



**Friends of Scholastic Crew, Inc.  
Rochester, New York**

***Crew Safety Guidelines and Boathouse Rules***

Friends of Scholastic Crew, Inc. is an umbrella organization fostering scholastic rowing in Rochester. Parents of participating rowers are included in the membership. Schools, coaches and members, support rowing in a safe environment at all times. The FOSC Board oversees safety, ensuring Coaches and participants are aware of the safety rules.

US Rowing is the national governing body and provides Safety Guidelines as an outline for crew programs with the expectation that ***“Program directors ensure that a safety program is systematically developed and that coaches practice the program and enforce its rules. Athletes are responsible for their station in the boat and being aware of what is going on around them in the water and the boathouse.*”**

**BOATHOUSE RULES**

1. Be respectful of all Coaches, parents, volunteers, equipment and teammates.
2. The boathouse is located in a public park. This is a highly visible location and you are expected to act accordingly.
3. Parking is allowed only in designated areas. Do not litter in the parking lot. Do not speed in the parking lot. Do not loiter in the parking lot.
4. Always keep pathways clear and use caution when crossing the pathway next to the boathouse. Pedestrians and bicyclists have the right of way.
5. As needed, a crew of eight will be assigned Boathouse cleanup. This may include litter patrol, sweeping the boathouse, washing boats and maintenance of the safety bags.
6. There is NO talking while moving shells or launches in and around the boathouse. Listen to your coxswain.
7. No rowers are allowed in the Boathouse without a Coach or parent supervision.
8. Rowers are prohibited from handling gasoline unless supervised by the Coach, or a parent.
9. Only persons involved with launching or recovering boats may be on the floating dock.
10. Notify Coaches immediately of any equipment that is broken or in need of adjustment.
11. Absolutely no horseplay, running, swearing, bare feet or gum chewing in or around the Boathouse, docks or in the boats.
12. If you remove something from the Boathouse, you are responsible for returning it to the place where you got it. The tool area is strictly out-of-bounds.
13. No disposable water bottles are allowed. All water bottles must be clearly marked with your name
14. No littering. If you see it, pick it up even if it's not yours.



15. Do not leave practice until the Coaches dismiss you.
16. No swimming.
17. No cell phones during practice hours except in an emergency.
18. No one should be on the trailer except when loading and unloading equipment.
19. Practice is for the students. Parents observing must remain well up on the pathway near the GWC railing, not at the FOSC Boathouse or Docks.

### **COACH SAFETY GUIDELINES**

1. Signed Emergency Medical Health Forms must be present with the Head Coach at all practices and regattas.
2. Every practice will have, at a minimum, one person in direct supervision. If the Coach is not present, the supervisor must be a recognized Assistant Coach.
3. Coaches remain current on water and weather conditions and have the authority to cancel practices for any safety reasons.
4. Practices will be canceled if lightning is seen and boats shall remain off the water for a full 30 minutes.
5. Coaches must have up to date CPR, First Aid and Defibrillator training.
6. Coaches hold seasonal safety meetings, ensure viewing of the US Rowing Safety Video and review the Crew Safety Guidelines with students.
7. Swim tests must be administered annually, and students must pass a swim test before going on the water the first time. Students with CPR & First Aid training are recorded with the Coach.
8. Coaches ensure that athletes understand all safety issues on the canal and river, outlining danger points or potential conditions, and ensure that similar water safety issues are reviewed at away regattas.
9. Coaches will provide intensive and ongoing training on safe equipment handling and cleaning – in the boathouse, at the dock and in the water.
10. Accidents and/or injuries must be reported to the Coach who will complete the Incident Reporting Form. Major equipment damage must also be recorded.
11. Maintain all rowing equipment with safety in mind. Note any equipment problems and if warranted, place an “Out of Service” marker on the boat.
12. Coaches must give approval for boats to be transported out of the Boathouse and must ensure that all boats are returned to row-able condition after use.
13. No boats may be rowed after dark (1/2 hour before sunrise and 1/2 hour after sunset) unless: approved by and directly supervised by a Coach, boats and launches are properly lighted; and all boats are accompanied by a launch and remain within 100 yards of the launch.



