

## Glossary of Rowing Terms

**ARA** Amateur Rowing Association. The national governing body for rowing in England, to which all clubs should be affiliated. Offers individual membership with benefits of monthly magazine, website information, insurance and racing licence to open regattas that are run under the associations rules.

**Back down.** Term used to describe using a reverse rowing action to manoeuvre the boat backwards or for turning.

**Backstay.** The back brace of a *rigger* that locks the pin in position to maintain *pitch*. (not found on *wing rigger* boats).

**Backstops.** The end of the slide nearest the *bow*. Prevents the seat from running off the *slide*. Also used to describe the position at which the athlete sits with their legs straight and *blade* to their chest.

**Beginning.** The moment at which the *spoon* of the blade is immersed in the water and propulsive force applied. Immersion and force application should be indistinguishable actions. Also called the *Catch*.

**Blade.** An *oar*.

**Button.** The plastic circular section of the oar that is pressed against the *swivel* when rowing.

**Bow.** End of the boat that travels through the water first and is sharpest. Athlete that sits in the seat position nearest this end of the boat.

**Bow Ball.** Ball shaped safety cap that sits over the bow end of the boat. Compulsory on all rowing boats for safety of other water users.

**Bow Side.** The right hand (starboard) side of the boat as the *cox* sits or the left hand side of the boat for a rower. Often marked by a green stripe on the oar.

**Burst.** A small number of strokes (usually less than a minute) taken at full pressure in training.

**Canvas.** The covered section of the boat that is from the *bow* to the open area (where the athlete sits) and from the open area to the *stern*. Often used to as a description of how much a race was won or lost by.

**Catch.** See beginning.

**Cleaver.** Type of blade that has a *spoon* in the shape of a meat cleaver.

**Collar.** Plastic sleeve fixed to the oar that the *button* circles. Button can be moved along the collar to adjust blade gearing.

**'Come forward'.** Verbal instruction used by the *cox* or athlete to bring the crew to *frontstops* position ready to row.

**Connection.** Used to describe the link between the power of an athletes legs to the force applied to the *spoon* of the *blade*. Should be made as soon as the *catch* is

taken and held through the trunk muscles for the length of the work section of the stroke.

**Cox.** Person who steers the boat by means of strings or wires attached to the *rudder*. Can be positioned in either the *stern* or *bow* of the boat.

**Coxless.** Boat without a *cox*.

**Crab.** When the *oar* becomes caught in the water at the moment of *extraction* and the blade handle strikes the athlete. Often causes unintentional release of the blade and significant slowing of boat speed.

**Double.** Boat for two *scullers*.

**'Easy Oar/Off'.** Verbal instruction given by *cox* or athlete for crew to stop rowing.

**Eight.** Boat for eight *sweep* rowers. Will always have a *cox*.

**Ergo.** Indoor rowing machine used for training.

**Extraction.** The removal of the blade from the water by application of downward pressure to the blade handle. In *sweep* this is done with the outside hand on the blade handle. Movement easiest when force is applied to the spoon of the blade until the last moment.

**Feather.** *Blade spoon* is flat to the water. This is the position of the blade spoon for the recovery section of the stroke. Athletes must be careful to fully extract the blade before feathering.

**Fin.** A piece of metal or plastic attached to the underside of the boat towards the *stern*. Provides directional stability by preventing sideways slippage.

**Finish.** The last part of the stroke where the blade handle is drawn in to the body. Following this (assuming clean *extraction*) the boat will be at its maximum speed. Force must be applied to the *spoon* right to the finish so that water does not catch up with the spoon.

**Firm.** Term used to suggest that the athlete is applying full pressure to the power phase of their rowing stroke.

**Fixed Seat.** Either a description used to differentiate a boat without a sliding seat mechanism or the athlete rowing arms and or body only and therefore not moving their seat.

**FISA.** The Federation Internationale des Societes d'Aviron is the international rowing federation. The federation is responsible for all international racing and rules. Organises a series of 3 World Cup Regattas and World Championships annually.

**Four.** Boat for four *sweep* rowers. Can be coxed or coxless.

**Frontstop.** The end of the slide nearest the *stern*. Prevents the seat from running off the *slide*. Also used to describe the position at which the athlete sits with their legs at 90 and the blade *spoon* at the furthest point to the bows.

**Gate.** The metal bar, tightened by a screw that closes over the *swivel* to secure oar.

**Gearing.** Term used to describe the ratio of *inboard* to *outboard* on the blade that determines how much power the athlete can apply through the water.

**Head Race.** Race in which crews are timed over a set distance. Usually run as a processional race rather than side by side.

**Heel Restraints.** Attached to the heels of the shoes and to the foot plate. Compulsory safety feature that helps the athlete to release their feet from the shoe in the event of a capsize.

**Height.** Measurement of distance from seat to point of work at the centre of the bottom edge of the *swivel*.

**'Hold it up'.** Verbal instruction meaning to bring the boat to a stop quickly. Perform an emergency stop.

**Inboard.** The length of the blade from the end of the handle to the *button* at the point where it will sit against the *swivel*.

