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|  | **Stone Bridge Rowing Club**  ***Survival Guide*** |  |

# Fall Season

In the fall, coaches from Stone Bridge and other Loudoun County teams collaborate in a multi-school program known as Miles Make Champions, aka MMC (www.mmcrowing.org). Fall season races are longer distance head style races, unlike spring season races, which are shorter sprints in heat format. Other fall season crew teams operate in the Northern Virginia area and if you are interested, our coaches will be able to offer suggestions.

# Winter Conditioning

From December through February, the team takes part in Winter Conditioning. During this phase of training, athletes work on a combination of team erg sessions, running, and strength training at a contracted gym. Winter conditioning is key to preparing for spring races. As former Coach McCormick once said, “Earn your medals in the winter – pick them up in the spring”.

# Spring Season

1. **Parent Meetings**: Be sure to attend the monthly parent meetings held throughout the school year. Coaches and board members provide in-depth information that doesn’t always make it into emails or meeting minutes. These meetings also provide parents with the opportunity to have one-on-one conversations with coaches, to mingle with other team parents, and to ask questions.

SBRC is a parent-run organization. Each year the Board of Directors is elected to be responsible for making decisions on behalf of the team. They do a lot of organizational planning, monitoring and managing financial resources, and support the coaches and all the athletes. There are also a lot of committees and coordinators that help make this team run efficiently. SBRC would not be what it is today without the dedication of our parent volunteers.

1. **Practices**: Team practices start at the end of February. Typically, the team practices on the water at Algonkian Regional Park (aka “The Gonk”) four days a week – weather and water conditions permitting – and at Stone Bridge High School one day a week. The Potomac River presents a few physical challenges that can affect practice being called off for the day, including water level, swift currents, debris, etc. The coaches monitor the river level regularly.
2. **Drop off/Pick Up**: Plan to drop off your athlete 15 minutes before practice starts, if possible, as they need to walk from the parking lot to the launch site and prepare their boats before getting on the water. Athletes driving themselves to practice need to park in the gravel lot at Algonkian next to the sports field. The paved lot is for boat launch vehicles. Coaches do their best to complete practice at the designated time, but because this is a water sport with equipment to maintain and put away each night, and because SBRC shares the practice site and one dock with multiple Loudoun County teams, pick-up times are an estimate. Because athletes are often wet and muddy after practice, it is a good idea to have something in the car to contain the mess, such as a large trash bag or rubber bin.
   * Carpooling: This is a common arrangement during spring season, with athletes or parents bringing other athletes to practice from school. Typically, practice starts shortly after school ends and Algonkian Park is approximately a 20-minute drive from the school. Contact any Board member to express a need for carpooling assistance.
   * Speed Limit: Algonkian Park has a strict 25 mph drive zone once you are on park grounds. It is essential that all drivers strictly abide by the speed limit. If the 25 mph is violated, our team can be kicked off the water. For each offense, the days off the water is longer. If we have too many offenses, we won’t be welcomed back. Also, numerous deer populate the park and have no problem sauntering in front of your vehicle as you drive back to the drop-off point, so KEEP ALERT!
   * Cell phones: Athletes are not allowed to have cell phones at practice. This is a safety issue and the coaches may not be able to respond in a timely fashion, as they are busy with athletes and maintaining their safety on the water.
   * Pickup Issues: The time posted in the practice time email is the pickup goal but is oftentimes not when athletes are actually ready to leave. The time estimated to carry the boats from the dock, derig them, and perform other crew activities is not always precise. Should you be running late in picking up your athlete, please contact the coach, your athlete, or a member of the Board as soon as possible via text or voicemail. Messages will be retrieved once the athletes/coaches are off the water and boats are stored away. NO athlete will be left behind when practice is over.
   * Passing the Time: Bring a book, snacks, or anything else to pass the time while the coaches are doing their best to get your athlete off the water safely. Carpools are recommended to avoid ‘pick-up-burn-out’.
3. **Attendance**: If an athlete does not show up to practice, the other people in their boat cannot row that day. Athletes must tell the head coach by 9am the day of practice if they aren’t going to be at practice that afternoon so they can rearrange athletes. Excused absences for missing practice are sick, school performances such as band, or a family emergency.

