



**YOUTH ROWER AND PARENT  
HANDBOOK**

**2020-2021**

## **PART I Introduction**

### **Who We Are**

The Norwalk River Rowing Association (NRRRA), a 501(c)(3) is Fairfield County's oldest community rowing center. Its purpose is to promote excellence in the sport of rowing by offering programs that provide educational and athletic opportunities to participants of all ages, abilities, and incomes. NRRRA's vision is to build one of the very best community rowing venues by delivering well-coached and well-equipped programs from beginner and recreational to competitive that foster a lifelong love of the sport.

This handbook contains information to help new and experienced rowers and their families understand the exciting sport of rowing, all facets of the club, and the expectations of both. It outlines policies and procedures that govern the day-to-day activities of the NRRRA Youth Program. Families should familiarize themselves with all of the information contained in this document. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact NRRRA's executive director, board members, or veteran parents. Information is also listed on the website: [www.norwalkriverrowing.org](http://www.norwalkriverrowing.org).

### **History**

Dr. Ralph E. Sloan, a former superintendent of the Norwalk Public Schools; Norman Weinberger M.D., a Norwalk Pediatrician, and a few local residents, founded NRRRA in 1986. The club was built to provide rowing opportunities for adults and youth of all experience levels and backgrounds. What began as a small group of enthusiastic rowers grew into an organization that now serves over 400 people yearly from throughout southwest Connecticut and New York. Rowers range in age from twelve years old to well in to their eighties. Many of the founding members, such as Dr. Weinberger, continue to actively participate in NRRRA's ventures to this day.

The Youth Program was officially founded two years after its inception in 1988 with the goal of developing a competitive high school team, the first rowing program in Fairfield County catered to developing high school-aged youth. Since then, NRRRA has grown to include a variety of other programs, including Learn-to-Row courses and Development teams that are geared toward the instruction of middle school student athletes.

### **Matthew Zucker Memorial Fund**

Matthew Zucker was a member of the Norwalk River Rowing Association (NRRRA) Youth Rowing Program from 1994 to 1996. Though he did not consider himself an athlete, his rowing experience was instrumental in improving his self-discipline and self-confidence, giving him a focus he soon grew to embrace. Matthew developed close relationships with his fellow rowers, relationships which sustained him when he fell victim to brain cancer shortly before his high school graduation until his passing in 1998.



Matthew's family established the Matthew Zucker Memorial Fund (MZMF) within the Norwalk River Rowing Association to promote youth rowing and provide scholarships for students who require financial assistance in order to row. Matthew's memory lives on in the ability of this Fund to provide

the opportunity to row, and experience the joy that it brought Matthew, to those who otherwise could not afford it.

Funds for the MZMF are raised by donation and various fundraising events and activities, the largest being the annual Erg-A-Thon held in his name. The Erg-A-Thon allows our community of rowers, both youth and adult, to raise money for completing a set distance on a rowing machine, known as an ergometer (erg). The goal each year is for our members to collectively reach 1.5 million meters. Donations toward this goal are solicited from family, friends, neighbors, classmates, teachers, co-workers, and more. In engaging a broader community through this fundraiser, NRRA aims to share its commitment to rowing and the desire for others to join this special community. All youth team rowers participate in this event in honoring the memory and determination of one of our own.

## **PART II - CODE OF CONDUCT**

### ***PARTICIPATION ON THE TEAM IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT, AND SHOULD BE TREATED AS SUCH.***

Therefore, participation in NRRRA programs requires rowers to abide by the following code of conduct, a promise that they commit to upon signing and returning the mandatory Statement of Understanding regarding this code. Depending upon the severity of a violation, the rower may be subject to disciplinary action deemed appropriate by the coaching staff and Executive Director.

Student-athletes, coaches, and all participants in the NRRRA are expected to represent themselves and their team with honesty, integrity, and character whether it is academically, athletically, or socially. Participation, with its many benefits also brings with it a responsibility to be positive and effective members of the team, NRRRA, and the broader community.

NRRRA strives to establish and maintain an environment where student-athletes have an opportunity to learn, practice, and compete free from harassment, hazing, and inappropriate conduct. This Code of Conduct sets forth the basic standards by which all participants in NRRRA programs - including but not limited to athletes, coaches, parents and volunteers - are required to maintain in order to participate in NRRRA rowing programs and related activities.

### **General Guidelines:**

#### **Student-Athlete Expectations**

1. Respect their teammates, coaches, competitors, and other rowers, along with personal and club property. This includes NRRRA's and other organizations' facilities and equipment, transportation and lodging facilities, and the personal property of all other individuals. Respect takes many forms; undermining a coach or teammate, either verbally or through one's actions, will not be tolerated.
2. Follow all team rules regarding language, hazing, harassment, tobacco, alcohol, and drugs.
3. Communicate with teammates and coaches with honesty and timeliness.
4. Give full measure academically, athletically, and socially.
5. Give full measure in all practices and competitions. NRRRA strives for excellence.
6. Attend all practices and competitions as scheduled unless absences are pre-approved.
7. Take accountability for choices and actions.
8. Abstain from horseplay or reckless behavior. These risk injury to self and equipment and are not allowed on the NRRRA premises. Student-athletes will be held accountable for any damages caused by such behavior.
9. Treat all equipment with responsibility and care.
10. Put the team ahead of one's self.

