

Southsea Rowing Club

BEACH LAUNCHING AND COMING ASHORE

Pre-launch check list

Weather/water conditions – what is the weather forecast/is it safe to go out in current conditions? Look for “white horses” or offshore wind with “white horses” in shipping lane.

Crew – is the combination of crew members going to be safe in current conditions? Are they adequately dressed? Waterproofs plus warm layers - winter, hats and sun screen summer. Shoes must be strong enough to walk on a shingle beach carrying the boat. Is there sufficient experience on each side of the boat?

Boat – is the boat in good condition: rudder, seats and blades in, riggers and gates tight, heel restraints in place, stretchers adjusted, bailers closed?

Supervision – in the case on novice crews, is there an experienced member of the club to supervise the outing and assist if necessary?

If any of the above threaten the safety of the crew or equipment the crew should not go afloat. If in doubt please ask an experienced member of the club.

Coxswain – must wear a life jacket and agree with the crew direction of launch of the boat. In the case of coxless crews direction of launch should be agreed. In general bows will be launched into wind or tide, whichever is stronger.

Additional help – in the case of novice and less experienced crews additional help should be sought so that minimum of six people launch the boat. Additional people may be necessary on rough weather conditions or with inexperienced crews.

Lifting the boat

All crew members will lift the boat holding onto cross members (never slides). Blades will be shortened and held between the body and arm to maintain control of the blades. Coxswains/helpers should control the stern and bow of the boat respectively with additional help for weaker, less experienced crew members as necessary. All should remember to lift the boat with the legs keeping a straight back.

Walking with the boat

Crew members should choose the safest route to the water avoiding slippery surfaces or long drops between the landing stage and beach.

Launching

As previously stated, launching will normally be with the bows into the wind and/or tide, whichever is stronger. The boat should be carried into the water until the stern/rudder are safe from grounding. The coxswain will normally control this process. In very rough conditions the bows should be placed into the waves and bow pair may get into the boat before the stern is clear of the shore, this manoeuvre requires additional help and should not be undertaken with less than four helpers plus crew.

Crew members should enter the boat by pushing their blade(s) out first and placing their backsides onto the seat, followed by their feet. In rough conditions this may be achieved by placing both hands onto the saxboards and jumping backwards into the boat. Once seated the crew member should take hold of and control the blade handle to maintain balance of the boat.

Coxswains will normally enter the boat last, once they have established that crew members are in the boat and have control of their blades. Coxswains will normally ask crew members to row the boat away from the shore before feet are attached and adjustments made. Crew members not asked to row should sit in the "safe position" with blades flat on the water to maintain stability. In all cases it is more important to row or sit in the safe position rather than adjusting seating etc. until the boat is safely away from the shore. Once told to adjust the oar handle should be controlled with one hand or under both arms and should remain flat on the water. Once adjusted each crew member should return to the "safe position," sitting at backstops with the blade held flat on the water and at arm's length with both hands.

Coming Ashore

Coming ashore is essentially the reverse of launching. The coxswain/steersperson will ease the crew in a safe position adjacent to the shore, facing into the prevailing wind or tide, to allow feet to be released. The crew may then row or back the boat closer to the shore prior to being told to exit the boat. In the case of inexperienced crews the coxswain will exit the boat first to ensure control. On a beach landing site this will usually be on the seaward side of the boat to avoid being pushed over by incoming waves.

Crews will then be asked to exit the boat in turn. Crew members should exit both feet together opposite their rigger. **Do not exit one foot at a time as you will be knocked over by the movement of the boat.**

Once the crew has exited, blades are shortened across the boat and the boat lifted from the water using help, as necessary, at the bow and with the crew. The coxswain should maintain control of the boat until it is safely on the landing stage/trestles.

Rough Conditions/Emergency Landing

In rough conditions or if the boat has taken on sufficient water to make it too heavy to lift or if sinking is likely some changes to standard practice may be required.

Rough conditions

This may involve either keeping the bows into the waves and backing onto the shore or coming in bows first. The choice depends largely on the depth of the water. In deep water (high tide at Southsea or Lymington regatta) stern first is safer as the crew has more control and the coxswain can exit first and control the boat. In shallow water (low tide at Southsea or Bournemouth or Ryde regattas) bows first is preferable with the whole crew exiting together on command. In all cases the crews should exit the boat when asked but expecting to be more than waist deep in water. The boat can then be walked into the shore and progressively lifted out of the water using help as necessary.

Waterlogged or sinking boat

If a boat has taken on water such that it may be damaged by or too heavy to lift it is safest to turn it in the water. This is done by removing blades, seats and other loose items, turning the boat into the waves (away from the shore) and lifting it out of the water upside down. It is vital that crew members on the seaward side, including the coxswain, hold onto the boat at all times whilst other crew members collect blades, seats etc and place them on the shore.

Emergency landing

If a boat is liable to sink, for whatever reason, an emergency landing may be necessary as a precautionary measure. This may be undertaken on any stretch of open beach along the Southsea Seafront. Areas to avoid are piers, breakwaters/groynes or sea walls. The stretch between the Pyramids Centre and the Rowing club is particularly hazardous in terms of the above. In addition, the divergence of tides around the point by Southsea Castle causes the water to be particularly rough when tides are strong. The water by the Pyramids Centre is relatively shallow except at high tide and it is safer to make an emergency landing there and walk a boat back to the club, rather than risk sinking in a hazardous area. In an emergency landing the waterlogged or sinking boat procedure should be adopted and the boat placed inverted on the shingle or pavement, while help is obtained to carry the boat back to the club.

For guidance about emergency landings in Portsmouth Harbour, see [Guidance on Rowing in Portsmouth Harbour](#)

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On behalf of Southsea Rowing Club Committee

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