varsity awards, senior awards, and rowers exchange gifts within their boats. Many boats give gifts to their coach. Everyone gets to give a speech if they like. It's a special night.

THE REGATTAS

Big Red Crew participates in a series of competitions each spring and fall. Regattas are out of town in places such as Columbus, Ohio, Oakridge, Tennessee, Marietta, Ohio, Cincinnati, Ohio, New Jersey, etc; We start traveling the first weekend in April and finish up middle to late May. Regatta schedule is included in this packet.

CREW BOOSTERS

Like most other public school rowing programs, Big Red Crew does require a participation fee for each rower.

Big Red Crew Boosters are parents and friends who want to see Big Red Crew stay at the top of the rowing world. We do the bulk of the fundraising to buy the best and safest equipment for the rowers, and provide the people power to help the program run smoothly. Big Red Crew Boosters Executive Board is elected every year. Booster meetings are generally held the second Thursday of each month.

Most of the equipment, including shells, which can cost over \$20,000 each, are purchased by the Crew Boosters. In addition to organizing and running fundraising events, parents also work at the race courses. We have fun, learn about the sport and get to know other parents and students.

PLEASE PITCH IN

There is more to Crew Boosters than fundraising, though. It takes people-parents and friends who will take a little time to help make the program run smoothly.

Regattas don't just happen, after all. At local regattas, parent volunteers serve as parking attendants, launch and safety boat drivers, run concessions stands, work the medal stand, sell T shirts. We need **EVERYONE** to come out and help make these events successful.

And when we go out of town parents are needed to buy, transport, prepare and provide food for our rowers at our big Red and White Tent (not to mention transporting the tent, setting it up and taking it down)

Be sure to say "Sure" when somebody calls and asks for your help. But don't wait for a call !! Contact a board member and offer your services. It's rewarding.....and fun !!!

IMPORTANT:

Each rower needs to be registered with Regatta Central. Please do this immediately.

**Go to www.regattacentral.com
Regattacentral.com/athletes/**

Enter Code: BG-086257 You will be prompted to enter Last name. Then follow the directions.

If you have any problems please call a coach or Regatta Central for help.

Each rower has to have a waiver for each regatta we participate in. This will cover all regattas except the Lindamood Regatta in Marietta.

ELEVEN INSIGHTS TO THE SPORT OF ROWING

Rowing is a total body workout. Rowing only looks like an upper body sport. Although upper body strength is important, the strength of the rowing stroke comes from the legs. Rowing is one of the few athletic activities that involves all of the body's major muscle groups. It is a great aerobic workout, in the same vein as cross-country skiing, and is a low-impact sport on the joints.

Rowers are probably the world's best athletes. Rowing looks graceful, elegant and sometimes effortless when it is done well. Don't be fooled. Rowers haven't been called the world's most physically fit athletes for nothing. The sport demands endurance, strength, balance, mental discipline, and an ability to continue on when your body is demanding that you stop.

Sweep and sculling. There are two basic types of rowing: sweep rowing and sculling. In sweep rowing. Athletes hold one oar with both hands. In sculling, the athletes have two oars, one in each hand.

The boat. Although spectators will see hundreds of different races at a rowing event, there are only six basic boat configurations. Sweep rowers come in pairs, fours, and eights. Scullers row in singles, doubles and quads. Sweep rowers may or may not carry a coxswain, the person who steers the boat and serves as the on water coach. All eights have coxswains, but pairs and fours may or may not. In all sculling boats and sweep boats without coxswains, a rower steers the boat by using a rudder moved by the foot.

The categories. Rowers are categorized by gender, age, and weight. Events are offered for men and women, as well as for mixed crews containing an equal number of men and women. There are junior events for rowers 18 or under or who spent the previous year in high school, and there are masters events for rowers 27 years old and older. There are two weight categories: lightweight and open weight.

The equipment. Today's rowing boats are called shells, and they are made of lightweight carbon fiber. The smallest boat on the water is the single scull, which is only 27-30 feet long, a foot wide and approximately 30 pounds. Eights are the largest boats at 60 feet and a little over 200 pounds for the newer ones. Rowers use oars to propel their shells. Sweep oars are longer than sculling oars, typically with carbon fiber handles and rubber grips (although some sweepers still prefer wooden handles). Sculling oars are almost never wood.