#### **A. Language**

Inappropriate language - including music with inappropriate or explicit lyrics - is not permitted on the premises of NRRRA, on the water, on team buses, in team hotels, or at race sites. Regatta Officials and Referees can and do disqualify entire teams for the use of foul language at regattas; therefore, this type of behavior will not be tolerated in any practice or competitive settings due to its immediate and severe consequences. <sup>(SEP)</sup>

#### **B. Hazing and Harassment Policy**

Hazing and harassment carried out by any member of the NRRRA community is strictly prohibited in any activities (team- or non-team-related). Student-athletes who violate the prohibition of hazing and harassment are subject to discipline by their coach, the Executive Director, and the Board of Directors. Any potential criminal activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

NRRRA defines hazing as any act, which endangers the mental and/or physical health, and/or safety of an individual, including without limitation acts intended to cause personal degradation or humiliation.

Hazing also includes any acts to destroy or remove public or private property for the purpose of initiation in, admission to, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in a group or organization. Hazing typically occurs in connection with initiation activities, though it is not limited to these events. Initiation activity is NOT acceptable at NRRRA.

NRRRA's code of conduct defines harassment or bullying as the severe or repeated use by one or more NRRRA members of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at any other member that to a reasonable objective person has the effect of:

i. Causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property.

ii. Placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property.

iii. Creating a hostile environment for the other member at any rowing activity.

iv. Infringing on the rights of the other member at any rowing activity or materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any rowing activity (which for the purpose of this section shall include without limitation, practices, workouts and other events of a member club.

Such activities and situations include but are not limited to:

1. Physical punishment, contact, exercise, or sleep deprivation that causes excessive fatigue and/or physical/psychological shock;
2. Forced or coerced consumption of food, drink, alcohol, tobacco, and/or illegal drugs;
3. Forced or coerced transportation of individuals;
4. Public or private acts with the intent to humiliate, ridicule, intimidate, denigrate, or cause indecent exposure or ordeal;
5. Coercing or forcing illegal acts;
6. Coercing or forcing acts that are immoral or unethical;
7. Blocking an individual's academic, athletic, health or personal success;
8. Personal servitude;
9. Verbal harassment, including but not limited to name-calling, verbal threats, and/or cat-calling;
10. Mental harassment;
11. Sexual harassment or misconduct;
12. Using electronic devices or venues (including, but not limited to, the internet, social media, and cellular phones) to harass or denigrate another person;
13. Deception;
14. Threat of social exclusion;
15. Conduct that is deliberately detrimental to team morale or cohesiveness;

A person commits a hazing and/or harassment offense if the person:

1. Engages in hazing, harassment, or bullying;
2. Solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in hazing, harassment, and/or bullying activities;
3. Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly permits hazing, harassment, and/or bullying to occur;
4. Has firsthand knowledge of the planning of a specific hazing, harassment, and/or bullying incident involving a student and fails to report the plan to the NRRRA Coaching Staff or other appropriate official of NRRRA to prevent the occurrence;
5. Has firsthand knowledge that a specific hazing, harassment, and/or bullying incident has occurred and knowingly fails to report it to the NRRRA Coaching Staff or other appropriate official of NRRRA.

## C. Reporting Procedures

An athlete who feels he or she has been bullied is asked to do one or more of the following:

- . Talk to your parents.
- . Talk to a coach, Board Member or other designated individual.
- . Write a letter or email to the club coach, Board Member or other designated individual.

There is no designated time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate club leadership as soon as possible to make sure that memories are fresh and behavior can be accurately recalled and the bullying behavior can be stopped as soon as possible.

## D. How NRRA Handles Bullying

### DEFINITION OF BULLYING: ( CDC)

Bullying is any UNWANTED AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR (S) by another youth or groups of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an OBSERVED OR PERCEIVED POWER IMBALANCE AND IS REPEATED MULTIPLE TIMES OR IS HIGHLY LIKELY TO BE REPEATED. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational HARM

If bullying is occurring during team activities, NRRA **stops bullying on the spot** using the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
2. Separate the parties involved.
3. Make sure everyone is safe.
4. Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
5. Stay calm.
6. Model respectful behavior.

**If bullying is occurring at NRRA or it is reported to be occurring at the club, the bullying is addressed by finding out what happened and supporting the youth involved using the following approach:**

### FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED

#### 1. First we get the facts

- a. Keep all the involved children separated
- b. Get the story from several sources, both adults and youth.
- c. Listen without blaming
- d. Don't call the act "bullying" while trying to understand what happened
- e. It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple athletes are involved or the bullying involves social bullying or cyber bullying. Collect all available Information

#### 2. Then we determine if it is bullying

There are many behaviors that look like bullying but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else.

