

ROWING TERMS GUIDE

Thank you for joining this year's High School Program with the Deep Cove Rowing Club! We hope you and your teammates come to enjoy the sport as much as we do. For all rowers, especially those who are new, a few helpful hints can often go a long way. Therefore, below are some basic pointers and terminology of rowing. Following that, we have included YouTube rowing video addresses so that you can see how the sport is supposed to look. (Simply knowing what rowing looks like, when done correctly, is often half that battle!)



THE CATCH: The beginning of the stroke cycle. Rower is reaching as far forward as possible, with hands outstretched and blades

square and buried in the water.



THE DRIVE: The “work” aspect of the stroke. From the *catch*, rower pushes down with the legs, swings body back slightly, and pulls the

hands to the side of the body.



THE FINISH: The end of the *drive*. At this point, the rower proceeds to *feather* the blade.

THE RECOVERY: The motion of traveling from the *finish* to the *catch*. Opposite motions of the *drive*: hands and arms reach out straight, body swings forward, legs crouch forward until rower has returned to the *catch position*.



BOW: the front of the boat

STERN: the back of the boat

PORT: Rower's **right hand**, left side of boat

STARBOARD: Rower's **left hand**, right side of boat

FOOTSTRETCHER: The piece of equipment the shoes are anchored to. Adjustable for individual preference. (Based on athlete's height.)

OARLOCK: The part of the rigger oar is attached to. Should always be pointing to *stern* of the boat upon entry, with oars perpendicular to the boat.

BLADE: The part of the oar that is placed in the water for each stroke.

HANDLE: The part of the oar rower hangs on to. Grip should be loose and in fingers.

SQUARE: The *blade* is perpendicular to the surface of the water.



FEATHER: The *blade* is parallel to the surface of the water.



HELPFUL HINTS...

- 1) **Rowing is a legs sport.** The legs are an athlete's largest muscle grouping, and therefore we use them to generate 85% of our power application. When applying power, remember to push the legs first, letting the arms "hang" – feeling as though they are stretching – off the handle. Ideally, power is applied from the ball of the foot to the heel, rather than with back or arms.
- 2) Try to **avoid "up/down" motions.** Remember – you are traveling horizontally. Therefore, vertical movement is only creating more drag on the hull of the boat and slowing you down, and making it harder to keep control of the blade.
- 3) **Don't worry about having your blades "off the water" on the recovery if you just learning how to row.** Certain skills sets must be attained before a crew can successfully row with blades off the water. In your first few practices, having your blades run along the surface of the water helps you gain a "feel" for where the water is. However, after the first few sessions, you should start trying to row with your blades off the water; otherwise, certain "bad habits" develop that become very hard to fix later on.
- 4) **Ratio is key.** Often, new athletes travel from the finish to the catch in an uncontrolled and extremely fast manner. Remember – as the boat is traveling "backwards", the faster you go up the slide to the catch is only serving to slow down the boat, as you are traveling against the boat's direction of travel. Ratio therefore refers to the time spent on the drive (pulling) VS the time spent on the recovery. Ideally, at any pressure/speed, this ration should remain 1:2.
- 5) **Don't be afraid to ask questions!** We are here to help and support you and chances are that if you need to ask a question, your teammates are probably wondering about it too.

SOME VIDEOS TO WATCH

2008 Olympic games:

<http://www.cbc.ca/olympics/ondemand/>

- Look to the "Choose a Category", select "Sports", then "Rowing". All are very good quality video, which allows the viewer to see the different styles of rowing employed by each crew.

For the all athletes, but directed at DCRC Club rowers:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYmODgeN0tU>

- Xeno Muller, multiple Olympic Medalist, showing the fine-tuning details of his technique.

For all athletes, but directed at new/or Fall-only rowers:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqVmMd7FdAA>

- Good demo of rowing technique, ratio and distinct parts of the stroke. Done on a rowing machine ("erg") but still 100% applicable to on-water rowing.