

A stylized black icon of a person rowing a boat, positioned to the left of the main title. The person is shown in profile, leaning forward, with a single oar dipping into wavy lines representing water.

The Wichita Rowing Association

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*MEMBERSHIP HANDBOOK*

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## Who We Are

The Wichita Rowing Association (WRA) is a non-profit organization and a member of the United States Rowing Association. Our goal is to promote rowing as a means of health and physical development, to encourage sportsmanship, and to develop an interest in rowing through training and/or competition. We are a separate organization from Wichita State Rowing but enjoy a close relationship. WRA admits members of any race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and national or ethnic origin.

## Location

WRA typically rows on the Little Arkansas River through Riverside Park. The formal name of WRA's boathouse is the "Riverside Rowing Center" (RRC), 531 Nims Wichita KS 67203 which is east of the Ralph Wulz Tennis Center compound at 551 Nims.

## Website <https://wichitarowing.org>

On our website, the public can view general information about the organization such as Programs, Events, Regattas, etc. Members have access to additional information by logging in. New members shall log in, create a personal profile, and pay member dues. Please include a profile picture which can be viewed only by other members. You are encouraged to add notes into the "See you on the river" box with information such as when you might be available to row or whether you prefer sculling or sweep. This will help you network and find rowing partners.

## Volunteering

EVERY MEMBER is expected to volunteer time to help sustain the club. In addition to special events like regattas, there is plenty to do on a day-to-day basis. We strive to keep the dues low by counting on each member to carry his or her share of the load. Members must help keep the area in and around the boathouse and our dock neat and clean.

Occasionally, requests are made for volunteers to support activities such as regattas, Learn-to-Row classes, boat/equipment moving, dock assembly or disassembly, facilities maintenance, etc. Members are encouraged to respond promptly and commit to helping when they can. **Many hands make light work!**

## Becoming a Member

### WRA Waiver

All rowers MUST sign a WRA waiver before rowing. The waiver can be found on <https://wichitarowing.org/membership> page. WRA recommends new or returning rowers consult a physician before engaging in rowing.

### USRowing Waiver

WRA is affiliated with USRowing. In addition to our WRA waivers, USRowing waivers are needed if you want to compete in USRowing hosted and sanctioned events. This waiver can be signed at [www.usrowing.org](http://www.usrowing.org) under the Forms & Documents section and requires a small membership fee. The following quote from USRowing is interpreted by the WRA to mean that a member can pass a swimming test that is equivalent to swimming 100 yards, treading water for 5 minutes and donning a life jacket

while in water. *“I understand the nature of Rowing Activities, both on water and land based, and that I am qualified, in good health, and in proper physical condition to participate in such Activity.”*

### Swim Test

WRA requests all rowers (members, guests, students) pass a swim test by a certified lifeguard and provide documentation. In the absence of swim test documentation, the rower must wear a personal flotation device while using WRA club equipment. A form specifying the requirements is available on the <https://wichitarowing.org/membership> page.

### Learn to Row Classes

(See the Programs section for class descriptions.)

Adult Introduction to Rowing - \$30

Adult Learn-to-Row series - \$140

### New Member Skills Assessment

Persons who wish to join the club and row club equipment and/or participate in on-water club sponsored events must possess basic rowing and safety knowledge and skills. These skills may be obtained by successful completion of a WRA Learn-to-Row series or demonstration of skills to a qualified designated club skills assessor or coach. Individuals joining with previous rowing experience may inquire about the skills assessment option by sending an email to: [membership@wichitarowing.org](mailto:membership@wichitarowing.org).

### New Member Orientation

All new members receive a basic orientation which includes a review of the WRA Members Handbook, access to the membership roster, a river map, USGS website for current river conditions, information on WRA governance and practices, and the combination to the boathouse. The membership committee will contact you for orientation when your membership is created via the WRA website.

### Guest Rowing

Guest rowers are allowed to use WRA equipment up to three times free, provided they: (1) are guests of a club member in good standing; (2) sign a WRA waiver before getting into a shell; (3) provide swim test documentation or wear a flotation device; (4) the member who is hosting assumes all responsibility for guest and ensures guest adheres to all club policies; and (5) do not prevent the use of club equipment by another member who wishes to row. Club programs and members have priority over guests. However, we are anxious to share our sport and work to accommodate guests.

## Dues

All members are encouraged to pay dues online through Wichita Rowing's website.

- If dues are increased after joining or renewing, the increase applies to your next renewal date.
- Full year dues are paid annually on the anniversary of a member's join date.
- Monthly dues are paid on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month via automatic recurring payments.
- Junior quarterly dues are paid on Feb 15<sup>th</sup>, May 15<sup>th</sup>, Aug 15<sup>th</sup>, and Nov 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Collegiate quarterly membership is effective on join or renewal date.

