

JUNIOR ROWING COURSE GUIDELINES



FALCON BOAT CLUB

Nick Kenworthy-Browne – Final version 1 September 2023

Everything depends on numbers, and the shapes and sizes of those who come. The aim is to make it safe, fun, and interesting. Flexibility is key to providing that safety, fun, and interest.

Beginners:

Day 1—Introduction to rowing, and a taster of the week to come.

The first day begins with introductions of the coaches, each other, and then moves onto some basic understanding of the movement of the rowing stroke as demonstrated by a simple squat. We then have four stations which we rotate people through to introduce them to aspects of rowing and give them a taster of what is to come in the week.

Four stations—rotating through, but moving to Kites after land rowing:

- 1) Land Rowing—boat on trestles to demonstrate the basics of the stroke
- 2) Parts of the boat—learning the safety checks and names of the boat
- 3) Feathering and Squaring—how to correctly feather and square
- 4) Kites—getting out in a touring boat to experience how to put the stroke together and move a boat

Day 2 and 3—Larger stable boats.

Continuing with rowing in the kites and possibly the octuple if there are enough equally sized/ aged juniors. One of the assistants takes the role of cox for this. Still essentially trying to demonstrate the order of the recovery and how to balance a boat through use of core and blade handles. Rhythm and rowing together across whichever boat you are in.

Day 4—Doubles and training singles.

We are beginning this day with a video on what to do in the event of a capsize; though they will be in the more stable double, some may be in training singles. Depending on numbers, a coxed quad or a kite remains an option for those who still need additional time to practice the stroke in a more stable platform. If someone capsizes, we use this as a day to talk through what to do.

Day 5— Fun day plus capsize drills.

This is essentially run as a sports day using relays and learning omnium skills. As capsizes are likely, capsize practice becomes part of the day, and those who have not capsized by the end of the day will be encouraged to do so before they finish¹.

¹ Capsizes drills may not be encouraged if the quality of the water is not considered clean enough. Very heavy downpours just prior to the day, particularly following a dry spell, usually see the water quality fall. Equally, updates from the EA and Thames water are also considered. This link provides near realtime notice of Thames

NOTE: The order of what happens when during each week may change according to weather conditions—for example, if the weather is better mid-week, capsize drills may occur then rather than on the Friday if that has poor weather conditions predicted.

Intermediate and Advanced:

Day 1—Assessment.

We take a look at how competent the athletes are by placing them in quads, doubles, and training singles. We particularly try and put those with under 6 months experience together in doubles according to who we have, age ranges, and shapes and sizes. Experience in larger boats often means that they have less experience in smaller boats, so we also look at technique which will help them move to smaller boats as the days go on.

Day 2—Paddle and Practice.

Working on what was identified as an area for improvement from day one, and getting used to new rowers. Additional technique and points for improvement according to each athlete.

Day 3—Re-asses and progress.

Depending on the athlete we may introduce another area of focus such as first 3-5 strokes of a racing start to teach the difference between torque and power.

Day 4—Switch up the boats.

Some changes from previous boat partners and some singling for those who have yet to try it. Training singles for those with less experience, and finer singles for those more practiced. Some may even be moved from singles to doubles or even quads.

Day 5—Singles and Omnium.

Similar to how the beginners final day is, with more focus on the omnium and a chance for those who have yet to try a single to do so. Capsizes are likely, and practice of them is encouraged¹.

Record of capsize drills.

The junior coach will retain a list of all participants who have completed capsize drill. Participants should be encouraged to complete the free British Rowing Row How safety training modules on Cold Water and Hypothermia and Capsize Drill.

Staffing of junior rowing courses.

The course will be run by at least one qualified senior coach with adult assistant coaches, and junior assistant volunteers. There will always be two adults present for the course. The ratio of coach / volunteers to participants will be determined by the age, gender or behavior of the children involved in the activity; any additional supervision or support needs the children may require; the type of activity, and the equipment required. (See

Water's Sewage overflow system and allows us to check if there is any concerns regarding capsize drills taking place: <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/edm-map>

<https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/British-Rowing-Safeguarding-Children-and-Young-People-Policy-June-2021-2.pdf>

All coaches and adult assistant coaches should have a valid DBS check completed via the Falcon Rowing Welfare officer. Where that is still in progress, there will always be at least 2 DBS checked senior coaches present.

Junior assistant volunteers are used as coxes and equivalents of the parent marshals (see guidance) —basically keeping people in line of sight. They may bank ride, but will always have a radio to stay in contact with one of the coaches. Their role is to watch and report, and guide on steering if necessary. In some cases, the J16s may take on a junior coaching role to help younger attendees improve in areas where their experience as rowers can be transferred.

All staff, including junior assistant volunteers, will be trained in the use of throw lines.