## **ROWER AND COXSWAIN SAFETY GUIDELINES**

1. All participants must complete the Swim Test; 50 yards continuous swimming with any stroke, 5 minutes continuous treading water wearing sweats, and securely put on a life jacket while treading water.
2. Participants are to exhibit mature behavior at all times at the Boathouse, shoreline and on the water. Demonstrate pride in your school and yourself and follow the directions of the Coaches.
3. Before rowing on the water, rowers must understand the following terminology: bow, stern, port, starboard, weigh enough, ready to row, coxswain, the stroke, bow person, seat numbers and hold water.
4. Be aware of all water marker locations and what they mean. Know distress signals: a) waving arms; b) waving shirts overhead; c) blowing Coxswain's whistle or horn; d) raising one oar vertical to the boat (for 8s).
5. Participants are not permitted to move or handle rowing equipment or supplies unless authorized by a Coach.
6. The coxswain is in sole command of a shell and should be the only person giving commands and instructions when the boat is moving. Rowers may assist a new coxswain with improving their skills, but only when the shell is not moving. If a coxswain's command will place the crew or equipment in harm's way, the rowers should stop the boat. A rower should only stop the boat and not attempt to issue corrective directions. The Coach will determine the penalty or ramifications to any rower who fails to comply with the reasonable directives of the coxswain.
7. Any request by a crew member to end practice for impending weather is to be granted by the coxswain.
8. On land and water the conduct of the crew and the handling of equipment are controlled by the coxswain, bowman or Coach. No 8 or 4-shell may be rowed without a coach-approved coxswain. If a coxswain is not available, a shell will not go out unless accompanied by the launch with Coach's approval.
9. Refrain from idle conversation when boats are being handled both and on and off the water, to hear the coxswain's commands.
10. If anyone becomes ill or injured, inform the Coach immediately.
11. Carry drinking water in the boat and stay hydrated. Dress appropriately for water and air temperatures.

### **In the Event of an Accident – Breakup or Sinking:**

- 1) Remain in a group, stay with the boat and wait for a launch to rescue. Coxswains maintain a rower head-count. Communicate with Coaches.
- 2) Put on life jackets or use oars for personal flotation.
- 3) Use buddy system, roll shell over and distribute crew evenly on the hull.
- 4) No one leaves the group, shell, or flotation device until they are at shore or at the rescue launch boat.



- 5) Crews could leave the shell if they can touch bottom and wade to shore, but this should only be done as a group.
- 6) Do not attempt to remove clothing in cold water; even wet clothing will delay the onset of hypothermia.
- 7) In a larger body of water, never attempt to swim ashore without a boat.

### **Safe Launching:**

- 1) Each rower is accountable for inspecting their own oar, rigging, foot stretchers, seat and slide before taking the boat to the water.
- 2) Boats always launch from the dock facing upstream.
- 3) Step into the boat only on the frame structure beneath the seat tracks. Put your foot in the center at the end nearest the foot stretcher. Never put any weight on the hull, or any part of the frame structure beneath the seat. Learn to get in and out of the boat primarily on one leg, balancing yourself with your hands on the oar handles and dock.
- 4) Place oar blades tip up while on the dock.
- 5) Push off or walk yourself off the dock with your hands, not the oar.
- 6) Follow the directions of the Coach.

### **Safe Handling of Boats on the Water:**

- 1) Never hit anything with the oars or boat. Look over both shoulders frequently, every 10 strokes, to avoid hitting anything.
- 2) Before getting in the boat, look over the water to see what activity is going on. Always be aware of other boat activity and water conditions.
- 3) Coxswains must know Right-of way rules as developed by the USCG.
- 4) Know where placed markers are in the water. When the water level is low watch for submerged rocks, logs and other objects; when high, watch for fast moving debris and objects.
- 5) Know daylight times for the calendar year to prevent rowing in the dark.
- 6) Rowers should wear high visibility clothing with reflective strips to enhance visibility. In foggy conditions, darker clothing is more visible, while at dawn or dusk, lighter clothing is better.

### **Safe Docking:**

- 1) Row slowly around the docks coming in for landing facing upstream. Look over your shoulders constantly. A frequent cause of boat damage is hitting the bow on the dock coming in too fast or not aiming properly.
- 2) Remember that the coxswain is in charge. If the first attempt at landing does not go well, weigh enough, back off and try again.
- 3) Step out of the boat as you step in, with one foot on only the center of the frame structure beneath the seat and towards the foot stretchers.
- 4) Place the oars tip up and out of the way as you prepare to lift the boat.
- 5) Be sure the seat will not fall out of the tracks when the boat is picked up and turned over. If it will not stay in the tracks, take it out before you roll the boat and replace it when the



- boat is in the racks.
- 6) Listen to the Coach who is coordinating launches and landings.
  - 7) When landing, give way to boats that have already landed. All crews should move as quickly on and off the dock as possible.
  - 8) Coxswains look over the boat upon return for damage or concerns.