Membership types	Definition / Qualification	Period	Dues	Additions (must reside in same household)	Plus each add'l person	Voting rights *
Adult	18 years and older ( <i>excludes high school students</i> )	Year	\$320	Spouse or children over 18 who are no longer in high school	\$160	All adult members
<b>Junior Plus **</b>	Completion of 7 <sup>th</sup> grade / age 14 through end of high school (includes option to add parents and older siblings)					Junior captain and adult rowing members
Monthly	Per month rate	Month	\$35	siblings of any age / parents	\$20 / \$15	
Quarterly	Per quarter rate	Quarter	\$95	siblings of any age / parents	\$60 / \$45	
Annually	Per year rate	Year	\$350	siblings of any age / parents	\$240 / \$160	
New College Graduate ***	Graduating collegiate rowers (requires approval)	First year	Waived	n/a	n/a	No
Collegiate	College rowers on summer break	Quarter	\$95	n/a	n/a	No
Contributive	Annual board approval	Year	N/A	n/a	n/a	Yes
Honorary	Board approval	Lifetime	N/A	n/a	n/a	No

\* Voting rights pertain to electing WRA's Officers and Board of Directors at the annual board meeting. The Board conducts the day to day business of WRA. Each paid adult member, including paid parent members and paid sibling members who have graduated from high school, may vote.

\*\* If multiple family members want to join and the family includes one or more juniors, use the Junior Plus membership type. This membership type allows one junior plus junior siblings, adult siblings, and parents.

\*\*\* Contact the Treasurer or Membership Committee for approval.

## Programs

### Juniors Program

WRA offers a volunteer-coached program for students between the ages of 14 and 18. Rowing generally lasts from late March until the end of November. Participants are required to attend three to four practices per week during the competition season. Junior rowers compete in several regattas which will include weekend travel to meets in the region. Parents of junior rowers are strongly encouraged to be involved with their children's competitive events and other rowing activities.

### Learn to Row Classes

(See class schedules and details at <https://wichitarowing.org/learn-to-row>)

Rowing classes are offered for anyone 14 years (or completion of 7<sup>th</sup> grade) and older. One-session, two-session and five-session classes are typically offered from late March through August.

No learn-to-row classes may be held for fees without approval by the Board and remittance of equipment fee to club treasurer. Only sanctioned or sponsored club activities are covered by WRA liability insurance. No member may use club resources, club name or assets for personal gain without the expressed consent of the board.

### Adult Introduction to Rowing

This is a single 3-hour session to give interested people a brief overview of what rowing is all about. Participants are given a tour of the facility; familiarized with different types of shells; receive instruction on the erg; dock-rowing; and take a ride in a double with a WRA member.

### Adult Learn to Row Class Series

This is a series of five sessions in which the student will build upon the content of the "Introduction to Rowing" class to become a competent novice singles rower. Beginning with instruction in a doubles shell, the student will progress to dock-rowing in a single to gain confidence and proficiency before rowing solo, with the coach and volunteer WRA members close at hand. In addition to rowing skills, other important topics are covered such as safety, rowing terminology, boat care, river rules and rowing etiquette. Following successful completion of the Learn-to-Row series, students are eligible to apply for WRA membership. Graduates usually enter WRA as Level II, Recreational rowers.

### Juniors Introduction to Rowing

In two 2-hour sessions, students between the ages of 14 and 18 are introduced to rowing skills, safety, rowing terminology, boat care, and rowing etiquette. WRA Junior rowers are on hand to help. Following the completion of the class, students are eligible to register as a member of WRA and participate in the Juniors rowing program.

### Adult Recreational Rowing

WRA welcomes those who want to row for health and recreation, not necessarily for competition. All members in good standing have access to the RRC and equipment any time it's safe to row. Members are encouraged to develop a cadre of other rowers with similar schedules so they can help carry boats, etc. The on-line roster helps members connect with each other.

## Masters Rowing (Competitive Adults)

Experienced adult rowers who enjoy competing will find others who are similarly focused. WRA members travel throughout the Midwest and beyond to compete in regattas. Members who are using WRA equipment for training must be considerate of the needs of all rowers when scheduling their practice times. Competitive rowers who use WRA equipment for off-site regattas must make arrangements in advance with the Equipment Committee chairperson. While competing, WRA members are covered by club liability insurance as long as they are following the rules of the regatta and WRA.

## Additional Coaching

Additional paid coaching may be obtained by special arrangement for programs or individual members. In the case of teams or programs, the special coaching fees are split amongst the participants.

## Skill Levels for Rowers, Coxswains, and Shells

There are four levels of rowers and equipment. Guidelines for rowing skills required to “level up” are presented later in this handbook. Assignment of specific shells to each of these categories is the responsibility of the Equipment Chairman. A full list of the shells in the WRA inventory and their assigned levels are shown later in this handbook.

## Skills Assessment

The following are guidelines to help rowers know when to move to a more challenging shell or what constitutes safe rowing alone. Rowers new to the club that have rowing experience will be checked out by a Skills Assessor. All shells are classified into Levels II, III or IV as shown in the inventory table. Before rowing solo in a single, members must be approved to the appropriate level by a Skills Assessor designated by the Board. A list of Skills Assessors is posted at the RRC.