# Athlete Needs for Practice

1. **Footwear**: The grounds are muddy, so rain boots or snug-fitting water shoes (not Crocs) with traction are useful. Otherwise, old shoes/sneakers will work, although they will be a mess. Waterproof socks under the boots also help keep their feet dry.
2. **Layer, Layer, Layer**: It can be COLD in spring. Athletes should wear a base layer specifically designed for cold weather activities under more form fitting active wear. No loose pants/shorts should be worn in the boat, so they don’t get caught in the boat mechanisms. Top layers can be bulkier as long as they allow freedom of movement without catching the oars. Neck warmers are very popular among the athletes to help keep warm.
3. **Dry Layer**: Because this is a water sport, athletes will get wet. It is a good idea to have a dry set of clothing, including socks, to change into following practice.

*\*TIP: If there are wet clothes in your car, remember to get them out when you return home to avoid an unpleasant surprise in the morning!*

1. **Fuel**: Don’t forget the healthy snacks! In order to be adequately fueled for the physically demanding practices, athletes should have an appropriate snack – not a treat – and plenty of water.
2. **Bug spray and Sunscreen**: Bugs can get bad at Algonkian once the weather warms up.

# Regattas

1. **The Day Before**: There may be a brief practice, but athletes will be primarily derigging boats and loading the trailer with everything needed for the race. Also, athletes need to stay hydrated and eat well the night before. Consider “carb loading” – a high-carb dinner.
2. **Arrival/Departure Times**: Athlete arrival times are EARLY and can vary between regattas but are generally around 7:00 am. Regatta details are sent out several days before each event. At times, parents have other obligations, but athletes should plan on remaining at the regatta until all SBHS boats have competed, all equipment is properly loaded, and coaches give the ‘all clear’ for departure. Please make carpool arrangements for your athlete if you must leave early. After regattas, the athletes typically meet back at the practice site to unload the trailer and re-rig the boats so they are ready to row for the next practice.
3. **Parking and Drop**: Most regattas charge $10-$20 for parking. Please bring cash as this is the only form of payment accepted. Depending on the venue, there is often a drop-off spot close to the racing site for athletes. Most of our regattas are at Sandy Run Regional Park. Nearby parking fills up fast so if you plan to watch morning races, you should plan to arrive early. The nearby parking is close enough that there is no shuttle. The park does arrange for satellite parking with a shuttle but because of the distance from the park, you should plan for extra travel time if arriving later in the morning or early afternoon.

*\*TIP 1: The early bird gets prime parking and better lawn/camp chair placement. Also, the port-a-potties are fresher with ample supply of toilet paper and hand sanitizer. Bring your own supply of toilet paper in a zip lock bag as there won’t be any left late in the day when you need it the most!*

*\*TIP 2: If your athlete carpooled earlier in the morning and you are planning to arrive late to watch a race, please allow for time to park, take the shuttle (if offered), and walk to the viewing area.*

*\*TIP 3: If you are bringing more than what can fit in a backpack or in one hand, consider getting a collapsible utility wagon to carry all your stuff. They free up your hands; minimize the back strain from carrying numerous bags, a cooler, plus lawn/camp chairs; and it’s easy to roll around. Wagons can typically be found at Sam’s, Costco, various sporting goods stores, or Amazon with an average price of $70. Think of it as a “back-saving” investment!*

1. **Things to Do Between Races**: If you arrive early, help set up our team tents and unload the hospitality trailer. Scope out the best viewing areas for the race. Bird watch and identify indigenous flora and fauna (warn others if you spot any of the poison variety!). Visit the on-site vendors (some accept cards but cash is always a good idea). Volunteer for a VASRA position. Support the other team boats and watch ALL the SBRC races. Hone your photography skills. Take a short hike or walk. Start a new hobby. Ask hospitality if they need a hand. Write a book. Become a watercolorist. Whittle. At the end of the day, help hospitality clean up or help load the hospitality trailer.