- a. To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:
  - What is then history between those involved?
  - Have there been past conflicts?
  - Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily recognized. If the targeted person feels like there is a power imbalance, there probably is.
  - Has this happened before? Is the targeted person worried it will happen again?
- b. Remember that it may not matter "who started it". Some kids who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse bullying behavior

- c. Once it is determined it is a situation of bullying support all kids involved

## **SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED**

### **1. Support the kids who are being bullied**

- a. Listen and focus on the child. Learn what's been going on. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
- b. Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input.
- c. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the club and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
- d. Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

### **2. Address bullying behavior**

- a. Make sure the bully knows what the problem behavior is. People who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
- b. Show the offender that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell them that bullying will not be tolerated. Adults should model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
- c. Work with the offender to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied.
- d. Involve the person who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, that person can:
  - i. Write a letter of apology to the athlete who was bullied.
  - ii. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied or for the club.
  - iii. Clean up, repair or pay for any property they damaged.
- e. Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences.
  - i. Zero tolerance strategies don't work. Suspension or removal from the team does not reduce bullying behavior. Rowers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or removal is a consequence.
  - ii. Conflict resolution and peer mediation don't work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset those who have been bullied.
- f. Follow up. After the bullying issue has been resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness.

### **3. Support bystanders who witness bullying**

- Every day kids witness bullying. They want to help, but don't know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying when they see it happening.
- a. Be a friend to the person being bullied.
  - b. Tell a trusted adult—parent, coach, or board member.
  - c. Help the person being bullied get away from the situation—"let's go practice is starting".
  - d. Set a good example by not bullying.
  - e. Don't give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders.

## **E. Social Media, Digital Communication and/or Internet Use**

No NRRA student-athlete will use any form of Social Media or digital communication including, but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Kayak, Myspace, Twitter, WhatsApp, email, or any other cellular- or internet-based device or venue to harass or bully teammates, coaches, other teams, rowing officials, opponents, or other competitors. This includes, but is not limited to blogs, pictures, or other various postings. If a student-athlete is suspected of or has committed such activities they will be subject to the following penalties....**SEE SECTION ON SACTIONS.**

## **F. Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drugs**

NRRA has a zero tolerance policy regarding the use of all tobacco, alcohol and/or illegal substances of any kind. In addition to the obvious issues of legality and health, *use of such substances greatly diminishes performance, violates the trust of teammates, and creates an unacceptable risk to safety in the face of the rigorous training undertaken at practices and races.* Therefore, the use of alcohol or drugs by student-athletes while involved in any activities (team related or non-team related) is strictly prohibited....**SEE SECTION ON SANCTIONS.**

### **G. Academics**

Student-athletes must maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA (effective Fall 2018) to be considered “in good standing”. In the event that a student-athlete’s GPA drops below 3.0, that student-athlete’s further participation will be determined by the Head Coach.

### **H. Attire**

Student-athletes agree to wear proper attire at all times during practices and regattas. Attire will not have offensive statements or logos and must not impede the rowing stroke. Shorts should be “fingertip” length at a minimum, and tight enough around the legs to not get caught in the seat tracks. Boys must wear shirts on land. Sports bras worn by girls must have appropriate coverage over them. Furthermore, as we are an outdoor sport, student-athletes and parents are expected to check the weather prior to practice to ensure clothing is appropriate for temperature and conditions.

### **Violations of the Code of Conduct:**

The actions of one student-athlete may result in a generalization to all student-athletes and reflect on the individual, parents, school, team, club and organization, whether it be positively or negatively. It is expected that all student-athletes abide by NRRA policies as outlined herein. In addition to all NRRA policies, student-athletes are responsible for following all local, state, and federal laws. Any participants who do not conform to this Code of Conduct may be subject to consequences for their actions.

If a violation of this Code of Conduct by a participant of the NRRA is witnessed, the student-athlete, parent, staff person or volunteer should report said violation to a NRRA Head Coach or an NRRA member of the Board of Directors. When requested, every effort will be made to protect the identity of the person reporting the grievance. A grievance need not be filed for a disciplinary action to occur.

### **Sanctions:**

Team members who violate the Code of Conduct, in spirit or letter, will be held accountable for their behavior. Disciplinary action may range from warnings to removal from practice, temporary suspension from the team, or suspension from one or more regattas. These sanctions are completely at the discretion of the coach. Severe violations will be brought to the Executive Director who may assess any of the following sanctions:

1. Termination from the program for the remainder of the season without refund.
2. Permanent expulsion from the program.

The Executive Director will communicate formal disciplinary actions to the team member in question and/or his/her parents. Parents may address concerns regarding such measures directly to the Board of Directors and, if they are not satisfied with the explanation of events and consequences, they may appeal the decision in order to provide additional evidence or information. The Board’s decision after any appeal is final.

On occasion, a parent’s behavior toward coaches, team members, other parents, regatta officials, or NRRA leadership may result in sanctions that affect their child’s continued involvement with NRRA. Contentious, confrontational, or blatantly disrespectful athletes or parents who fail to act in a civil, mature manner may be barred from further participation with the club.

