



Glossary of Terms

Abeam - Directly off side of shell.

Aligner- Official who is exactly on the starting line and is in communication with the stake boats so the bows of each shell are aligned exactly even. Like the Starter, he has the power to signal a false start.

Are You Ready? – Coxswain's command preparing crew for executive order, which will follow.

Astern – Directly to the rear of the shell.

“Back ‘Er Down” – Command from coxswain calling for oarsmen to reverse blades and row backward in short strokes.

Beat – Number of strokes per minute which crew is rowing; usually varies in race.

Blade – Flat surface of oar usually varying in width from 6 ½ to 7 ½ inches, and in length from 24 to 30 inches, depending on rigging of crew and size and strength of oarsman. Blades are painted school's colors.

Blade Work – Action of blades during stroke, encompassing such techniques as “catch”, “feathering” etc., used to describe manner in which oarsman handles his oar.

Body Angle – Amount at catch, of forward lean of oarsman's body from hips; most types of strokes have 60 degrees body angle at catch.

Boot Stretcher – cross pieces in shell to which shoes are fastened; adjustable so that when oarsman's feet are in shoes, with knees straight, his seat is at the end of the slide.

Bow – Forward section of shell.

Breakage – Damage to boat or equipment; breakage during first 100 meters of race is grounds for referee recalling all shells and restarting the race.

Catch – The point in stroke cycle at which blade enters water.

Check – Amount of interruption of forward progress of shell which commonly occurs at the catch and sometimes at the release. It is also a split in the then wouldn't skin of a shell.

Course – A recognized waterway upon which rowing races are held. A crew is also said to have rowed a “course” when it rows against a stop watch over a prescribed distance, usually the distance which it will row in the race for which it is training.

Cox Four – A shell in which four row, each rowing a single sweep oar A coxswain steers the boat and calls the stroke just as in an eight.

Cox Pair – A shell rowed by two, each using a single sweep oar. The coxswain steers the craft and calls the stroke. The cox may either be sitting in the stern or lying down on his back in the bow.

Coxswain – Member of crew who sits on stationary seat at stern, facing forward; primarily charged with steering often calls beat and aids in carrying out strategy of race by gauging position of competing crews; usually selected for size and savvy.

Crab – Upsetting action caused by turning of oar blade in water so that the release is either forced or impossible to make – former is partial crab”, latter (when control of oar is fully lost_ is “full crab”. Some crabs result in an oarsman being thrown out of the shell.

Dash – A 500-meter race, usually for eight-oared crews or singles.

Decks – Sections of shell at bow and stern covered usually by varnished silk or nylon; BOW DECK extends about 12 feet back from prow to washbow; STERN DECK extends from back of coxswain's seat to tiller post.

Double – a shell in which two scullers row, each using a pair of oars or sculls.

Drive – Part of the stroke cycle between the catch and the release in which the oarsman or sculler applies power to the oar.

Easy All! – The coxswain's command to his oarsmen to stop rowing.

Eights – Colloquial term used to indicate eight-oared shells, as differentiated from "fours" or "doubles" etc.

Facing – Turning of oar blade perpendicular to surface of water in preparation for catch; and; also during drive.

Feathering – Action of turning oar blade parallel to surface of water during recovery; use to cut down wind resistance of blade and aid in releasing.

Feathering Under – term for feathering blade before it is clear of water; when done too quickly, may result in a crab. Some rowing style call for feathering under, others do not feather until blade is clear of water.

Finish – As part of stroke cycle, the last part of the drive before release; also, when prow of shell reaches end of course, also, manner in which crew rows final portion of race, i.e. "strong" or "weak" finish.

Footstop – The shoe assembly or rack into which each crewmember laces his feet in a racing shell.

Four – A shell in which four oarsmen row, each using a single sweep oar. The man in the bow steers by rudder by use of a tiller wire attached to the toe of one shoe.

German Blade – A colloquial term used for the shovel shaped or tulip shaped oar blades used by many crews; originated in Germany.

Gunwale – Top strip along sides of shell to which outriggers are secured.

Heavyweight – An oarsman or sculler or crew, which is too heavy to qualify as a lightweight entry.

Inboard Work – Terms applied to all phases of stroke cycle, which take place inside the shell, such as "slide control", "body swing", etc.

International Distance – 2,000 meters (approx. 1 ¼ miles)

Keel – Center line of shell, running from bow to stern along the bottom; in construction, strengthening member to which ribs are attached (as the backbone of the human body); also, term designating stability with which shell moves through the water (i.e.) "good keel" is when the shell does not wobble.

Knifing In – Under-facing blade on catch so that oar goes too deep when power is applied.

Knockers – Short wooden handles on tiller ropes by which coxswain steers and sometimes pounds out cadence of stroke.

