

Dear Youth Program Parents,

Welcome to the Miami Rowing Club Youth Program. We are delighted to have you on our team!

This handbook has been prepared as a resource to help parents learn about the Youth Program, its objectives, expectations, requirements, and duties. There is a lot of useful information on how we operate, regattas, communications, administration, etc. Please take some time to review the handbook information and keep it accessible. We look forward to welcoming you and your family to our MRC family!

Go MRC!!!

Sincerely, Youth Program Parent Committee

1. Code of Conduct

As teammates and representatives of Miami Rowing Club (MRC), all athletes are expected to adhere to high standards of behavior at all times. All rowers and their parents are expected to read this handbook and to adhere to the Parent and Rowers agreement that can be found at the end of this document.

2. Practice

Practices are normally held Monday-Friday, 4:30-7:00 PM, and Saturdays 7:30-10:00 AM. During the Fall Season, athletes typically have a weekday off, determined by their team coach. Extra morning practices might be required during Spring Season, especially in preparation for State, Regional and/or National Championship. Saturday practice hours depend on each team coach's decision and can vary one week to another but are usually around the same time.

Athletes must be on time to practices. All athletes are expected to be in proper workout attire and ready to work at the start of practice. Practice is not completed, and athletes cannot leave until they have been dismissed by their coach.

3. Attendance

All Youth Program participants are expected to attend every practice, unless the coach has given authorization otherwise. Coaches will take attendance at the start of each practice session. Regular attendance demonstrates respect for your teammates. A missing crew member disrupts practice for all. Commitment plays a very important role in team unity. An unexcused absence will potentially disqualify a rower from competition. More than 3 unexcused absences may lead to dismissal from the program, without refund.

Please let your coach know that you will miss a practice as soon as you become aware of it. Except for serious and sudden illness or other equally serious mitigating circumstances, this should be done at least a day in advance.

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT SPRING BREAK:

Spring break normally comes at a time when the team is preparing at full steam for the most important part of the Spring Season. A whole week of training lost is not only detrimental to the rower, but it is highly disruptive for the rest of his/her boat. In other words, **there is no Spring Break for us in Rowing!** Practices will continue normally, and all athletes (including Novices) are expected to attend.

4. Attire

Proper attire is required for all practices and regattas. For practice, rowers are required to wear spandex shorts, t-shirts, running sneakers and sun protection. A water bottle is highly recommended to maintain proper hydration and is a MUST at regattas.

For competition, Novice and Varsity athletes are required to wear the official MRC unsuits, available for purchase in our apparel shop (main office) and either a red visor or hat.

Middle School Rowers are required to wear official MRC Spandex short, MRC Navy T-shirt and either a Visor or Hat in Neon Orange color.

For colder race conditions, long sleeve racing shirts designed to be worn under the unsuits are available also from our apparel store (Thermal T-shirts).

Other clothing needs for regattas and practice include warm-up layers, waterproof outerwear, extra socks, extra t-shirts, water-resistant sandals or water shoes, a change of clothes. Always check the weather forecast, but always have extra gear with you. You may spend the best part of an entire day at a regatta, so be prepared with some extra layers and/or changes of clothes.

In addition to the official racing gear, our apparel store has a wide range of items in stock: t-shirts, hoodies, shorts, bags, hats, etc. Our apparel store is always available for ordering in our office. Additionally, we are also open at the Club prior to regattas, parent meetings and other events. Parents, siblings, and supporters are encouraged to wear our official MRC gear (for example t-shirts and/or hats), to show support for the team at regattas. Apparel store located inside MRC office, will be open daily during office hours.

5. Testing

Coaches constantly monitor athlete performance. Tests are administered to help determine seat assignments and monitor each athlete's improvement, on a regular basis during every season. Testing is done both on land and in the boat. A rower is NOT guaranteed ANY seat in ANY boat. They must work hard to earn a seat in a boat, and work even harder to keep the seat that they have earned.

Testing may include ergometer, running, indoor strength, seat racing on the water and evaluation of technique. The aim is to assess a rower's technique, muscular strength, strength on the erg, aerobic endurance, mental discipline, interaction with teammates and the overall skills that affect the ability of a crew to reach its full potential. Athletes who regularly attend practice and work diligently are well prepared for these tests. Some tests are announced, some are not.

All tests are compulsory. In case an athlete is unable to undertake or complete a test, this will be rescheduled, as this is one of the requirements for participation in competition during the season.

At any time, a coach may move a rower up to fill the seat of another rower who constantly misses practice, has an issue with behavior or attitude, or who does not demonstrate commitment to training requirements.

- Swim Test

For safety reasons, all athletes need to demonstrate that they can swim 200 yards without stopping and without touching the bottom of the pool / sea. A swim test will be administered by coaches, usually during the first week of practice.