## **PART III – DAILY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Personal Accountability:**

#### **A. Timeliness**

Every team member is expected to arrive at practice on time and ready to row. If you will be late for some reason, tell your coach beforehand. No rower may leave the practice before the coach has dismissed the team. For safety and accountability reasons, athletes are not permitted to linger in the parking lot after practice. [L] [SEP]

#### **B. Consistency**

Rowers agree to commit to the team and not miss or skip practice unnecessarily. To build successful boats, teammates must practice together as frequently as possible. Inconsistent attendance at practice impacts the entire team. [L] [SEP]

#### **C. Teamwork**

Practices and regattas are a chance for the team to function as a unit in order to accomplish the tasks required by the group. **Rowers may not leave a scheduled practice or a race before the coach has dismissed the team. During regatta season it is ideal for the rowers to travel to and from regattas as a team. To ensure accountability and that all race tasks are accomplished on time and with precision, it is important for all rowers to be available to assist in this endeavor. Attending a regatta only during an individual rowers race time does not promote a team spirit and is not in the best interest of the club. Parents choosing to transport their rower to and from regattas, separate from the team, must inform the coaching staff prior to departure from the boathouse. Once at a regatta rowers are not permitted to leave the trailer area without permission from a coach. Parents choosing to remove their rower from the premises AT ANY TIME during a regatta should clear said departure with the coaching staff and then sign the departure waiver located with a chaperone.** [L] [SEP] **Parents staying in the same hotel, as the team, will not be allowed to share a room with their rower, separating said rower from the rest of the team. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

#### **D. Forms and Waivers**

No team member will be allowed to participate until all medical forms, waivers, swim test, and the statement of understanding have been completed and returned. [L] [SEP]

#### **E. Attire**

Team members must come prepared with appropriate rowing attire to practice and races.

1. Practice attire: Bathing suit tops, sports bras, or bare chests are not considered appropriate attire. Rowing shorts (spandex type), T-shirts, socks and sneakers are a must every day. White rowing/spandex shorts are not appropriate. [L] [SEP]
2. Regatta attire: NRRA uniforms and/or clothing. Clothing from other programs, high schools or colleges is not allowed. Bathing suit tops, sports bras, or bare chests are not considered appropriate for competition or warm-ups.

#### **F. Attendance**

Rowing is a team sport that is severely hampered by absenteeism. Being on a team is a serious commitment that must not be compromised by lack of dedication and poor time management.

1. An absence will be excused only if it is medical or school related, such as a special teacher conference or make-up test. There will be no other “excused” absences. In all cases it is expected that you notify your coaches ahead of time. [L] [SEP]
2. Excessive absences may result in a suspension from a race or regatta, losing a seat on your boat, and/or any other sanction to be determined at the coach’s discretion. [L] [SEP]
3. Notification to coaches is the responsibility of the rower, not the parents. [L] [SEP]

4. Under no circumstances are fees refundable due to excessive absences. Refunding of fees is at the sole discretion of the Executive Director.

## **E. Safety**

EVERYONE at a practice or competition is responsible for safety, both on the water and off. By its nature, there is a personal maturity and physical strength and stature required to row. The measures below are the minimum daily steps NRRRA's high school athletes must take in practices or competition to mitigate potential safety risk.

1. Coxswains and rowers will not row outside of hailing distance of the safety launch unless expressly directed by a coach.
2. Rowers must be quiet in the boats and listen to the coaches' and coxswains' commands and directives.
3. Coxswains and rowers must be alert to the boat traffic on the water and avoid obstacles or collision at all costs. This includes yielding to motorboats when and if necessary and following the established traffic pattern.
4. Coxswains and rowers are to return to the NRRRA boathouse or nearest dock in the event of lightning, rising winds, excessive debris in the water, or white caps.
5. Coxswains and rowers are expected to inspect their seat before launch to reduce safety issues on the water and let the coaches know if there is an issue.
6. Given NRRRA's practice site's location and the fact that practice often ends in the dark, athletes will utilize the "buddy" system: no one should be left alone.
7. For warm-ups the team often runs around the apartment complex. The complex is large and there will be times during runs and occasional land workouts when the athletes will be out of eye contact of a coach. It is the athlete's responsibility to stay with the group.

## **F. Communication**

Team captains, upperclassmen, and coxswains are expected to conduct themselves as leaders within the team. For routine issues, rowers will try to resolve issues or questions independently, then with the team captains. The team captains will bring team related issues to the coaches. The coaches maintain an open-door policy and are available to discuss and resolve conflicts of the team as needed.

## **Racing Lineups And Boat Selection:**

### **A. Coxswains**

The term "coxswain", or "cox'in", is an old naval term for the commander of a small boat. Coxswains are expected to be leaders on the team. In a coach's absence, the coxswain has the responsibility for implementing the race strategy, correcting technique, and executing the workout as planned – all while extracting the maximum possible effort from their teammates. Often a role taken by athletes who are smaller in stature, becoming a coxswain is an incredibly mentally and intellectually challenging position, which builds leadership, confidence, and technical acumen. Rowers, too, may be asked to rotate as coxswains on occasion.

### **B. Rowers**

All NRRRA team members who commit themselves and show up to practice will row and compete at some point in the season. However, to be selected for the most competitive boats, coaches apply a mix of selection criteria that is part art and part science. Rowers are constantly assessed throughout every practice, workout, and team event. Selection is based on a mix of:

1. Physical ability: Height, strength, erg scores, and other factors.
2. Technical ability: Knowledge and utility of the rowing/sculling stroke.
3. Mental maturity: The ability to follow directives, to overcome mental stress associated with racing, to handle equipment safely and responsibly, and to hold oneself accountable for performance.
4. Sound Judgment: The ability to make good decisions in high-pressure situations.
5. Attitude: One's demeanor when subjected to rigorous physical and mental demands and

- behavior toward teammates and coaches.
6. Compatibility: How a rower interacts with teammates in a boat's specific lineup.

