



USC ROWING ASSOCIATION

Responsibilities, Expectations, and Code of Conduct - Season 2021-2022

These expectations and rules need to be read and understood. They must be signed online by both rowers and parents upon joining the Team. Please take the time to read through these Responsibilities, Expectations, and Code of Conduct carefully and be fully aware of what is contained within.

The Upper St. Clair Rowing Association is a competitive sports team. All rowers are new to the sport and have an equal chance to become strong, contributing members of the team. Novice rowers will spend a year learning rowing technique and building skill, strength, and endurance. JV and Varsity team members are expected to be athletes dedicated to improving their rowing and contributing to high-performance boats.

Note that Upper St. Clair Rowing recognizes that athletes learn this new sport at different rates. USC Rowing welcomes all athletes who are dedicated to their team and conscientiously work toward improving their performance - regardless of their current skill level.

PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS

Rowing is unique in its demand for extremely high attendance and effort during the on-the-water seasons. You have decided to make a commitment to the Team, and your coaches and teammates depend on you to fulfill that commitment.

- Rowers whose attendance drops below 90% seriously jeopardize the performance of the lineup in which they row. Coaches reserve the right to change line-ups, exclude rowers from racing, and/or attend regattas if their attendance is less than 90%.
- The expectation is that you will attend all land and water practices and be on time.
- Excused absences for practices are allowed for academic, (e.g. ACT, SAT), family, health, or religious reasons. Text is the preferred form of communication and the coach should be contacted as far in advance as possible and then again the day of the missed practice.
- It is the responsibility of the ATHLETE to contact the coach. Missing practice for any reason disrupts the entire team, as people have to be shifted around, and in some cases, entire boats cannot practice. Parents: Please try to avoid scheduling doctor's appointments, tutors, and the like for your child during practice hours.
- The practice is held in all weather. Please dress appropriately. If high wind or thunderstorms preclude an on-the-water practice, a land workout will be held at the boathouse or high school. Notification of last-minute changes will be relayed via email or text messaging through Whatsapp communication system.
- During the official school year, bus transportation is provided to water practice at Montour Marina Boathouse. Students are not permitted to drive to practice.

- All students are required to ride the bus to and from practice unless prior arrangements are made with the Head Coach.

PRACTICE RULES

- The practice is not a social hour - do not waste time.
- Come prepared. Spandex rowing shorts, running shoes, and a full water bottle are required for every practice.
- Be dressed and ready for practice.
- As soon as you arrive at the boathouse, you have 5 minutes to get off the bus and get to your designated meeting place ready to begin practice (change, use the bathroom, etc.). Do not delay your team.
- Do not interfere with any other team's practices. This includes talking to people on other teams while they are launching from or returning to the boathouse.
- If you see another Upper St. Clair boat needing assistance, please help them. Clear this with your own coach when possible.
- Coxswains are required to check the equipment they will be using that day before they go out.
- At the end of practice, Coxswains are responsible for ensuring that the shells are wiped dry and making sure everything is put away.
- Absolutely no horseplay in the bays or around rowing equipment will be tolerated. It is very expensive! No horseplay at the docks or waterfront. No horseplay at all.

PRIORITIES

We understand that Rowing may be one of several interests you have. The sport of Rowing, however, makes an unusually high demand of your time and commitment for roughly two months of the Fall semester and two months of the Spring semester. Be certain you are willing to make that commitment.

By now, you should be well aware of the academic demands at Upper St. Clair. It is your responsibility to do your schoolwork and to finish it in a timely fashion so that you do not need to miss practice to make it up. Learning to balance and budget your time is essential. Of course, extenuating circumstances will occur. Just remember that all of your teammates are facing the same academic rigors as you are, and they depend on your participation to prepare a boat for competition.

- SATs I & II, and ACTs: Oftentimes, these tests happen to be scheduled the same day/weekend as a Race, (October and May). We realize these tests are extremely important. If possible, try to schedule the exam outside of those months or select an alternate date. This will avoid causing you to miss a race, and minimize the impact on your fellow rowers.
- AP Exams: Please plan for them! They come in late spring during the most competitive part of the season. It is vital that you carefully schedule study time so that you can practice and prepare for your exams. Remember, if you miss practice, you are affecting other people who have just as much schoolwork as you do.

When considering whether to keep your child home for whatever reason or to take your child away on a trip during the season, please be aware that this affects many other families and rowers as well.

- It disrupts the boat line up. Other rowers will have to be shifted around just to get out on the water.
- Inserting a new person can cause major disruptions. In many cases, if several people are missing, entire boats can't practice, the coach's workout can't be implemented, and valuable water time is wasted.
- It also is unfair to the parents and families of the other kids on the team who have rearranged their lives and schedules to work with the teams' schedule.