### **SAFETY AT THE BOATHOUSE**

1. Coaches remain accountable for the conduct of his/her crew from the point of student arrival, until departure
2. Porch Sitters are there to help with safety, security and supervision.
3. Maintain “Quiet” in the Boathouse and do not disrupt practice.
4. Misuse of boathouse facilities or equipment may mean time off the water or compensation for any equipment repair work or replacement.
5. Alcohol, drugs and tobacco are strictly prohibited in or around the Boathouse. These substances are strictly prohibited in any designated crew area – practice or regatta location. Use of any of these substances may result in the dismissal from your team as determined by the Coach and the school administration.
6. Boathouse doors are to be shut, locked, or fully secured when out on the water unless a coach, or FoSC Board Member is present.
7. Equipment must be properly secured when the last person departs.
8. Students must know where all safety and first aid equipment is stored and should be trained on how to use it.
9. Gasoline/flammable materials are to be kept in the Designated Storage Area
10. Except if authorized, no one is to be in or near the Boathouse outside of regular hours, except to return equipment after a regatta.
11. The Coach must ensure rower supervision for any non-water rowing activity occurring during practice times.
12. Parents, siblings and pets – Remain outside of the Boathouse during practice.
13. Facility parking requirements for cars and trailers must be strictly followed

### **SAFETY ON THE DOCKS**

1. Dock supervision is required on scheduled rowing practices for boat logging, launching and recovery.
2. On behalf of the Board and within the stated FOOSC governing rules, the Head Coach has the Final Authority for the daily use of the Boathouse and equipment, and for their safe and efficient management.
3. Launches must be ready to run before crews leave the dock. All boats must be accompanied by a launch at all times after moving out of the docking area. Singles and doubles are to stay



- within 100 yards of the launch; other boats are to stay within 500 yards of the launch.
4. When several crews are launching within close timeframes, a time schedule must be developed by the Coaches and adhered to.
  5. Rowers at the boathouse but not on the water during practice must inform the Dock Master if they are leaving the premises (going for a run, attending to equipment, etc.) Rowers not on the water are under the direction of the Coach.
  6. Gear and equipment must be stored well-back from the launch area.
  7. Crews docking have priority over crews launching.
  8. Boats may never be left unattended at the dock.
  9. “Heads Up” to clear the path of a boat from Boathouse to dock.
  10. Parents, siblings and pets remain off the docks.

### **SAFE EQUIPMENT HANDLING**

1. All boats must be wiped and dried before being placed back on the rack. The inside of the boat should be rinsed daily as well as the riggers, pins and bolts. Take the time to clean a boat inside and out with soapy water once a week.
2. Coxswains are responsible for the proper handling of the Cox Box.
3. Ensure that equipment problems are noted for safety and maintenance. Inform the Coach so that the equipment will not be used by anyone else.
4. Ensure that bow balls are attached to the bow of every shell to provide protection against the sharp prow of the boat in the event of a collision.
5. Ensure that shells are fitted with proper shoes. Attached to the heel of each shoe must be a string or a shoelace that is secured to the foot-stretcher. This tie should be loose enough to allow the heel to rise at the beginning of the stroke but strong enough to hold the shoe down in case a rower has to pull the feet out if the boat capsizes.

#### **Handling Expensive Shells:**

- 1) When lifting a boat, ensure that there are enough rowers and that they are properly spaced on bow and stern sides. Ask for help if you need it.
- 2) Always lift boats off the racks – do not slide them off on the gunwales.
- 3) Watch riggers carefully to make sure they do not hit or scrape anything. Don't step or put arms through a rigger when climbing in or out of a boat.
- 4) When putting a shell on the racks or on stretchers, make sure it isn't resting on any part of the rigger. Lift the boat evenly. All boats should be carried very carefully and should not hit any other equipment.
- 5) Always use a coxswain to move a boat and stop all unnecessary talking.
- 6) Do not place shells on the ground. Place them on the stretchers for proper support. Walk around a supported shell, never step over a shell.
- 7) Before leaving the dock, do a quick inspection of seat, rigger, stretchers, etc. to make sure no parts are missing, loose, or broken. Notify the Coach immediately if there is a



problem. Replace missing or broken parts. If something can't be fixed, use a different boat. Never row a damaged shell.

- 8) When transporting shells to a regatta, remove all seats and rigging. Gunwales should be on foam protectors, never on plain metal. Secure all boats – they should not be able to move in any direction during transport.
- 9) Drivers transporting boats to regattas are responsible for compliance with all applicable laws and regulations for boat transportation.

