

Headington School Oxford Boat Club



2010 - 2011

With Compliments:

Ryan Demaine: Director of Rowing

Headington School

Oxford

OX3 7TD

www.hsobc.co.uk



HEADINGTON SCHOOL OXFORD BOAT CLUB.

ROWING AT HEADINGTON.



Headington has established itself as one of the top rowing schools in the United Kingdom. Rowing was first introduced in 1991 and since then, the boat club has grown to include all years throughout the school. Membership in the boat club ranges from complete beginners to Junior World Championship Standard. Headington School Oxford Boat Club is a competitive club with a recreational facility for the novice squad.

Ryan Demaine (Director of Rowing) is supported by ten qualified rowing staff, two of which have either represented their country in rowing or coached to an international level.

In the 2008 – 2009 season Headington ranked as the top girls rowing club/school in the country, the First Eight winning the "Triple" (The National Schools Head, The National Schools Regatta and Henley), while the Juniors Won the Vitar Ludorum and the biggest junior event in the country (the Peterborough Junior Regatta). This season has already seen the club enjoying success. At the National Schools Head of the River, the First Eight won by over 30 seconds. J12s to J18s are encouraged to row and participate in what is one of the schools most competitive clubs, both domestically and internationally. Over the last five years, Headington has had an average of three girls per a year representing Great Britain. The reason for this success lies in Headingtons training ethos which relies on the commitment and dedication of those who participate in the boat club.

WHY ROW?

First and foremost, is fun! Rowing offers the opportunity to be outdoors and challenge oneself. As one's rowing develops and they become passionate about the sport, an incredible will to compete is born. This coupled with the sense of identity and camaraderie within the sport makes rowing one of the true great team sports.

At Headington School we encourage athletes to develop at their own pace. Headington has a squad system that allows athletes to be developed with people of a similar ability as themselves. Once athletes are capable enough, they move into the next squad.

These practices, while being challenging are geared to allowing girls to be able to compete at the number of different events that we attend around the country. In doing this, girls are exposed to a sport which helps them develop as individuals while encouraging self motivation; personal responsibility; tolerance; and a will to improve and succeed.

CAN MY DAUGHTER TRY THE SPORT FIRST?

All new U3 members will be charged **£55** which is non refundable as a start up fee. This covers all costs for the trial period which lasts up until half term, including membership and insurance from the ARA. Once the registration forms have been signed this fee can not be returned as girls will be registered with the ARA immediately. After the trial period, girls will be charged the full termly fee of **£117** which covers costs for the remainder of the term (this includes the initial £50 charge).

WHAT DO THE TERMLY ROWING FEES INCLUDE?

Fees for **2010-2011** season: **176** for Juniors to Seniors
117 for Novices (U3rds only)

They include most essentials. All tuition both at land training sessions and water sessions is included, use of all HSOBC facilities, provision of all boats and equipment and also individual insurance. Additional costs of entering events, transport to these events, and items of HSOBC rowing/racing kit are charged to the bill. Any girl who attends Great Britain squad trials will be charged for the costs incurred.

I've heard rowers train very hard, is this true?

Yes they do. That is not to say that training hard is not fun nor good for the girls. When the girls start rowing, the emphasis is on fun and enjoyment as well as learning new skills (There is no point doing a sport you don't enjoy!).

From 13 years upwards the shift is more towards performance and racing crews for the bigger events. Selection, regardless of age, is on ability and performance. Here the success of an athlete is 99% a reflection of their commitment and the amount they train. It is therefore important that you encourage your daughter to attend sessions so they can get the most out of it.

Can my daughter do another sport or another activity?

Definitely. If your daughter does another sport, we would encourage them to continue doing so. The boat club actively encourages girls to gain other skills, experiencing and experience other training environments and competitions. It is however important that girls follow the training quotas as these allow leeway for girls to do more than one sport or activity.

If your daughter does music or choir, we encourage them to continue doing so. Many of the Boat Clubs members are very talented and participate in these activities. The Boat Club encourages them to continue doing so. These practices are often on a **Monday** (subject to change) so juniors can do the **Friday** rowing session.

If your daughter is in the **J16 to Senior age group**, they need to keep in mind that missing one session a week does impact on them by the end of the year. If they miss a session, they need to make up for this on a Friday. In the 2008 – 2009 season, girls who did not make the top boats had a far lower attendance ratio than those who did make the top boats. It is therefore important that girls in the J16 to Senior age group prioritise which sports they wish to do. In the Autumn, and Winter terms, we do encourage the older girls to participate in other activities. It is however important that in the Spring and Summer term, they ensure they are following the full training program.

