

SRC SQUAD TRAINING

Theme Sheet - Catches on the water

The sliding exercises should have ensured that you are sliding properly and delivering yourself to the right position to take the catch. Remember the key objective is to ensure that the crew member can get into the correct position at the catch:

- Shins vertical, no gap between thighs and body;
- Lower back set at catch;
- Body in pre-stretched position;
- Blades square

The aim of the catch is to place the blade in the water at the point of maximum reach. As you prepare for each catch think of the following:

- Arms relaxed and stable, outside arm straight, inside arm slightly bent;
- For sweep rowing outside shoulder should have rotated forward (for scullers, shoulders should be level but the lead hand might be slightly forward);
- Shoulders relaxed and low, not around your ears;
- Blade(s) square and level (do not drop the hands before the catch).

To take the catch the hands need to move up and forward to drop the blade into the water. Shoulder muscles will rise slightly.

Remember

- Blade should drop only to blade depth;
- Watch other crew members to ensure you are in time.

Avoid

- Speeding up the slide immediately before the catch;
- Over-reaching and using the shoulders to initiate the catch;
- Reaching further forward once you have reached front stops (we usually refer to this as "reaching for the extra bit");
- Failure to square during the recovery, so that squaring and taking the catch become blurred into one ineffective movement rather than two distinct movements "square and in;"
- Driving the legs before the catch, resulting in the boat stopping before the catch and missing the first part (quarter) of the stroke;
- Hesitating at the catch rather than having a smooth transition from the recovery to catch. This will result in loss of co-ordination of the leg drive. If the stroke

person hesitates at the catch this will confuse the crew, resulting in them "rushing the stroke person" and a loss of power and rhythm.

- Bending the arms at the catch and during the first half of the stroke

The catch is the most difficult part of the stroke to execute and failure to get it right is probably the greatest cause of loss of boat speed. This is particularly the case during racing when crews try to increase pressure and rate. There is a loss of length in the water, the ratio between stroke and recovery changes and the crew starts to rush. It takes practice and focus to just raise the hands and drive the legs, rather than trying to "row the blade into the water."

Water Exercises

- Catch slap

In continuous rowing, slap the feathered blade on the water immediately before the square and catch. Remember the separation between slap, square and raising the hands to drop the catch in.

- Roll ups

Taking single strokes starting from the finish with square blades, extract the blade, feather, hands away, slide to the catch position, square and take the catch by raising the hands. This is a slowed down version of starting to row from back stops except that it is not followed by the leg drive. The objective is to establish the catch as the end of the recovery, which is taken by the hands only, not as part of the leg drive.

- Feet out

Row with feet out of the shoes. This encourages relaxation and stability on the way forward.

- Early squaring

Square the blade as the hands come over the knees. This forces a distinction between square and catch.

- Square blades

Develops skills in extracting the blade square and dropping the blade in square. For inexperienced crews this exercise can be undertaken in pairs with other crew members holding the boat steady and level. It can be followed alternate square blades and feathering, thinking about "down and out square, feather, slide with level hands, square and raise hands," as five separate components of the recovery.