**Lateral pitch.** The outward angle of inclination of the *pin* to the vertical.

**Length.** – Length of stroke- the arc through which the blade turns when it is in the water from *catch* to *finish*.

**Loom.** The shaft of the blade from the *spoon* to the handle.

**Macon.** Type of blade that has the traditional shape spoon.

**Novice.** Term used to describe someone who has very little rowing experience.

**Oar.** Lever used to propel a rowing boat. Also known as a *blade*.

**Outboard.** The length of the blade from the tip of the spoon to the button at the point where it will sit against the swivel. (Or, the engine on the coaching launch.)

**Overlap.** The amount by which the *scull* handles overlap when an athlete holds them horizontally at right angles to the boat.

**Pair.** Boat for two *sweep* rowers.

**Pin.** The spindle on which the *swivel* rotates.

**Pitch.** Angle of inclination of the *spoon* to the vertical during the propulsive phase of the stroke. This is dictated by both the *stern* and *lateral pitch*.

**Pressure.** The amount of effort applied by the athlete to the power phase of the stroke. (usually light,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$ , firm or full)

**Points.** Points are awarded to athletes for winning races. Number of points determines the *status* of the athlete. See the ARA Rules of Racing for more details.

**Posture.** Position of back and shoulder muscles during the stroke cycle. See section on flexibility and posture.

**Power phase.** The part of the stroke between the *beginning* and the *extraction* when the blade is in the water and propelling the boat.

**Quad.** Boat for four scullers.

**Rate.** Or rating. Number of strokes rowed in a minute.

**Ratio.** The ratio of the time taken for the *power phase* to that of the *recovery* phase of the stroke. Ideally time taken for the recovery will be about three times that of the power phase. 1:3

**Recovery.** The part of the stroke phase between the *extraction* and the *beginning* or *catch* when the blade is out of the water.

**Regatta.** A competition with events for different boat types and *status* athletes usually involving heats, semi finals and finals for each event. Boats compete side by side from a *standing start*.

**Rhythm.** (Good) Optimum *ratio*.

**Riggers.** Metal outriggers attached to the boat outer shell of the boat next to each seat that support the *swivel* and the *pin*. There are currently several different designs of rigger from two or three stay metal or carbon tubing to metal or carbon wings.

**Rigging.** The way in which the *riggers*, *slides*, *swivel*, *pins*, *foot plate*, *oars* and *sculls* can be adjusted to optimise athlete comfort and efficiency.

**Rigger jigger.** A small spanner used for attaching and adjusting *riggers*.

**Rudder.** The device under the boat which when moved causes change of direction. Linked to the *cox* or a crew member by wires.

**Running start.** A racing start undertaken with the boat already moving.

**Saxboard.** The sides of the boat above the water line made to strengthen the boat where the *riggers* attach.

**Scull.** Smaller version of the *oar* used for *sculling*.

**Sculling.** Rowing with two *oars*.

**Shell.** The smooth hull of the boat. Sometimes made from wood but more commonly now from a synthetic material.

**Slide.** Two metal runners on which the seat travels.

**Span.** The distance between the centres of the bow and stroke side *swivel* on a sculling boat.

**Spin turn.** Term used to describe turning the boat on its axis.

**Spoon.** The end of the oar which enters the water. Usually painted in the colours of the club represented by the athlete.

**Square or squaring.** To turn the oar so that the *spoon* is at 90 degrees to the water. This action should be done early during the *recovery* to ensure good preparation for the *catch*.

**Standing start.** A racing start done from stationary.

**Stakeboat.** An anchored boat or pontoon from which rowing boats are held prior to a race starting.

**Status.** Levels of racing determined by the number of times an athlete has won a race. Athletes are awarded points for each race they win. In a crew boat status is determined by the total number of points the crew has. See the ARA Rules of Racing for more details.

**Stern.** The end of the boat that travels through the water last.

**Stern pitch.** Sternwards angle of inclination of the *pin* to the vertical.

**Stroke.** One cycle of the *oar*. **2.** The rower who sits closest to the *stern* of the boat in front of all the others and is responsible for the *rating* and *rhythm* of the boat. (other crew members can influence rating and rhythm from behind)

**Stroke side.** The left hand (port) side of the boat as the *cox* sits or the right hand side of the boat for a rower. Often marked by a red stripe on the oar.

**Stretcher.** A metallic or carbon plate inside the boat to which the shoes are attached. Secured with adjustable screws.

**Sweep.** Rowing with one oar on one side of the boat.

**Swivel.** The U shaped plastic rotating piece mounted on the *pin* in which the oar sits whilst rowing.

**Tap down.** To the lower the hands at the end of the stroke to remove the *spoon* from the water.

**Tap turn.** Term used to describe a method of turning the boat where each rower uses a forwards or backwards rowing action with there arms only.

**Trestles.** Portable stands used to support a boat for *rigging*, washing, admiring etc.