

GREATER DAYTON
ROWING ASSOCIATION

Learn to Row 2007

LESSON PLAN

This lesson plan
belongs to: _____

Session: _____

Coach: _____

Coach Phone: _____

Coach Email: _____

Boathouse Phone: 222-4769
Greater Dayton Rowing Association Website:

www.daytonrowing.org

GREATER DAYTON ROWING ASSOCIATION

Learn to Row 2007

Objectives

- Learn to safely row a single without endangering themselves, other rowers, or the equipment.
- Learn boathouse rules and security procedures.
- Learn about becoming a GDRA member.

Lessons

- There are eight lessons. Each lesson is two hours long.
- Classes begin promptly. Notify your coach if you will be late or absent, so that they can plan the class appropriately.
- Make-up lessons will only be arranged if a class is canceled by the coach, typically due to bad weather or high water.

The Lesson Plans

- In each of the eight lessons, the coach should cover the lesson plan described here. You will not have mastered the previous lessons' topics, but the coach will move on to the next lesson so that you will hear their explanation and see the demonstration of each of the critical topics before the end of your four week course.

Safety

- The coach's top priority is **SAFETY**.
- All rowers must know how to swim and be able to handle themselves in the water. You will end up in the water while learning to row. We do not wear safety vests or life jackets while rowing.
- Be aware of unsafe weather conditions. Read "GDRA Personal Safety Guidelines" in the GDRA club rules to learn about:
 - **High Water**
 - **Thunder Storms**
 - **High Wind**
 - **Cold Temperatures**

Be prepared:

- Wear appropriate clothing:
 - Pants or shorts that are form-fitting and stretchy, not baggy.
 - Shirt that is not too long or baggy
 - OK for sweating and river water
 - Socks
 - Hat (optional)

- Bring a dry change of clothes and a towel.
- Bring a water bottle with you. The boathouse has a hose.

Boats

- The coach is responsible for assigning you a boat at each lesson and reserving your boats.
- You will use various club boats during LTR. You begin rowing in a Zephyr. They are relatively stable. When the coach sees that you are ready to progress, you will row a Maas.
- Sculling boats are fragile and expensive. The handling appropriate for a canoe or kayak would destroy a rowing shell, so please handle them with great care. See "Equipment Care & Handling" in the GDRA club rules.
- If a boat is broken or has a missing part, please notify your coach ASAP, so the boat can be tagged for repair. See "Equipment Damage and Repairs" in the GDRA club rules.
- On the bulletin board, right above the sign-out log in the boathouse, is a list of boats available to use. The list identifies what boats are available and who can use them. (see "Rowing Performance Shells" in the club rules) The boats also have size and weight guidelines.

A Few More Things...

- The coach is not a clerk or club officer. A list of contact numbers is in this packet for your information and any issues you may have.
- The boathouse combination is for members only. The coach will not give you the combination. Upon successful completion of LTR, you are welcome to join GDRA and have full member benefits.

Life After Learn-to-Row:

Rowers who pass the rowing safety test on the last class will be awarded a Learn-to-Row Graduation certificate. Additionally, you will be eligible to join The Greater Dayton Rowing Association (GDRA). Please ask your coach or any club officer about the responsibilities and opportunities associated with GDRA membership.

Hand Care:

Your hands connect you to the boat, and you may get a blister or two before the calluses form. Gloves do not help; they interfere with controlling the blades. It does help to rub your hands with the waterless wash lotion. It has high alcohol content and will help toughen your hands up. Keep your hands clean – especially if you have an open blister. Don't use the waterless soap if it burns though!

LESSON # 1

Introduction & Swamp Test

Bring a towel and change of clothing for this lesson. A swimsuit is recommended.

Meet your coach and classmates. Your fees and paperwork should have been processed and completed. If not, please give them to your coach. Make sure you completed a **USROWING WAIVER**. You may not row until this waiver is completed and turned in to the LTR Director.

