

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 visible. Below the boat are three wavy lines representing water.

The Wichita Rowing Association

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 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.

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 15th of each month via automatic recurring payments.
- Junior quarterly dues are paid on Feb 15th, May 15th, Aug 15th, and Nov 15th.
- 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
Junior Plus **	Completion of 7 th 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

Learn to Row Classes

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

Rowing classes are offered for anyone 14 years and older. One-session and five-session classes are typically offered from June through August. Participants must provide a swim test certificate and sign a waiver. Forms are available on WRA's website.

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.

Learn to Row Class Series

This is a series of five sessions in which the student will become a competent novice single's rower. Beginning with instruction in a double's 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. WRA welcomes all Learn to Row graduates to join WRA and graduates usually enter as a Level II, Recreational Rower.

Junior's Program

WRA offers a coached program for students who have graduated 7th grade through high school, typically aged 13-19. The program aims to teach young rowers the fundamentals of the sport of rowing while also focusing on hard work, commitment, teamwork, and responsibility. Rowers practice 3 days per week and can choose to be on a competitive or recreational team. Competitive rowers compete in 2-3 regional regattas per season and a rower can switch between teams at the beginning of each session. Rowers come from all backgrounds and athletic ability; juniors do not need to be a proven athlete to give rowing a try. Parents are encouraged to volunteer at Junior's events and other WRA activities.

The year is divided into 4 sessions with rowing on the water from mid-March through mid-November. The remainder of the year is spent training on ergs. The sessions are:

- Spring: 02/15 – 05/14
- Summer: 05/15 – 08/14
- Fall: 08/15 – 11/14
- Winter: 11/15 – 02/14

For more information contact the Juniors' coach at junior-crew@wichitarowing.org

Adult Rowing Program

Adult recreational rowing focuses on the health and fitness benefits of rowing, socializing, and forming friendships. WRA welcomes those who want to row just for fun and those who want to compete. Members have access to the boathouse and equipment 7 days a week and can row whenever the weather permits.

All adult rowers are welcome to attend open rowing practices. The practices are a scheduled time to give opportunities to row in larger boats, have help getting on and off the water, gain more experience, and get feedback to improve skills, if desired. The schedule is located on [Wichita Rowing Association - Masters](#). If the times do not fit in your schedule, you can connect with others via the online member roster and during volunteer and other group activities. You can also contact the membership committee at membership@wichitarowing.org for help finding others to row with you.

WRA Masters and Juniors who wish to compete travel to regattas throughout the Midwest and beyond. Masters are rowers who are 19 or older and want to compete. Arrangements to use WRA equipment for regattas must be made in advance with the Equipment Committee chairperson. While competing, WRA members are covered by club liability insurance as long as they follow the rules of WRA and the regatta.

Additional Coaching

Additional paid coaching may be obtained by special arrangement for programs or individual members. Prior approval by the board is required if club equipment/resources will be used.

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 ¹	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: Bowing Skill set: All bows should be Level 4 A = Lots of rowing experience and bowing experience -> comfortable to bow at full speed; B = Early bow experience -> 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

General 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.
- Consider carrying a waterproof container with your cell phone and small wrench for bolts.
- Adverse conditions not covered by specific WRA policies exist that should make you consider against going out on the water. These include:
 - excessive heat and humidity
 - downpour and horizontal rain
 - excessive debris
 - ominous weather

- 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 currents. Row a more stable shell until you know your ability in adverse conditions.
- Watch the US Rowing safety video annually at USRowing.org. Coaching staff should also watch the coaching section annually.
- Rowers in organized, scheduled programs should notify their coach and coxswains of any medical condition that could impair their ability to row or 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

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.

Lightning Policy

- NEVER launch a shell if you see lightning or hear thunder! If you can hear thunder, it means lightning is present.
- Wait 30 minutes after lightning or thunder has stopped before launching.