Between rowing camp and National Schools, it is vital that those who put themselves forward for selection for Top/Lead Boats (The "A" boats) attend training regularly as the training program is specifically designed to get girls to peak for National Schools. There are also vital race preparation and race strategy sessions that the athletes will do to ensure that are equipped to race at the National Schools Regatta. Please do not organise any activities over the weekend training for your daughter in the three weeks leading up to the National Schools Regatta.

What about the Duke of Edinburgh Award which is just before the National Schools Regatta?

There is often a DoE award a week before the National Schools Regatta. The school have arranged with the boat club that those who wish to do the award can do this in Autumn Term of the same year. This allows athletes to prepare for the event while also being able to gain this valuable award.

Is my daughter insured for Training and Racing?

The schools' insurance covers all members of the school and coaches during their participation in rowing and travelling to and from events. Membership of the Amateur Rowing Association also covers all rowers during training and racing. (Every girl in HSOBC will be registered with the Amateur Rowing Association (ARA)).

What do I need to bring to every rowing session?

Novices and new rowers: When your daughter goes to do her swimming test and capsize drill in the swimming pool, she needs to bring her swimming costume, hat, towel and a pair of shorts and a t-shirt. She will have a 50 metre swimming test and then do a controlled capsize with two members of the coaching team who is also qualified lifeguards.

All girls: Your daughter must always bring spare rowing kit to all water based sessions, as well as a spare change of warm clothing. (There is a small chance that she might fall in so a change of kit is essential, particularly in the winter months). The same applies if the weather is poor. Rowing does not stop for rain and she will need to have plenty of kit to change into.

Your daughter will be prevented from rowing if she is not appropriately dressed for the conditions. If it is cold, she will be expected to have leggings, a long sleeve top and a cap to keep warm. If she does not have this, the coaches reserve the right to prevent them going afloat. Please respect their decision as they have your daughters well being in mind.

If it is hot, your daughter will need sunscreen and a cap.

All kit is purchased from <http://www.crewroom.biz/> an online rowing store that supplies Headington Kit. Please do not purchase kit if your daughter is in the Novice Squad. She will not need rowing kit as a J13s. Once your daughter has moved to the J13 squad, she will need to have this kit. The online store orders high quality rowing clothing from the USA. To this end, the store is only open for orders at specific times of the year. This will be explained at the parents meeting and notices will be published on the rowing web page.

Water bottles and food?

What ever the training might be, a water bottle is essential and girls will be prevented from training if they do not have this (Girls are NOT allowed to share water bottles). If they are in the J15 to Senior age group water is not enough to replace lost fluid as a result of training. Your daughter will need to have some "High Juice" in their water bottles, electrolyte replacement fluid, or carbohydrate drink. Please ensure that your daughter uses a new water bottle each week or if it is a proper training water bottle, these are cleaned and disinfected regularly.

It is important that girls have food for between sessions on the weekend. Girls will also need to have a light snack for immediately after training in the evening. This will ensure that girls are able to benefit recover and benefit from the training.

Headington School Oxford Boat Club

The Novice Squad

Beginners are introduced to the novice squad where the sport of rowing is taught. Here, the emphasis is on fun and the sessions look to teach athletes the very basics of sculling (Rowing with two blades/oars). These skills include posture; developing core stability to prevent injury; and to develop basic technique. Most importantly, competence in a small boat is taught by teaching them how to control, steer and move a boat while being aware of other boats around them.

The novices main rowing sessions are on Saturday mornings. They are also encouraged to attend a Monday and Friday afternoon session which helps develop technique on the ergo machines which can then be applied to the Saturday session. These sessions, while being fun, are geared towards developing core stability, flexibility and endurance. Characteristics that are vital for rowing.

Beginners start rowing in the single sculls at Hinksey Lake. At the site there is a small lake that is knee deep. After they have mastered the basics of sculling, they are moved to the larger training lake, where they can learn how to row further. In April, a selection of Novices will be moved from the Sculling lake to Godstow where they can move into crew boats.

A capsizing drill and swim test must be completed before any one is allowed to row. This is done and organised by the head of the squad. Only once they have completed this test will they be allowed to row. The dates are listed in the Rowing Calendar, so please diarise them as there will not be another opportunity to do the drill.

The Novices may do a race in the season.

During the week, once a basic physical "fitness" is developed, girls will do regularly do activities that encourage them to develop their aerobic and anaerobic fitness.

Novice Training Days and Times:

Monday and Friday: 4pm to 6pm.

Saturdays: (while at Hinksey Lake): Book a 1 hour slot in the day between 8am and 3pm.