### **Handling Oars:**

- 1) Oars are color-coded as matched sets. Use matched sets for the same shell.
- 2) Carry oars with blades forward and only carry two oars at a time.
- 3) Never drop oars or lean oars against the side of a building.
- 4) If an oar is damaged, inform the Coach.

### **Handling Safety Launches:**

- 1) Launch drivers are coordinated by the Head Coach. If required under NYS law they must be trained in “safe boat handling” provided by the US Coast Guard or Power Squadron, etc. Drivers must comply with all Marine Law boating regulations.
- 2) Launch drivers of FOSC equipment must be 18 years or older.
- 3) No more than two shells may be supervised by a launch at all times.
- 4) No more than two passengers may be in the launch.
- 5) Anyone driving a launch and all passengers must wear a life jacket.
- 6) The launch is to be considered a safety vehicle at all times and must carry:
  - Approved personal flotation devices for all participants
  - One Coast Guard approved throw-able PFD with line
  - Paddle
  - Anchor
  - Water bailer
  - Emergency line (min. 50 ft)
  - Emergency First Aid Kit and space blankets
  - Air horn or other warning device
  - Emergency communications equipment.
- 7) Gas tanks must be removed from launches before being stored inside the Boathouse.
- 8) When lifting a launch, ensure that there are enough rowers. Never drag the launch or motor on the ground or on the docks.
- 9) Do not drive the launches onto the docks.
- 10) Recreational use of FOSC launches is not permitted.



## BOAT LOGGING FOR SAFETY

The Head Coach, or in his/her absence, an Assistant Coach completes the Daily Boat Log:

1. Name of boats and launches out on the water.
2. Name of the coxswain or driver
3. When the boats left the Boathouse and returned
4. If there were any problems with the equipment
5. Air temperature, wind, weather conditions
6. Direction the boat is going (N or S on the River, E or W on the Canal)
7. Emergency cell phone numbers of coaches and launch drivers on the water
8. Final equipment inspection upon return, repairs/adjustments needed
9. Safety equipment check
10. Water temperature and flow rate

## SAFE WATER AND WEATHER CONDITIONS

Just because you can go on the water, doesn't mean that you should. When the air is below 40 degrees and/or the water is below 50 degrees, hypothermia can set in quickly.

**Level #1 Conditions** - When BOTH the air temperature is above 40F and the water temperature is above 45F:

- Normal policies shall apply to shells on the water.

**Level #2 Conditions** - If EITHER the air temperature is below 40F OR the water temperature is below 45F but both are above Level #1 conditions:

- All High School Crews shall have one launch per shell on the water regardless of size.
- No first season novice rower may row in a boat comprised of only first season novices. A first season novice may row in a boat that is comprised of novices but under no circumstances shall the boat contain more than half first season novices.
- There must be at least one other school launch on the water to assist in the event of a water rescue.

**Level #3 Conditions** - If EITHER the air temperature is below 32F OR the water temperature is below 40F:

- No High School Crews are permitted on the water without the approval of an Officer of the FoSC Board of Directors.
- If approved, all level #2 conditions apply.





### **In addition:**

- **At water temperature below 50F coxswains must wear a PFD**
- The water flow needs to be below 12,000cfs.
- If the water flow is between 8,000 and 12,000cfs, crews must have one launch per shell on the water regardless of size.
- The wind needs to be below 25mph and no gusts over 30mph.
- No white caps on River.

### **Rowing in Cold Weather:**

“Dress to beat the cold” Layers of clothing are more effective than one warm garment. Use tech gear as an initial layer, followed by fleece, and a water and windproof outer layer with hood. Wear a hat. Wear pogies (rowing mittens) for cold hands.

### **Steps to Combat Hypothermia in the Water**

- 1) Keep your head out of the water. Swimmers will retain heat best if they remain huddled with others and wear a life jacket. The body cools rapidly when swimming in water of 50F; remain as motionless as possible; stay with your boat even if land appears to be within easy reach; and holding still in the water is preferable to swimming. Physical ability is hampered and judgment is impaired in cold water.
- 2) Use the Heat Escape Lessening Position (HELP). HELP or Huddle procedures can cover areas of high heat loss and lead to increased survival time. Both methods resulted in nearly 50% increases in predicted survival time.
- 3) “Buddy up” so that rowers are in groups of two or three, this provides a way to monitor each person and to support one another in a time of emergency.
- 4) Get out to the water and onto an overturned shell if you can.

