

Chairman's Newsletter

December 2011



To RRC, RCC and LUBC members, and parents of RRC Junior members...

Safety Focus – Incident Reporting & Night Rowing

Incident Reporting

Did you know all incidents and near misses must be reported online by all parties within 24 hours? Do you know why and how to do this? This short article explains.

Incidents and near misses provide important learning points and therefore help to improve safety. This is why you must report all incidents and near misses whether you were part of the activity or just a witness. However, the first thing you should do after ensuring that everyone involved is safe is write down what you saw, even if it is on a scrap of paper!

An incident is any event which results in personal injury or equipment damage, no matter how minor, but what is a near miss? Here are some examples:

- Sudden evasive action has to be taken to avoid a collision,
- A boat is flouting navigation rules,
- A boat is not displaying the required lights at night,
- A crew has boated in high risk conditions.

I am sure you can think of many other examples. In other words, a near miss is any situation which potentially could have caused

personal injury or equipment damage. The golden rule is: if in doubt then report.

How do you make an online report?

- Go to [//www.britishrowing.org/](http://www.britishrowing.org/)
- Login by clicking the login button in the very top RH corner of the home page.
- Click the online services button just to the L and select "incident reporting" from the drop-down list.
- Now follow the instructions.

If you are not a British Rowing member then please ask someone who is a member to make the entry for you. You still need to inform our Safety Advisor and you can do this by sending an Email to safety@runcornrowing.com.

Night Rowing

Rowing or sculling in the dark or in poor visibility is dangerous and is not encouraged. At all times in poor visibility (for example, after sunset and early morning) craft shall be fitted with white lights showing fore and aft, and visible through 360 degrees. The Captain's permission is required for night rowing and all outings must be entered on the Runcorn Rowing Club outings board (the white board on the LH door of the clubhouse as you face the river).

Interview with Henry Harte, RRC J16 sculler & rower

How and when did you get into rowing?

The first time rowing was mentioned to me was 20 months ago. My friend Lewis Parsons was keen on starting rowing as he thought it would help him at university. He asked Sam [*my younger brother*] and me if we wanted to start

with him and as we didn't have any other activities on at the time we accepted. We first went to Northwich as that was our closest club but after about a month of asking and going down to the club we decided to give it up as they were not interested in us joining their club.

So after another few months we heard about the “Yearn to row” at RRC. Immediately we joined that and found that RRC had a very friendly atmosphere so I liked it straight away. This is what got me into rowing.

Is this your main sport?

Yes and I spend most of my free time doing it, although sometimes I play football with my friends.

Why do you like it?

I like rowing for a number of reasons. Firstly, due to the club’s relaxed atmosphere and friendly members it’s hard not to like rowing. Being down at the club is an enjoyable experience and the social side makes it a sport you love. Secondly, I enjoying keeping fit and feeling healthy because I think exercise helps you to give a positive outlook on life. Finally, I am also a very competitive person and rowing lets me be competitive through lots of competitions and events being available.

You’ve achieved a lot in a short time. Why do you think this is?

I think the support of the club and my parents have given me opportunities to train hard and work hard enabling me to do well at regattas and events. In particular Val Edwards and Dave Street have helped me to achieve my goals by providing excellent training sessions and support in everything I do, so thank you very much to them.

What are your favourite highlights?

My two favourite highlights of my rowing experience so far are firstly, coming second at national championships and secondly taking part at Henley royal regatta.

What are your rowing ambitions?

Ultimately every rower’s greatest dream is to represent his or her nation at the Olympics and that would be what I would love to achieve. Whether this is possible or not I don’t know yet but I do know that is long term what I would like to achieve, as probably would every young rower. However my goals for this year are to try and be successful at junior trials and represent

Great Britain at either Coupe or the junior world rowing championships.

You’ve recently taken up sweep- how’s that going?

Sweep is another skill that will hopefully help me at some point in my rowing career, so I thought it would be a good idea to try it. I have only done it about 10 times but already enjoy it greatly.

What do you think of RRC?

I don’t think you could get a better club than RRC, I’ve learned in rowing it’s not all about good boats and having big and powerful people that make a club good and successful. But I’ve learnt that it’s the people that make a club and I’ve never met nicer people and more positive people than at RRC and I think that’s why our club is very popular and successful. Because of the fact that everyone gets on with everyone and we all support each other in everything, I do I think it motivates everyone making them faster and stronger. I don’t believe you could get a better club than RRC.

What do we do well and not so well?