From April onwards: Training is at Godstow: 8am to 12pm: Sign up for one of two slots: 8am to 10am and 10am to 12pm.

Please note, rowing times and days may change due to restraints occurring from St Edwards Boat Club, Hinksey Sculling School or coaching restraints.

Novices: Acceptance into the boat club 2010 - 2011:

Last year the Boat club had 48 girls signing up to row. The limit for the Novice Squad is however 30. If the boat club limit is exceeded, a selection process will take place where the top 30 girls will be invited to row at Headington, while the remainder will be directed towards Hinksey Sculling School (This was the case in the '08 and '09).

The boat club would like to give all girls the opportunity to have chance to try rowing and we are delighted with the interest that has been shown in the club. There are a limited number of spaces in the boat club, and although we would like everyone to continue it not always possible to accommodate all of the girls who would like to row. Once the girls appreciate the level of training commitment we expect, each year we find that some girls decide that they do not want to continue rowing. The coaches will always have the girls' best interests in mind and will offer advise as to whether they feel that your daughter is suited to the sport.

This will be done formally at half term, (April – Subject for change depending on external restrictions) by contacting parents to update them on their daughters progress where on the following:

- Attitude to training.
- Responsiveness to coaching.
- Attendance.
- Physiological ability.
- Potential to move on.

Once parents have this information we ask them to make a decision as to whether or not they wish their daughters to continue with rowing. Should we still have more girls than safe for the club to accommodate, it may be necessary at this stage for coaches to recommend which girls will be accepted. This recommendation will not be based solely on ability but will also reflect the commitment and attitude that the athletes have shown up to April.

The Junior Squad: J13 and J14 Squad:

By the Junior Squad (J13s and J14s) a competitive sculling focus is brought into the squad. Girls are encouraged to participate in various J13 and J14 head races and regattas. Girls are selected into crews based on a selection criteria which looks at their ability to move a small boat, their technical ability and their physical ability (See selection criteria page). A selection of J14s will be invited on the April rowing camp if they have met the selection criteria.

Here the emphasis is again on fun, but also incorporating competitive work within that. Technique and basic rowing fitness is built on from when they were novices. Juniors race a number of Headraces and Regattas throughout the season. Thus girls who attend sessions on a fairly regular basis (see attendance quotas) will have an opportunity to race.

Junior Training days and times (Subject for Change):

Monday, Wednesday and Friday: 4pm to 6pm.

If there is a mid week water session, it is until 6:30pm.

Saturdays and Sundays: 8am to 12pm.

Please note, rowing times and days may change due to restraints occurring from St Edwards Boat Club, Hinksey Sculling School or coaching restraints.

J13 and J14: Acceptance into the boat club 2010 - 2011:

The expected attrition in the current Novice age group has not occurred this year, however boat club numbers are manageable and safe. This season, for the Novice and J13 age groups of 2009 – 2010 who will be entering into the J13 and J14 age groups, there will be no selection policy as the numbers are manageable. We hope that the girls continue to enjoy rowing and participate in the boat club.

Please note, there will be a selection for rowing camp. See Headington School Oxford Boat Club Selection Policy.

Main event for the year:

Please see club calendar as this will have more events listed.

The J15 Squad, J16 and Development:

The J15 and J16 squads are introduced to Sweep rowing (Rowing with one blade/oar). Sculling is still a very important focus for the group. In the J15 and J16 age groups, a full competitive program is introduced where girls are able to compete in various Head Races and Regattas. Any girl who is in the J15 squad is eligible for selection to boats in the J16 and Senior age group. This will ensure that, should she be excelling in the sport, she will be able to thrive with those of a similar ability.

The Development Squad is made up of J17s or J18s who are not ready for the Senior Squad. The focus here is on developing athletes so they can move into the senior squad. The emphasis here is building endurance (aerobic and anaerobic), building technique, flexibility and core stability. Once these have been developed and once they have met the selection standards for the Senior squad, they can move up to the senior squad. The senior squad is made up by those who's commitment is not questioned.

The J15, J16 and Development Squads require a **75% (J15) to 80% (J16 and Development)** attendance. If girls can't make training, coaches need to know **5 days in advance** so transport; equipment and additional staff can be planned. Again, racing is only available to all those who attend sessions regularly. If your daughter is struggling with **academic work and deadlines**, all your daughter needs to do is speak to their coach and arrangements will be made for them to miss a session and catch up training on another day. Please let your daughter communicate with coaches rather than parents. The coaches are then able to hear first hand what stresses your daughter may be under.

Junior Training days and times:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday: 4pm to 6pm.

If there is a mid week water session, it is until 6:30pm.

Saturdays and Sundays: 8am to 12pm.