- If lightning or thunder occurs while you are already on the water, return to the WRA dock IMMEDIATELY, or seek some other safe location such as underneath a bridge if you are far from the dock.

Wind Policy

- Rowing is not recommended when white caps are on the river.
- Carrying a shell is more difficult when it is windy. Ask for assistance, if necessary.
- Wind gusts can blow slings over. On windy days, place slings in areas protected from the wind and check that slings are still standing before carrying the boat from the dock. A shell can be damaged if blown off slings and should never be placed on the ground.

Cold Water Policy

WRA cold water policy is in effect when the water is below 55° F and the water and air temperatures combined add up to more than 90° F. These guidelines establish a minimum safety standard. Rowers are encouraged to use extreme caution in any conditions that pose a risk of hypothermia.

Water temperature for the Little Arkansas can be found on the website for the USGS station near Sedgwick, KS at https://waterdata.usgs.gov/ks/nwis/uv?site_no=375350097262800

When cold rowing conditions exist use the following policy.

Water Temp / Condition	Policy
Water + air temp is less than 90° F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not row a WRA shell. • US Rowing guidance states rowers launch only “if the water and air temperatures combined add up to more than 90° F”.
Ice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not row a WRA shell if ice exists on any part of the river! Even thin ice can damage the fragile hull of a rowing shell.
Less than 45° F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WRA shells must be accompanied by a launch and the launch must remain within 500 meters of the shell. • The rowing log must include the name of the launch driver. • WARNING: Based on guidance from USRowing a rower can develop total exhaustion or unconsciousness within 15 to 30 minutes in water below 45° F.
45° to 55° F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WRA shells must stay in groups of two or more and must remain within 250 meters of other shells in the group.
More than 55° F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No restrictions

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

Lowlight Policy

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. Rowers must provide their own lights.

- WRA recommends all shells rowing before official sunrise or after official sunset display lights that are visible for at least one mile; a red flashing light facing the bow and a white light facing the stern.

- 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 rowing log for the shells must include the name of the launch driver.

What to Know Preparing to Row

Selecting a Shell

- There is no reservation system for shells and members will usually find a shell available. Please be courteous and consider the needs of fellow rowers when selecting a shell.
- Shells with a "Do Not Row" tag or sticker are awaiting repairs and are not available for rowing.
- Review skill and shell levels for information on selecting the right shell for your rowing ability.
- Learn-to-Row classes and Juniors' practices have precedence for shells. Potentially busy times for shells are:
 - Level II Aero's during Learn-to-Row classes
 - Level III and IV shells during Juniors' practice (usually Tues & Thurs evenings and Sat morning)

Rowing Log

Before taking a shell out, either a club or private shell, you **MUST** sign out in the logbook. This holds true whether the shell is being removed from the boathouse 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 or person responsible for the removal of the boat from the boathouse.
- 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. The logbook is a safety measure to ensure no rower is stranded or in trouble on the river.
- The information matters, it is used to understand shell and oar usage, so please make it legible.

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 boathouse.
- 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.).
- Use caution when removing shells from the racks, as they are stored in rather tight confines. Mind the riggers! Be careful not to scrape your or an adjacent shell.
- 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. You can confer with a more experienced rower or your coach if you are unsure as to how to maneuver a shell from its storage space. Rowers are always happy to help, as assistance is routine and benefits the whole club.

Pre-Row Equipment Safety Check

Shells periodically need to be repaired. These shells are marked with a "Do Not Row" sticker or tag and should *not* be rowed!

A shell may have an unidentified issue and therefore it's the responsibility of each rower to check the shell before taking it to the dock. Rowers should check for a missing or loose bow ball, rough-gliding seats, loose screws/nuts, incorrect rigging, 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. Space is provided at the bottom of each sign-out sheet for this purpose. If there is a major problem, such as but not limited to a broken rigger or a missing bow ball, feel free to affix a "Do Not Row" tag to the boat.

Locking the Boathouse

Never leave the boathouse unattended with the doors open or unlocked.

