



## **Q & A for Novice Rowers**

**Joining the club...What's in it for me?** Rowing is a lifelong sport; it is low impact and provides great conditioning. MRC offers terrific opportunities to row just for fun and fitness, to race at the national level, and a little bit of everything in between. Whether you are looking for competition or camaraderie, MRC is committed to giving you skills and resources to realize your goals through rowing.

**Who are the Novices?** Novices are first-year rowers. As a group you'll row together and learn the sport, which will include safely moving and storing equipment, terminology (weigh enough has nothing to do with relative mass or the quantity of matter), on the water safety, club rules, basics of the stroke, off the water safety and more safety. You'll build some muscle, and you'll get some blisters. By fall, you'll have the opportunity to race if desired.

**What does MRC do with my fees?** The membership dues and program fee allow MRC to provide quality coaching, maintain safety equipment, pay for training, gas, administration, and keeping the lights on at the boathouse, and the acquisition and care of the club's \$350,000 fleet of elite and recreational boats.

**Is rowing safe?** It is as long as you follow the rules, and we're sticklers for safety rules. Our coaches receive safety training, and our launches have USRowing and Coast Guard mandated safety equipment in them. You are strongly encouraged to purchase and wear a belt style PFD when you row. We also have firm policies on cold, low light, and river flow conditions. For regular updates, go to the [Safety](#) page on the MRC website.

**Looking into my crystal ball, rowing after my novice year looks hazy. Help!** After your Novice year, you move together as a group onto the Green Team for your second year. You are introduced to sculling technique in addition to sweep rowing and continue to build endurance. After your second year, you can choose to row with one of the competitive teams or the Recreational Team. Each team has different expectations and training goals to allow you to find a place that best fits you. Given the importance of fitness, MRC members will also organize XC ski groups and other member training groups for winter conditioning.

**I'm a trainer and racer. I bet I could be good at this!** Ok, hot shot, go for it! Competitive rowing is one of the most physically demanding of all sports. Not only is the energy demand great, but every mistake a rower makes will be repeated 30+ times a minute in a race, so the stroke must be learned correctly. Be patient; it takes a while (years) to master our sport, and while erg fitness is an excellent starting point, there is no substitute for strokes on the water.

**Did you say that rowing takes years to master?** We have top rowers who are still perfecting their form after 20 years, which is why getting off on the right foot is so important. But as my old Pappy used to say, there's little that succeeds better than hard work...except private lessons. MRC coaches are available, see the website.

**Who is Jen Sowins?** Jen is Club Administrator. In addition to your coaches and team captains, she is a great resource for any questions, comments, or concerns. Just like many of you, she started rowing through MRC's Learn to Row program to Novice, to Green, and now rows with the Women's Competitive Team. A West Coast transplant who landed in the Twin Cities in 2014, she thought she was looking for a physical challenge and opportunities to continue competing. Even better, she found her people here in the rowing community at MRC.



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### **So how much does all this stuff cost?**

A good, used single costs between \$3000 and \$6000. They are \$7000 - \$12,000 new.

A new pair of sculling oars start at \$600 plus shipping.

And those big eights? \$35,000 - \$55,000+!

These numbers are generally for some of the top North American and European boat manufacturers. Chinese equipment can be as much as 30% cheaper.

**How do I sign up for Novice practices?** Once a club member and registered for the Novice Team, you'll be invited to create an iCrew account and will be assigned to the Novice Team. In iCrew you'll be able to mark yourself as attending for up to three practices per week. Since you sign up for practices individually, it's okay if you're out of town or have another commitment. You only sign up for the practices you can attend. In iCrew, you'll also be able to view your boat assignments and see who else you're rowing with.

**Who will be our coach?** For 2022, the Novice Team coaches are Blake Wagoner (Head Coach), Ixchel McKinnie, and Annette Van Guilder. Check out coach bios on the MRC website under the Coaches Corner page. Other coaches will sub and help out from time to time.

**I am a self-starter and want to work out on the rowing machines in the boathouse. Is that OK?** YES – BUT, we don't recommend it for the first few weeks after you complete Learn To Row. The erg (rowing machine) is great for fitness, but it does not exactly replicate the rowing stroke. Give yourself the opportunity to learn some rowing technique muscle memory. As the season progresses, go for it. New for 2022, we are installing an app-based electronic door lock so all members, including Novices, have better access to the boathouse.

**What is Safesport?** MRC is a member club of the USRowing Association (USRA), the national governing body for rowing in the United States. They insure us, and we race in their regattas. The USRA is part of the U.S. Olympic Committee's SafeSport program, which seeks to create a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for all participants. New for 2022, all MRC members, including Novices, will need to complete a 30 minute Adult Athlete SafeSport Training online.

**I can just row and do nothing to help the club, right?** Negative, Ghost rider. In other words, no. MRC is volunteer led and predominately volunteer run. We need you! Because members volunteer their time for stuff like cleaning the boathouse locker rooms, gardening, garbage removal, and serving on the board or other committees, MRC has more money to spend on the exciting stuff – BOATS!

**Where can I find some resources on my own?** A few websites.

- Row2k.com - classifieds, results, videos, shopping, special coverage of major events
- Worldrowing.com - Olympic and World Championship news and info
- USRowing.org - home of American rowing, articles on technique, safety, organization, regattas, Olympic Team, etc.
- Rowingillustrated.com - videos, chatrooms, opinion, and blogs
- Biorow.com - are you a rowing nerd? This place is for you, complete with formulas, charts, and graphs
- Concept2.com - home of the world's leading rowing machine, considered by many the gold standard ergometer, with training plans, logs, and world indoor records
- Join the Facebook group MN Row Hub
- Craftsbury.com, FloridaRowingCenter.com, CalmWatersRowing.net, and Allamericanrowingcamp.com – a small sample of rowing schools. A number of our members take a rowing vacation (and this one time, at rowing camp . . .)