Boathouse Tour

- Bays
- Ergs
- Boats and oars
- Reservation and sign out logs
- Safety board, telephone, emergency numbers, first aid kit
- Docks

GDRA Safety Procedures and Island Park Rules (sheets included)

- Sign out and sign in logbook
- Traffic pattern
- Dock courtesies
- US Rowing Safety Video

Basic Ergometer Technique

- Coach will demonstrate basic erg technique:
 - Hands loose on the handle
 - Upright posture
 - Drive with legs
- Rowers practice erg technique

Swamp Test

- The coach will demonstrate the proper technique for getting back in the boat from the water.
- Each student will need to demonstrate this technique.

LESSON # 2

Moving Boat & Body

BOATS: Zephyr or Quad

FOCUS: Boat handling, and overall stroke mechanics.

At the Boathouse, Review:

- Traffic patterns and Safety Rules, Boat reservations.
- Questions from previous session.
- Sign out the boat and set out slings.

Boat Handling:

- Coach shows how to move the boat from rack to slings.
- The class moves the boat to the slings, hull down.
- Oar (scull) carrying. Carry sculls with the blades forward.

At the Dock:

- Review Traffic Pattern, again.
- Coach will demonstrate how to get into the boat.
- Coach will demonstrate oar-handling basics:
 - Grip: fingers hook the oar handle, loose and relaxed.
 - "Never Let Go of Your Oars"
 - Stable position: Blades flat, hands together.
- Coach will demonstrate how to set in oars correctly
 - Dockside scull first
 - Oarlocks point toward the stern
- Coach will demonstrate how to adjust foot stretchers
- Coach will demonstrate basic rowing stroke:
 - Catch-Drive,
 - Release-Recovery
 - Continuous motion
 - Level hands
 - Relaxed arms and shoulders

Row!

LESSON # 3

Hands

Focus: Good grip and hand position.

BOATS: Zephyr or Quad

At the Dock, review:

- Traffic Pattern
- Getting in the boat
- Handling the oars, setting in the oars, and adjusting foot-stretchers
- The basic stroke

Coach demonstrates proper hand technique:

- Relaxed grip with fingers and a FLAT wrist
- Light grip with fingers (not the death grip!)
- Keeping wrists flat with elbows "wide"
- Ability to feather with fingers ONLY

While rowing, practice these drills:

- Sitting still in the boat – practice feathering with fingers only.
- Before beginning to row – check your grip!
- Start and stop the boat several times to practice feathering and setting a good grip

LESSON # 4

Balance

Focus: Find the natural set and balance of the boat.

BOATS: Zephyr or Maas

At the Dock, review:

- Traffic Pattern
- The basic stroke
- Hand Technique

Coach demonstrates techniques for good balance:

- Left hand over right hand
- Both hands should be at almost the same height
- Find the proper hand height by letting the blades float on the water
- Hands move 'across the table top' throughout the stroke
- Oars are designed to float at their natural level in the water.

Rowers launch and practice drills:

- Find an out-of-the-way place on the river for these drills
- Row one-scull-at-a-time to watch your blade while practicing flat 'table top' strokes. Tuck the non-rowing scull against your rib cage to steady the boat. Switch between port and starboard.
- Hold scull handles together with your arms outstretched and blades flat on the water. Lean left and right to feel how the blades support you against the water.
- Hold scull handles together with your arms outstretched and blades flat on the water. Slowly separate hands vertically to feel how the boat tilts.
- Practice rowing as if pulling oar-handles across the top of table.