Technique and quality rowing sessions are incorporated to ensure that the girls get conditioned for rowing. Runs, ergo work and circuit work are all important in the conditioning of the girls to compete. By doing this, a strong sense of camaraderie and identity is built. Further more, there is a strong focus on organisation to help girls with their work.

Please note, there will be a selection for rowing camp. See Headington School Oxford Boat Club Selection Policy.

Main event for the year:

Please see club calendar as this will have more events listed.

Seniors: J16s and J18s (if selected)

The seniors row on Mondays to Thursdays from 4pm to 6pm. They also row on Saturdays and Sundays 8am to 12pm. Here girls are encouraged to be self motivated and responsible.

Here running; ergo work; swimming; circuit work and weight training (only under strict supervision) all contribute to allowing athletes to attain high standards of racing. Headington Senior boats are selected very carefully with regard to what events would most benefit the girls for the various events we compete at throughout the year. Girls have the opportunity to attend the various GB assessment and trial weekends throughout the year, where, if they prove to be successful, they may represent Great Britain at one of the following: The World Junior Championships; the Coupe de la Jeunesse; the Anglo-French Match (J16 only); and the Home Countries Regatta (England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales).

For girls aspiring to the junior Great Britain team, there is obviously a much greater demand on time and training. A GB Selection standard has to be met before girls may be put forward for GB trials.

Main event for the year:

Please see club calendar as this will have more events listed.

Why is attendance important?

Rowing is a sport everyone can be successful in. A large number of pupils at Headington would like to row yet are turned away as we cannot cater for so many. In **September 2009**, 48 additional girls have applied to row. Of which, after a selection process, only 32 were registered in the boat club. The remainder were directed to Hinksey Sculling School. Thus for those who do row at Headington School, it is important they attend sessions. If people do not attend sessions they are also putting themselves and others at risk as they have not been conditioned to row. Further more, they are denying opportunities to girls who really want to row. Rowing is a physical sport. Headington incorporates top coaching methods to minimise the possibility of injury, so it is important that we are able to see girls on a regular basis, as to ensure the correct training takes place. **The boat club reserves the right to terminate a girls membership or disallow them from racing with HSOBC should they fail to attend sessions regularly.** If girls do not attend sessions, they might not be signed on for the following term as these positions can be filled by girls who truly want to row and get the most out of it.

Attendance quotas:

Novices:	55%
Juniors:	60%
J15s:	75%
J16 & Development	80%
J16s and Seniors	80%+ (There should be no doubt as to their attendance).

What monitoring is there of the girls?

All training programmes are carefully structured and progressive and the coaching staff monitor each girl's development and performance. A detailed log book is kept on every training session; crew and results the girls achieve. This is then used later for crew selection.

Adolescent girls grow at different rates and these factors are taken into consideration when they are training. Therefore we may take height, weight, arms span and heart rate measurements for the girls to help us monitor them. Body weight is particularly important when selecting what boat type that girls row in (each boat has a buoyancy maximum weight).

Those girls going on to represent Great Britain may be physiologically tested and may be subject to random drugs test which are run by British Sport. If this is done, a Headington Staff member will accompany them at all times.

Do Juniors have to Undergo Drugs Testing?

The Sports Council for Great Britain Drugs Testing Unit has been increasingly active at junior and senior events in recent years. It is extremely unlikely that a junior (U18) would be tested at a domestic regatta, but should one of our rowers be singled out for testing, it is beyond our control. More recently, two Headington Girls were tested at the GB trials. Please ensure that, should your daughter be taking medication, your doctor has been notified that she is an athlete and may get tested (J15 to J18s). A junior (U18) would not be tested without a member of the Headington coaching staff being present.

What do I do if there are adverse weather conditions?

Rowing is not cancelled for bad weather unless coaches consider it too dangerous to row. Please keep in mind that we can not control the weather nor predict it. We row in rain, snow and wind. However, if there is fog (something that is fairly frequent around these parts) we will not risk going afloat. Sometimes the fog lifts after an hour. Sometimes it doesn't. In which case, girls will do team building activities by the river. Headington does not row when there is lightning. Again, it is too dangerous and girls will be prevented from going afloat.

We cannot determine what the river conditions will be until we get down to the river. On Saturday and Sunday we only arrive at the river at 8am. We do not go out on the river if:

- The visibility is low (fog).

If there is fog, we will often wait to see if it lifts. During this time, the whole group will do a circuit or game of some description. These circuits and games are important so please do not feel that it is a waste of time if your daughter does not get onto the water.