### **What to do in a cold water emergency:**

- 1) Call 911 **IMMEDIATELY**.
- 2) If a victim is conscious, re-warm him/her by removing wet clothing and wrapping in warm blankets (don't rub them down). Give warm liquids.
- 3) Warm only the torso with warm blankets or the body heat of another person. Prevent the victim from losing more body heat. Do not re-warm extremities of the victim. If not breathing and there is no pulse, clear the air passage and begin mouth-to-mouth rescue breathing and external heart massage (CPR) **IMMEDIATELY**. Once you begin CPR, do not stop until medical assistance is obtained. Don't give up.
- 4) Minimize the person's physical exertion when removing from cold water and do not have the person walk.
- 5) Protect the person from wind especially around head and neck to prevent further heat loss.
- 6) Do not move or handle an unconscious person roughly as it may cause severe fatal heart beat.



### **Rowing in Hot Weather:**

Rowing in hot weather with sun exposure or high humidity poses a challenge to the body's regulation system. If sweat is excessive and fluids are not continually replaced – dehydration may occur. Ambient Dry Temperatures at 77 to 89.4F are considered Moderate, at 89.6 to 100F considered High, and above 100F considered Extreme.

### **Steps for Prevention of Dehydration:**

- 1) Drink water before, during and after rowing. During exercise, fluid intake should match fluid loss. Always carry drinking water in the boat.
- 2) Limit your time in the sun; wear a hat, use sunscreen and stay in the shade when possible. Wear lightweight clothing. Plan activity level consistent with the degree of heat, sun exposure, or humidity.
- 3) Do not take "salt tablets." Consumption of sodium salt increased potassium loss. Moderate potassium depletion will cause weakness and fatigue while severe depletion can result in fatal heart irregularities.

### **Heat Exhaustion:**

Heat exhaustion and heat stroke are potentially catastrophic events and are true medical emergencies. Know the signs and treatment.

#### **Signs of Heat Exhaustion:**

- Extreme weakness
- Profuse sweating
- Muscle cramps
- Pale, clammy skin
- Vomiting, nausea or chills

**Treatment:** Drink water, shade from sun, treat for shock and cool rapidly.

#### **Signs of Heat Stroke:**

- Hot reddish skin that is dry
- Rapid pounding pulse
- Behavior changes
- Dilated eyes
- Unconsciousness

**Treatment:** Get medical care immediately. Provide cool water, shade and ice.

## **SAFETY AND INJURIES**

Safety begins with good health and avoiding injury. In order to row, all students must complete an annual physical examination as required by their school. It is important for athletes to consult with the Coach on any health concern. The Coach must provide instruction on injury prevention



in the context of rowing technique and overall safety.

### **Rower Overboard:**

If a rower goes overboard, such as when a crab is caught:

- 1) The coxswain gives the command to stop rowing and then to hold water.
- 2) The stroke removes his/her oar and carefully directs, not throwing it, to the person in the water.
- 3) The crew backs the boat to the person in the water.
- 4) The coxswain gets hold of the person or lets him/her grasp a rigger. Another rower may be required to enter the water to assist with first aid. Generally, it should be the person who was seated in front or behind the rower who is now in the water.
- 5) Do not attempt to bring the person aboard if the launch is near.
- 6) Coach records the Incident and contacts the rower's parents.

### **Rower Unconscious:**

If a rower has lost consciousness support him/her in the water until a rescue launch arrives, or help him/her to the bank as fast as possible if no launch is at hand. All rowers should know life-saving procedures. If necessary, resuscitation should be applied immediately, even while the rower is still in the water. An ambulance should be summoned by the quickest method available.

## **STUDENT-ATHLETE AND PARENT RESPONSIBILITY**

FOSC Crew Safety Guidelines are maintained on the FOSC webpage and are reviewed from time to time for updating. It is the responsibility of the Coach to ensure that student-athletes print, review as a class and sign-off on these Guidelines each spring and fall season. This review should occur in conjunction with viewing of the US Rowing Safety DVD and any other safety or First Aid training. It is the responsibility of the student to understand the Guidelines and take them seriously. It is the responsibility of a high school student's parents to review the Guidelines and be aware of all safety precautions and procedures established by Friends of Scholastic Crew, Inc.



## N O T I C E

FOSC requires that all student-athletes, coaches, parents, and volunteers abide by these Crew Safety Guidelines and Boathouse Rules. Any violation, even inadvertent, by a student-athlete could result in that student-athlete losing authorization to use FOSC equipment, and thus relinquish ability to participate in crew.

I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to the terms of the FOSC Crew Safety Guidelines and Boathouse Rules.

Parent/Guardian Signature\*: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature\*: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Failure to sign by Parent/Guardian or Student-Athlete will render athlete ineligible to use FOSC equipment.