***Selection is the sole responsibility of the coach and decisions of the coaching staff are final.*** No rower's seat is guaranteed because of experience, seniority or past results. Whatever the decisions of the coaches, all rowers and coxswains are expected to fulfill their assigned responsibilities to the best of their ability. If an athlete does not accept the decision of a coach, they may be suspended from racing or otherwise sanctioned. Parental intervention to sway a coach's decision will not be tolerated.

### **Basic Performance Standards:**

All athletes must keep themselves in good physical condition and report to practice ready to work hard. They can achieve this in the off- season by eating nutritious meals and maintaining an aerobic conditioning level through cross training (biking, erging, swimming, running or any other means of physical conditioning to maintain health and strength.) This helps coaches ensure that the physical demands of the program do not injure athletes as they enter the more competitive spring training. The coaches will dictate minimum performance standards for all rowers. Erg standards for returning rowers will be set by the coaches throughout the year.

### **Guidelines for Sleep, Diet, and Fitness:**

Peak performance requires more than just hard training at the boathouse. Rowers must make healthy decisions and take care of themselves if they wish to be at their best. All aspects of training –nutrition, rest, health and exercise– are equally important.

- a. Get plenty of sleep. You need it! One long night of sleep before a regatta is not enough. Sleep is most important the two nights prior to a race. Athletes must approach schoolwork and other responsibilities in such a way that pre-race nights can be as restful as possible.
- b. Minimize screen time! Your smartphone's screen significantly alters your sleep rhythm. Eliminate or reduce screen time in the evening.
- c. A rower's diet should be high in protein and carbohydrates with lots of fruits, vegetables, white meats, and complex carbohydrates such as pasta, potatoes and rice. A good breakfast and lunch are a must if you hope to have good energy at practice. Before practice, a healthy snack, low in protein and fat is recommended. Rowers' diet should also be low in sugar, since sugar tends to provide quick bursts of energy followed by energy crashes rather than the longer-term energy necessary for endurance training. Avoid heavy, greasy foods and caffeinated drinks the night before a race. Since carbohydrate loading is only effective 1 or 2 hours before an athletic event, a heavy pasta dinner the night before a race is not effective.
- d. Stay hydrated– drink plenty of water before, during, and after every practice.
- e. NO CRASH DIETING! This has an incredibly negative effect on both your mental and physical abilities leading up to a race. If you are concerned about your weight, whether as a coxswain or a lightweight rower, please discuss with your coach the best and healthiest way to meet and maintain your goal weight.
- f. Bring your own water bottle (with your name on it!). Do not bring disposable water bottles to practice.

### **Injuries:**

All injuries, regardless of how insignificant they may seem, must be reported to your coach. Coaches will inform the rower's parents and the Board of Directors of all injuries sustained at practice. If a coach sees an injury or suspects an injury or health concern, they will report it to the parents immediately. If the athlete continues to show pain, limping, or any health risk, they will not be permitted to participate until the issue is resolved. Athletes and parents that knowingly withhold information on injuries will be subject to sanctions. These guidelines are to insure that we all are working toward healthy and safe teams.

### **Other Health Issues:**

At the start of the season, coaches should be informed by rowers or the parents of rowers as to any

medications or preexisting medical conditions (physical or mental) that rowers might have. This will help the NRRA coaching staff to better assess or react to a medical emergency. Parents will insure that the athlete has whatever medication or device they need (epi pens, inhalers, etc.) and possesses the knowledge to use them properly.

## **PART IV - PARENT'S HANDBOOK**

### **General:**

Rowing is a sport unlike any other. New parents may find its lexicon, traditions, and format completely foreign, but with a little time and the help of the Club's more experienced parents, new parents will soon come to realize what it is that keeps NRRA youth rowers hooked. A wealth of information now exists online regarding the sport's long history, most storied rivalries, and many dimensions. At the end of this section are listed some useful websites that can help you get familiar with rowing and gain a better understanding of what your child is experiencing at practices and competition.

The role of the Club is to promote and develop the sport of rowing and to increase access to all members of our community. The club, like the sport, is comprised of many demographics:

- a. Masters Rowers (the term refers to those over age 21) who may row for either competitive or recreational reasons
- b. Youth Rowers (ages 13-18)
- c. Collegiate Rowers (affiliated with an institute of higher education)
- d. Elite Rowers (training for competition at National Championships and internationally sanctioned events)

### **Balancing Priorities:**

Rowing does require a substantial commitment of time and energy. Parents often worry that the time and energy spent rowing will have adverse effects on their child's academic pursuits; however, the discipline and commitment that rowing requires often helps students to manage their time better and be more efficient in their studies. Crew is unique in that the absence of even one rower can prevent the entire team from practicing and will hurt the team's ability to prepare and race successfully. We would not presume to tell you how to organize your child's time or encroach on your personal decisions, but we do ask that you be aware of the consequences to the rest of the team if you consider keeping your child home on a particular day. If you become concerned about your child's academic performance and worry that rowing is to blame, please talk to your child's coach. **Remember to keep your child's coach informed if your child will miss practice!**

### **Parent Organization:**

*"Many hands make light work"*. NRRA is very fortunate to have motivated, caring, and dedicated parents on our team. The Board of Directors ensures the proper functioning of the Club as it pertains to its safety policies, resourcing and equipment maintenance, and execution of its programs. The specific tasks, however, that help our youth team function at regattas, are the sole responsibility of the Parent Organization.

