

Coxie (Coxswain) Duties

Crews that require a coxswain (i.e. sweep 4+ and 8+) will need to address the assignment of this role.

In most cases, a crew will share responsibility for this role by rotating the position between crew members. Other crews have been fortunate enough to recruit a dedicated coxswain. This can be done by checking with your non-rowing friends or acquaintances.

Regardless of the assignment of this position, it is important to be aware of the basic roles and responsibilities of a coxie before going out on the water. The club hosts Coxie Clinics throughout the rowing season and ALL crew members are encouraged to attend.

The Function of the Coxswain

As a coxie you are in control of the boat both on and off the water. You are responsible for your own safety, the safety of your crew and of other water users and the equipment, much of which is extremely expensive to repair or replace. Therefore you need to be aware of what is going on around you at all times.

Within the boundaries of safety and working as a team with the rest of the club, your job is to make sure that your crew get the most out of every outing, and win races. To do this you need to encourage your crew and when necessary push them to the limits of their concentration and physical endurance; coxing can be seen as a psychological sport.

Every outing is different and you can always do things in a better way than before. The crew will only follow orders from you, not their coach or anyone else. Work with them to decide on an outing plan of warm-up, exercises, firm pieces, etc.

Giving Commands

To make life easier for your crew, commands should be given in time with their rowing, this is very confusing when explained on paper so please ask your coach or an experienced member to explain.

Before starting any piece of rowing (inc. spinning) ask 'are you ready', and then WAIT for a second to give your crew a chance to answer. Relations can be strained if you ask the crew to row when they have tops over their heads! Rowers have a great insulating effect on sound (particularly when tired). Whilst people on the bank half a mile away may hear you perfectly, bow pair may not.

Cox boxes are a little temperamental and suffer from loose wiring that occasionally needs jiggling. Microphones cannot be shouted at – they can't cope and distort your voice, so enunciate and speak clearly. The tone of voice that you choose is very important. Screaming 'relax' at the top of your voice will usually have the opposite effect.

Keep words to a minimum and your commands simple. Using the same basic ones every outing makes life much easier.

Always say whom you're talking to before giving a command, not afterwards. This applies particularly when you've got different people doing different tasks.

If the crew don't do what you say don't scream at them, they may not have heard you! Especially in a tight situation just repeat yourself (into microphone) or shout louder (without one). If the cox box dies and you can't shout, get 4 or 5 to relay to the bow of the boat.

Try to phrase any comments or coaching as positively as possible. It is easier to think about doing something than not doing something.

Try to keep your crew's focus in the boat; anything else is your problem.



Post outing 'crew meeting'

This is where you need a bit of motivational skill and tact. Always try to have a meeting, it gives a point to the outing, and rowers (& you) can talk if they're not happy with the outing. The coach will lead the meeting or if there isn't one you/the crew captain can do it, usually asking each rower to say something about the outing.

Try to set some targets for the next outing so that your crew (& you) keep improving. Try to keep things positive whilst encouraging constructive criticism. There's only so much people can take when they're tired, wet and cold. If things need sorting out or there are problems, pass them on to your program contact (coach or representative) ASAP.

Coxswain Calls - How to get the boat in and out of the boathouse

Managing to get a 220 lb. fragile and expensive shell from the boathouse to the dock can be intimidating. The key to success, like so many other rowing functions, is listening to the commands of the coxswain, and when required, doing it as a crew...in unison. Depending on the exact location of the shell in the boathouse, (i.e. on the first, second, or third rack, or on the fourth) the object is to remove the shell and carry it to the dock and successfully place it in the water.

To take the boat out of the boathouse, have the crew stand next to the boat beside their assigned riggers. All of the boats are stored on racks that slide out to allow the crew to alternate on each side (half on port, half on starboard). The crew should rest the boat gunnels (edge) on their shoulder, though crew members will have to adjust for different heights – if crew members are very tall or very short, they will have to carry the boat below or above their shoulder level to ensure that the load is fairly distributed.

Boats are stored in the boat house stern first (stern towards the back of the boat bay) except for the fours that are in the first boat bay – those are put in bow first.

Coxswain calls for taking the boat out of the boathouse:

Hands on the boat and the slide... ready to slide...slide.

Split opposite your riggers

Ready to lift an inch... lift

Walk it out, away from the rack

Ready to lift to the shoulders... and lift

Ready to walk it out...go (Remember to call "Heads up on the dock" and to watch for obstructions on the dock)

Let it run. (When the bow crewperson reaches the end of the dock)

Ready to swing the Bow to the Humber, Stern to Ontario Place.... and Swing

Let it run. (When the boat is parallel to the edge of the dock)

Toes to the edge.

Ready to lift up over the heads... and lift.

Inside grip

Ready to roll to the waist... and roll.

Push it out... lower to the water. (Coxie must watch the fin to ensure it is not damaged).

To take the boat back into the boathouse, you would essentially reverse these calls:

Ready to lift to the waist...and lift.

Up over the head...and up

Ready to split, opposite your riggers...and split

To the shoulders

Ready to swing the stern to the boat house...swing

Let it run (once the boat is in position to go into the correct boat bay – stern first)

Walk it in, nice a slow

Let it run (once you are opposite the rack)

Ready to side step it in...go

Outside - continuing holding the boat, inside – come out. (Do not let crew on the outside of the boat let go at this point as the boat is too heavy to rest on the extended slides without bracing)

Ready to slide...and slide