

Newport Sea Base Rowing

Races – A Guide for Parents

(Adapted for NSBR from an article at NorthwestRowing.com)

Advice for race day: plan to go early, stay all day, and bring everything you need with you.

Check the Website the night before the regatta for any last minute changes that may have been posted.

Get a map to find your way to the regatta. Most racecourses are listed in the locations section of the website. When possible, these maps have both driving directions and where to park, and often, where to find the best viewing.

Be there on time. Most regattas start at 7 or 7:30 AM. Schedules of events are often not available ahead of time, so it may be difficult to plan your arrival around when your rower will be racing. Last minute boating changes do occur, so the best bet is to be at the regatta from the start, unless you are sure that you won't miss anything by arriving later! At some regattas, schedules are posted, at some copies are available, at others (especially ones with just a few teams), nothing is printed or posted and you just need to ask someone who looks knowledgeable when your rower may be approaching the finish line.

Mandatory Transportation for Rowers. Your rower will be transported to the regatta, usually very early in the morning, on a chartered bus leaving from the Sea Base parking lot or a nearby restaurant parking lot. Rowers are required to return on the bus.

Rowers will need to be at the regatta for the entire event. Even when not racing or preparing to race, they are expected to be available to unload and rig boats, help cheer for their teammates, fill in for other injured or missing teammates in unexpected races, help de-rig, load trailers, and assist in unloading the boats from the trailer and returning them to the boathouse. #OneTeam

Interacting with your Rower. Depending upon the regatta, your rower may be racing in one or many events. Your rower will seek you out when (s)he needs or wants something (food, clothes, money). It is best if you are not the one responsible for required equipment for your rower, there will be a time when (s)he needs it and you are not in sight. Prior to your rower's boat launching, the coach will meet with the entire boat and go over final pre-race information. Stay clear of your rower from the time of the pre-race boat meeting until your rower has been released from the post race debrief. Your rower needs to be focused at this time, and unfortunately family and friends are a distraction.

Dress appropriately. Dress in layers that you can discard if the sun makes an appearance. Some suggested clothing items: comfortable shoes which don't get wet in the rain, wool socks, tee-shirt covered by a long-sleeve shirt, covered by a sweatshirt, which is covered by a Gortex or similar waterproof jacket. Make sure you have a hat or cap of some sort that keeps the rain off your head, even a baseball style hat helps. And finally, bring a good pair of polarized sunglasses – it always seems that when the sun does appear, it is directly across from where you are watching the races.

Personal Items. Remember that there may not be a store nearby, and you might not want to give up your parking place to go search for one. The restroom facilities are usually port-a-potties. Therefore a roll of toilet paper and some tampons/sanitary napkins sealed in a plastic bag can be lifesavers when needed.

Tools for Watching Races. You will want to keep track of your rower's races; so get a race schedule as soon as they are available (they run out at many regattas). Bring a yellow highlighter and a pen to mark your rower's races and make notes. You will also find that it is nearly impossible to tell which boat is which without binoculars – invest in a good set as soon as possible.

Taking Pictures. You will soon learn that pictures of crew races are disappointing. Unless you have an extra-long telephoto lens, you won't be able to tell which boat is which, even at its closest point. Your best chance to take pictures is when the boats are being prepared for a race, moving the boat to the water, loading the boat in the water, and taking a “team picture” after the boat has been returned to the stretchers. Even for those shots a telephoto lens helps considerably.

Socializing. Regattas are hours of boredom punctuated by a few minutes of excitement as your rower races. Most regattas have areas where teams can set up tents and supply food for their rowers. Find out where most of the other parents will be watching the races, and set up your folding camp chairs. You may not be sitting in the chairs all the time, but it reserves a spot for you to call home and where you can store your gear. One of the more pleasant activities at regattas is having hours of time to talk with other parents – you will become good friends with many of them. Visit with the parents running the food tables, and you will learn more about how the rowing program works than from any other source. Bring along a book to read, just in case.

Food. Different clubs make different arrangements regarding feeding the rowers. Some have food tents and provide food for the rowers, but not the parents. Others feed everyone as long as there is food available. Some require rowers and parents to bring their own food. A few regattas have food that can be purchased, although the quality varies greatly. Regardless, plan on bringing plenty of food for both yourself and your rower. Basic picnic food is sufficient, including sandwiches and snacks.

Rower's Clothes. Bring a bag of extra clothes for your rower. At some regattas during the season, they will be in dire need of an extra pair of socks, sweatpants, or sweatshirt. A warm blanket might also be handy.

Good Luck, and Enjoy the Regatta!