The crew. Athletes are identified by their position in the boat. The athlete sitting in the bow, the part of the boat that crosses the finish line first, is the bow seat or Number one seat. The person in front of the bow is Number two, then number three and so on. The rower closest to the stern that crosses the finish line last is known as the stroke. The stroke of the boat must be a strong rower with excellent technique, as the stroke is the person who sets the rhythm of the boat for the rest of the rowers.

SPM no MPH. Rowers speak in terms of strokes per minute, literally the number of strokes the boat completes in a minute's time. The stroke rate at the start is high-38-45, even into the 50's for an eight and then "settles" to a race cadence typically in the 30's. Crews sprint to the finish, taking the rate up once again. Crews may call for a "Power 10" during the race- a demand for the crew's most intense 10 strokes.

Race watching. The crew that's making it look easy is most likely the one doing the best job. When watching a race, look for a continuous, fluid motion from the rowers, synchronization in the boat; clean catches; oars entering the water with little splash; and the boat with the most consistent speed.

Teamwork is number one. Rowing isn't a great sport for athletes looking for MVP status. It is, however, teamwork's best teacher. The athlete trying to stand out in an eight will only make the boat slower. The crew made up of individuals willing to sacrifice their personal goals for the team will be on the medal stand together. Winning teammates successfully match their desire, talent and bladework with one another.

Rowing is the ultimate walk-on sport. US Rowing is a membership organization that serves rowers of every ages and ability from the beginner to the experiences rower to the national team. So, there's definitely a place for you.

COMMON ROWING TERMS

Bow: The forward end of the boat which crosses the finish line first.

Blade: The end of the oar which pulls the boat through the water.

Bucket Rigging: Two riggers on the same side next to each other instead of alternated.

Catch: The entrance of the oar blade into the water at the beginning of the stroke.

Check: Amount of interruption of forward progress of the shell which commonly occurs at the catch and sometimes at the release.

Check it down: Stop immediately. Square blades in the water and hold.

Coxswain: Person who steers the shell from a seat located in the stern or a lying position in the bow.

Crab: Upsetting action caused by turning an oar blade in the water so the release is either forced or impossible to make.

Ergs: Short for ergometer; individualized rowing simulators that help strength and conditioning.

Feathering: Turning the oar blade flat during the recovery to lessen wind resistance.

Foot stretcher: Where the rower's feet are tied.

Head Race: The traditional fall regatta, in which boats cross the starting line at full speed at roughly 15 second intervals. The course usually involves navigating three miles of river, around bends and under bridges.

Lightweight: A crew on which each athlete weighs under a specific amount (130 pounds for women)

Novice: A rower in the first year of collegiate competition.

Oar: A 12'5" long, carbon fiber lever that moves the boat through the water.

Port: The left side of the boat.

Power 10 or 20: A tactical move of 10 or 20 strokes; a tactic the cox uses to motivate the crew to meet a specific goal.

Recovery: The time between strokes while the oar blade is traveling through the air.

Release: The oar blade leaving the water at the finish, or end of the stroke.

Regatta: The name of rowing events in which several crews compete.

Repechage: A second chance race for those crews which do not automatically advance to the finals of an event through the heat.

Rigger: The metal or carbon fiber structure attached to the side of the boat into which the oar fits.

Rigging: The relationship between the oar, the rigger and the position of each rower. Changing the rigging means changing the leverage, just as a bicycle rider changes gears. Most crews have an optimum rigging, depending on their size, strength and experience.

Run: The distance the shell moves during one stroke.

Sculling: Type of rowing where each rower uses two oars.

Shell: Boat used in the rowing races; seats nine people for an Eight and five people for a Four, and ranges in length from 45 feet for a Four to 58 feet for an Eight.

Sprints: Used in collegiate competition, this type of race features a course which is 2000 meters long, usually with four to six unmarked or buoyed lanes and a floating or staked start.

Starboard: The right side of the boat.

Stern: The back of the boat; the end the rowers face during competitions.

Stroke: A complete cycle of moving the shell through the water; the rower who sits closest to the stern, looks directly at the coxswain in a sterncoxed boat and sets the rhythm for the shell.

Stroke Rate: The number of strokes taken per minute, or cadence.

Sweeping: Type of rowing where each rower uses one oar.

Swing: The hard to define feeling when near-perfect synchronization of motion and power application occurs in the shell, maximizing the shell's speed.

Varsity: The collegiate or high school rower who competes beyond the novice level.

Weigh Enough: Halt, in general, stop whatever you are doing.