- If you are locking up, check all doors in the boathouse.
- Doors should be locked before you head to the dock unless someone remains at the boathouse.
- If you are the last one going out to row or leaving the area, you are responsible for closing all the doors and insuring they are secure.
- Members are given the lock combination upon joining and are responsible for never sharing this information.
- The combination to the keypad lock is changed periodically. All current adult rowers will be notified of the new combination by email.

Coach Launches

- The rowers in each program are responsible for bringing down and putting away the launch.
- Coaches are responsible for making sure the launches' gas tanks are full.
- Gas expenses will be reimbursed by the club Treasurer.
- **The two-stroke outboard motor requires the addition of two-cycle oil to the gas.** The amount needed is marked on side of the motor. *The four-stroke motors should NOT have oil added to the gas.* IMPORTANT: Accidental use of the wrong type of gas can cause serious engine damage. Clearly mark gas cans and use accordingly.
- Gasoline should be stored in the shipping container, never in the boathouse.

What to Know on the Water

Launching and Docking

Pay attention to dock traffic on and off the water.

- When carrying a shell to the dock, launching, or docking, be aware of other shells and wait your turn.
- Smaller shells can get on/off the water more quickly. There may be times when it is better to let the smaller boat go first.
- Always launch and return to the dock with the bow pointing upriver, into the current. If you plan to row downriver first, you still launch the shell pointing upriver, row away from the dock, row to the middle of the river, and then turn.

Traffic Patterns

Rowing has traffic rules:

- Shells should be rowed upriver, into the current, when launching and returning to the dock.

- No matter how the river turns, the closest bank should always be to your starboard side (rower's left).
- Shells should never proceed on the wrong side of the river unless directed to do so by a coach, 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 perpendicular to the shore. When stopped, shells should be parallel to the shore.
- Pay attention to faster moving shells and allow them to pass. Usually, the slower boat will stay close to shore and the faster boat will pass in the middle of the river.

Things to Watch Out for on the River

- **Bridges**
 - Never turn a shell near, under, or immediately upriver of a bridge.
 - The current can push a turning shell right into a bridge piling.
 - Make sure you are far enough away or down river of a bridge before turning.
- **Dam**
 - When the water is calm, stay at least 600 feet back from the orange log boom and dam near Seneca Street. Six hundred feet is a little before the intersection by the Art Museum.
 - When the river is flowing fast, it is windy, or there are other adverse conditions, stay at least 1000 feet from the log boom and dam, i.e., before you get to the white and gray apartment building.
- **Sandbars**
 - Sandbars usually remain fairly stationary, i.e., in the same general place in the river. Row cautiously until you know where they are located.
 - Be more cautious when the river level is low as sandbars may be closer to the surface.
- **Debris and Deadheads**
 - Bottles, plastic bags, and cups pose few problems; but logs and branches can cause considerable damage.
 - Debris sometimes floats 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 is worse after a big rain, especially before the river has crested.
 - Deadheads happen when a log becomes mired in the riverbed, usually with one end pointing up toward (and sometimes through) the surface of the water and occur anywhere in the river. They can be very difficult to see and extremely damaging to shells. Bows and coxswains need to watch closely for them.
- **Other Watercraft**
 - We share the river with kayaks, canoes, and paddle-boarders and the occasional motorboat.
 - These watercraft frequently do not follow any traffic pattern. Be cautious and courteous when approaching them. They may not understand how limited our view is.

- Motorboats are not allowed on the Little Arkansas River without a permit. They should slow down when approaching a shell, but this doesn't always happen. If necessary, stop rowing and wait for them and their ensuing wake to pass before proceeding.
- When you encounter others, be courteous ambassadors for WRA.

Wakes and Waves

The USRowing video provides a good visual demonstration of how to handle wakes. Wakes can break a shell in half, swamp, or flip a shell. Treat wakes with caution.

- 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 rowing the bow directly toward them.
- 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 which 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.
- Turning in waves is tricky; allow plenty of room, energy, and time to make the turn.