- **What It Is:** The NRRA Parent Organization is an all-volunteer group of parents dedicated to supporting the youth rowing program and its coaches in the management and fulfillment of the rowing experience. The Parent Organization is, in effect, **all of the parents**. It is separate and distinct from the formal governance of the Board of Directors. **The Code of Conduct is applicable to the Parent Organization as well.**
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** The NRRA Parent Organization assists the youth rowing team with race day logistics and support, administrative functions of the team, and fund raising. The Parent Organization also acts as ambassadors, welcoming new families to NRRA and serving

as an invaluable source of information. When necessary, the Parent Organization can present concerns or suggestions specific to the youth program to the Board of Directors through their Board representative. The Board considers requests to contribute funds toward regatta support items or other needs identified by the Parent Organization.

- **Organizational Structure:** The NRRRA Parent Organization is made up of two Co-Chairs and one treasurer. Those Co-chairs who are graduating out of the youth program select co-chairs. The Parent Organization organizes all the volunteers for regattas and supplies a “Parent on Duty” during practice time. *The success of the youth program depends on the support and contributions of all the parents of NRRRA. Please support your child!*

## **Race Day:**

Regattas are always congested and distracting. Parents are asked to concentrate on the setup of support items like tents, tables, grills, etc. and not partake in the boat loading and unloading, which is the sole responsibility of the athletes and coaches. This is done to instill responsibility and discipline in our athletes and to ensure clear and efficient communication between coaches and rowers.

### **A. Preparation**

- Help your rower follow the schedule the coach lays out for him or her. Rowers must be where they need to be when they need to be there.
- Parents, family, and friends are not permitted at the trailer until all loading and unloading is completed, unless otherwise directed by a coach. Please leave ample room around the trailer for the boats, oars, and other necessary racing equipment.
- All “alternates” on the team will follow the same rules and directives of active rowers.

### **B. Cleanup and Departure**

- **Do not** plan to leave the regatta site until the trailer is completely loaded and the coach has dismissed the teams. Exceptions may be made by the coach on a case-by-case basis, but please keep them informed if you must leave for some reason.
- Typically the trailer will be unloaded and boats re-rigged after a regatta at the next regularly scheduled practice. However, in some cases, rowers may be asked to unload on the day they return so that boats are ready and available for use by other members of the club. The coaches will make this call at their own discretion.

### **C. Administrative Requirements**

Rowers must be in good standing with the club and fees paid. All new rowers must sign a waiver, submit a medical release form, and take a swim test before their first practice. You may also be asked to sign multiple waivers over the course of the season, as some regattas require their own

### **D. Communication**

Most of the communication that you will receive from NRRRA will come from the NRRRA office. Volunteer information will come directly from the Parent Organization, via email or a designated alternative. In some cases you will need to be contacted by phone. It is critical that the office, the Parent Organization, and the coaches have an accurate email address and phone number for parents and athletes. This information is not shared outside of the club.

### **E. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### ***What can I expect with my child rowing with NRRRA?***

If you’ve never been around rowing, you are about to begin an exciting experience. Your child has chosen a tremendous sport - one that teaches discipline, teamwork, toughness, and confidence. It is a sizable commitment of time, energy, and money; however, when you watch NRRRA rower’s race and see the intensity with which they approach their workouts or the enjoyment they get out of coming to the boat house, you’ll know that these commitments are well worth every minute. You will have many

questions as the season progresses. Please feel free to speak to the coaches after regularly scheduled practices or with other parents.

### ***What other expenses should I expect?***

Program fees do not cover uniforms or NRRRA apparel. Additionally, regardless of attendance, Parents are expected to contribute a set dollar amount for each regatta season, paid to the Parent Organization, in advance of the first regatta. The Parent Organization is responsible for regatta food and coordinates the details of race day food for ALL athletes. The payment of funds in advance ensures that all athletes are well fed during races, which allows them to recoup and reenergize, so that their physical endurance is maintained throughout the racing event.

### ***What is expected of me as a parent of a NRRRA rower?***

Just like the sport your child has chosen, this organization requires a team effort from the parent body. Parents are responsible for:

1. Arranging to transport your child to and from the boathouse for practices and to and from regattas for which the club is not providing transportation.
2. Meeting all rowing-related financial obligations on time and in full.
3. Enthusiastically supporting the fund raising events throughout the year.
4. Wearing your NRRRA spirit wear.
5. Minimizing unnecessary interference in regularly scheduled practices.
6. **PARENTS ARE REQUIRED TO VOLUNTEER FOR THREE (3) REGATTA AND ONE (1) NON REGATTA DUTY.**