*\*TIP 1: When all else fails, Starbucks is a short drive from most venues, but make sure to get a stamp when leaving the parking lot.*

*\*TIP 2: Port-o-Potties often run out of toilet paper/hand sanitizer; it is a good idea to carry your own.*

*\*TIP 3: Regatta tee shirts can sell out in popular sizes/styles early in the day.*

1. **Watching Out for Hazards**: Regattas are busy with many rowers, coaches, spectators, and boats all in a confined area. Please be aware of your surroundings while walking around as oars and boats are being transported at head level. Right-of-way needs to be given to athletes carrying boats and equipment.
2. **Be Ready for ANY Weather:** Regattas are outdoor events not only for the athlete but for spectators. You will be exposed to the elements for the length of the regatta with minimal to no cover or shelter area. Along with your lawn/camp chair(s) and other stuff make sure to overdress for the weather just in case!

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| Hot | Sunscreen, hats, sunglasses, bug spray, and dress in layers because though the morning may be cool, the afternoon may be sweltering. |
| Cold | Layers! Coat, gloves, hat, thick socks, earmuffs, blankets, hand  warmers, neck warmers, boots |
| Wet | Waterproof boots or shoes, long rain coat, large umbrella, AND a  change of clothes for when you and your athlete do get wet. |

1. **What to Bring:**

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| Required | Cash for parking |
| Young Children | A small tent where they can hang out, a hammock to put in the trees, extra snacks, small games, bubbles, crafts, portable DVD player,  electronics, portable charger |
| Optional | Collapsible utility wagon, lawn/camp chairs, cooler, snacks/food, binoculars, camera, comfortable and sturdy shoes (often lots of walking), a book, toilet paper, pocket tissues, hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, small games, a blanket, portable charger for your  electronic devices, a bag for all your stuff |
| Also Optional | A positive attitude, a lot of patience, a sense of humor |

1. **Food**: Our hospitality team and parent volunteers provide meals, snacks, and drinks throughout the day. Though this is for families, athletes and coaches are First Priority and need to be properly fueled. Athletes have specific instructions from the coaches about when they should eat. Please allow and encourage athletes and coaches to cut in line for food as they are under strict time constraints between races. Occasionally, parents, except for young children, may be asked to wait to serve themselves lunch until hospitality makes sure all the athletes eat first. If you plan to bring additional family members or friends to the regatta, let the hospitality team know in advance so they can be prepared to feed more people. Also, if you or your athlete has any food allergies or dietary restrictions, let the hospitality team know and they will do what they can to accommodate.

## Miscellaneous Info:

* + Coaches are VERY busy on race days, so please save questions for another time or try asking other parents or board members.
  + Do not expect to see your athlete once you drop them off. They are busy rigging the boat, preparing for their race, derigging the boat, or bonding with their team. Typically, they will find you and the hospitality tent when they are hungry or need money for food or other supplies.
  + Though it is fun to watch athletes unload the trailers and rig the boats, this is the staging area and is for athletes and coaches only. Coaches refer to the boat trailer areas as the team “locker room”, and just like in other sports, parents are discouraged from entering the team locker room.
  + At Sandy Run Regional Park (aka the Occoquan), the best viewing spot for races is near the grandstands, which is a 20-minute hike or quick shuttle ride from the hospitality tents. There is a small fee, and often a wait, to get on the shuttle, so either way allow for plenty of time to get to the viewing area before your child’s race. Also, the grandstands can be crowded, so consider bringing a portable chair.
  + Except for service animals, pets are typically not allowed at regatta sites. If you have to bring a pet that is not a service animal be prepared to leave them in or near your vehicle and visit them often for water, food, and attending to their bathroom needs.

