

SRC SQUAD TRAINING

Theme Sheet - position in the boat

Position of stretcher

Examination of rigging manuals often suggest that the Stretcher should be set so that the rear wheels of each seat is an equal distance behind the pin, e.g. 65cm for a 183cm (6ft)cm oarsman. This assumes that each member of the crew is approximately the same height and will then finish at the same point and row through the same arc. For the average club crew this is a big assumption. One way to check that this is approximately correct is to sit the crew in the hands away, legs flat, body over position. In this position the blades should be at right angles to the boat. If this is followed by a double check to ensure that the outside hand does not come off the blade at the finish, this should ensure that each crew member is driving the legs throughout the first half of the stroke and that each crew member will be rowing approximately the same arc.

When actually rowing the blade should be at right angles when the slide is driven three quarters of the way through its travel. At this point the body should be upright the arms straight and the knees at an angle of 165° this is the strongest position in the stroke and matches the point of greatest force on the blade.

For scullers the "blades at right angles" check is equally valid but the double check is to ensure that the thumbs just clear the rowing vest at the finish and that the scull handles are at least 10cm apart at the finish. Sculling is slightly different from rowing in that the arc of the stroke is longer $100-110^{\circ}$ against $80-90^{\circ}$. If the ratio of the stroke in front of the pin is 60/40 this means that the angle at the catch for scullers is $60-66^{\circ}$ against $48-54^{\circ}$ for rowing.

Height of the seat above the heels

The height of the seat above the stretcher is a compromise between efficiency of leg drive, i.e. (reduced distance or heels high efficient leg drive) and stability, i.e. lower heels, lower centre of gravity. It is recommended that the seat should be 16-20cm above the heels.

There are a number of extraneous factors which will encourage crew members to wrongly position their feet:

- Slides hitting the backs of legs - particularly in coastal boats;
- Concept 2 foot straps - for ladies with small feet;

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.

At the same time there should be no last second rush forward on the last 10-15cm of the slide and no reaching for the "extra bit" once as front stops.

For inflexible people this may involve lowering the feet until flexibility improves. Any theoretical loss of efficiency in leg drive will be more than compensated by a catch and drive taken from a strong stable position. The proof is easy to show, try rowing on an ergo with sliders. Move the heel restraints up and allow yourself to accelerate up the slide - see the score drop of. Now lower your feet and control the slide so you slide steadily and take the catch by raising the hands and pushing the legs first, the scores will speak for themselves