

HINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL ROWING ASSOCIATION

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Why row?

There are many advantages of competitive and recreational rowing compared to other sports. The benefits include:

- Full body workout using all of the major muscle groups (legs, abdomen, back, arms)
- Low impact on joints
- Wide range of muscle and joint movement for greater flexibility
- Simultaneously builds strength and aerobic conditioning
- Indoor and outdoor rowing is versatile
- Being part of a team is fun, social and rewarding

Who should row?

Anyone and everyone! Our team celebrates diversity and championing individuals that work hard for themselves and their team. People of all ages, sizes, and physical limitations can learn to row and achieve a level of accomplishment that is both physically beneficial and personally rewarding. The beauty of our sport is that with hard work and dedication, anyone can be successful. Most importantly, rowing is fun! There is nothing quite like getting a boat of 8 different individuals rowing in unison together. Come check it out!

Do you need prior rowing experience to join our team?

No! All athletes that are new to crew row on the Novice team which includes a development program where you learn the basics one step at a time. All beginner rowers will spend the first 3 to 5 practices on land learning about rowing safety, equipment and technique. They will watch a safety video and learn what is expected of each athlete both on land and on the water. They will be introduced to the erg, as well as stretching, light running and calisthenics. Once on the water much time is spent listening and observing as athletes take turns trying the rowing stroke. Everyone must be patient! There are only so many seats in a boat so on occasion an athlete may be asked to ride with the coach in the coaching launch. This is a great opportunity for the athlete to see what rowing looks like from outside the boat and ask the coach questions. A portion of each practice will be spent doing land work with the intention of both learning and reinforcing technique as well as improving fitness. In general, during the first 2-3 weeks of practice, novice athletes should expect to split their time fairly evenly between water and land. At all times we expect each athlete to be giving their best effort to whatever they are doing.

What is the difference between Novice and Varsity Rowing?

A novice rower is an athlete in their first year of high school rowing. At HHSRA we have designed a program that will teach our novice everything they need to know to compete with, and against, other competitive high school athletes. You can think of novice rowers like the JV members of our team. Yet, unlike most teams where JV and Varsity practice separately, we manage practice so that we may work together as one team. In fact, there are often opportunities for our novice rowers to race with varsity before the end of their first season. The biggest difference between novice and varsity practice is that novice rowers tend to spend a bit more time training on land. The reason for this may be:

- An odd number of new athletes, so we have too many/few to fill boats
- Some athletes need a bit more time focusing on basics before getting in a boat, so they will continue to work on the erg
- Challenging rowing circumstances that a novice rower is not yet prepared for (i.e. high winds)

Sweep Rowing vs. Sculling

There are two types of rowing: sweeping and sculling. The major difference between sweeping and sculling is that in the former each rower has one oar and in the latter two oars. At Hingham High School Rowing we practice and compete in sweep boats, primarily 8 persons. However, we are looking to expand our program in the future to include sculling over the summer and during our fall season.

What is an erg?

An “ergometer” (“erg” for short) is a device that measures work. When we use the term erg, we are referring to the [Concept2 indoor rowing ergometer](#). Rowers, coaches, and the US National Rowing Team use the erg as a tool for measuring an athlete’s potential for moving a boat. “Erg scores” have become the currency for college recruitment and team selection. There is certainly more to moving a boat on the water than just pulling hard, but the erg can show who can pull the hardest if you can teach them to row well. We utilize ergs for both fitness building and technical work, including reviewing the basics of the rowing stroke.

When are practices?

3:30-5:45 pm for the boys and 3:45-6:00 pm for the girls. We stagger practices to avoid overcrowding while the boats are launching and docking.

Where are practices?

We split our practices between two locations depending on availability. Primarily, the team rows out of Bare Cove Park. As a backup we also row out of the Hingham Maritime Center.



FAQ

Do I have to row year-round?

Many rowers choose to participate year-round. While some varsity rowers have participated in another sport over the winter, most train and race with the team in Fall and Spring. We encourage multi-sport athletes! However, it should be understood that the more time spent rowing, the better the athlete will be at rowing.