## Skill Levels of Rowers

**Level I (Novice).** In general, the Level I Novice group includes wherries and other shells that relatively inexperienced rowers may use safely. We have no Level I boats in the WRA inventory.

**Level II (Recreational).** Level II recreational shells include the Maas Aero’s. (Graduates of WRA Learn-To-Row classes are typically considered Level II Recreational rowers.)

**Level III (Experienced).** Level III shells include the Maas 24’s.

**Level IV (Advanced).** Level IV shells include the most competitive shells WRA owns. They may be used by those WRA members most experienced in rowing, shell safety and shell handling as approved by designated Skills Assessors (a list is posted at the RRC).

## Basic Beginner Single Rowing Skills

- On water skills
  - Can do backing strokes
  - Can turn shell around even with wind blowing rower into shoreline
  - Can slow down quickly or pick up speed if needed to get out of harms’ way
  - Can launch and dock safely and efficiently
- On land skills



- Handles shell properly and carries it safely, usually with assistance
- Correctly places oars in riggers
- Correctly gets into shell
- Correctly checks shell before rowing
- Water knowledge
  - Knows river – bridges, shoreline hazards, sand bars
  - Checks weather and river current websites to determine conditions of safe rowing
  - Knows limits of ability and based on conditions will move to a safer shell or limit how far to row
- In-case-of-trouble knowledge
  - Is comfortable with probability of flipping shell, getting self and shell safely to shore, and back to the WRA dock if possible
  - The solo rower should take fewer risks and more precautions

### Rowers Upgrading to a Higher Shell Level

#### From Level I to II

- Graduates of WRA Learn-to-Row are typically considered Level II
- Has rowed 60,000 meters as demonstrated by logbook entries
- Has the basic “On Water” and “On Land” skills mentioned above

#### From Level II to III

- Level II plus the following
- Has rowed 150,000 meters as demonstrated by logbook entries
- Can demonstrate technical maneuvers, such as arms only rowing, legs only rowing, and racing starts
- Can stop a shell quickly and effectively

#### From Level III to IV

- Level III plus the following
- Has rowed 500,000 meters (250,000 meters of that solo) as demonstrated by logbook entries
- Has a great shell sense
- Can easily row side by side with other shells with good navigation

## Shell Inventory & Levels

Type	Boat Name	Skill Level <sup>1</sup>	Bowling Req	Coxing level	Weight Class	Weight Range
Singles	2A	2	N/A	N/A	Heavy	< 240 lbs
	2B	2	N/A	N/A	Heavy	< 240 lbs
	2E	2	N/A	N/A	Heavy	< 240 lbs
	2D	2	N/A	N/A	Heavy	< 240 lbs
	3A	3	N/A	N/A	Heavy	< 240 lbs
	3B	3	N/A	N/A	Heavy	< 240 lbs
	3C	3	N/A	N/A	Heavy	< 240 lbs
	4A	4	N/A	N/A	Light	< 140 lbs
	Jet	4	N/A	N/A	Mid	< 195 lbs
	Shannon Lee	4	N/A	N/A	Mid	< 195 lbs
	Lizzy	4	N/A	N/A	Heavy	< 230 lbs
Doubles	Mass	3	B	N/A	Heavy	< 480lbs combined
	Vespoli	4	A	N/A	Light	<390 lbs combined
	Pfeifer	3	B	N/A	Heavy	< 480 lbs Combined
	Sailfish	4	A	N/A	Mid	< 255 lbs combined
Quad	Audacious	4	A	N/A	Light / Mid	< 710 lbs combined
	Heron	3	B	N/A	Heavy	< 950 lbs combined
Fours	Alumni	-	N/A	-	Heavy	
	Wadsworth	3	N/A	B	Mid / light	
	Billony	3	N/A	B	Heavy	
8+	WSU 8	3	N/A	A	Mid / Heavy	
<p>Note 1: Skill level for multi boat person boats: Level should be based on the cumulative skill sets of people in boat and activity. (example: level 4 bow and level 2 for LTR Activity can take a level 4 boat)</p> <p>Note 2: Bowling Skill set: All bows should be Level 4 A = Lots of rowing experience and bowling experience -&gt; comfortable to bow at full speed; B = Early bow experience -&gt; not comfortable with full speed.</p> <p>Note 3: Coxing skill set: A = Has experienced several times coxing 4+ and comfortable with coxing 8+ B = Early experience learning steering methods and crew commands [B can perform as A if experienced crew or coaching support]</p>						

## Coxswains Upgrading to a Higher Shell Level

### Level I Coxswains

- Novice provided initial cox instruction by coach

### From Level I to Level II Coxswains

- Under guidance of coach
- Knows hazards of the river and can navigate easily
- Knows what to do in case of emergency
- Demonstrates good safety skills

- Knows commands for getting shell to/from river, launching, and docking
- Can safely and correctly execute weigh-enough, hold-down and other basic commands on water

#### From Level II to Level III Coxswains

- Under guidance of coach
- Is fluent with coxing commands
- Has a good repertoire of coxing drills
- Has basic knowledge of rowing workouts and use of spm
- Is interested in coxing a race (but this is not a necessity)
- Is working on successful coxing side by side with other shells

#### From Level III to Level IV Coxswains

- Can take a crew out without a coach and provide a meaningful workout practice and race
- Knows drills and when each drill is appropriate to use
- Is interested in motivating and personally encouraging each rower in shell
- Can easily cox side by side with other shells (coxed or blind) and is working towards race steering skills even if never wishes to cox races

**Note:** All rowers and coxswains regardless of Level are always encouraged to continue to improve skills and seek to help others improve theirs.