LESSON # 5

Steering and Backing

Focus: Looking, turning, backing traffic pattern

BOATS: Zephyr or Maas

At the Dock, review:

- Traffic Pattern
- Hand Technique
- Balance

Coach demonstrates techniques for steering and looking:

- Be Aware of Where You Are
 - Glance at both river banks to judge if you are on the proper side of the river
- Look Ahead
 - Look during the drive (stable part of stroke),
 - Look on both sides
 - Every 5 or 10 strokes.
- Turning
 - Execute a continuous (around the river bend) turn by reaching out farther with one scull while approaching the catch, and increasing pressure with that leg during the drive.
 - Execute a slow, sharp turn by pulling with only one oar
 - Execute a pivot turn by setting one oar to back, one oar to row.
- Backing
 - Row with hands only until you build confidence.
 - To row the boat stern first, the blades can be either 'turned over' or regular.
 - Short, light strokes

Rowers launch, and practice:

- Turning and looking to maintain the traffic pattern
- Each type of turn
- Keep hands level while turning
- Practice backing for 500 meters

LESSON # 6

Release, Recovery and Rhythm

Focus: Quick Release, Slow Recovery

BOATS: Zephyr or Maas

At the Dock, review:

- Traffic Pattern
- Looking, Turning, Backing

Coach demonstrates release:

- The goal is to quickly release the blade from water
- Apply downward pressure on handles to get the blade out of the water
- Only a slight motion is required
- Shoulders relaxed, elbows out moderately
- Hands stay level – no dumping into the lap
- Early release is better than late release

Coach demonstrates recovery:

- Recovery starts after the release,
- As the blades exit the water, immediately push the hands away
- Set body angle before moving up the slide
- Controlled slide with fixed body angle (pull boat under you with toes)
- Upright posture, over-extension is bad for balance and power
- 2:1 ratio (recovery takes twice as long as the drive)

Rowers launch, and practice with the following drills:

- Pick Drill - Arms only, then arm-and-shoulders only
- Pivot Drill - Pause when hands are away, then slide with a fixed body angle
- Recovery Drill – start squared at release. Move from release to catch, then pause at catch, and take one stroke. Stop boat and repeat. ... a *more challenging drill.*

LESSON # 7

Catch and Drive

Focus: Clean, squared entry to water, Drive with legs

BOATS: Zephyr or Maas

At the Dock, review:

- Traffic Pattern
- Looking, Turning, Backing
- Quick release, slow recovery

Coach demonstrates catch:

- Sequence: Go to the catch position, square the blades, drive.
- The catch position is with legs bent, back fixed, and arms out.
- The blade is fully squared when flat part of sleeve pulls against the vertical pin.
- Square the blade early or late, but square before starting the drive.
- Balance is most precarious at the catch position, but a clean release will make it easier.

Coach demonstrates drive:

- The drive starts after the squared blade enters the water,
- Legs move first, then open up the back, then with the arms
- Finish all parts of the body together.
- Maintain shallow blade depth

Rowers launch, and practice the following drills:

- **Tap Drill** – At the catch, square the blades, then lightly move blades vertically (an inch or less) “tapping” the water. Tap five times and drive. After ten strokes, stop the boat and repeat. Focus on light, relaxed movement at the catch.
- **Half Blade Drill** - To correct buried blades, try placing the blade only halfway into the water at the catch and during the drive.
- **Catch Drill** – At the catch, drive with legs only. Quickly release the blade before pulling with arms and shoulders. After ten of these leg strokes, gradually add arms and shoulders.

LESSON # 8

Docking and Test

Focus: Safely docking the boat, verifying basic skills for safe rowing

BOATS: Zephyr or Maas

At the Dock, review:

- Traffic Pattern
- Backing
- Questions on any lesson

Coach demonstrates docking:

- Docking is a frequent source of broken boats
- Land in middle of the dock without touching boat.
- Approach at roughly 45 degrees, slow but steady
- About one boat length from the dock:
 - Stop rowing, put your hands together and drop your hands so that the sculls are parallel to each other
 - Lean onto the outside blade. This will tilt the boat and lift the inside oar into the air, so that it clears the dock. Keep hands together.

Rowers launch, and practice docking.

Your coach will request each student to demonstrate turning, looking, and other basic skills. Students who satisfactorily demonstrate these skills will graduate from Learn-to-Row and be eligible to join the GDRA. Each graduate will receive a signed certificate of graduation and a GDRA membership form.

The coach and all students will wash down the boats. The coach will explain and demonstrate boat wash tools and methods.