

# 2025 Getting Started Guide



## Welcome to BCR!

Thank you for joining in the camaraderie and commitment to our community that defines Berkshire Community Rowing. We hope that you enjoy many great rows with us and that you spread the word about what we do to bring rowing to the Berkshires.

### Our Crew:

**Head Coach:** Patrick Dent

**Assistant Coaches:** Ted Humphrey, Randy Oberle, Eric Hatcher, Don Roche, Mike Piotrowski, Jon Hunt, et al.

**Board of Trustees:** Chris King, Connell McGrath, Randy Oberle, Ellen Spear, Jean Marie Stein

**Dockmaster:** Loren Paduano

**Contacting Us:** Send an email to [info@berkshirerowing.com](mailto:info@berkshirerowing.com)

### Ways to Participate

Coached sessions (e.g. Learn-to-Row classes, Masters (adult), Juniors (youth))  
Membership without coaching (Reserve a club boat and row on your own)

### General Boathouse Information

The following information is very important and up to date as of January 2025. Terms may change, so please help us by remaining flexible.

- The on-water season starts in mid-April and ends on November 1.
- The staffed hours of operation for the boathouse are 6:00 AM to 10:00 AM Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and 6:00 AM to 9:30 AM on Sunday.
- **Please be aware that in the Summer, Juniors practice starts at 9 AM on weekdays. We strongly encourage Masters to be off the water by 9:15; the dock gets very busy after that and there may not be a place for you to dock.**
- High winds, fog and storms will affect boathouse hours. Notifications are sent out via Remind (see below).
- Information and club news is available at [berkshirecommunityrowing.org](http://berkshirecommunityrowing.org).
- Please like us on Facebook. Search for Berkshire Community Rowing.

### Membership Options

- Everyone who uses BCR facilities must have a current membership or be in a program before they participate.
- You may pay in full by credit card or pay monthly by doing an electronic transfer from your bank to ours. Please ask us for information on monthly payments.
- You must sign the US Rowing Waiver **online** before your first row. We still have paper waivers but the US Rowing waiver gives a much higher level of liability protection. It may take 24 to 48 hours to get your US Rowing membership set up after you sign up for a BCR program. Please plan accordingly.
- A detailed list of Membership options and programs is available at

[RegattaCentral>Clubs>Berkshire Sculling...](#) See more details below for how to sign up.

- Any membership that includes coaching also comes with a full membership to the Pittsfield YMCA. Once you register for your program, fill out a waiver for the Y, and we will put your name on their list. Go to the Y to get a card, and then use all the facilities!
- When practices cannot be held on water due to weather, they will take place at the YMCA.
- **Our juniors programs** run by season. See details below for how to sign up. Juniors cannot row outside of practice hours or without coaches.

### Scholarship Policy

BCR does not want money to be a barrier to participation. If you want to join us but cannot afford the fees, please contact [scholarships@berkshirerowing.com](mailto:scholarships@berkshirerowing.com) and your request will be handled anonymously and with tact.

### Members Bringing Guests

- Members are encouraged to bring guests. Guests of members may use club equipment and facilities at no charge for a single visit per year; guests who row more than once must purchase a membership or program.
- Each member may bring up to four guests a year, but may not bring the same guest more than once.
- Guests must sign liability waivers before rowing. If you are a US Rowing member, you can add BCR to your membership and the liability waiver you already signed will include us. If not, you can sign a paper waiver at the boathouse as long as you are rowing no more than three times in a season.

### Joining BCR and Registering for Memberships and Programs on RegattaCentral

RegattaCentral.com is our registration and boat reservation platform.

1. Go to [RegattaCentral.com](http://RegattaCentral.com). If you already have a RegattaCentral account, **do not log in** to join a program or membership. First...
2. Click the "Clubs" tab and scroll down to select—Berkshire Sculling Association.
3. Click the various categories (memberships, programs, learn to row).
4. Click either the Join/Renew or the Register button.
5. You will see an option to sign in or create an account. Once you do that...
6. You'll see a drop down that reads "Select Participant." In most cases you will select yourself, but if you are registering an additional family member, click the "Add Participant" hyperlink and add their information. Continue to fill out all required fields.
7. On the payment page, you may pay via credit card or PayPal. You can also pay by check by selecting the "Check Pay" option. We must receive your payment before your first row, unless you've made other arrangements with us by email.
8. You will receive a registration confirmation email from RegattaCentral.

### Reserving Boats on RegattaCentral

Once you have a club membership, you can follow these steps to reserve boats. If you are in a coached program, you may not have access to reserve boats.

1. Log into your RegattaCentral account.
2. From the Home screen, click on the blue Reservations link.
3. Click New Reservation and fill out the requested information.
4. You may only reserve a boat for one hour, and you may only reserve one boat per day.
5. If your plans change, cancel your reservation on RegattaCentral as soon as possible.