The club does well by organising sessions, running sessions and reviewing sessions excellently, giving everyone an opportunity to row and giving good coaching and training. It also has an extremely good atmosphere motivating everyone to do well. With the finances it’s got and the land it owns, I don’t think the club could improve in any way at all. Although the only things I may change would be more ergos for everyone to enjoy as at the moment it can become a little crowded, and a few more top quality boats to go with the ones that we already own.

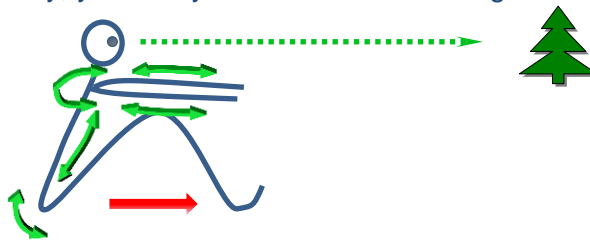
Thanks Henry.

Good luck with your ambitions. It is actually in our five year development plan to more than double the number of ergos and to expand our fleet. Chris.

Technique Master Class – The Catch II

This article is about what your body should be doing at the catch. This is the second in a series of articles about the catch. The simple answer to this question is “not a lot!” and there are some very important reasons why.

Let’s review what should happen. Remember “hands, body, slide!”? This is all about the sequence of movements from the finish up to the catch. Here we will only discuss the slide part, as this is what leads into the catch. So, after “hands and body,” your body from the hips up should be pivoted forwards into the one o’clock position, your back should be in a strong shape (more about that in a moment), your arms should be straight, your shoulders should be stretched forward, your head should be in line with the boat and elevated so that your eyes are in line with a point just above the horizon. Diagrammatically, your body should look something like this:



The green arrows represent body shape. There is no movement here. The red arrow represents movement. Hey, there is only one red arrow! Yes, that means that the only movement on the slide part of the recovery is the compression of the legs; nothing else except what you do to get the spoon into the water in the last few centimetres before the slide reaches its catch position (that was covered last month). And just as important, the movement represented by the red arrow is steady, no speeding up, no slowing down, no pausing, just steady, whatever rating you are doing.

So what can go wrong? Well, lots, but I’ll only cover the most common faults. These are:

- Movement other than just compression of the legs. This can be movement as you begin the slide, such as delayed arms away or delayed body swing and common symptoms of this are the hands hit the knees and the spoon scrapes the water, or movement towards the end of the slide, such as additional body swing, reverse body swing (sitting up), flexing of the thoracic spine or very delayed stretching forward of the shoulders and arms. In other words, you are mistakenly interpreting the green arrows in the diagram above (which correspond to shape) as movement.
- Non-steady compression of the legs. The most common faults here are late in getting the slide moving and as a result the slide movement is faster than it should be, or acceleration of the slide as you move into the catch. Both of these are very detrimental to the speed of the boat at the catch.
- Failure to adopt the correct body posture (as represented by the green arrows). The most common faults are flexing of the thoracic spine, i.e. you compress your lungs, whereas the correct posture should achieve the opposite, failure to pivot at the hips (in fact it is very common to see no body swing at all and this means you have taken your 2nd most powerful muscle group, the hamstrings, out of the equation!). Keeping your head up will help you to maintain a strong back posture.
- Failure to come forward far enough. Your shins should be vertical at the catch. If you stop short of this then your stroke will be shorter.
- Leaning, i.e. your body leans away from the centre-line of the boat. There should be no lean at all in sculling, and in sweep there should be a slight rotation of the shoulders and a slight lean into the rigger but both should be kept to a minimum. Keep your head looking straight ahead will help with this. Do not look at your spoon, ever!

Why is all of this so important? Well, there are two main reasons. The first reason comes from realising that most of the mass in a boat (including the boat itself) is your own body mass from your hips up. The catch position is a rather delicate balance position and if you throw your upper body mass around at the catch or on your approach to the catch it can upset the balance of the boat and

the movement of the boat through the water. The second reason is to do with making sure you can engage the most powerful muscle group in your body, your quadriceps, at the catch and translate that into applied pressure in the water. You cannot do this if your arms are bent or your upper body is flexed, etc., and you risk injury if you try, especially with modern spoon designs.

So what can you do? Here are some thoughts.