6. Team Captains

Rowing is the ultimate team sport. It requires tremendous dedication and brings out the best from our young Youth Program participants. Expert and committed coaches invest their heart and soul in getting the most out of each athlete. Athletes that demonstrate leadership qualities can complement a coach's guiding hand, and help rowers become a true team. MRC's Captains and Commodores are, in effect, team leaders that have demonstrated leadership qualities. Captains are expected to:

Actively participate in MRC functions such as Blue Blazer and Awards Banquet

- Help organize and maintain order on road trips to away regattas.
- Facilitate communications (among rowers, and between coaches and rowers and vice versa)
- Organize activities for the Youth Program participants to give back to the community
- Help spread the word regarding the MRC Youth Program to recruit new talent

Based on their leadership qualities, the MRC coaching staff shall reach a consensus to name two team captains, one each for the boys' and girls' team.

Team Captain: The Captain shall serve as team co-leader. The captains are to be selected in the first few weeks of training, preferably by the first competitive regatta, and no later than mid-October.

7. Issue / Conflict Resolution Process

There is a multilayered system in place to facilitate communications between student athletes and their team leaders and coaching staff. Norms have also been established to allow parents to ask questions or

discuss grievances. Student athletes are encouraged to keep lines of communication open between themselves and the assistant and head coaches as well as the team's captains-

Rowers can speak with their coach regarding any issues or questions concerning their performance, lineups, boat placement, behavior, etc. This process can be facilitated by the captains within each team. Most potential issues can be diffused without further escalation within this structure. As parents, we need to take a seat back and promote communication between our rowers and their coaches. However, there may be times, when, after the rower has taken up an issue with the coaching staff, a parent may feel that their intervention is still necessary. In this case, parents must refer their grievance to the Youth Program Director, Head Coach Cesar Herrera - not the team coach, nor MRC employees and volunteers, nor members of the MRC Board of Directors. In all matters referenced in this paragraph, the Youth Program Director has final authority to make decisions.

8. The Rowing Seasons:

Fall Racing

Usually, most of the regattas in the fall are Head Races. These time trial style races are about 3 miles (5K) long. Each division starts boats separately at 10-15 second intervals. Head races are usually conducted on a river with various turns, bridges, buoys, etc. Within each division, results are determined by which crew covers the course in the least amount of time. There are referees throughout the course and time penalties are given for missed buoys, unsportsmanlike conduct, improper passing, or failure to yield.

For our Youth Program, the highlight races of the fall season are the "Head of the Charles," in Boston in mid-October, and the "Head of the Hooch," in Chattanooga, TN, which takes place during the first weekend in November.

Because the club's entries for these two races are restricted to qualified boats and a limited number of accepted petitions, the participation in this regatta is limited to selected rowers. The selection process follows our physical and performance test. The rowers chosen for these regattas are announced as soon as the entries are confirmed, and the selection process ended.

Spring Racing

Spring is the primary season for rowing, From January onwards, we start training for Sprint Races, which are usually 1,500 or 2,000 meters in distance. Usually, there are six or seven boats racing in designated lanes. All boats start at the same time, from a complete stop on the water. The boat that crosses the finish line first is the winner. Spring is the most important part of the year for us and the time when training becomes more intense.

9. Regatta Schedule and Line-ups

A Regatta Schedule is posted in the Team Unify account at the beginning of the year. However, because information is added and/or updated throughout the season, please check your account regularly to be informed as soon as possible of any changes. Regattas are a great opportunity for rowers to test their skills, show off all their hard work, learn to cope with the stress of competition and, above all, have fun!

Line-ups:

Once race line-ups are communicated (usually two weeks in advance, although sometimes this may not be possible), we ask that you trust and respect the coaches' decisions. Please bear in mind that although the goal is to have line-ups set well in advance, there might be changes in the week leading up to the race due to rower's illness, performance, behavior, race organization or other factors.

10. Regatta Protocol

Regatta responsibilities begin on the specified de-rigging day, which is one day prior to the team's departure and do not end until the races are over, and all boats are properly rigged and placed back in the boathouse.

Most of our regattas involve out of town travel. Athletes are normally asked to be at the racecourse and check in with their coach on a Friday afternoon, at a time determined by the coaches. This is necessary for unloading the boats from our trailer, rigging them, and testing them in a final practice before racing on Saturday. This is the responsibility of ALL rowers attending the regatta.

All athletes need to plan on being at the regatta until the trailer is completely loaded and ready to leave at the end of the regatta, unless told otherwise by a coach.

Dress appropriately for regatta weather conditions. Make sure to check weather forecasts and bring appropriate apparel. Spectators should be prepared as well. We have team tents, so you will have some shelter from the weather, but space is limited, and rowers take priority. There is going to be a lot of standing around, so you might want to bring a couple of fold-up chairs to sit on.

11. Traveling to Regattas

Rowers are required to make their own transportation arrangements and ensure a timely arrival at the racecourse.

Regarding accommodation, the team stays in one hotel, booked by the Club. Normally, rowers are placed four in a room. The coaches decide room placement for all rowers. There are no co-ed rooms.

Regattas incur additional costs for the rowers, not included in the tuition fee. A regatta fee is levied before each regatta to cover accommodation, food at the racecourse, race entry fees, boat transportation and other incidentals.

In addition to a block of rooms for the team and, as a courtesy to our families, the Club makes every effort to reserve a block of rooms for parents at the team hotel. However, typically hotels will only allow us to book a very limited number of these, so you may have to make reservations in alternative hotels. Parent rooms are paid for by parents. These are not included in the regatta fee mentioned above.