BOAT LINEUPS

Selection Process: Everybody in good standing and participation in the weekly practices on the team races. Any and all decisions regarding where an athlete will row are coaching decisions. Understand that selecting a boat is an art and not a science. There are many factors to consider, some objective, some subjective.

The coaches consider erg scores, technical ability, attitude, responsiveness to coaching, the results of seat races, and the ability to blend in with the athletes already selected for the boat. The coaches also rely on their own instinct - while this is a purely subjective method of selection, it is one they rely on to a great degree. Things like grittiness, determination on the erg, the desire to finish first during an erg piece or run, or to lift more than anyone else is all taken into account. Many times, those who are willing to do what it takes to row in the A boat successfully will clearly rise to the top on their own. It will often be as clear to the rowers as it is to the coach who is deserving of a seat in the A boat.

Creating a line-up that will go fast is a unique blend of many things, not just the four or eight fastest erg scores. While performance on the erg is an important factor, it is not the only factor considered. We start the selection process on the first day of training. The coaches do not always claim to be correct in selecting the right people. However, the line-ups put out are what are considered to be the best at that time. If you are in a situation where you are unhappy about what boat you're in, it is not time to complain or take it out on others. Your job is to make your boat go as fast as it can by cooperating with the crew of that boat. If you continue to do good things on and off the water, it will get noticed, and you will get a shot at a higher-level boat. Line-ups are never set in stone, and the coaches reserve the right to change anyone's seat at any time.

The coaches' job is to help you achieve your goals. Your job is to show up to practice motivated to do well, to improve, and to work very hard. Those traits cannot be given, but the coaches can help you find them. It is your responsibility to want to be on this team, to want to work hard, to want to succeed, to want to improve, and to want to prove to yourself and to others what you're made of. Give us that, and the coaches will do their best to help you achieve what it is you want to achieve through rowing at Upper St. Clair. If you cannot be trusted to bring to the team what is outlined above, and you don't trust the coaching staff to help you, then nothing will be accomplished.

EXPECTATIONS OF TEAM CAPTAINS

NOTE: If at any time during the season a Team Captain does not respectfully strive to meet these expectations or does not abide by the duties and responsibilities outlined below, he/she may be removed as Team Captain by the Head Coach and/or Parent Board for the remainder of the season.

- Display exemplary attendance at practices, regattas, and events to fulfill these expectations.
- Establish the lead in terms of attitude, appearance, attendance, demeanor, responsibility, and dedication to the sport. Captains are expected to set standards of both athleticism and conduct; failure to act appropriately in accordance with these expectations demonstrates unworthiness of the captains' title.
- Anticipate what needs to be accomplished (at practice and at races) and always be working to complete those tasks by leading the team in getting it done.
- Maintain decorum within the team; take charge when teammates are out-of-line; keep the team focused. In the event of a coach being occupied and unable to directly attend to all rowers, captains must take a certain responsibility for controlling team behavior and maintaining the workout routine.
- Must demonstrate qualities of leadership both at crew and outside of crew and school
- Be inspiring and be a role model both in and outside of crew and school
- Represent the interests of their teammates in communicating with the coaches and parent board
- Inform the coach of situations that are unsafe or not in the best interest of the team
- Do the things that their teammates should have done but did not (e.g. cleaning up).

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEAM CAPTAINS

- Motivate rowers and assist coaches in providing a productive, efficient, and fun workout environment
- Assemble and organize the team and conduct the warm-up routines before each practice
- Coordinate getting out the oars and launches (or ergs during high school practices)
- Assemble and organize the team and conduct the stretching routine after each practice
- Coordinate putting away the oars and launches (or ergs and weights at winter practices)
- Attend and participate in team functions such as recruiting events, novice camps, fundraising events, and other functions as determined by coaches and parent board
- Organize informal team activities such as GNO (Girls/Guys Night Out), Frisbee, ice skating, and captains' practices as assigned by their coach
- Assist novices and new team members to be sure they feel welcome and included
- Be available to assist other rowers as needed
- Facilitate communication between the team and coaches as requested by the coach. This may include emailing or calling team members in the event of schedule changes, cancellations, etc.
- Assign the mentor-mentee pairs at beginning of each season (along with input from the coach)
- Assign the trailer load & unload teams for each race
- Promote positive team morale by:
 - Speaking positively about the team and its members at all times

- Directing any concerns raised by rowers to the coach and facilitating an open conversation to resolve any issues
- Being good role models in work ethic and behavior (on and off the water) at practice, races, and outside of crew
- Showing leadership by following and encouraging all rowers to abide by the USC Crew and School District codes of conduct at all times
- Being responsible for notifying the coaches of any infractions
- Showing a sincere passion for the sport of rowing