### REMIND for Boathouse Hours Text and Email Notifications

BCR uses a system called Remind to send notifications to its members regarding boathouse info such as weather alerts, boathouse closings, delays in opening, etc.

- To receive text notifications, send a text to 81010. In the body of the text type @brass787.

- To receive email notifications, go to [remind.com](http://remind.com), click sign up and select the student option. Enter your email and register for our “class” using the code @brass787.

NOTE: Coached programs use a separate communication app regarding practices. You will receive this information when you register for a coached program.

## What to Wear and Bring

- Close-fitting clothes that can be tucked in at the back. Dress in layers. Avoid baggy sweatshirts or jackets with open front pockets as they can get caught in the oars..
- High-visibility shirts and/or hats: neon green, yellow, pink or orange.
- Footwear:
  - For beginners, wear socks and shoes such as docksiders or water shoes. Avoid shoes and sneakers with soles that are thick or that protrude behind the heel.
  - For intermediate/advanced: Wear SOCKS. You will not be allowed in our boats without them.
- If it's cool, wear layers that can easily be shed.
- Bring a change of clothes similar to those above, and a towel, in case you flip and want to continue rowing.
- Sunscreen
- Lightweight water bottle
- Hat and sunglasses

## Boathouse and Lake Rules

- Reserve a boat before you arrive, unless you're in a coached program.
- Arrive 5 or 10 minutes early: the one-hour boat reservation starts at the time you reserved.
- Check in with the dockmaster.
- Get your oars out on the dock before moving your boat. Put your boat on slings to check the tie-downs and other foot stretcher settings. Then put the boat in the water.
- You may row for the full hour, but leave enough time at the end of your row to clean the boat and help put it away. If you arrive late, the boat is still due back an hour after the beginning of your reservation.
- When arriving at the boathouse for the first time, bring your printed out waiver from US Rowing, or allow extra time to fill out and sign the waiver.
- If you are new to the club, but are an experienced rower, on your first row you must row with an experienced club member to learn our water. Please drop us an email and we'll arrange for somebody to row with you.
- We follow the Hundred Degree/Four Oar Rule. If the combined water and air temperature is below 100°, there must be a minimum of four oars on the water (i.e., no singles or pairs) and life jackets (provided) must be in shells at all times.
- **When rowing singles, stay within 100 meters of shore unless you have passed a flip test or are accompanied by a coach in a safety launch.**
- From May 15 - September 15, athletes do not need to bring a life jacket in the shell.
- Other seasonal rules may be in place, so please check with boathouse staff.
- Check in with boathouse staff before every row. They will enter your name and boat on the daily sign-in sheet.
- Row counterclockwise around the lake staying close to shore.
- Share the lake and be courteous to other boaters.
- Watch out for swimmers!
- Once you've finished your row, wash the boat and oar handles, wipe out the tracks with the vinegar solution. Rinse and towel them.
- Help staff get your boat back in the house unless they tell you it's not necessary.

## Zebra Mussel Policy

If you bring your own boat to Onota, please wash it thoroughly before your first row and after you leave to row elsewhere.

## Volunteer Requirements; 10 hours per season per member

BCR relies on its members' generosity and investment in our club to sustain itself. There are plenty of ways to volunteer:

- **Serve on the Board of Trustees.** Email us for more information.
- **Serve on a Committee.** We have four committees: Outreach (events & marketing), Finance, Infrastructure, and Development (fundraising). We need more members on each committee. Learn more about each committee online, and email us if you are interested in joining a committee.
- **National Learn to Row Day** is an annual event in early June with volunteer jobs for members of every skill level. It takes a fair amount of planning, a lot of good spirit, and as many hands on deck as possible!
- This year, we need to do a LOT of cleaning and organizing at the boathouse. If you have a half day to help us, email us and we'll find an appropriate volunteer opportunity at a mutually convenient date and time.
- We also need to **repaint all our oars!** This requires a lot of work, a lot of steps, precision, and patience. If you want to come help out at an "oar painting party," make sure you are on our email list for those announcements.
- **Our boats need TLC.** If you want to learn about boat maintenance and care, sign up to help us repair and make small improvements to our fleet.
- Bring a few dirty towels home from the boathouse to wash them, and bring them back!
- **Bring us an idea** for a fundraiser or event or campaign that you would like to sponsor! Email us to discuss the idea.
- We will post additional volunteer opportunities on our website and at the boathouse, as they come up.

Once you volunteer, please log into RegattaCentral and select the "volunteer" tab. Select 1, and then on the next page, type:

1. The number of hours you volunteered (rounded to the nearest 15 minutes)
2. The date you volunteered
3. What you did

*For example:*

*4.25 hours, June 2, Learn to Row Day*

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