

USC Rowing Association

August, 2019



Welcome to season 2019-2020!



The season 2019-2020

The crew season extends through the entire school year. While some students commit to either the Fall or Spring racing seasons because of other sports or activities, the majority of them participate in both. Students participating only in the Spring racing season also participate in the Winter conditioning season, including the indoor Erg competitions, to prepare and condition for the Spring races.

The fall racing season is composed mostly of training and conditioning in preparation for two or three head races (head races are timed races in which boats go down the course individually, as opposed to sprint races which are side-by-side racing and generally take place in the spring).

Over the winter, the team works hard on strength and conditioning to build endurance and to be ready for a quick start in the spring racing season. The team has always done well in the indoor Erg competitions that take place during the winter season. Spring is by far the busiest season, with several sprint races, many of them requiring travel out of town. The season builds in anticipation of the Midwest Scholastic Championships in mid May, where the Panthers row against over 50 teams from across Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and West Virginia. Finishing in the top three or four in a Midwest final qualifies a boat for national competition; the goal of every Upper St. Clair crew.

History of USC Rowing Association

Founded in the Fall of 1989, Upper St. Clair Crew is in its 25th year of rowing. Under the leadership of coach Florin Curuea's Team, and USC coach Sarah Wetzel, the team sports a strong foundation of dedicated rowers with great parental support backing the club.

USC Crew purchases and owns all of its equipment. Because the school district recognizes crew as a club sport (although letters are issued), the team relies heavily on fundraising and parent support.

Rowing benefits its participants in ways that go far beyond fitness and competition. Discipline, leadership, dedication, teamwork, and time management are among the skills developed from participation in crew. Many graduates continue rowing at the collegiate level and some even receive scholarships that result directly, or indirectly from their rowing experience.

USC Crew rows a total of eight different boats of various shapes and sizes. The team utilizes the Montour Marina Boathouse located at 4551 Royal Avenue, Coraopolis Landing on the Ohio River for the storage of boats and for conducting Fall and Spring practices. In addition to the Fall and Spring season, there is a Winter conditioning season that includes indoor erg (rowing machine) competitions.

The team practices for High School rowers are Monday through Thursday from 4-7 pm Saturday practices 8:00 - 11:30. Fort Couch rower practices are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:15 - 8:15 and every other Saturday from 8:15 - 11:15. We also train at the Upper St. Clair High School during the winter conditioning season.



Rowing gear

Rowing gear can be as minimal as a pair of spandex, a t-shirt, and a pair of socks. Clothing should be close-fitting so that it minimizes wind resistance and does not get caught in the slides of the seat or the oar handles while rowing. Rowers should always bring a full water bottle and a complete change of clothes to practice. It's a water sport; students should be prepared and expect to get wet!

Rowers do not wear their shoes when rowing, but instead use shoes anchored in the boat. However, they should always have shoes with them for required running, erging, land practice.

Most team members have monogrammed crew bags to carry their clothing to and from practice and races. It is important that the rower brings a variety of layers to accommodate all weather conditions. It is not necessary that all items be of top quality: as you've probably learned by now, your child will lose clothing. However, when buying clothing, try to avoid cotton and to select items made from wicking fabric (i.e. dry flex poly) or a non absorbing (i.e. nylon) or breathable fabric with wind and water protection (Gore-tex).

The only required articles of clothing are a racing unisuit and a Crew racing shirt. The unisuit, crew bag, jacket, and additional rowing items may be purchased through the on-line store from our web site. Other items are available, such as USC Crew polos, hats, sweats, and crew jackets. The team does race in the late fall/early spring so these other items will come in handy.



Rowing 101

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Rowing is not an upper body sport. Although upper body strength is important, the drive that moves the boat comes from the legs and back. Rowing involves all the body's major muscle groups in a total body workout, developing endurance, strength, and an ability to tolerate the pain that muscles experience in the last 500 meters of a race.

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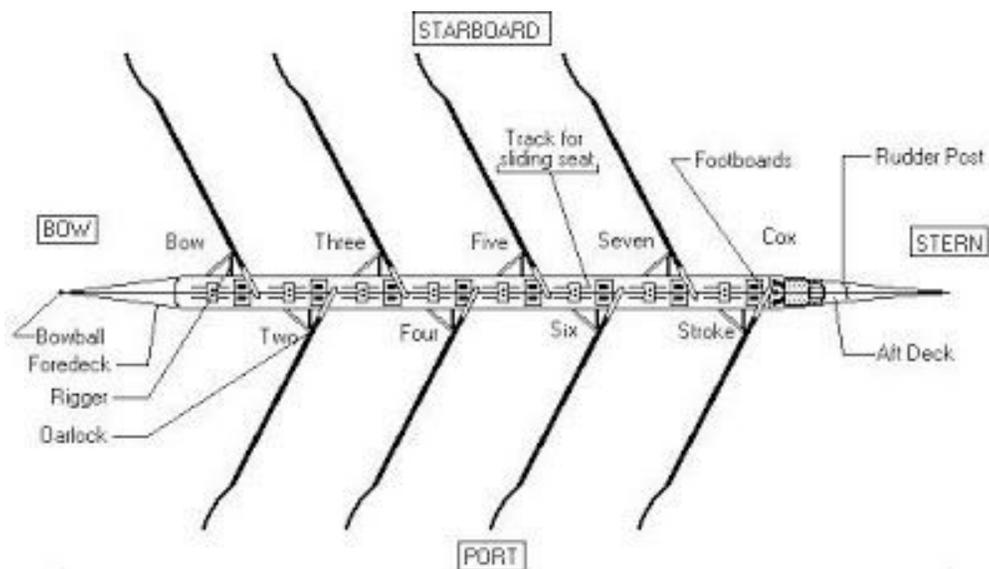
Rowing has no MVPs. Rowing is the ultimate team sport in which an athlete must perform at his/her personal best while maintaining a mirror-like unity with the rest of the crew, obeying the coxswain's commands. An athlete trying to stand out in an eight will only make the boat slower. There's no "I" in CREW!