# Rowing Lingo

* **Bisweptual:** A rower who can row on both the starboard and port sides of the boat.
* [**Bow**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bow_(rowing)#Bow_seat)**:** The front of the boat. Also, a term for the rower in the number 1 seat in the bow of the boat. In coxless boats, the bow is often the person who keeps an eye on the water behind him/her to avoid accidents.
* [**Coxswain**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coxswain_(rowing)) **or "cox":** The oar-less crew member who is responsible for steering and race strategy. The coxswain either sits in the stern or [lies in the bow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowloader) of the boat and faces in the direction of travel.
* **Cox Box:** An electronic device that gives a readout of various data such as stroke rate and is connected to a headset and loudspeakers to amplify the coxswain’s voice.  'Cox-Box' is a registered trademark of Nielsen Kellerman.
* **Crab or Catch a Crab:** A rowing error where the rower is unable to quickly remove or release the oar blade from the water and the oar blade acts as a brake on the boat until it is removed from the water. This slows the boat down. A severe crab can even eject a rower (colloquially an “ejector crab”) from the shell or capsize the boat (unlikely except in small boats). Occasionally, in a severe crab, the oar handle will knock the rower flat and end up behind him/her, in which case it is referred to as an ‘over-the-head-crab.’
* **Crew size:** 1, 2, 4, 8; the number of rowers in the crew.
* **Engine room:** The middle rowers in the boat. In an 8-person shell, these are generally seats 6, 5, 4 and 3. They are generally the biggest and strongest rowers, who provide most of the power to the boat (see “Power House”).
* **Ergometer (Erg):** An indoor rowing machine.
* **Feathering:** The act of rotating the oar so the blade is parallel to the surface of the water.
* **“Heads” or “Heads Up”:** Off the water, a shout to alert others to watch out for a boat being carried.
* **Head Race**: A time-trial competition that is typically held in the fall, winter, and spring seasons. In this form of racing, rowers race against the clock and the crew completing the course in the shortest time in their age, agility, and boat class category is deemed the winner.
* **Heavyweight:** A rower who weighs more than the limit for [lightweight rowing.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lightweight_rowing) Often referred to as “Open Weight”.
* [**Lightweight**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lightweight_rowing)**:** A rower whose weight allows him or her to be eligible to compete in [lightweight rowing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lightweight_rowing) events.
* **Novice:** Rowers who are rowing for their first year.
* [**Port**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Port_(nautical))**:** The left side of the boat when facing the bow. The term also refers to a sweep rower who rows with the oar on the port side of the boat. This means that the oar blade is placed to the rower's right.
* **Power 10:** A coxswain call to take 10 strokes that musters all the strength the rower can give.
* **Power House:** The middle rowers in the boat. In an 8-person shell, these are generally seats 6, 5, 4 and 3. They are generally the biggest and strongest rowers, who provide most of the power to the boat (see “Engine Room”).
* **Regatta**: A series of crew races. The number of boats in a race typically varies between two to six, but any number of boats can start together if the course is wide enough.
* **Rigging**: All of the equipment used to outfit the boat, including the apparatuses (oars, outriggers, oarlocks, sliding seats, etc.) attached to a boat that allow the rower to propel the boat through the water. In transport to and from a race, the boat does not have any apparatuses attached. Therefore, ‘rigging’ the boat is done in preparation for a race and ‘derigging’ the boat is done after the race before loading it on the trailer.
* [**Sculler**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sculling)**:** A rower who rows with two oars, one in each hand.
* [**Seat number**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boat_positions_(sport_rowing))**:** A rower's position in the boat counting up from the bow. In an eight, the person closest to the bow of the boat is 1 or "bow," the next is 2, followed by 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and finally 8 or "stroke."
* **Set (the boat):** Keeping the balance of the boat steady, centered, and level so it doesn't rock side-to-side.
* [**Starboard**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Starboard)**:** The right side of the boat when facing the bow. The term also refers to a sweep rower who rows with the oar on the starboard side of the boat. This means that the oar blade is placed to the rower's left.
* **Stern:** The back of the boat.
* [**Stroke**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stroke_(rowing)#Stroke_seat)**:** One full motion of the oar to move the boat. The movement consists of the catch, drive, finish, and recovery. It’s also a term for the rower closest to the stern of the boat, responsible for establishing the crew’s stroke rate and rhythm.
* **Stroke Rate:** Number of strokes per minute.
* [**Sweep**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweep_(rowing))**:** A style of rowing in which each rower uses one oar.
* **Uni:**  A one-piece rowing uniform that is a specially-designed garment tailored specifically for the sport.

## VASRA: The Virginia Scholastic Rowing Association: a 501 that promotes and supports scholastic rowing in Virginia and sponsors and conducts competitive rowing regattas for high schools in Virginia. It is an organizational member of USRowing, the national governing body for the sport of rowing in the United States.

* **Wash:** The wake from a motorized boat, disliked by rowers as the wash affects the boat stability and can cause water to flood over the gunwales.