- The river levels are too high (see web page). Training may be moved to the training hut or girls may be asked to go down to Dorney Lake. In which case, girls will be asked to meet at Headley Way to catch a school bus there. Rowing will then be from 7am to 2pm or 7am to 12pm depending on the sessions. This only applies for J14s to J18s.

The river levels can also pose a problem. Godstow is a flood plain, and this proves to be problematic in that sometimes the lock keepers will allow the water levels to rise on our reach. On other occasions, the lock keepers will allow water to continue flowing and the water levels remain low. If over a week it has been raining continuously, it is likely that the river will be **RED FLAGGED**. Please keep an eye on the web site (www.hsobc.co.uk) because we have set up a system that can notify you if there is no rowing. Firstly, if you look at the rowing notice board (the grey area that scrolls), you will see a section called, Godstow Flag Status. Please look at the web page before setting off in the morning, or the evening prior rowing. Please also look at the training pages found on this link: <http://hsobc.co.uk/training.html> Coaches will post notices about specific squads here. Please keep an eye on this page.

If it is **red**, there is DEFINITELY NO ROWING for juniors and novices.

If **amber/orange** a risk assessment will be done and then a decision will be made as to whether or not a crew may boat.

If it is **green**, there WILL be rowing for all rowers.

- If it is too windy (only applies to Juniors and Novices). Wind speed may have different effects if the direction changes. Again a risk assessment will be done, and then crews may or may not be allowed to boat.

You may find that when we arrive, the water levels are high, & or it is too windy. This is beyond our control and please understand that we cannot predict what the water will be like (wind speed can have different affects due to the direction).

Development and Seniors may still have rowing, although this may only be determined once we are down at the water. Often the flag is not updated immediately, as the lock keepers have not updated their systems by 8am. So this is left to **R.M Demaine** and our **Water safety advisor or our Child Protection Officer** who will state whether or not it is safe to go onto the water. If it is not safe, these rowers will be taken up to the training hut where they will complete their session.

Why not have a phone tree? We have tried this in the past and inevitably there is a break in this tree and this has caused many problems. We therefore do not have a phone tree.

Does rowing affect academic performance?

In the last Five years, girls who done rowing have, on the whole, also been high achievers. No less than 5 of our rowers have gone on to Cambridge University while two of our rowers have been Head Girl at Headington.

Those who initially struggled academically (when they were younger) have found that rowing has helped them organise their time, while ensuring they have a fit and focused mind and body. Rowing is a sport that requires athletes take ownership of their time, commitments, academic and overall wellbeing. To this end, girls who do rowing gain skills that help in a wide range of areas especially in their academic lives. There is no need for people to worry about rowing affecting their GCSE's or A-Levels as our rowers generally have better marks than those who don't have another sporting focus in their lives.

Important dates:

Please always make sure you look at our web page: www.hsobc.co.uk. Up-to-date regatta information will be available including directions and regatta draws.

Will my daughter be racing?

HSOBC is a competitive club with a recreational facility for its novice members.

In 2007, Headington introduced a selection policy (Please see Selection Policy Section) for all squads and reserves the right to de register girls who fail to meet the minimum selection standards required to row in the club.

Most of the girls in the club want to race and we are tremendously successful. We are always either top or very near the top of the National Rowing league. We have girls who represent Great Britain at the GB vs France J16 Match, Junior European Championships, Junior World Championships and the Youth Olympics.

For Novices, racing is not offered, however, if the Director of Rowing assesses crews to be of a suitable standard to race, this might happen. The juniors (J13s/J14s) and upwards will start being entered into races if they have attended sessions and met the minimum standards that the club requires.

Crews are selected for racing on attendance, ergo time trials results, swims and run results. The final selections are based on seat racing and other water based tests. These are the most important results. Prior to a crew being entered, the Heads of Squads motivate to the Director of Rowing which individuals should race, and what boat types they will be racing. Once this is done, the Director of Rowing will have the final say and a crew will then be entered.

The coaches at Headington School are trained professionals. They all have qualifications to coach rowing and are closely monitored by the Director of Rowing (Who is himself an international Rowing Coach for Great Britain). Headington School prides itself on the standard of its coaches. It is therefore important to trust and respect the decisions made by the coaches who are professionally trained and have many years of coaching and rowing experience. Every coach monitors every training session and a detailed log book is kept for selections. Their selections are discussed at Coaches Meetings where the Director of Rowing will question these selections. There after, the Director of Rowing will make the final entry. Races and crews are selected for the club to succeed as a whole, not simply to target a specific individuals success. Please feel free to question our selection policy if you have any concern. However, interference with our selection policy, or intimidation of our coaches will not be seen as constructive or conduct acting in the best interests of the club or your daughter. If this happens, the boat club reserves the right to terminate a girls membership with the club.

