



## FOR PARENTS

Rowing is a great sport for kids – and we’re so glad yours is joining the crew! Not only does rowing provide a strong foundation for optimal physical development, it teaches and reinforces life skills as well, ingraining teamwork, time management, and discipline – all useful habits that will empower your child for optimal functioning in today’s world.

### Supporting Your Child’s Entry Into Rowing

Learning how to set, work toward and achieve goals is an important life skill, and rowing offers a healthy, sports-based platform for this learning to occur. You can help your children get a handle on their rowing goals by having an honest discussion with them. Below are a few conversation starters you can use to help your child determine his or her goals:

1. If this is really something you want to do, who should we ask to make sure we are on the right track?
2. Are you meeting new friends in rowing? What is the best part about rowing and why do you want to keep doing it?
3. I hear there are lots of options for rowing, and some kids at the club have continued rowing beyond high school. Has anyone from your club gone to university and rowed on the varsity team? What have they said about that experience?
4. I wonder what university coaches look for in a good rower. What do you think?
5. Someone told me that rowing has won more Olympic medals for Canada than any other sport. Have you thought of going to the Olympics? Have your coaches ever talked about what it’s like to row for the national or Olympic team? What do you think you would have to do to make the team?

These questions are open-ended, allowing your junior rower to be the expert in their sport, but still letting you guide the conversation. The hope is that your child will feel ownership of their sport and empowerment in regards to their future.

Many of the answers to these questions can’t be found just by showing up for daily practice. If, however, your child is willing to expend the effort required to find the answers, they are likely ready to commit to the challenge. The questions you ask should get your athlete thinking about their future options and leading them down the road toward goal setting.

### ...And On The Subject Of Setting Goals

Young people are often averse to setting goals, mostly because they don’t think very much about the future! You may hear, “I don’t know, whatever, I just want to row,” but over time, your child may begin to think about their future in rowing and talk about where they are heading. These dialogues can help a teenager learn to look ahead and make plans to work really hard for something, which is the greatest gift sport can give to anyone. It can also help parents



and children to work together toward a common end. A clear and challenging goal can empower an athlete to get up early in the morning and get to practice, rather than the parent feeling the need to drag their child out of bed and force the kid out the door.

Sport is the perfect avenue for young people to develop their independence and take responsibility for their future. It will take your young one a lot of hard work and planning to figure it out, but hard work and planning is what is needed to get to the top – in rowing as with anything else.

#### Parent Tip

In getting your child started down the path to being a rower, it is tempting for parents to do all of the groundwork for the sake of efficiency. But this isn't supportive of your child's optimal development. Encourage your child to take the lead and be responsible for their own experience throughout the world of rowing.

### When Your Kid Is A Rower: A Snapshot Of Parent Responsibilities

#### Driving To Practice

Early morning drives to and from practices and regattas are part and parcel of the rowing lifestyle. Some practices may be at your child's school while others may be at the local boat club. Regattas may be local or require some travel time to get to. You may need to make arrangements for high school athletes to get to school after early morning practices at the local boat club.

Please be on time if you drive your child to the boathouse. If an athlete doesn't show up for practice or is late, this affects the entire crew, which may be as many as eight other athletes. We have all heard the expression about "missing the boat". Through meeting these team commitments, your child will learn valuable lessons about time management, personal responsibility, and accountability.

Remember that once an athlete arrives at a regatta, they need to be left with their team/coaches/crew well in advance of their scheduled race time. Often, you won't even see them again until the end of the day after the trailer is loaded. (Of course, you *will* see them fly past during the race!)

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#### Financial Considerations

As with other sports, rowing brings with it a few related expenses such as:

- rowing club membership fees, to pay for coaching and administration
- unisuit (team uniform for racing)
- regatta fees



- travel-related expenses (perhaps for the entire family)
- other expenses as determined by individual schools and/or clubs

There is usually an expectation that all athletes will participate in fundraising endeavours with their clubs and/or schools, for future equipment purchases.

Part of the fees collected by clubs go toward membership in their provincial rowing association, as well as their Rowing Canada Aviron (RCA) membership.

#### Volunteer Roles

Parents often get into rowing because their son or daughter has joined. We've even made rowers out of a few of you! Other ways to become involved might include:

- volunteering with the local rowing club/school rowing team
- club executive
- fundraising support
- volunteering at regattas in concession, boat driving, or in the results area

If you end up falling in love with rowing and want to get involved yourself, may we suggest that you:

- take a Learn To Row rowing class
- take a Learn To Row Coaching course
- consider becoming a certified umpire to officiate at regattas

See you out there!

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