Flipping a Shell

- In the event of a flipped shell you must be able to get your feet free quickly. Therefore, you should always be able to slip your foot out of the shoes without any help from your hands.
 - Never tie the shoes too tight.
 - Make sure the heels of the shoes are fastened to the foot stretchers.
- Remain calm and stay with the shell if you flip; it will float.
- Follow the coxswain or bow directions:
 - They may direct you to swim the boat to the shore or sandbar, or to wait for the launch.
 - If directed to shallow water, follow their instructions on getting back into the shell without causing damage.
- Be cautious when getting back into a flipped single to ensure the shell is not damaged. If you are unsure on how this is done ask a coach or experienced rower, or review the safety video on our website, or videos listed on the message board in the RRC.

Running Aground

- If a shell runs aground, stop rowing immediately.
- Rowers in cox'd boats should follow the coxswain's commands and in non-cox'ed boats follow the bow's commands.
- Shells should be assessed for damage first. If the shell is too compromised to row, the coxswain or bow will direct the rowers to get out in pairs. Depending on the circumstances, the coxswain or bow could have the crew swim the boat to shore, and/or roll the shell, and/or wait for rescue. See Swamped Shell section on the technique of rolling a boat.
- If the shell can still be rowed, the coxswain or bow may try backing off the sandbar/shore with all rowers. If the shell remains stuck after attempting to back off, the coxswain or bow should have the rowers get out in pairs until the shell becomes light enough to push off.
- Once back on land, the hull should be thoroughly checked for damage.

Swamped Shell

A shell is swamped when the interior water reaches the gunwales.

- The coxswain or bow should direct rowers to get out of the shell as soon as possible, starting with the pairs in the middle.
- If rowers stay in the shell, the floatation at bow and stern may cause the shell to break apart.
- If rescue is imminent:
 - Signal the launch to pick up rowers, following instructions from the cox or bow.
- If rescue is not imminent, take the following steps after all rowers are out of the boat as directed by the coxswain or bow:
 - Remove oars or place them parallel to the shell
 - All persons should move to the two ends of the shell so the boat can be rolled without riggers posing a danger to anyone.
 - Use the rolled shell as a floatation platform; 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.

Calling 911

If you need to call 911 from the Riverside Rowing Center, the street address is 531 Nims, Wichita KS 67203 which is adjacent to the tennis bubble at the Riverside Ralph Wulz Tennis Center.

Let dispatch know whether you are at the boathouse 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 party.

Learn the bridge names and river landmarks in case you need to direct EMS to a location on the river.

What to Know after the Row

Caring for Equipment Post-Row

- After rowing, all club shells must be cleaned before being put back on racks.
- Clean the shell thoroughly with a spray bottle and towels, including the riggers, seat tracks and (if present) the little lip where the upper deck meets the lower hull.
- If oars are visibly dirty, they should be cleaned.
- If you changed the rigging for your row, return the rigging to the state it was in before your row. Foot stretchers and spacers are the only exception; they do not need to be reset.
- If any damage or condition issues are discovered while cleaning, make a note at the bottom of the sign-out sheet in the logbook. If the damage makes the boat unsafe to row, attach a "Do Not Row" tag to the boat.

Placing Shells on Racks

- Shells are usually stored with the bow facing the garage doors. However, shells with backward facing riggers are usually stored with the stern facing the doors in order to align the riggers with the other boats.
- Make sure the boat is pointed in the right direction before carrying it in.
- Take as much care placing shells on the racks as you did removing them.

Bringing in Slings

- If other shells are on the water when you come in, leave slings out for them.
- If all shells are in, bring in all remaining slings even if you did not take them out.
- Checking the logbook is a good way to determine if shells are still on the water.

Locking the Boathouse

Never leave the boathouse unattended with the doors open or unlocked and if you are the last one to leave, make sure all doors are closed and secure.

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 wish 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.