Please respect these decisions. Selections will not be changed after they have been entered, unless injury, illness or poor performance leading up to the event has occurred. Please note: Crews are only selected on ability and what they have demonstrated they are able to do, NOT to "Give X a chance in the "A" boat".

Please see the selection policy's for Regattas, Head Races and the April Rowing Camp. Available at www.hsobc.co.uk

What is the parental involvement?

Rowing is a team sport and if a member of a crew is late or fails to turn up, it disrupts the whole crew. It is important therefore that you make sure your daughter attends any sessions that she is supposed to, and that she arrives on time.

HSOBC is very fortunate that many of the parents regularly come and support at races and this support is greatly appreciated. At larger events we have the HSOBC marquee, and many parents bring drinks and picnics and make race days very social occasions. We also organise regular events and fund raising functions ranging from the HSOBC summer ball, to quiz nights, barn dances and Bar-B-Ques.

Please don't feel that you need to help girls carry boats or blades. This is for the girls and coaches to do. If coaches or staff need help, they will definitely draw upon help from the parents.

It may interest you that there are parent running or cycling groups on Saturday and Sunday mornings. So while your daughter is rowing at the water, you can be meeting other parents for a bit of physical activity of your own.

I hope this information gives you a small insight to the boat club. The members of HSOBC love their sport and have a very good rapport with the coaching team. We aim to make it a rewarding and enjoyable sport for everyone. If you have any unanswered questions or would like any further information, please don't hesitate to contact me. You can also see the Headington School Oxford Boat Club web page for further information: www.hsobc.co.uk

I look forward to meeting you.

Ryan Demaine
Director of Rowing
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Captain's summary

"I first started rowing in the L4 because I had done some canoeing on my holidays in the past with my family and I thought the two would have been similar. I couldn't have been more wrong! Having not done much sport previously I had a slow start at rowing. However, when I started to really throw myself into it in the L5 I began to get the most out of my rowing. I learned to push myself both mentally and physically and made some of my closest friends. In the U5 I started to train with the senior squad. I got to know the older girls, with whom I was racing in the 8. It was so great to talk to and become close to those who I had looked up to for so long. They were able to give us invaluable advice about exams and moving up through the years at Headington. As a rower, you learn to organise your time very well. In fact many people have found it has helped them with their studies, learning to focus and manage their time efficiently. Lots of girls match their performances on the water with outstanding academic achievement.

"During my time rowing at Headington I have been on multiple camps and trips with the Boat Club. Rowing camps in the Easter holidays have become an annual event. As well as setting us up for the summer they have been a really good chance to get to know both the other girls in the club and coaches better. We go to the South of France which means beautiful sunshine, much needed after the long winter months! Some of the parents of the boat club raised money for a group of senior girls to race in Switzerland during the October half term. This international event (a nine km race in a single scull) was one of the best experiences I have had at Headington, however horrific it sounds! To cut costs we went on the trip with a school from London and so we were able to get to know the people who had once just been our rivals. I have also been lucky enough to represent GB as a Headington girl. Last summer I raced in the Junior World Championships in Beijing which was the trial event for the Olympics. This meant we were one of the first crews to get to use the new Olympic lake. In order to get there it was necessary to go through a gruelling trialling process, but I have gained so much from it I would recommend any girl with the potential to have a go too.

"Since I started HSOBC the club has grown in size and warmth. Friendships cross many year groups. Some of my closest friends are people who I would otherwise never have met. It has been an absolute pleasure and honour for me to be Head of Boats in such an exciting and vibrant club. I look forward to hearing of the club's success in the future as I know there is much to come!"

Headington School Oxford Boat Club Coaching outlines for Physical Education and Sport. - R.M. Demaine

Preamble

The matter of sweep rowing, sculling training and working with weights has been discussed at length at FISA Commission meetings and in Australian Rowing forums.

It is not a matter where there is indisputable scientific evidence on which we can base hard and fast rules. It is clear however that the decisive factor for the amount of load and load toleration is not the *age* of the youth but their *stage of biological development*.

These guidelines are prepared to assist coaches to make appropriate judgments on the selection of rowers and to prepare training programs that avoid the incidence of long-term injuries (following the FISA and ARA).

This is however preliminary until such time this can be reviewed by the boat club and those involved with coaching in order to fully endorse a more complete and purpose driven guideline that takes the schools timetable and overall goals into consideration.

Physical Development

High demands are put on the body during puberty and the effects of these vary greatly from one individual to another. The blood volume increases by almost 50% and the heart and lungs attain their final growth. This is not a reason to reduce training but it underscores the importance of a qualified coach and their responsibility to have a clear picture of the health of each athlete.