### ***What if I have a concern or a complaint?***

1. While it is normal to have questions, please ask other parents who might have greater experience first, then the coaches. Coaches should be allowed to focus on coaching first and foremost. If another parent can answer your question, please start there first.
2. If there is a question regarding rowing or practice policies that you don't understand despite your inquiry with other parents, please do ask the coach. Issues and friction points are usually resolvable with a civil discussion and can keep dialogue open rather than leaving resentments or open issues to fester.
3. Coaches are human; they will make mistakes sometimes. Student athletes will make mistakes. Parents will occasionally be unable to follow-through on some aspect or expectation, club employees and board members may not be able to meet a need immediately and so on; but if everyone commits to working toward the greater cause, these issues usually can be worked out constructively.
4. Shooting off emails and using inflammatory language as a "first resort" is considered outside of the club's spirit of trying to make a workable learning environment. Contentious, unnecessarily confrontational or blatantly disrespectful parents or athletes who fail to act in a civil, mature manner may be asked to leave the club.
5. Race lineups and "who makes which boat" are one of the biggest friction points on a team. Coaches must remain objective, impartial decision makers who weigh the training objective and needs of the team/boat with a holistic assessment of every rower. Coaches are hired for their experience and sound judgment. The decision on who will be boated where is both an art and a science. Race line-ups are not negotiable. The coach's decision here is final!

## **F. PARENT'S HOSPITALITY TENT/REGATTA VOLUNTEERS**

### ***Chair Persons***

Usually given to two people, Chairpersons are responsible for leading, organizing, and managing the organization for a specific regatta. They are expected to send emails to all volunteers reminding them of their responsibilities and providing as much instructions as possible, such as what time to report to the tent/site a week or so before the regatta. They should provide all their regatta volunteers, and the coaches, with the Chair Persons' cell phone numbers, or the easiest way to be reached at all times. They will work with the coaches on tent location, designing the menu and timing of the different meals,

consult the inventory list of the trailer, and give the lead shopper a detailed shopping list.

This is a great opportunity for new parents to meet other parents and, like all the other responsibilities, does not require prior experience. Traditionally this job requires your time commitment for the full duration of the regatta from beginning to end.

### ***Bus Chaperones***

Ideally, there will be two parents on every NRRR bus. These parents will be given the binder (contains medical releases) and the roster list from the coaches the morning of departure. They must take attendance on the bus before leaving and keep the athletes calm and happy. Attendance must be taken again whenever you reload the bus. Once returned to Norwalk, the chaperones must ensure the athletes clean out the bus before leaving and must wait until all athletes are picked up. You may be asked to assist in accompanying a sick athlete to emergency care in the event that the parent is not available, at which time you must inform the regatta chairs of your need to be relieved from your bus chaperone's responsibility.

### ***Hotel Chaperones***

Hotel chaperones are required to get the athletes into their assigned rooms - assignments which are previously made by the coaches - and lights out by the time designated by the coaches. Chaperones must ensure the athletes remain in their rooms through the night by placing tape across the doors. In the morning, they are to make sure all athletes are up and awake when needed and subsequently to assemble the athletes back onto the bus/or to the race location. Hotel chaperones should be available to participate and assist in any group meals during the stay. Your hotel and meals cost will be covered by NRRR.

**All chaperones and coaches should have working cell phones with them at all times so that they can communicate with each other whenever necessary.** Be sure you have the cell phone numbers of the coaches and other chaperones, and that they have yours. Communicate with the coaches in as timely a manner as possible if you see anything that you feel is out-of-line or questionable. Any punitive discipline for improper activity is the responsibility of the coach. If a coach is not present when an activity occurs that you deem inappropriate, do what you feel is necessary to manage the situation, then report it to the coach and let the coach impose the discipline. Traditionally this job requires your commitment for the evening as well as the transportation to and from hotel/regatta.

### ***Tow Trailer to the Regatta/Tow Trailer from Regatta***

The person designated to tow the Parent Trailer must coordinate with the Chairperson or the Lead Shopper as to when you need to take the trailer from the boathouse to the regatta site. They must discuss location and timing with the Chairperson or coaches. On the return they must be at the regatta towards the end, and tow back to the boathouse (Moody's Lane). Traditionally this job requires your commitment to be the first on site at the regatta or last one out from the regatta.

### ***Regatta set up - typically around 5:30 AM - 7 AM***

**All hands on deck!** Set up the tent early in the morning on the day of the regattas. Be prepared to carry boxes and tables; the trailer sometimes needs to be unloaded a short distance from the tent location. Put out the tables, set up grill, put paper goods out on table, set up bread, peanut butter, jelly, and fruit and put everything in place. Traditionally this job requires your commitment to be the one at the regatta site before the athletes' arrival and can last a couple of hours.

***Breakfast duty typically around 6 :00 AM - 9:00 AM***

***Lunch duty typically around 10:30 AM - 2:00 PM***

***Snack Duty typically around 2:00 - 5:00 PM***

The preparation of the meals is usually very easy. Parents don't need to be a chef to help. The Chairpersons are there to help and give instructions. It is mainly about grilling, heating, chopping, mixing, and putting the food out for the taking. You may be asked to pick up any perishable supplies if needed

(cold breakfast/coffee/bagels). Traditionally this job requires your commitment for 3 hours.