### Bow Rower and Coxswain Responsibilities

Concern for the safety of WRA members is the primary purpose of the cox/bow list. In multi-rower sculling and some sweep shells, the rower in bow seat is responsible for navigation. Therefore, bow rowers and coxswains must have a solid knowledge of and comfort level negotiating the various hazards of the river. To ensure this, all rowers must obtain permission to bow or cox club shells. Occupying a position on the bow/cox list entitles a rower to sign multi-seat shells out to row when they are unsupervised by a coach. This individual thereby accepts full responsibility for the condition of the shell and safety of the crew while the shell is signed out. Membership in the WRA does not confer a place on the cox/bow list. Only a skills assessor, safety chairman or a coach may add a person to the cox/bow list or change an individual's place on the list. The head coach of each program typically maintains a cox/bow list that identifies which rowers are recommended to bow or cox a particular type and level of shell, and the skills assessor approves the recommendations.

## What to Know Before Going to the River

### Good Sense Recommendations

- If rowing alone, let family or friends know when to expect you back.
- On warm days make sure you have drinking water with you in the boat.
- Err on the side of safety. You may be able to easily handle a racing single in calm waters but have never rowed a racing single in chop or fast river currents. Take a more stable shell until you know your ability in adverse conditions.
- Consider carrying a waterproof container with you for a cell phone and small wrench for bolts.

- Watch the US Rowing Safety Video, “Ready All Row,” at least one time, if not every year. Those coaching others are highly recommended to watch this each coaching year and to also consult the Coach Section of the Video. A copy of the Video is stored at the RRC.
- Rowers in organized, scheduled programs should notify their respective program coach and coxswains if they have any medical condition that could impair their ability to row or that requires special attention. Inhalers, sugar packets or other medical necessities should be taken in the shell and located next to the rower (not with the coxswain).

### Flowrate Policy for the Little Arkansas River

Members are responsible for checking the USGS Valley Center gauging station’s flowrate (water speed measured in cubic feet per second) and adhering to WRA’s guidelines. The USGS website for the Little Ark is: [https://waterdata.usgs.gov/ks/nwis/uv/?site\\_no=07144200&PARAMeter\\_cd=00065,00060](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/ks/nwis/uv/?site_no=07144200&PARAMeter_cd=00065,00060)

Valley Center’s gauging station is about 17 miles upstream from the WRA’s dock. ***Rains in the Wichita area are below the gauging station and can increase the flowrate considerably in our section of the Little Arkansas River. Rowers should take this into consideration when deciding to row.***

Any change in flowrate can transport debris from the size of small sticks to telephone poles. In early spring, more debris are likely than later in the season and usually debris are greater before the crest than after. Debris of any size can pose a significant hazard to all rowing shells. ***When in doubt, do not go out!***

When the flowrate is high, use more caution around constrictions, such as bridges, and keep more distance than the usual 150 feet from the dam. Remember, using a lower level and/or multiple person boat provides more stability and is safer.

Use the following guidelines for flowrate as measured by cubic feet per second (cfs) *as long as debris do not pose a risk to shells.*

#### Little Arkansas River Policy

Flowrate (cfs)	Rower Level	Shell Type	Comments
Under 500	All	All	
500 to 1,000	III and IV	All	No Learn to Row classes
1,000 to 1,500	III	No singles	24 hours after the crest
	IV	All	
1,500 to 2,000	IV	No singles	Consider using a lower level boat
2,000 to 2,500	IV	No singles or doubles	Use extreme caution
Over 2,500	None	None	No WRA boats on the river

Owners of private equipment are strongly encouraged to follow these same guidelines.

### Cold Water Policy

When cold-water rowing conditions exist (**water temperature** below 55 degrees F) club equipment will only be used as described herein. The USRowing website states a common cold-weather policy is that crews can launch if the water and air temperatures combined add up to more than 90 degrees Fahrenheit. To understand the danger of frigid water review the table below from the USRowing website giving elapsed time to total exhaustion or unconsciousness in cold water.

<b>Water Temperature</b>	<b>Exhaustion or Unconsciousness</b>
Under 32 degrees F	Under 15 minutes
32.4 – 40 degrees F	15-30 minutes
40 – 50 degrees F	30-60 minutes
50 – 60 degrees F	1 – 2 hours

- When the water temperature is below 45 degrees, all club-owned shells must be accompanied by a launch and must remain within 500 meters of that launch. The shells must be signed out in the logbook, listing the name of the launch driver who is accompanying those shells.
- When the water temperature is between 45 and 55 degrees, club-owned shells must stay in groups of two or more and must remain within 250 meters of all other shells in their group. The shells must be signed out in the logbook, listing all other shells in the group.
- Owners of private equipment are strongly encouraged to follow these guidelines and are expected to make responsible and mature decisions in an effort to promote safe and responsible rowing for all club members.
- Under no circumstances should WRA-owned equipment be rowed when ice is present anywhere on the river. Shards of ice can cause damage.