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It only looks easy. Great rowing looks graceful and fluid, but don't be fooled. Pulling oars smoothly and effectively to move the boat through the water while balancing a boat that may be as narrow as 11 inches across is very difficult work. Because rowing uses all of the major muscle groups in the body, the rower builds up a fearsome level of lactic acid in the bloodstream, as much as 50% higher than any other athlete, and stays there for the entirety of a race. Watch how quickly that graceful motion turns into pain and gasping for air after a boat crosses the finish line.

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Rowing is the only Olympic sport in which athletes cross the finish line backwards to win a race.



Upper St. Clair Rowing Coaches



Florin Curuea - Head Coach

Improve technique and performance in both sculling and sweep rowing and build strength and endurance under the expertise of Coach Florin Curuea.

As a rower, he has earned over 50 medals at the national and international level including: Romanian National Championships – 21 Gold Medals, 2002-2003 – Gold Medal at World Championships, 2012 Olympic Games – 12th Place Finish and 2012-2013 – Silver Medal at European Championships.

As coach, his accomplishments include: 2016 - 5th Place World Championship U23 Men's 8+, 2015 - Gold Medal World Championship U23 Men's 4, 2014 – Bronze Medal at the World Championships Men's 4-, Gold Medal at the U.S. Regional Championships, Bronze Medals at the U.S. National Championship



Sarah Wetzel - Assistant Coach

Sara joined North Allegheny High School's rowing team in 2010 and returned to the sport in college to continue coxing for Virginia Tech's club crew team. She coxed both the men's varsity 8 and the women's novice four. After college, Sarah returned to Pittsburgh and became involved as a volunteer with the adaptive team at Three Rivers Rowing Association. Over the next year, Sarah coached First Row, an all-female high school team for Pittsburgh Public and charter students, and is rowing with the corporate program in 2019.

McDarragh Minnock - Assistant Coach



McDarragh began her rowing career in 2013 at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, on the Lady Volunteer's Novice Rowing team. She dedicated three more years to the Lady Volunteer's on the varsity team and competed in many esteemed events such as Head of the Charles, San Diego Crew Classic, Conference USA and Big 12 Conference Championships. During her time at Tennessee, McDarragh achieved many academic and athletic goals, was awarded a spot on the All-Big 12 Rowing Team for both the 2015 and 2016 seasons, and conference honor roll all four years. McDarragh graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Kinesiology, and went on to complete her Master's of Science in Kinesiology-concentration in Biomechanics.



Mihaela Curuea - Assistant Coach

Mihaela started rowing in 1994 and was part of Romanian Junior National Team from 1995 to 1998. She participated at the Junior World Championship in 1998 where she won Silver medal in Women's 8+ and Bronze medal in Women's 4-. From 1998 -2000 she was part of Under 23 National Rowing Team. During her rowing career Mihaela won multiple medals at national and international regattas. In 2002, she graduated from the University of Bacau where she obtained a bachelor's of Sport Science degree.

James Garver - Assistant Coach

James started rowing as an adult when his children started rowing with their High School rowing team. He has been rowing with the Pittsburgh Rowing Club team for more than 10 years and enjoys the sport of rowing and being out with the team.

As a Level 2 coach. Coach Jim started coaching with the Hampton High School Rowing team by organizing and coaching summer learn to row camps and assisting the head coaches as needed when going to championship races. Now with additional training from USA Rowing and Coach Florin Curuea he has a strong understanding of training programs, building endurance and recognizing ways to improve rowing technique with rowers.

Whatsapp communication

Off-site communication between coach and rowers will be with Whatsapp. Florin will set up the rower Whatsapp group and all rowers will need to connect to be able to follow all the messages from the coach. Message could include a change in planning, preparations for the race, etc. Parents can also be added to the group.

If you're not familiar with the app, it's like iMessage but not exclusive to Apple devices, or like text messaging without eating into your cell plan. You can send photos and videos for free, and voice chat for free – so long as you're connected to the internet, that is. Download the app for free from your app store and install it. Once you've downloaded and opened WhatsApp, you'll need to configure a few things before you can start using it properly. Follow through the guided instructions – the app will need your phone number to automatically match contacts, and to text you a verification code to prove ownership of your device. Once you've followed these basic steps, you're in.

We will set up a separate group for parents and we will use the cell phone number you provided at registration. Need more info? Please contact Ronald (vicepresident@uscrowing.org or via Whatsapp).

Contact Information

Upper St. Clair Rowing Association Board Members

Sara Brinkman - President - president@uscrowing.org

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