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The coaches have instituted an attendance policy that will guarantee regular participation in rowing. Students who regularly participate in practice will receive top priority to race at regattas. The attendance policy is as follows:

- Any rower who wishes to participate in a regatta must attend daily practices during the week of the regatta.
- If there are open weekends between regattas, the rower still must participate in practices.
- If a student misses a practice that is not excused by the coaching staff the student may not be allowed to participate in the upcoming regatta.
- Indoor races are not subject to this rule - you will be expected to participate regardless of your attendance during the week of the race.
- If a rower cannot make any practice, regatta, or event due to special circumstances the rower is to inform the head coach prior to that date, who will then decide whether to waive the policy for the student and the regatta in question.
- Coaches reserve the right but are not obligated, to waive the policy in the best interest of the whole team.
- Rowers who choose not to abide by this policy will be putting their fellow boat members at risk of not racing if they do not regularly attend practice.
- It will be up to the boat members to encourage the absent rower to attend practice.
- Excused absences will be granted during the season for extenuating circumstances.
- Once the seat assignments have been made for a given regatta and a rower is absent, tardy, or leaves practice early, there is no guarantee that their seat will be held at the subsequent regatta.
- Unexcused absences include any absence that has not been approved by the coach including but not limited to:
 - absences due to participation in other school activities or clubs
 - doctor/dental appointments
 - family obligations
 - too much homework
- Rowers need to maintain a minimum grade of a 'C' in all classes in order to participate in practice and races.

REGULATIONS FOR BEHAVIOR ON BUSES

Buses for practices and in-state regattas are school-sponsored-- a privilege that all rowers and parents must respect. Therefore, all rowers are expected to be on their best behavior

while traveling to/from practices and regattas. Rowers shall abide by the following regulations:

- Bus drivers are in charge and must be respected.
- Rowers are expected to refrain from swearing, rudeness, and loudness.
- Rowers will NOT harass other rowers. This includes verbal, physical, or sexual harassment.

The Parent Board directs that complaints of harassment shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action be taken when allegations are substantiated. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the School District's legal and investigative obligations.

- Captains are responsible for reporting rower misconduct to the Head Coach and Parent Board.
- Consequences for rower misconduct are as follows:
 - **1st offense** - Warning to rower by Head Coach and/or Parent Board
 - **2nd offense** - Call to parents by Head Coach and/or Parent Board
 - **3rd offense** - Suspension from the bus for ONE WEEK of practice. Parents of suspended rower agree to provide transportation for the rower to/from practices during the week of suspension. If a rower does not attend practices during the suspension week, he/she is not permitted to participate at the next regatta/event (includes banquet, party, etc.)

REGULATIONS FOR AWAY/HOME EVENTS AND REGATTAS

The following regulations shall apply to all home and/or away meets and regattas:

- All rowers must travel to and from the Regatta with the Team. If an exception occurs, it must be pre-approved by the Head Coach and must be informed in writing.
- All rowers are expected to participate in bus loading and unloading, race site set up/breakdown, boat rigging and derigging.
- Rowers must abide by the time schedules established by the coaching staff and chaperones will assist in implementing the schedule.
- Room assignments are specifically designed by the Head Coach or Parent Board and are final.
- Rowers must adhere to the rules in the USC High School Student Handbook, abide by the predetermined curfew, remain quiet, and stay in their rooms until the morning. Room checks will be made by chaperones to ensure students are accounted for and in their assigned rooms. Rowers will be given contact numbers of chaperones in the event they need assistance. Rowers may not leave the hotel area, the race site, or other designated areas without the consent of a chaperone or coach. Any violations may result in the rower being scratched from the race.
- Room damages, missing items and other miscellaneous extra charges (i.e., phone charges, movie rentals, etc.) will be the responsibility of those individuals sharing a room unless a single responsible person can be identified.
- Rowers should support their teammates during races unless otherwise instructed by the coach.

The Upper St. Clair Rowing Association follows the guidelines set forth by the Upper St. Clair School Board Policies for the District.

The following sections are adopted from the USC High School Student-Parent Handbook.

CLUB SPORTS

Club sports operate under the guidelines set for interscholastic athletics. Students are required to meet the same standards for behavior, attendance, and academic eligibility. Club sports coaches and sponsors will be notified by the administration concerning student behavior and performance.

ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR

The Upper St. Clair High School Ethics Statement acknowledges *Equality, Teamwork, Honesty, Integrity, Character, and Social Conduct* as pillars of the foundation of our academic, extracurricular, and service missions.