Unexpected surges in output and long plateaus of performance are caused by normal, but individual varying, biological developments.

Up to around 15 years of age the heart must work harder than in adulthood and will only achieve high performances with high beat frequency. The resting rate is likely to be around 80/min. and under stresses such as ergometer work it will reach values over 200/min.

The cardiac muscle will strengthen itself gradually at first and then adapt itself to the load with a greater beat volume. The frequency of breath and the volume of inhalation will behave in a similar way.

Under these circumstances, and up to the end of puberty, high intensity training should have a low priority compared with low and medium level work, which will better prepare the athlete for future high load requirements. Put simply, skill based work (rowers are competent with body preparation) over long duration at low intensity should dominate the training plan for all up to the age of 15.

Prior to the age of 15 the connective tissues (muscle, bones, cartilage, tendons and ligaments) do not attain a rigid structure. If in the lead up to this age level, an athlete was to concentrate on sweep rowing, and on one side of the boat the strain would invariably lead to deformation and damage.

In later years of adult competition the high strain demanded by rowing over long distances is only capable of being supported by fully intact connective tissues. It is important therefore to develop the muscles involved in trunk stability (this is essential) at an early stage to support the stresses of competition at the elite level. This is now a major focal point of the club in which core stability is pivotal in the overall development of the young athletes in order to prevent injury.

Accordingly it is advisable for rowers in the U14/15 year physical development stages to concentrate mainly on sculling and accompany this with resistance training using body weight or circuit work as well as a number of cross training activities such as swimming, bike riding, and running. However, it is beneficial for skill development if they undertake some sweep oar rowing at low intensity and on both sides of the boat. This may even entail an occasional race up to 1000 meters in distance for the better developed of this group in the 14 to 15 years age levels.

At the developmental age of U15/16 years it is appropriate to move to sweep oar rowing providing the sculling apprenticeship has been served and the individual has reached a sufficient stage of physical development. It is essential to accompany this with a properly supervised strength and conditioning program and advisable for rowers to learn to row both sides of the boat.

Girls generally grow and mature earlier than boys. Cross sectional height values for girls are around 160cm and begin to plateau at age 14 or 15 years of age while boys grow steadily through this period to around 170cm. Similarly girls weights level off at the same time while boys grow. Personalised training programs can thus be implemented.

The differences in the range of values for those who do not fit the norm (age versus physical development) are significant. There are late developers and early developers. Late developers grow for longer than early developers and they are generally taller as adults (there are still exceptions).

The differences in the range of values for both sexes from these studies is significant. There are late developers and early developers. Late developers grow for longer than early developers and they are generally taller as adults. Late developers need different rowing preparations, they need more skill based work, constant strengthening programs without heavy weights and medium rather than high intensity in the boat. Early developers can cope with high levels of intensity and strengthening programs based on endurance principles. Neither group should ever be subject to hypertrophy programs (ever increasing weights). Boys or girls could begin these programs at 17 or 18 years depending on their development and only under the care of a qualified instructor. The program would be for a short period rather than a sustained term.

Late developers need different rowing preparations; they need more skill-based work, constant strengthening programs without heavy weights and medium rather than high intensity in the boat. Early developers can cope with high levels of intensity and strengthening programs based on endurance principles. Neither group should ever be subject to hypertrophy programs (ever increasing weights – for muscle mass increases).

There is common agreement that pre adolescent weight training will do little to increase the muscle size of a child. Some benefits may emerge in skill and technique. Young rowers may be introduced to weight training in the form of circuit work using body weight. Until an athlete stops growing in height, any weight program should be undertaken with great care, never without the guidance of a qualified instructor or coach.

We are fortunate generally that nutrition is not a factor in the development of young people in Britain. However diet education is an essential part of the training program and coaches should ensure it is included. The discussion should cover energy systems, the correct use of sports drinks and hydration techniques. Drugs in sport should also be part of the education of a young athlete. This should cover prohibited substances, prescribed medication and the status of over the counter medication.

The European Model

The general European model provides sculling racing for ages as young as 8 through to 14 years. Sweep oar rowing begins in the 15/16 year old group. The full program of all boat classes is available to all at the age of 16. Under the rules of the Amateur Rowing Association of the UK there is no sweep oar racing for women under 16 (under 16 at the commencement of the season in September). The same applies to males under 15 years.

Training Duration

For 12/13 to 16/17 year groups an athlete can sustain 5 to 9 sessions of 90 to 120 minutes duration per week. This advice is contained in "Guidelines for Children in Sport" ASMF 1989. These go on to say that training should be a mixed bag with long distance workouts and strength training using own bodyweight complemented by sessions of stretching and emphases on flexibility and skill. They also say that it should be fun.