Can I participate in other extra-curriculars while rowing?

Yes! We are very supportive of our athletes participating in activities outside of rowing. Many of our current athletes are involved in the schools music programs and musical. Our only requirement is that coaches are provided at least 48 hrs advance notice of when athletes will have to miss practice as a result of their other activities (i.e. a band concert).

Who are the Coxswains and what do they do?

Team rowing is usually in teams of 2, 4, or 8. In teams of 4 or 8, there's often an additional athlete in the boat called a coxswain who coaches the rowers and steers the boat instead of rowing. On race day, the coxswain's primary task is to steer the boat. They also guide the rowers in executing their race plan and keeps them apprised of where they are in relation to the other boats. They have a huge responsibility to keep their rowers focused and motivated during any and all practice and race circumstances. Contrary to popular perception, they do NOT yell "Stroke! Stroke! Stroke!"

Do you have to be short to be a coxswain?

There is no height requirement, but there is an advantage to having a light coxswain. For youth nationals, the minimum weight is 121lbs male or female. That does not mean we expect all of our coxswains to be at that weight. We value healthy and safe methods of weight management. We educate all of our coaches and rowers on the basics of good nutrition for active sports participation in growing adolescent athletes. Therefore, we want to be upfront that weight loss to achieve status is not recommended or encouraged. We value fair and equal participation of all our rowers and coxswains, and weight will never be a deciding factor.

I heard that rowers are all tall. Is there a height requirement?

No! While it is true that height can be beneficial (in part because it enables a rower to have a longer stroke), the sport is full of successful rowers who would not otherwise be considered tall. If you are ready and willing to learn how to move effectively within a boat, you will be successful!



FAQ

How long are races?

In the Fall, rowers' race against the clock in ~5,000-meter races. In the Spring, rowers race head-to-head in ~2,000-meter races. In the fall we attend anywhere between 3-5 regattas. In the spring we attend between 7-9 regattas.

What is a regatta like?

Regattas generally last all day and, in the Spring, can be two or occasionally 3 days long. The athletes usually travel together in buses. The parents watch from an outdoor area where some prepare breakfast, lunches and snacks for the rowers and their parents/family members. It is definitely an "extended family" team effort! HHSRA volunteers often arrive early or even the day before and set up the tents and grills. HHSRA parents pride themselves on providing some of the most healthy and delicious food at the regatta.

What should I wear?

We row rain or shine. It is imperative that our athletes dress for the weather. Layers are often the name of the game and rowing clothes will get dirty! Clothing should be both comfortable and snug (lycra/spandex). They should allow you to move freely but not be baggy. Baggy pants, shorts, shirts and hooded sweatshirts tend to get stuck in the sliding seats and the oars. Running sneakers and water shoes (many of our athletes wear crocs) are required. In many of the boats you will take your shoes off and leave them on the dock, however they are needed for land workouts. We also recommend that every athlete has sunglasses, a hat or visor and a water bottle at every practice. Of course, we will not row when there are high winds or lightening. On those days we will move practice on land/indoors.

Why is rowing so expensive?

HHSRA is a separate 501c3, we receive no direct financial support from HPS (though we get lots of other support!) A new or second hand boat will cost our program many thousands. Add to that coaching salaries, maintenance costs, oars, safety launches, coxing equipment, race fees and travel expenses, our costs can add up quick. Nonetheless, we are committed to providing all interested Hingham High students the opportunity to row and have developed demonstrated need-based scholarship opportunities to help offset/cover the cost. Additionally, we offer a family discount for siblings.

Do the boats tip over?

It is very unlikely for the eight-person and four-person boats to tip over. However, because accidents happen (although we've never had one!) you must be a competent swimmer able to tread water for at least seven minutes. Additionally, our coaches are in motor boats (launches) within sight of the rowers at all times. We also have a parent safety launch at every practice to provide back up and safety support to the coaches.



FAQ