

MOUNT VERNON CREW

COXSWAIN CALLS

Making the calls

General reminders:

- *give changes of command in two strokes: example: ALL 8, ROW IN TWO, ONE, TWO,
- *don't give commands while your coach is talking unless there is a safety issue
- *tell the rowers when they are doing well

Getting a boat off the racks/trailer

"*Get hands ON!*" Call all the rowers in your boat to the rack, rowers should spread out on the length of the shell

"*Up off the racks, and UP!*" they should lift the boat up off the racks a few inches –be sure and watch that the shell will not hit the rack above it

"*And out of the racks*" watch your skeg and the riggers of the boat

"*Up over heads and up!*" making sure the boat has cleared the rack, all riggers are clear of the rack, boat will not hit any branches overhead, make sure all rowers lock their arms

"*Split down to shoulders from bow and split!*" the bow man will split (usually to the left) and then 2 to the right so on so forth. Rowers should NEVER be in between the riggers

"*walk it straight, watch the riggers!*" watch your bow and stern, watch your riggers on both sides- in other words-make sure your boat doesn't hit anything

"*Bow swing to your right*" or whichever way you need the boat to go-be sure to watch where the stern is going-if it is going to hit something yell "**Stern up over heads!**" or simply "**wane' nuf!**" then fix it from a halt.

"*Watch your step*" before they get on the dock -go ahead of the boat, turn around and tell your rowers

"*Walk it to the edge*" command for when every body is down on the dock ,make sure you are now at the stern to make sure your rudder and skeg will not be snapped off then say

"*Up Over heads and up! Roll to high waist and roll!*" "*Ease it AWAY form the dock, and down*" Then you hold on to the stern and bow stays with other end of the boat. While bow man holds the bow he can take off his shoes. As everyone else takes off their shoes and gets their oars, put your cox box in, turn it on and test it. Have 2 seat bring bow his oar. Have bow put his oar in.

"*Oars out*" once the starboard oars are locked in their oar locks, those rowers can slide them all the way across the boat. This helps balance the boat. ROWERS SHOULD NEVER GET IN THE BOAT IF THE OARS ARE NOT OUT-the boat will flip and you'll have rowers in the water. then say into the cox box,

"*Bow one foot in*" bow puts one foot in, you put one on your seat as well)"*And in*" (both of you sit) then say

“Everybody else, one foot in, and in” “Count down from bow when ready” this means they will call out their seat number after they are done tying in. Wait for the coach’s okay to launch.

At MVYC

Launch and recovery are different at the MVYC marina. The MVYC is not a floating dock and that makes things tricky, especially when the tide is low. Your rowers should not be talking during launch and recovery so that you can give commands and hear the coach on the dock. It is important that you listen to the coach on the dock so that equipment (both yours and patrons of the MVYC) is not damaged. It is also important that you make sure that the riggers are not resting on the dock when loading or unloading rowers from the boat. Too much pressure on the riggers can cause the shell to split where the riggers are attached to it. You’ll also need to watch the pilings near both ends of the shell if you are launching an 8.

Basic commands and terms and what they mean (commands are in CAPITALS)

- ***back it** – use to turn the boat. Usually only one side will back it. Have the rower turn the oars so the curved part (back) faces you. Tell them to bring the oar handle in to the chest, lift up to bury the blade, and then push out and away from them. Have one side or the other do this to turn the boat.
- ***catch**- refers to the moment the oar enters the water to take the stroke
- ***CHECK IT DOWN!** –roll blade so that it is curved towards the bow, dragging it on the water to slow the boat. Usually used after command to weigh ‘nuf
- ***drive**- the act of pushing against foot stretchers and pulling the oar through the water
- ***feathering/rollup/squaring**- the act of turning the oar from parallel to the water to perpendicular
- ***HOLD WATER!** –stop quickly. Refers to squaring blades and burying them in the water and pushing against them.
- ***port**- the side of the boat to your left and the rowers’ right. Remember “left” has 4 letters and so does “port”. Even numbered rowers are port.
- ***rudder**- the rubber device under the boat that makes you change direction. You should stay beside the rudder at all times when taking the boat out or putting it in the water.
- ***release/finish**- the moment the oar exits the water
- ***slide**- the motion of moving from the release to the catch
- ***starboard**- the side of the boat to your right and the rowers’ left. Odd numbered rowers are starboard.
- ***square blades**- oar blades are perpendicular to the water
- ***WEIGH ‘NUF!** –stop

Technical Calls

As the voice of the coach in the boat, you can make your crew row better and more efficiently which makes the boat go faster. In many ways this is the hardest part of coxing. You could write books on the technical side of coxing, but the best way to learn is to listen to the coaches. Listen to what they say and see if you can identify those faults from your cox seat. Once you can, try to correct them during practice.