- As with any aspect of rowing, you need feedback from your coach. The best form of feedback is to have a video taken of you while you are rowing and for the coach to run through the video and discuss with you any faults that you may have.
- You need to become self-aware whilst you are rowing; you should focus on different aspects of what your body is doing (e.g. your shoulders, upper back posture, or head position) and make adjustments. Give it a go; it's quite demanding!
- You need to work on core strength. To do that you need to be attending regular gym sessions.
- My final thought, you should practise and master the skills which will give you the ability and confidence to feel comfortable and under control on the recovery leading up to the catch.

What skill drills should you do? Here are some suggestions but why not ask your coach for their suggestions too? They may have better ideas than me!

Stationary drills

- Balancing at $\frac{3}{4}$ and full slide with oars off the water,
- Roll ups (ask a coach to explain and to monitor you; this is tricky to get right).

Moving drills

- Rowing just the first few inches of the slide with feathered or square blades,
- Legs only rowing with no body swing and no arms, again with feathered or squared blades,
- Pause rowing at $\frac{3}{4}$ slide is another good one,
- Rowing low-rating firm aiming to get as much cover as possible between strokes without actually pausing anywhere on the recovery.

Ergo drills

- You can try connection exercises on an ergo (ask a coach to explain if you do not know what these are),
- Another good one is elevate the rear of the ergo by placing it on a low step and row low-rating firm aiming to keep the slide under control as you approach the catch.

Security

Reports have been coming in that the alarm systems are not being set and the clubhouse door is being left unbolted. Please, please may I remind all of you that you have a duty to ensure that the clubhouse and boathouses are properly secured whenever you leave the site. ***If you find that you cannot do this yourself then you must contact someone who can.***

Keys for the clubhouse door may be obtained from our treasurer, Eric Bennett. These are special security keys which cannot be copied so please take care of them.

We have installed new security systems in the Jim Newcomb boat shed and in the clubhouse. They both work in the same way. To disarm them you must lift the flap on the control box and type in the security code (a four digit number). To rearm the system, you must lift the flap, press the reset button (it is not always necessary to do this but it does not hurt to so), type in the security code and wait a moment for the system to ask if you wish to set the alarm, then press the "yes" button. You now have about 30 seconds in which to leave the building and lock the door. The alarm should sound briefly about 2 minutes after you have set it and this confirms that it is working. If you do not hear this, then you must go back and try again.

The security number has been chosen to be easy to remember but, obviously, we do not publish it in Emails or on our website. Please ask if you do not know what it is.

Christmas timetable

There will be no formal training sessions during the Christmas holidays (25th December to 1st January inclusive) unless you are instructed otherwise by your coach. Adults only: if you would like to row over the Christmas holidays then please self-organise and make sure that you complete the outings board and tell someone that you are going out who can check that you have returned safely. Remember also that you must consult the Captain should you wish to use a Runcorn Rowing Club boat outside of formal training sessions.

Ed's Birthday Row (The Christmas Row) will take place on 27th December starting at the clubhouse at 10:00. Please inform Vivien Shaw of your menu choice and pay the £7 fee before the Christmas break. This is a great social occasion so please come along.

The adults Christmas party will be held at the Heathercliffe Hotel on 16th December. Menu choices and final payments (£22 per seat) should be made to Lorraine or Kevin Reynolds as soon as possible.

Christmas quiz

1. What was the name of the boat in which Sir Chay Blyth and John Ridgeway first rowed across the Atlantic in 1967?
2. In what year was the first Atlantic Rowing Race held?
3. To the nearest 100 miles, how long is the Atlantic Rowing Race?
4. How many crews are participating in the Atlantic Rowing Race this year?
5. Which Olympic Rower joined Ben Fogle in successfully completing the 2005 Atlantic Rowing Race?
6. What rowing quest did the Scottish long distance cyclist Mark Beaumont complete with 5 other rowers this summer?
7. What indoor rowing record did Trevor Coulter break on 4th December 2011?
8. How many gold medals did GB win at the 2011 World Rowing Championships?
9. Who are the current world champions in the W2x-?
10. Where will the 2012 World Championships be held?
11. When did Olympic rowing begin?
12. In what year did women's rowing first appear at the Olympic games?
13. Who was the first rower to win 5 medals in 5 consecutive Olympic games?
14. How many medals did GB rowers win in the 2008 Beijing Olympics?
15. How many rowing disciplines are there in the 2012 London Olympics?
16. In how many of these disciplines did GB pre-qualify during 2011?
17. What is a Pilot Gig?

Answers will appear in the January newsletter.

Wishing you all a happy and peaceful Christmas.

Chris Wheatley, Chairman, Runcorn Rowing Club (chair@runcornrowing.com).