- All Upper St. Clair students are expected to demonstrate the highest level of conduct, sportsmanship, and behavior whenever they represent the school and the community.
- All members of the Upper St. Clair community must consider their actions carefully and be responsible for them.
- Students are expected to do their best to uphold the Upper St. Clair High School Ethics Statement at all times.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

USC School district recognizes that student sanctioned use of alcohol and other controlled substances is illegal. Anyone found to be violating this rule during practices, regattas, and/or on away trips will be referred to the Upper St. Clair High School administration and sanctioned as dictated by the following: **Rules Concerning Substance Use Among Activity/Athletic/Club Sport Participants.**

The following rules will apply to students who use alcohol, tobacco or other controlled substances. Any student who violates these rules will be subject to the appropriate school consequences in addition to the following:

- **1st offense** - Any student using alcohol, tobacco, or other controlled substances on school property will receive a suspension from school-sponsored activities.
- **2nd offense** - The participant will receive a two-week suspension from activity participation.
- **3rd offense** - The participant will be suspended from the activity for the remainder of the current year.
- A student who violates these rules off school grounds will receive a three-day suspension from activity participation or will be subject to the coach/sponsor's rules if they are approved by and on file with the Athletic Director and/or Principal.
- After each offense, the student will be counseled by his coach/sponsor.

- The school district Drug and Alcohol Policy will be enforced where applicable

Please review the USC School District's policy on the following topics in the [USC High School Student-Parent Handbook](#)

NOTE: For the welfare of each rower, each chaperone and or/the Head Coach shall maintain *in loco parentis* and as such, may enter a rower's room and search his/her belongings if there is a reason to believe that anyone of these policies may have been violated. Rowers in violation will be scratched from the current and/or next regatta/event. Parents will be contacted immediately and agree to pick up rower from the regatta/event and return home.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR CLUB SPORT PARTICIPANTS

The following guidelines have been developed by the Upper St. Clair School District to monitor the academic performance of students on athletic teams: At the beginning of the sports season, initial academic and attendance eligibility will be governed by PIAA and school district requirements.

In season, weekly monitoring of an athlete's eligibility will be as follows:

- If a student is not earning a passing grade, that student will be referred to the Athletic Director by noon on Friday.
- The Athletic Director will chart students by courses as they are submitted by teachers.
- Coaches will be officially informed by the Athletic Director of all such referrals by Friday.
- Any student-athlete who is not passing four full-credit courses will be ineligible to practice and [compete in regattas] for one week. The student will remain ineligible until he/she has achieved a passing grade in four full-credit classes.
- Any penalties or sanctions imposed on students will begin on the following Monday.

VARSITY LETTER

In order to receive a varsity letter, each team member must do the following:

- Be on the team and in good standing for a minimum of four seasons.
- Participate in all practices, and have no unexcused absences
- 90% attendance is required once excused absences are factored in.
- Participate in all of the regattas in each of the qualifying seasons.
- Only one excused absence from a regatta per school year is allowed.
- Demonstrate leadership, hard work, and ability to mentor and teach the novice team members.
- Be in good standing in both discipline and school academics for each of the qualifying seasons.
- Comply with the USC Rowing Association Code of Conduct.
- Be current on all dues payments and owed fundraising.
- Actively participate in fundraising and other team-related activities.

- Receive the recommendation from the coaching staff.

COMMUNICATION

Open communication among athletes, coaches, and parents is essential to a healthy and effective team. Coaches are responsible for communicating information regarding the athletic program to parents. Parents are responsible for understanding the athletic program's rules, regulations and requirements, and the coach's expectations.

Communication/information coaches should provide to parents:

- Eligibility requirements
- Coach's contact info and expectations
- Location/Times of practices and races
- Procedure concerning player injury
- Team rules, guidelines, and disciplinary procedures
- Lettering requirements

Communication/information parents should provide to coaches

- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
- Specific concerns in regard to the coach's philosophy and/or expectations.
- Information regarding student injuries and medical conditions.

Appropriate concerns for parents to discuss with coaches:

- Treatment of their child
- Ways to help their child improve,
- Concerns about their child's behavior.

Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:

- Playing time/positions/assignments; in rowing, this means seat positions/boat assignments.
- Other student athletes.

Procedures for discussing parental concerns:

- Parents should not confront coaches or engage in discussions with coaches about concerns in person at an event.
- Parents may discuss concerns or request a meeting with coaches via the contact method designated by the rower's coach and at a time that is mutually convenient, anticipating a timely response.
- If the coach cannot be reached, the Parent Board should be contacted to schedule the meeting.
- If the meeting with the coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution, the parent may schedule an appointment with the Parent Board to discuss the situation.
- Coaches may also schedule a meeting with the Parent Board to discuss issues with parents.
- If a situation is still unresolved, additional meetings with appropriate administrators may be scheduled.

A Final Note

The Responsibilities, Expectations, and Code of Conduct document is a lot to digest, but it is hoped that it will clearly outline what is expected of you as a rower at Upper St. Clair (and as a parent of an Upper St. Clair rower). Please feel free to email or call about anything related to the team.