Below are some suggestions on calls you can make to correct rowers on the water (command is italicized-with what it means following)

Catches

Catches should be early, quick, sharp, and precise. Backsplash or backing the blade in refers to a small amount of water sent up towards the bow by a blade that is catching at the right time. You may want to count the catches and the finishes in the rhythm of an appropriate stroke as set by your coach, such as "Catch-2-3-4!"

"Quick catch!" – Brings arms slightly up to drop blade into water. Not hesitating then putting it in

"Lots of backslash!" –back splash is the water that splashes because of the oar, it means the rower is putting in too close to the water and rolling up to the catch

"Make that blade disappear/bury it!"-put your oar all the way in the water, if not a crab might occur

"Quick/aggressive at the catch!"-No hesitating at the catch put it in and pull

Finishes

"Clean release!" Pop the oar out of the water- do not proceed with the recovery if yours is still underwater

"Clean finishes!" Do not pull into your lap, maintain even oar height throughout the stroke

Set

Two major things that affect keel are making sure rowers are together in the stroke and hand levels. If the boat is leaning towards one side, the rowers on that side should raise their hands, while the rowers on the other side lower their hands. This often helps fix the keel.

"Set it up!" Balance the boat

"It's on (name side)...., set it up!" –either port or starboard, balance

"Set the keel!" If the keel is to port ports lift up on oar handle, starboard lower handle heights and vice versa

"Watch your hand levels, straight in, straight out!" Remember where to pull in (two inches below the nipple drop down two inches push away parallel) and engage your arms to keep from wobbling.

"Keep it up off side (name side)!" – Side is either port or starboard, whichever it is resting on

"Keep your hand levels consistent!"

"Find the middle ground!"

"Work together to set the boat!"

"Pull into the sternum, two inch strike down, repel parallel!"

"Keep your hands consistent!"

"Square up at the same time" If it's dropping to one side at the catch- tell that side to stop skying.

Swing –or rhythm in the boat

This consists of rolling up the slide together with no rush in the boat.

"Move together!" roll up the slide together

"Find that swing!" adjust speed of compression to mimic stroke

"Seat # _-you're early/late." – Use this judiciously. If you notice one person is consistently getting to one part of the stroke earlier or later than everyone else, let them know by telling them they are early or late, and what part of the stroke they are early or late too.

"Focus straight ahead." Follow

"Follow the person in front of you!" self-explanatory

"Think of the drive as acceleration!" on the drive, make it powerful

"No pauses at the catch, connected stroke!" No pausing at the catch drop the blade in and drive

"Don't rush up to the catch than wait!" Don't rush your slide

"In together, out together!" One catch

"One catch, one release" Row together

"Synchronize with your stroke!" Row as one

"Follow stroke" – Use the name of your stroke instead of the seat number.

Ratio

"Long and strong!" Long recoveries and strong drives.

"I need ratio NOW!" - note, this is best used as an "emergency" call, don't overuse it!

"Squeeze out the run!" Run in the boat is how many meters the boat travels per stroke

Lowering the stroke rate

When talking about lowering the rate, use a very calm, long cadence in your voice.

"Down from a to a in two, down one, down two!" – Use the rate you are at and the rate you should be at two fill in the blanks.

"Lengthen it out!" Slow down the recovery, add more layback

"Think about resisting your seat on the recovery with the same muscles you drive with." Especially towards the bow, the muscles relax when the rowers get tired causing more rush in the boat

"Your wheels are inching up the track." –Slowing down the slide, convince them to get the wheel to turn one more revolution before catching if they can

"Keep it long!" long recovery

"Lengthen it out together! Timing!" Together slow down and follow

Raising the stroke rate

"Bring it up from a rate to a rate in two, up one, up two!" – The rates are the rate you are at and the rate you need to be at.

"Hands are flying, in and away!" quick arms

"Quick hands out of the bow!" quick arms

"Snap the arms!" quick arms (catching a theme here yet?)

"Hands away, shoulders follow!" remember arms and backs

"Quick drive!" Jump of the seat stretchers

"In and away!" quick arms

"Quick hands!" quick arms

"Jack it up!" crank up the rating

Motivational Calls

This is particular important in pieces or any competitive/power work. The cox has got to convince the athletes going through masses of mental and physical pain, to push themselves hard and then harder still. Your job as a cox is to get every last available ounce out of them. This is a difficult topic because it's more than just a question of saying "row harder!" To be an effective motivator, think about what motivates you, though bear in mind that it may well be different from your crew depending on gender and temperament. To motivate them well, you need their respect. They don't necessarily need to like you (though less experienced and less professional crews are less able to distinguish this) but they must respect you because if they don't, your calls are useless. It also helps if they want to do it with and for you. They must trust your judgment absolutely and know that at

every single moment you want it as much as they do, and that you are giving your all just like they are. Show you care as well. Listen to them – their highs and low, and try and be a person they can come to both for comfort and advice. This is all vital information on how you can best get the most out of them both in training and racing. Work off their mood – if they're down, be positive. If they're frustrated, be calm. Go to all the land training because it instills in the crew a sense that you care about their training and that you are with them in every step they take.

