

Niskayuna Rowing
Participation Protocols
Participation, Safety, Success

Crew is a challenging and rewarding sport that requires teamwork, discipline, timing, strength, fitness, and speed. Niskayuna Rowing offers a broad-based program with a storied history of success at the local, state and national levels. Our graduates have gone on to race at many prestigious colleges and universities and won the NCAA Championships. We offer opportunities for athletes at the modified, freshmen, junior varsity and varsity levels. We invite NCSD athletes in grades 7-12 to join our program. Niskayuna Rowing is committed to maintaining a non-discriminatory and inclusive environment for student athletes. No experience is necessary--only a willingness to work hard and a positive attitude. We follow the principles of interscholastic athletics promoted by the NCSD athletic department. The rewards of athletic participation are many including camaraderie, confidence, physical fitness, time management skills, and the ability to face new challenges. While success is often measured by races won, the development of the individual and the ability to afford opportunities for the student athlete to fulfill their potential are also of considerable value.

Rowing is similar to track in its calendar. During the fall season, we race over long distances (3000-5000m); in the winter we train indoors, racing on ergometers; and in the spring we have sprint races of 1500m. During the summer, we offer a club program with options from Learn-to-Row to elite level racing.

Athletes are welcome to join in any season; however, new athletes do best when they join the program in the summer or winter.

To participate in our rowing program, all athletes must fill out an Athletic (gray) Card and have a current physical on file with the nurse's office. All new rowers are required to pass a swim test which includes swimming 150 yards, treading water for 10 minutes and donning a life jacket while treading water.

Our intention is to accept as many athletes into our program as our resources allow. We prefer not to make cuts. The first week of each season will be considered an assessment period. Athletes will participate in a tryout (regardless of number of athletes) to determine training groups. This tryout will include fitness, strength, speed, agility, and rowing components. The coaching staff will observe and evaluate all athletes. At the end of this assessment period, the Head Coaches will meet with each athlete and let them know which initial training group they have been assigned to. Participation in one season does not automatically guarantee an athlete a place in the same training group the next season. Training groups are based on skill level and boat speed, not age. Coaches reserve the right to place athletes at practice and/or events at the most appropriate skill level as determined by the coaches, which can include placing high school students in boats with middle school students during practice. This structure promotes safety on the water and a competitive training environment, and conforms to the NYSPPHA Athlete Placement Process.

Should we find ourselves in the unlikely situation where we have more athletes than we have resources to safely accommodate, we reserve the right to make cuts. Any cuts will be made by consensus of both Head Coaches. The Head Coaches will meet privately with those athletes and their parents to explain what areas the athlete needs to improve in. All athletes who are cut are encouraged to join Learn-to-Row the following summer. Any athlete who does not make the team, or chooses not to continue after initial training groups are announced, will be offered a full refund.

Safety is paramount. All sports involve a certain level of risk, but the risks are greater for rowing. All new athletes are required to attend the safety presentation before going on the water, and all returning athletes will review safety procedures at the beginning of each new season. All athletes are expected to be familiar with safe rowing practices and adhere to them at all times. This includes general awareness of the conditions and strict attention to directions. Should an athlete behave in an unsafe manner, or create an unsafe situation by direct or indirect action, that athlete will be given a warning by their coach. Should any unsafe behavior continue, or an athlete jeopardize the safety of himself or others, the head coaches will meet with that athlete and his/her parents to address the issue. Athletes who pose a risk to themselves or jeopardize the safety of others, on the water or at the boathouse, may be asked to leave the program. After consultation with the Head Coach and Athletic Director, the final decision regarding continued participation rests with the Program Director.

Athletes are expected to attend all scheduled practices, which may include Saturdays. Missing practices will affect placement. There may be times when an athlete rides in the coach's launch during practice. This can provide an important learning opportunity, but should not occur on consecutive days unless an athlete is injured. Because our water time is so limited in the spring, athletes at the varsity and junior varsity level are expected to practice over spring break. (**Note that in 2016 we will be racing during spring break.) Missing these practices (traditionally double sessions) will have an impact on boat placement. Modified athletes are encouraged, but not required, to practice (once a day) during this week as well.

Racing: Different regattas use different classification systems for entries. Athletes will be entered into events appropriate to their skill level. While we strive to get everyone a race, not every athlete will race at every regatta.

Boatings (line-ups and classifications--8+, 4x, etc) are strictly the responsibility of the Head Coach. The Program director will review entries to ensure that they conform to protocols.

Rowing is an outdoor sport. As such, we are often at the mercy of the weather. High winds, thunder and lightning, and flooding are just a few of the situations which may keep us off the river. Athletes should be prepared to work out on land at any time. Regattas may be postponed or cancelled due to unsafe conditions. We have no control over this. There are no refunds or make-ups when events are cancelled due to weather.

All athletes, parents and coaches are expected to adhere to their respective codes of conduct as outlined in the NCSD Student Athlete Handbook and Coaches Handbook. Any violation of these codes of conduct will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Niskayuna Rowing is committed to applying the protocols defined in this document uniformly to all rowers at all levels. Should an athlete have a question or concern about their situation, the following protocol should be followed in this order:

1. Athlete requests a meeting with their coach
2. Athlete's parent requests a meeting with their child's coach
3. Athlete and/or parent requests a meeting with the Program director
4. Athlete and/or parent requests a meeting with the Athletic director

Rowing is a great sport which allows athletes to challenge themselves and grow in many different ways. We look forward to creating a positive experience for our athletes of all levels and finding success on the racecourse.

Welcome to Niskayuna Rowing.

Be a Warrior!

I have read the Participation Protocols for Niskayuna Rowing and agree to abide by these guidelines.

Athlete's Signature

Date

Parent's Signature

Date