Please note that, regardless of accommodation arrangements, parents are responsible for their rower(s). All rowers are expected to respect curfew times set by the coaches, to show respect for other guests in the hotel, and to behave in a manner consistent with the Code of Conduct. Rowers engaging in behavior detrimental to the team and to MRC will be subject to strict disciplinary measures decided by their coach and the Youth Program Director, which might include suspension and expulsion from the Club.

12. Volunteering and the Youth Program Parent Committee

The Youth Program Parent Committee is our parent volunteer organization. Its role is:

- To provide support during regattas for our rowers (food, hydration, etc.)
- To organize our Blue Blazer banquet, which is one of our most important annual fundraising events
- To operate our apparel store
- To help organize the Miami International Regatta
- To help organize the End of Year Award's Ceremony

This is a VITAL part of the Youth Program, and without it, our tuition fees would be many times higher. As such, it requires much help and an active contribution from each and every family.

We encourage parents to learn more about the sport and enjoy the camaraderie at regattas and fundraisers by volunteering. There are many ways to participate, both in Miami and away, at weekends, during the week, at regattas, in fundraisers or other functions. There is always something even for the busiest working parents!

In the interest of fairness, we have instituted a compulsory 20-hour volunteer requirement for each family. This requirement is IN ADDITION to activities related to the Miami International Regatta. However, we understand that, under some exceptional circumstances, some families are unable to contribute the 20 hours, in which case, a payment of \$300 will be accepted in lieu of volunteering at the beginning of the year. If the 20 hours are not completed by the end of the year, the \$300 will be charged with the last tuition payment.

13. Communications

Most of our communications with parents are through e-mail. Please ensure that you provide us with an up-to-date email address to ensure that you get all the important information. The link to each program Parents' group chat is shared via email at the beginning of the season. Please join your respective group. We also have periodic parent meetings, where important announcements are made. Details of these meetings are sent out by email, usually a few days in advance. Please make every effort to attend. These

meetings are a great opportunity to meet other parents, ask questions and keep up to date with developments.

14. Administration and Operations

To optimize and streamline our administration, operations and communications, we use a web-based application called Team Unify. www.teamunify.com/reczzmrc

Each family has an account in Team Unify, and instructions on how to access it are sent out at the beginning of the year.

Team Unify has very powerful tools for registration, billing, roster management, control of volunteer tasks and hours, parent communications, attendance control and many other features. For example, by accessing the system, you can:

- See your billing statement, payments made, outstanding invoices.
- Register online
- See the Regatta and Hotel schedules for the year
- Other useful information

We strongly recommend that you become familiar with the system and take the time to watch some of the basic tutorials.

15. Fees & Payments

In order to pay our operating costs and replace equipment, we charge tuition fees that cover the period of September 1st to April 30th, and a mandatory donation to the equipment fund.

Tuition is charged in four installments: Sept 1st, November 1st, Jan 1st and March 1st.

The equipment fund donation is due in full upon registration. In addition to tuition and equipment fund fees, rowers attending a regatta are charged a regatta fee to cover hotel, food, race entry fee, boat transportation and other incidentals. The regatta fees vary, depending on location and duration of event.

For rowers competing in Regional and National Championships in May and June, additional tuition fees will be assessed to cover operating expenses for those months.

Please note that coaching levels and other operational commitments are established at the beginning of each rowing season. For this reason, we are unable to provide refunds if a rower withdraws in the middle of a season. The only exception is a withdrawal due to serious injury or illness with proof of a medical certificate.

16. Safe Sport

Miami Rowing Club adheres to the US Center for SafeSport guidelines as required by USRowing. All athletes aged 18 and older must take a SafeSport course. For more details, please refer here: <https://usrowing.org/sports/2016/6/1/safesport.aspx>

PARENT AND ROWER AGREEMENT (CODE OF CONDUCT)

Every student athlete participating in the Miami Rowing & Watersports Center is expected to engage only in those activities that will promote the reputation, character, health and welfare of the individual, the team, the MRC organization, and the community. Therefore, every student athlete must agree to comply with the following:

- I. Abstain from the use of alcohol, tobacco products, illegal substances or illegal weapons at all times
- II. Not use abusive, disrespectful, offensive and/or inappropriate language and/or behavior (e.g. kissing, inappropriate touching) while on City of Miami and MRC property, representing MRC in the community and/or participating in any event as an athlete for MRC

- III. Demonstrate respect for MRC coaches, parents and Board members
- IV. Give all due and proper respect to other teams and their coaches
- V. Give all due and proper respect and assistance to my teammates, on and off the water.
- VI. Use consideration and care when using property of MRC and the City of Miami and cause no deliberate damage to this property at any time
- VII. Be punctual for practice and other rowing events
- VIII. Abide by any and all rules established by the Board of Directors

Understand that violation of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action as determined by the coaches and/or the Youth Program Committee Club Handbook. I understand that I am responsible to review and become familiar with the contents of this handbook to include the Rower Code of Conduct and Policies and Procedures