These guidelines establish a minimum safety standard. All rowers are encouraged to use extreme caution in any conditions that pose a risk of hypothermia. This policy is usually only necessary from late fall to early spring.

### Lightning Policy

NEVER launch a shell if you see lightning! According to US Rowing guidelines, rowers must wait to launch 30 minutes after lightning has been sighted and no new lightning bolts have been seen. If lightning is sighted while you are already on the water, you must return to the WRA dock IMMEDIATELY and wait for conditions to clear.

### Lowlight Policy

WRA recommends all shells rowing after official sunset or before official sunrise display lights that are visible from at least one mile; a red flashing light facing the bow and a white light facing the stern. In addition, all club-owned shells that are rowing more than thirty minutes before official sunrise or more than thirty minutes after official sunset must be accompanied by a launch, unless specifically exempted by the Board. The shells must be signed out in the logbook, listing the name of the launch driver who is accompanying those shells. Owners of private equipment are strongly encouraged to follow these guidelines and are expected to make responsible and mature decisions in an effort to promote safe and responsible rowing for all club members. These guidelines establish a minimum safety standard. All rowers are encouraged to use extreme caution in low-light conditions, including those that exist due to weather conditions.

### Other Adverse Conditions

Under certain adverse conditions, you should decide against going out on the water. These include excessive heat and humidity, high wind, downpour, horizontal rain, rough water (especially when marked by whitecaps), strong current, excessive debris, or ominous weather. Not only do these conditions make rowing dangerous, but incredibly frustrating and not much fun.

## Calling 911

If you call 911 from the RRC, the street address is 551 Nims, Wichita KS 67203. Tell dispatch this is adjacent to the tennis bubble at the Riverside Ralph Wulz Tennis Center. Also, let dispatch know whether you are at the RRC or down at the dock. If you have assistance, assign one person to stand out on the road to meet EMS and direct them to the injured.

If you carry a cell phone while you row, be sure to learn the bridge names and river landmarks well, so you can describe where EMS should meet you.

## What to Know Preparing to Row

### Selecting a Shell

All rowers must abide by the Shell Use/Skills Policy contained in this handbook.

There is no reservation system for shells. Members will usually find a shell available, especially if they are flexible about which boat they want to row. Be aware that Level II Aero's will be busy during Learn-to-Row classes. Level III and IV shells will be busy during Juniors' practice (Tues night, Thurs night and Sat morning). Please be courteous in working to accommodate the needs of fellow rowers.

### Rowing Log

Before taking any shell out, either a club shell or your own private shell, you **MUST** sign out in the logbook. This holds true whether the shell is being removed from the RRC for a row, to go to a regatta, or to be sent away for repairs. When signing the logbook, write the date, time, and names of all rowers in the shell. The information matters, so please try to make it legible. When you come back from rowing it is **VERY IMPORTANT** to sign in with the time you returned and to log your approximate meters rowed. Failure to do so may result in a search party trolling the river for a missing rower. The logbook also provides information that helps us demonstrate WRA's presence and appreciation of the park and river.

### Carrying Shells

Before you attempt to pick up and move a shell, make sure you have the appropriate slings set up for the shell outside the RRC. Check that you are using WRA slings, not personal slings (they are labeled). Use caution when removing shells from the racks, as they are stored in rather tight confines. In particular, be careful not to scrape your shell or an adjacent one with riggers. Be sure to confer with a more experienced rower or your coach if you are unsure as to how to maneuver a shell from its storage space. Above all, don't be afraid to ask for help, even if you merely need a spotter to watch and make certain that the procedure goes smoothly. Rowers should never attempt to carry a fully rigged shell with less than the number of rowers the shell holds (i.e.: eight people carry an eight, four people carry a four or quad, etc.). If you are uncertain about how to properly carry any shell, ask for assistance. Rowers are always happy to help, as this assistance is routine and benefits the whole club.

### Pre-Row Equipment Safety Check

At times, particular shells need repairs. These shells will be marked with a "Do Not Row" sticker or tag. It should go without saying, but do not row a shell with a "Do Not Row" warning affixed to it.

Even without the tag, some shells need maintenance. Before hitting the water, rowers should check for rough-gliding seats, incorrect rigging, loose screws/nuts and loose foot stretchers. If any piece of

equipment is questionable and you are unsure of its safety, choose another shell and note the equipment problem in the logbook.

### Adjusting Rigging

If you had to re-rig a shell in order to row it, you must return the rigging to the state it was in before you used the shell. The foot stretchers are the one thing on the shell that don't need re-setting after each row.