The better the coxswain, the more "juice" they will be able to squeeze from the lemon that is their crew. Motivational calls are different for every crew because each crew member has different things which make them tick. This is especially apparent between men's and women's crews. There are physiological differences in male and female brains that make them work differently, to greater or lesser extents depending on the individual of course.

Often, motivational calls are improvised, taken from important notes the coach has said, or things the boat learns during practice. However, here are some stock calls which can be sprinkled throughout to help you fill verbal empty space during a race.

"Drive it down!" I need more pressure

"Stomp on those foot stretchers!" remember legs and I need more pressure

"Break your riggers!" (not literally!) I need more pressure

"Bend the oar!" more pressure

"Squeeze!" (out the run) this isn't good enough run

"Jump, swing, and snap!" remember ratio and give me more

"Hammer those knees!" drive with your legs more power

"Slam your knees down!" keep the pressure up by using your legs

"Jump on it!" (Off the foot stretchers) more power from the legs

"Quick turn around out of the bow!" quick arms, higher rating, more power

"Make those hands fly!" quick

"Keep the fire!" Power, need more pressure (feel the burn?)

"Make it intense!" feel the pressure, keep the pressure, be the pressure

"Make 'em cry!" to pass some boats more power is needed

"Put the power on it!" good rowing now let me see your strength

"Empty the tanks!" I don't want you even breathing by time we are done

"Send that boat!" More run

"*Swing it and bring it!*" Swing together and bring on the pressure

"*Pick the boat out of the water and make it fly!*" bow pair needs to roll up sooner and not sky and everyone else needs to drive

"*You're invincible!*" –you're awesome now give me more power

"*Nothing to faze us!*" –things are going good, pull out ahead give me open water (row harder)

"*Power it up!*" I need more pressure

"*Strike it down!*" put those legs down quick (like lighting a match)

"*Strong in the legs!*" push with the legs

"*Quick through the water!*" drive quickly

"*Strong through the water!*" drive hard

"*Power on the drive!*"

"*Embarrass them!*" Make'em lose

"*Try to make every stroke better than the last one!*" You'll be done sooner

"*Make yourself stronger HERE!*" Power ten

"*Attack it in the front half!*" catch it in and explode at the catch

"*Body angle!*" don't forget your backs

"*Breath*" – Especially use this when rowing up to the starting dock before a race, and also in the first 100 meters

"*Hammer the legs! Explode!*" I need you to not be able to walk you're driving so hard

"*Make it hurt!*" (Not that it's that hard to do) Up the ante, more power, more drive

"*Hang on it! Suspension!*" Suspension is the second your butt is almost off the seat from driving so hard and you are hanging on by an oar, (very good thing).

"*Do it for person/etc.*" – For example, having your boat do something to please your coach, or calling a ten where one stroke is for every person on the boat and one is for your coach is often very effective.

"*Keep it up! Looking good! Nice!*" general compliment

"*Send it!*" send those puddles behind me. (It means you get better run)

"*Show me you want it!*" prove to me I can suck more power out of you

"Own it!" win this race

"Make every stroke COUNT!" You're taking halfhearted strokes

Tactical Calls

As the cox, you are the brains in the boat. That means you do the thinking and make the decisions. If another crew moves up on you, you have to decide whether a counter push, or a hold and wind would be the best option. In head races, you have to decide whether the wind makes rowing in the slower, calmer water more efficient. Sure there is a race plan, but as a cox you need to be able to use the race plan not just implement it. This is your judgment but use it wisely because it's moments like this that rowers will remember. They will remember if in that crucial moment you lead them to victory, or let them down.

"Don't let 'em move!" Don't let the boat we are passing catch up

"Hold 'em off!" Don't let them catch up, more power

"Take seat _!" – Use the seat you need to get to, for example, stroke seat on the boat ahead of you. Walk through them

"Get me to seat _!" - Use the seat you need to get to, for example, stroke seat on the boat ahead of you.

"Take it here and now, make a decision!" Don't just hover around three seat, walk through this boat

"Reel them in!" (the boat in front of you) let's walk through a boat, I need more power for that. Row,

"We're walking like crazy!" passing the boat in front of you

"Move right through them!" half way through passing a boat and you feel the pressure die

"I've got seat/location, give me seat/location in number of strokes!" – Tell the crew where you are located on an opposing crew, such as you, as cox, are sitting next to their four seat, and you want to be at their two seat in five strokes. This is great motivation and also a good way to update your crew.

"Walk right through them!" Pass them