Knocker Boards – Small pieces of hardwood attached to gunwales at coxswain's seat, against which he beats his knockers.

Layback – Amount of backward lean of oarsman's body at finish of drive.

Leather – portion of oar shaft, which fits into the oarlock, usually greased to reduce friction.

Leg Drive – Power applied to stroke by force of legs against stretcher pushing sliding seat toward box.

Length In Water – Term describing arc in water through which blades move on drive; actually, amount of forward motion of shell while blades are anchored in water.

Let Her Run! – The command to stop rowing.

Lightweight – A lightweight man/woman must be less than 160/130 pounds with the boat average less than 155/125 pounds.

Loom – Shaft of oar between blade and handle.

Missing Water – Faulty catch in which oar blade is not anchored properly, resulting in missing part of initial drive.

Oarlock – U-shaped swivel holding oar on outrigger; fulcrum of lever created by oar; it is mounted on "sill" and rotates on upright "pin", with "gate" at top to secure oar.

Oarsman or Oarswoman – The correct term for one who rows in a pair, a four or an eight.

Octet – A shell made up of eight scullers.

Old Boy – A former oarsman or sculler still active in the sport, either as a coach, an executive or just a fan.

Orthodox Rig – The stroke oar protrudes from the port side of the shell and each oar alternates up the boat to bow.

Outboard Work – Term applied to all phases of stroke which takes place outside of the shell, combining timing and blade work.

Outrigger – Metal frame extending oarlock out from side of boat to maintain constant distance (usually 31 ½ in. to 33 in.) of oarlock from center of shell.

Pair – A shell towed by two athletes, each using a single sweep oar.

Port – Left side of the shell, facing forward (from stern forward, stroke, 6, 4, 2).

“Power 10” (or 20) – Maximum effort by oarsman for designated number of strokes.

Puddles – Whirlpools left in water by action of Oar.

Quad – A shell with four scullers, each using a pair of oars or sculls.

Racing Start – First strokes of race, usually shorter and quicker than those used through body of race.

Rate or Rating – Number of strokes per minute being rowed by crew; this usually varies in a race.

“Ready All?” – Preparatory command to get crew ready to row.

Recovery – Part of stroke cycle in which oar is returned to position for the drive – i.e. duration of cycle from release to catch – during which oarsman’s seat is returned to stern end of slide.

Release – Part of stroke cycle in which blade is removed from water at end of drive.

Rigger – The steel outrigger into which the oar is locked.

Rigging – Adjusting and altering accessories in shell such as outriggers, boat stretchers, tracks, sliding seats, etc. sometimes the accessories themselves.

Rudder – Steering device at stern of shell. Most rudders are usually 8” deep and 14” wide and made of mahogany. They fit into the stern by means of a removable pin. They can be removed.

Rudder Ropes – Lines connecting wings on top of rudder with coxswain by which he steers shell. In straight fours, bow steers shell by right footstop or shoe, which swivels.

Run – Distance a shell is propelled by one-stroke cycle.

Scull – Smaller couter part of sweep; used in singles, doubles and quads.

Scullers – One who sculls a single or in a double or quad. A sculler uses two oars.

Sculling – Type of rowing in which sculler uses sculls.

Shell – (eight-oared shell) A boat built for racing; usually 61 feet long, 24-26 inches wide at widest point (approximately at No.4 seat) and tapering to either end; weighs fully rigged, 250-260 pounds; skin is of cedar, single, or ply, approximately 3/16th of an inch thick.

Skying – Faulty recovery in which blade is too high above water, caused by oarsman carrying hands too low.

Slide – Track, usually 27” long, on which sliding seat rolls.

Slide Control – Oarsman’s command of speed at which he moves his seat along slide during stroke cycle.

Rushing the Slide – moving seat too rapidly during recovery.

Shooting the Slide – Failing to keep seat directly under oarsman during drive, thus increasing body angle.

Spacing – Distance between successive sets of puddles; varies at different boats.

Starboard – Right side of shell, facing forward. Oars on the starboard side of standard-rigged boat are Bow, 3, 5, 7.

Starter – The official who starts each race.

Stern – Rear of shell.

Stretcher – cross bracing in the shell to which the shoes or boots are fastened. They are adjustable to suit leg length. Also used to describe the canvas and wooden horse upon which shells are placed when not on the storage racks.

Stroke – Oarsman in No. 8 seat, farthest astern facing coxswain, who sets beat for rest of crew to follow.

Sweep – oars, usually 12 feet long, averages about 8 ½ pounds in weight. Three main parts are “blade”, “loom”, and “handle”.

Washing Out – When oar blade comes out of water during drive – creating surface wash, losing power and unsteady shell.

Weights – The bag of sand or steel weights required by those coxswains which weigh under the minimum.

Workboat – A clinker-built boat used for training oarsman.