### Coach Launches

The rowers in each program are responsible for bringing down and putting away their own coach's launch. The coaches are responsible for making sure the gas tanks are full for the coaching launches. Gas expenses will be reimbursed by the club Treasurer. Our older outboard motor is a two-stroke motor and the newer motor is a four stroke; **be sure you add the appropriate amount of two-cycle oil to the gas for the two-stroke only – it's marked on side of the motor.** Do not leave unmixed gas at the RRC unless it is a clearly marked as such; accidental use of gas without two cycle oil will cause serious engine damage.

## What to Know on the Water

### Launching and Docking

Always push off and come into the dock with your bow pointing upriver. If you plan to row upriver first, quickly row clear of the dock after pushing off and proceed. If you plan to row down river first, launch with your bow pointing upriver, then row away from the dock into the middle of the river and turn around. When docking or preparing to launch be very aware of other shells that are coming in or going out. At times, it's preferable to wait for a smaller shell to land and get off the water, rather than making it wait for an entire four or eight to load, tie in, and launch. Certain times of the day feature more rowing traffic than others, especially early morning on weekends and after work during the week. Pay attention to what's going on, both on and off the water, and be respectful of others needing to move more quickly or slowly than you.

### Traffic Patterns

Shells should be rowed up river, into the current, when launching and returning to the dock. No matter how the river turns, the bank will always be over your left shoulder. Shells should never proceed on the wrong side of the river unless directed to do so by a coach or race official, or under emergency circumstances. Do not row down the middle of the river. Leave a buffer zone between yourself and the opposing traffic. Shells should never stop in the water positioned perpendicular to the shore. When stopped for any reason, shells must maintain an orientation parallel to shore. All rowers are to be attentive to faster moving shells and make way for them to pass. Usually, the faster boat will take the line closer to the middle of the river.

### Wakes and Waves

The US Rowing video provides a good visual demonstration of how to handle wakes. It is important to know that a wake can break a shell in half, swamp or flip a shell. Therefore, treat wakes with caution.

- If the approaching wakes are higher than the gunwale, the shell should be turned parallel to the wake to avoid having parts of the shell unsupported by the water. This could break the shell.



Rower(s) should stop rowing and lean away from the approaching wake, with oar handle(s) on the wake side lifted slightly.

- If wakes are lower than the gunwale and widely spaced, continue to row without a course adjustment. Closely spaced wakes that are lower than the gunwale may be taken at a 90-degree angle with the bow directly toward them.
- Turning in waves is tricky; allow plenty of room, energy and time.

### Running Aground

- If a shell runs aground on sandbar/shore, stop rowing immediately. Rowers in cox'd boats, follow coxswain or bow's command.
- After assessing for possible shell damage, the coxswain or bow should try backing out if the shell is not too far up on a sandbar. If the shell remains stuck on the sandbar and the rowers are unable to back off it, the coxswain or bow should have the rowers get out in pairs until the shell becomes light enough to push off the sandbar.
- Once back on land, the hull of the shell should be carefully checked for damage.

### Swamped Shell

- A shell is swamped when the interior water reaches the gunwales. If rowers stay in the shell, the floatation at bow and stern may cause the shell to break apart.
- If rescue is imminent, the coxswain or bow should direct the rowers to untie from shoes, signal a launch and unload rowers by pairs - starting in the middle of the shell - as soon as possible in order to avoid damage to the shell.
- If rescue is not imminent, take the following steps after all rowers are out of the boat:
  - Remove oars or place them parallel to the shell
  - All persons should move to the two ends of the shell (it is dangerous to roll a shell when rowers are near riggers)
  - Then roll the shell to form a more stable floatation platform so rowers can either lie on top of the hull or buddies can hold onto each other across the hull and swim the hull to shore.

### Things to Watch Out for on the River

- **Bridges**—Never turn a shell around near, under or immediately upriver of a bridge. The current can push a turning shell right into a bridge piling, so make sure you are far enough away or down river of a bridge before turning.
- **Sandbars**—Sandbars and mudbars tend to occur in predictable locations. Row cautiously until you know where they are located. Although these are generally not a problem, when the water level is especially low you may need to row closer to the middle of the river.
- **Debris**—Pop bottles, plastic bags, and styrofoam cups pose few problems; but logs and branches of varying size can cause considerable damage. They sometimes float just *under* the surface of the water, so single rowers, bows and coxswains need to pay considerable attention to spotting them and steering clear. Debris tends to be worse in the spring and after it rains.
- **Deadheads**—Deadheads are what happens when a free-floating log becomes mired in the riverbed, usually with one end pointing up toward (and sometimes through) the surface of the water. These can be very difficult to see and extremely damaging to shells. They can also occur



almost anywhere in the river, near shore or smack in the middle of the channel. Bows and coxswains, again, need to watch closely for them.