Clearly the five sessions will apply to the 12/13 year group working up to 9 sessions for the 16/17 year groups. It would be rare that any crew spent more than 120 minutes on the water in any one session.

The HSOBC Guidelines:

J12s – Novices:

- Primary activity is sculling with emphases on learning basic key concepts of rowing.
- A sculling test and swim test must be done in order to row.
- Secondary activities include running, stretching, swimming and fun circuit work.
- Ergo work simply focuses on teaching athletes about technique.
- Short pieces may be done to condition Novices for possible ergo regattas and regattas in the summer.
- Core stability and flexibility are primary focuses at this age.

J13s and J14s:

- Primary activity is sculling with emphases on low intensity training in 1x, 2x, 4x (Sculling test must be done and passed in order to start rowing and race at any regattas). A very important part of this is to encourage the kids to be confident in smaller boats thus following the ARA's World Class start guidelines.
- After a period of basic conditioning, training loads increase in respect to that which is required for racing. It is unsafe and unhealthy for girls not to be conditioned for racing, so from December onwards, interval training will occur particularly for J14s.
- Secondary activity in running, stretching, cycling, swimming and for anaerobic activities – fun ball games that require short intensity sprinting with rest periods (interval work).
- A 1000m-ergometer fitness trial may be conducted every 3 weeks (Preferably on the Concept 2 ergometer machine), and the details are encouraged to be recorded for future reference.
- Focus on flexibility and skill.
- Focus on circuit training and core strength.

J15 year - Development:

- Primary activity in sculling with an introduction to sweep oar rowing on both sides of the boat. They may compete in sweep or sculling events.
- Secondary activity on progressive resistance and endurance training.
- Cross training activity to form an integral part of the weekly schedule.
- Still a focus on core strength (stomach and lower back).
- A 2000m-ergometer fitness trial must be conducted every 2/3 weeks (Preferably on the Concept 2 ergometer machine), and the details must be recorded for future reference.
- Flexibility tests and conditioning.
- Organic and muscular-skeletal screening to identify problems that may be adversely affected by continued participation in sculling/rowing development programs (especially with regard to early identification of possible back problems).
- Girls only get the opportunity to race if they have been attending sessions.

J16 year – Development / Senior:

- Strength and conditioning programs are an essential part of the training plan.
- Continued sessions of sculling and cross training to be part of the training plan.
- Advice on health maintenance, personal care and nutrition to be available to all rowers.
- Advanced race preparation and skills for the following year need to be stressed, as this age group will be the "feeder" for the first team.
- Still a focus on core strength (stomach and lower back).
- A 2000m-ergometer test may be conducted every +2/3 weeks (Preferably on the Concept 2 ergometer machine), and these recorded for future reference.
- Flexibility tests and conditioning.
- Sweep oar rowing with emphases on both sides of the boat for those athletes at an appropriate stage of physical development and who have completed the sculling apprenticeship.

Open age group - Seniors:

- Sweep oar rowing may now be the primary activity for those having completed the sculling apprenticeship and at the appropriate stage of physical development.
- Strength and conditioning programs are an essential part of the training program.
- A 2000m-ergometer test may be conducted every +3 weeks (Preferably on the Concept 2 ergometer machine), and these recorded for future reference.
- Continuing education on health maintenance and nutrition to be provided.
- Rowers who are enthusiastic for future prospects should be guided into clubs or Universities that would suit their development both educationally (Degree etc) and in terms of rowing (if they wish to continue after school).

General

It is not possible to provide guidelines that cover every individual case and it is expected that these are read with common sense. If there is a problem coaches are expected to consult those who are specialised (in the case of a diabetic for example).

Coaches must also respect ones health and may not allow a student to row or compete with having the knowledge that the student has flu or other such illness that could result in permanent damage or extreme discomfort. This also applies to the ARA guidelines in the case of sever temperatures and inappropriate dress.

Further Reading:

It is suggested that coaches attain a formal qualification (Certification form the ARA) in rowing coaching. Suggested readings can be found in the following books:

Redgrave, S. Complete Book of Rowing, Partridge Press, London 1995. See chapter 11 for a discussion on rowing injuries and steps rowers should take to treat them.

Draper, J.A. Growth, Development and the Junior Athlete published in "Better Coaching - Advanced coaches manual" Pyke, F.S. Australian Coaching Council.

Reference:

Webb, B (1997) NSW Rowing Commission. Australia.

<http://www.rowingnsw.asn.au/handbook.shtml>