Tent breakdown typically is around 3:30 PM or at the end of the regatta. Clean up, take out trash, handle the items for recycling, break everything down and re-pack the trailer. Take home pots, pans, and other kitchen utensils that we are not able to clean on location, and bring back to the trailer the next day. Traditionally this job requires your commitment for 2 to 3 hours near, or at, the end of the regatta.

### ***Food shoppers***

Work with the Chairperson on the menu. The Lead Food shopper will assign items for each shopper to purchase; buy the items needed; wash all fruit and vegetables; get the perishable items into coolers; any non-perishable items should get into the trailer BEFORE it leaves the day/night before; submit receipts to the NRRRA Parent Treasurer for reimbursement. Traditionally this job requires your commitment to 2 to 3 hours of shopping and timely delivery of goods as instructed by lead shopper.

### ***Inventory Trailer***

The day AFTER the regatta at the club: straighten out all the stuff in the trailer; follow the latest inventory list and make all necessary updates and forward (via e-mail) the list to Inventory/Trailer Lead or chair of the next regatta. Traditionally this job requires your commitment of 2 to 3 hours soon after the trailer returns from the regatta as well as communicating with regatta chairs.

## **G. Regatta Food Guidelines**

*Developed for the Parent Organization by Carolyn McDonough and Catharine Labine- Fall 2013*

**Foods to be avoided:** Any food that takes too much time or energy to digest, or causes gastrointestinal disturbance, or worse aggravates a disease process or provokes allergic response. We have athletes who have moderate to life-threatening, tree nut allergies. Please plan alternatives for this population.

### ***What are some examples of foods that can be difficult or slow to digest?***

- High fat: red meat, cheeseburgers, sausage, bacon, cheese, ice cream
- Fried foods: doughnuts, fries, potato chips
- Acidic foods: such as heavy tomato sauce, orange juice
- Candy
- Even low-fat dairy if lactose intolerance is an issue

### **Ideal Breakfast Choices:**

- Whole wheat tortillas/rolls with scrambled/fried eggs (cheese optional)
- Pancakes/French Toast
- Hard Boiled Eggs
- Yogurt parfaits (low-fat vanilla or plain yogurt with thawed frozen berries, honey and granola)
- Bagel/bread/tortilla with peanut butter and honey/jam
- Nutrigrain/granola bars
- Oatmeal
- Fresh fruit: bananas, apples, grapes, watermelon

### **Ideal Lunch Choices:**

- Grilled chicken or sliced turkey sandwiches with lettuce and avocado
- Breaded chicken fingers
- Green salad with grilled chicken
- Soup with chicken and noodles
- Chicken chili
- Chicken and low-fat cheese quesadillas
- Veggie burgers
- Pesto pasta salad/cauliflower rice salad/quinoa salad with grilled chicken

- Lean hamburgers

**Ideal Snacks Choices:**

- Homemade trail mix: mixed nuts with dried fruit
- Hummus with veggies
- Celery sticks with peanut butter and raisins
- Chocolate milk-almond milk if allergies or issues with lactose
- Low-sugar energy drinks
- Coconut water
- Granola bars
- Fresh fruit: bananas, apples, grapes, watermelon

**Food timing:** Here are some suggestions for a range of foods that can be consumed on a timeline prior to exercise....

3-4 hours before competition

Fresh fruit, bread, bagels, oatmeal, pasta (no tomato sauce), baked potato, cereal with milk, yogurt, toast with peanut butter, lean meat, quinoa, avocado, hummus, water, coconut water

2-3 hours before competition

Fresh fruit, bread, bagels, pasta (no tomato sauce), low-fat yogurt, water

1 hour or less before competition

Apple slices, banana, watermelon cubes, a small serving of grapes, energy gels, diluted sports drinks, water

The follow-up question is: *what should athletes eat to aid recovery?*

First, one should take care of fluid/electrolyte loss with water or a diluted sports drink and perhaps a salty food.

Current thought about nutrition recovery centers around a one-hour window for proper intake of carbohydrate and protein (4:1 as higher uptake of protein slows rehydration; approximately 0.5 grams carbohydrate for each pound of body weight). A body's refueling continues for several hours after exercise at a slower rate.

- Proper refueling is especially important for athletes racing multiple events.

Since smoothies are an impractical regatta food choice, one could instead eat a banana with peanut butter, peanut butter on celery with raisins, yogurt with berries, granola and honey, hummus and vegetables, quinoa salad. Trail mix with proper carbohydrate to protein ratio is a fine choice. Young athletes like chocolate milk, though the refined sugar is problematic. Energy bars are a reasonable choice; again the refined sugar is an issue.



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## Statement of Understanding

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read the NRRRA Youth Program Code of Conduct and daily policies in their entirety as detailed in the NRRRA Handbook. I agree to abide by the rules of the Norwalk River Rowing Association as stated. I will abide by my coaches' direction, the rules of rowing, and by all other operating guidelines implemented by NRRRA.

I understand my commitment to my teammates and to this rowing program and that I am accountable for my behavior.

I understand that any violation of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action deemed appropriate by the coaching staff and Executive Director.

I understand that rowing will include close proximity to others during the course of practice and races and that I will take personal responsibility to reasonably protect myself and my teammates from the spread of germs and viruses.

Signed,

\_\_\_\_\_

Rower's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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