- **Other Watercraft**—We share the river with kayaks, canoes and paddle-boarders (plus motorboats and jet skis on the Big Ark). These watercraft do not necessarily follow any traffic pattern. Remember that they row frontwards and don't have any concept of how limited your field of view might be. Legally, motorboats and jet skis are required to have a permit to be on the Arkansas River. They should slow down when approaching a shell, but this doesn't always happen. Stop rowing if necessary to wait for motorized watercraft and the ensuing wake to go by. When you encounter others be courteous ambassadors for WRA. Public use of the rivers is ultimately a plus for groups such as ours.
- **Dams**—On the Little Ark there is an orange log boom and dam near Seneca Street. Stay back at least 150 feet from these obstructions when water is calm and further when the river is flowing fast. On the Big Ark there is a large dam at Lincoln Street.

### Flipping a Shell

In shells with shoes, BE CAREFUL to NEVER TIE YOUR SHOES TOO TIGHT. Also, make sure that the heels of your shoes are tied to the foot stretchers. In the event of a flipped shell, you need to be able to get your feet free quickly. If you should flip or fall out of your shell, remain calm and STAY WITH THE SHELL. It will float. Wait for the launch to arrive or try to kick your way to shore and get back in the shell there. In the case of singles, ask an experienced rower or coach for additional techniques for getting back into a flipped single.

## What to Know after the Row

### Caring for Equipment Post-Row

After rowing, all club shells must be wiped down with a towel before being put back on racks. Clean the shell thoroughly, including the riggers, seat tracks and (if present) the little lip where the upper deck meets the lower hull. Water in spray bottles and towels are available for this purpose.

### Placing Shells on Racks

Before bringing any shell back into the RRC, make sure that the correct end of the shell will be going in first. By convention the stern goes in first and the end with the bow ball faces out, with few exceptions. Take as much care in replacing shells on the racks as you did removing them, especially with tired arms.

### Bringing in Slings

If you know there are other shells still on the water when you come in, it is OK to leave some slings out. However, if you know there aren't any other shells still out, please bring in all remaining slings even if you didn't set them out yourself. Check the logbook to determine if there might be shells still out on the water.

### Locking the RRC

Never leave the RRC unattended with the gates unlocked. If no one else is around and you need to make a fast dash to the dock, close the gates in such a manner so that they appear to be locked, and get back quickly. If you are the last one out onto the water be sure to lock the gates. If you are leaving the area and no one is left at the RRC, you are responsible for locking the gates and tugging on the locks to

make sure they will not open. Members are given the lock combinations upon joining and are responsible for keeping this information to themselves.

## Damage to Shells/Equipment

### Reporting Damage

When equipment is damaged – major or minor, on or off the water – the incident must be reported in order to ensure the safety of rowers and prevent further damage to equipment. Enter a note in the logbook. There is white space at the bottom of the log sheet for notes. Identify the shell, the location of the damage, how it was incurred (if known), the date and time that it was observed, and your contact information. If the damage renders the shell unfit to row, you must also mark it with a "Do Not Row" warning tag (available in the sign-out box) to prevent anyone else from taking it out until it's repaired. Ideally, the Equipment committee chair should be informed quickly of damage to any club equipment.

### Damage Resolution

All rowers must be attentive during rowing, docking and shell handling. Members are encouraged to advance their rowing skills, but they must never row a shell rated higher than their own skill level without the concurrence of a designated skill assessor. A list of skill assessors is posted at the RRC.

Accidents can happen even though we take precautions to prevent them. So that members feel comfortable using WRA equipment, the following information is provided regarding the cost of repairs.

- *Routine minor damage:* Minor damage during routine use, such as a broken fin from a submerged log, is covered by membership dues.
- *Minor damage due to negligence:* In the event of minor damage due to negligence, the person(s) responsible may be asked to help perform the repair or provide other services to offset the time or cost required.
- *Major damage due to negligence:* Major damage will be considered on a case by case basis by the WRA board and the member(s) involved. If deemed appropriate, the responsible member(s) may be requested to make a contribution to the Equipment Fund to help offset the cost of major repairs. The cost of repairs is ultimately the responsibility of WRA.

Note: The club insures all equipment for accidents and loss. In the event of a major accident or loss, insurance would pay for costs after the deductible.

## WRA Governance

### Board of Directors

Current board members and their contact information are available to WRA members when they login at <https://wra.wildapricot.org/wra-contacts>.

WRA is run by an unpaid Board of Directors. The by-laws allow for up to 25 board members, but a more typical number is 10. The Board is elected to a term of one year at the annual meeting held after the last regatta of the spring season (typically in June). All individual, family, contributing members and the men's and women's Junior captains in good standing may participate in the election. The newly elected Board of Director's first order of business at the annual meeting is to elect three club officers for President, Treasurer and Secretary. Board meetings are held once a month, with agendas e-mailed to

the board members in advance. At all meetings of the Board of Directors, a majority of the Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of club business. All WRA members are encouraged attend the board meetings and may submit issues in advance to be added to the agenda for discussion at upcoming meetings. Periodically, a summary of Board actions will be disseminated to the membership.

