

Ayle of Quinte –Instructions for Coxing rev, Sept 2021

Competent Cox

A competent cox is a person designated by the board to have the skills and training to safely take a St. Ayles Skiff onto the water. The cox may not necessarily be the person who is steering the boat at all times, but remains responsible for the safety of the boat and the crew.

Personal and Crew Safety

- the competent cox follows the club safety policy at all times
- ensures crew's orderly entry and exit of the boat
- assigns the initial rowing positions of the crew including the tiller position
- ensures self and crew are wearing life jackets and proper non-skid footwear.
- ensures all safety equipment is in good working order and that a mobile phone is available for emergency communication
- is responsible for using proper and consistent terminology and commands
- will ensure commands are audible to the crew.
- is responsible for the steering of the boat and must be aware of other boats or hazards on the water ensuring a safe course to avoid collision. This responsibility can be delegated to the person at the tiller, under the direction of the cox as needed
- if, in the cox's opinion, weather conditions are not suitable for a safe row, the cox will assume authority for the decision to proceed or cancel the row.

Rowing Terminology

- Port side- when looking forward, toward the bow of the skiff, port refers to the **left** side. There is red tape on the oar.
- Starboard side. When looking forward toward the bow of the skiff, starboard refers to the **right** side. There is green tape on the oar.
- Stroke- the action that propels the boat forward as well as the position of the rower nearest the cox, rowing on your starboard or right hand.
- Catch- start of the stroke
- Finish- end of a stroke
- Recovery- part of the stroke when oar is returned to the catch

Naming rowers

The rowers are designated by their position from the bow. The rower in the bow is number one (port side), then two (starboard side), three (port side) and stroke (starboard side) is the rower closest to the cox seated in the stern.

- Port side- all rowers with oar on the same side as bow oar and #3 oars.
- Starboard side- all rowers with oar on the same side as stroke oar and #2 oars.
- Bow Pair- bow and number two oars
- Stern Pair- stroke and number three oars

Manoeuvring the Boat

This section deals with various commands the cox would use to orient the boat prior to rowing, to get the boat free of a congested area, to get the boat back to a dock and to direct the crew while rowing. It bears mentioning that when manoeuvring at a slow speed or stopped the cox must be aware of wind conditions that will have an effect on the direction and position of the boat and take appropriate action to counter these. Before leaving the dock the cox will consider all factors, including crew abilities and weather conditions and develop a plan for getting the boat safely away.

- All four **ready to row, ready, row** instructs the rowers to begin rowing
- To establish the desired boat speed to start a row the command would be “all four ready to row **light, half or full pressure, ready, row**”
- Single or multiple strokes by one or more rowers such as “**port side two strokes please**” can be used for minor corrections to direction.
- **Easy oars** or let it run is the command to stop
- The command **row on** instructs rowers to continue rowing.
- The command “**back it down**” is to reverse the oar and row in a reverse or backward direction ie: the opposite of a stroke. The cox should be specific as to which oar he wishes to back the boat. An example of this would be “bow pair, back it down, ready, row” or “all four back it down” ready, row”, followed by “easy oars” when you wish the action to cease.
- The command “starboard side row on, port side hold the boat, ready, row” will turn the boat sharply to port. The opposite “port side row on starboard side hold the boat.” will turn the boat sharply to starboard. The cox will then instruct the port side or starboard side to start to row by the command “port side ready to row, row” or the command “join in”.
- The command “starboard side ready to row, port side back it down, ready, row” will spin the boat around within a boat length.
- Single or multiple strokes by one or more rowers can be used to make minor course corrections, for example “port side increase pressure, ready row”
- To change oar pressure use the command “**up pressure**” or “**half pressure**”.

- The speed of the boat can be changed by modifying the stroke rate or pressure, for example “increase pressure” or “**power 10**, ready, row” for ten faster or stronger strokes
- For a power 10 the command is “power ten, ready, row” and commence counting off the ten strokes. If you wish to continue use “carry on, full pressure”.

In summary the cox tells the crew what action is desired followed by the warning “ready” or are you ready and “row”, which is the command to initiate the instruction.

Steering

This is a very important part of coxing. Over steering the boat will result in dramatic reductions in boat speed. The cox must establish a point of reference to steer toward and look far enough ahead to allow for minor steering corrections and collision avoidance. Minor corrections to steering can be accomplished by one or the other side increasing pressure to accomplish this. A command example would be” starboard side, increase pressure, ready, row” followed by “back to even pressure, row”. Refer to “Manoeuvring the Boat” for turns where it is desirable to make a tight turn around a mark when such a turn is considered advantageous in a race.

General note

In 2020 the board met to look at standardizing rowing commands. For the cox to communicate effectively with the crew, to avoid confusion and keep us all safe there must be one consistent set of simple commands, regardless of the number of rowers or type of oars. **To this end starboard side and port side will be used.** These boating terms are universal and widely understood. One quick look at the colored stripe on the oar lets the rower know which side of the boat they are on – red is port, green is starboard. In an emergency situation there must be no confusion.

The competent cox is in command of the boat. The crew must respect the competent cox at all times and not interfere with cox instructions. The cox is responsible for boat safety and for clear articulate cox commands to the crew. The cox ensures the crew understands the command and that the command is heard by all. The cox must steer the boat on a true course and is responsible for crew encouragement. The crew is responsible for following cox commands, rowing together and a positive attitude. Learning to cox is like learning to row. It takes time and practice however a well trained cox together with a well trained crew is a formidable combination.