## Officers

See the club by-laws for a more detailed description of each position

- **President:** Chief executive officer of the board of directors; heads board meetings and drafts meeting agendas
- **Secretary:** Custodian of all the records, books, and documents of the club
- **Treasurer:** Custodian of all funds of the club

## Committees

The position of committee chairperson is typically held by a Board member. It is highly encouraged for the general membership to be involved in one or more of the committees. A list of standing committees appears below. Temporary committees are sometimes formed as a need arises. Please be open to the idea of helping out on a committee, even if only in a “learner” capacity.

- **Executive Committee:** Consists of the three officers and the immediate past president – performs routine management of the affairs of the organization during intervals between meetings. All significant actions are to be reported at next board meeting.
- **Nominating Committee:** Responsible for presenting a slate of candidates for election at the annual meeting and filling vacancies as they occur. Appointed by the Board of Directors and shall not serve more than 3 years.
- **Building and Grounds Committee:** Responsible to investigate and report material needs, maintenance and upkeep of building and grounds; organize and direct scheduled work days.
- **Fundraising and Development Committee:** Responsible for guiding the Board of Directors on fundraising activities, developing an annual fundraising goal and plan.
- **Finance and Audit Committee:** Proposes for board approval an annual budget and evaluates annual budget in comparison to previous years.
- **Equipment Committee:** In charge of maintaining and repairing equipment, orients members on proper use of equipment and keeps an updated list of required maintenance materials, parts and may spend up to \$500 without Board approval.
- **Community Programs Committee:** Coordinates recruitment for new WRA members, organizes and operates Learn-to-Row classes.
- **Regatta Committee:** Coordinates all functions for at home regattas.
- **Safety Committee:** Review club safety procedures.

## Fundraising

Members’ annual dues don’t begin to cover WRA’s operating expenses (purchasing boats and equipment, repairs, maintenance, facilities costs, equipment insurance, liability insurance, etc). Our largest fund-raising events are the Frostbite Regatta in November and the Bea Ritchie Memorial Sprints in June. These events are only possible because of the volunteer efforts of the entire membership.

## Regattas

Typical regattas throughout the year attended by WRA members who which to complete:

- WSU Erg Sprints – Wichita, KS (2000 meters) February
- Kansas Open Indoor Rowing Championships – Topeka, KS (2000 meters) February
- Spring Youth Championship – Oklahoma City, OK (2000 meters) April
- Lake Shawnee Spring Classic – Topeka, KS (1000/2000 meter sprint) April
- Prairie Sprints Youth Regatta – various locations (usually Wichita) (1000 meters) April/May
- Great Plains Rowing Championship – Topeka, KS (2000 and 400 meters) May
- **Bea Ritchie Memorial Sprints – Wichita, KS (1000 meter sprints) June**
- Sunflower State Games – Topeka, KS (400 meter sprints) July
- Stars and Stripes Regatta – Oklahoma City, OK (1000 meter sprints) July
- Lake Dillon Challenge – Frisco, CO (10,000 meter head race) August
- U. S Masters Nationals – various locations (1000 meter sprints) August
- Head of the Wolf – Kremmling, CO (5000 meter head) September
- Head of the Des Moines – Des Moines, IA (5000 meters) September
- Head of the Oklahoma – Oklahoma City, OK (4000 meter head race) September/October
- Head of the Charles – Boston, MA (5000 meters) October
- Six Bridges Regatta – North Little Rock, AR (4000 meters) October
- **WRA Frostbite – Wichita, KS (2500 meter head race) November**
- Head of the Hooch – Chattanooga, TN (5000 meters) November

All rowers competing in the regatta sponsored by Wichita Rowing Association must sign a waiver for the specific event.

## Private Shell Storage Policy

Members may rent space for privately owned rowing shells at a rate fixed by the WRA Board. Fees for rack space are due during January/February each year. Space is rented for one-year periods only. Rack fees for private shells are \$75 per seat (i.e.: a single would be \$75; a double would be \$150).

The allotment of rack space is made by the WRA Board. The WRA Board will consider the nature of the equipment being stored, the ease of access, the frequency of use, and the member's support of the club. If a shell is rowed at least six times per year (as reflected in the logbook), the shell owner will be entitled to renew his or her lease for the next year. In special circumstances, the WRA Board may renew a lease if the shell use does not meet the minimum.

Members may store privately owned oars or slings in the RRC without charge, space permitting. Members are urged to store all other equipment (such as boat covers and personal car-top shell racks) offsite, but may in certain circumstances keep such items at the RRC with the express permission of the WRA Board.

The WRA Board will maintain a waiting list of people who wish to rent shell rack space. Waiting list positions are not transferable. As rack space becomes available, the WRA Board will give preference to people who have been on the waiting list the longest. However, other factors may also be considered, such as the number of rack spaces an owner has already rented, the frequency of use of the equipment stored, and the owner's participation in club activities.

Members renting rack space may transfer the space when selling a shell berthed in that space. Notification of any such transfer must be given to the WRA Board.

The WRA Board may terminate any rental agreement for good cause. WRA is not liable for any damage, theft, or personal injury resulting from the placement of private equipment in the RRC or from its use. It is suggested that members storing equipment in the RRC insure it against any loss.