



Head of the Ohio - October 3-4, 2026 Volunteer Information Packet

Dear HOTO Volunteer,

Thank you for volunteering at this year's Head of the Ohio Regatta. This event is not possible without volunteers. You have the thanks of the Three Rivers Board of Directors, the boathouse staff, and the members of the rowing community.

This packet will provide you with an overview of the various volunteer positions during HOTO weekend. There are many moving parts to a regatta, and we ask that all volunteers be prepared to be flexible and open to changing roles and shift times as needed during the regatta weekend.

- Plan to arrive at the Volunteer Check-In Tent on Washington's Landing **15-minutes before** the start of your shift.
- If the weather permits, please wear your HOTO Volunteer shirt throughout your shift (over long sleeves if necessary). If conditions require a jacket, please wear your shirt underneath the jacket. A hat & sunglasses are also recommended.
- **We have been informed that we may not have access to all of the parking lots on Washington's Landing for HOTO weekend this year due to projects taking place at several properties. We are working through this with our island neighbors and will share the parking plan and island access plan as soon as we have final confirmations.**
- Please allow extra time as all volunteer spots may be full upon arrival. As a result, please consider carpooling with fellow volunteers due to the limited parking.
- Please be mindful of fellow volunteers and only use the island parking for your specific shift.
- The Shuttle Bus will begin running from the 11th & Smallman lot beginning at 5 a.m.
- Be sure to wear comfortable, weather appropriate clothing.
- Please note printouts of race results will not be available as TRRA works to reduce waste.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please reach out before the race weekend.

Sincerely,

Bob Oltmanns & Matt Logue
Regatta Co-Directors

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Pre-Race Set Up

Date	Shift #1	Shift #2
Thursday, October 2, 2026	11:00am - 3:00pm	
Friday, October 3, 2026	10:00am - 3:00pm	

- **Course Installation:** Assist the TRRA Staff at placing the buoys along the race course. TRRA staff will be driving the launches. Volunteers should be comfortable on boats and capable of lifting 30-pounds (cinder blocks). Launch drive experience and knot tying knowledge/skill is preferred but not required.
- Recommend these volunteers wear waterproof clothing and work gloves
- **Island Set Up:** These volunteers will be working in coordination with our Regatta Director and the tasks include, but are not limited to:
 - Signage set up
 - Athlete Village & other tents set-up
 - Boathouse Prep inside Washington's Landing
 - Dock Prep at Washington's Landing

Friday Evening Trailer Load-in

Date	Shift #1	Shift #2
Friday, October 2, 2026	4:30pm - 8:30pm	

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- This role will guide the trailers (coming in for Saturday races) to appropriate parking areas.

Skills Needed:

- Friendly demeanor
- Strong communication skills.
- High degree of situational awareness.
- Be prepared to stop vehicles, including moving vehicles.

Things to keep in mind:

- Recommend volunteers wear comfortable shoes, hi-vis vest/clothing, bring a flashlight.

Saturday Evening Trailer Load-in

Date	Shift #1	Shift #2
Saturday, October 3, 2026	4:30pm - 8:30pm	

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- This role will guide the trailers (coming in for Sunday races) to appropriate parking areas.
- These volunteers may also require assisting with the Saturday trailers getting out of their parking spots.

Skills Needed:

- Friendly demeanor
- Strong communication skills.
- High degree of situational awareness.
- Be prepared to stop vehicles, including moving vehicles.

Things to keep in mind:

- Recommend volunteers wear comfortable shoes, hi-vis vest/clothing, bring a flashlight.

Volunteer Check-in & Information

Date	Shift #1	Shift #2
Saturday, October 3, 2026	5:30am - 10:30am	10:30am - 4pm
Sunday, October 4, 2026	5:30am - 10:30am	10:30am - 4pm

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- Check-in all HOTO volunteers
- Track vacant spots to fill day of volunteer sign-ups
- Distribute T-shirts to volunteers
- Assist athletes & guests with questions regarding the regatta.

Skills Needed:

- Friendly personality
- Organized - systems oriented
- Ability to work in a team environment

Things to keep in mind:

- The volunteer check-in is also an information tent for HOTO athletes & guests. Please be prepared to answer questions regarding the regatta. Key contact information will be provided.
- Recommended these volunteers bring a chair.

Awards

Date	Shift #1	Shift #2
Saturday, October 3, 2026	10:00am - 3:00pm (or end of Regatta)	
Sunday, October 4, 2026	10:00am - 3:00pm (or end of Regatta)	

The Chief Referee or Regatta Directors will notify the awards tent when races are deemed official and provide the volunteers with the order of finish for each race.

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- Recording & handing out medals
- Allow teams to take pictures with the trophies (if there is a trophy for event).

Skills Needed:

- Friendly personality, but firm
- Organized - systems oriented

- Ability to work in a team environment.

Things to keep in mind:

- Only the Chief Referee and Regatta Directors can make the race result official.
- Coaches and parents may try to get their medal early so be prepared to tell them no - not until the race is official.
- **When handing out medals, please make sure you document the name of the person receiving the medals and the team they represent.**
- Recommend these volunteers bring a chair.

Race Timing at Start and Finish Line

Date	Shift #1	Shift #2
Saturday, October 3, 2026	6:00am - 11:00am	11:00am - 4:00pm
Sunday, October 4, 2026	6:00am - 11:00am	11:00am - 4:00pm

Volunteers will be working with USRowing Referees to keep racing fair for all competitors. HOTO utilizes two timing systems: An electronic primary system and a written backup system. **Training will be provided on each system prior to the race.**

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- The start and finish times of each entry in every race.
 - These areas can get hectic at times.

Skills Needed:

- It is imperative volunteers in the timing areas have a high degree of situational awareness & ability to remain focused under pressure.
- Very task-oriented with a high ability to focus in fast-paced situations
- High degree of comfort and skill using iPads and tablets.
- Legible handwriting
- Ability to work in a team environment and communicate both effectively and efficiently.
- Good eyesight and the ability to identify teams are preferred.

Things to keep in mind:

- The Referees run these stations. There are set procedures and protocols they will be following that they will teach you on race day. Each Ref has their own process for these stations so please be adaptable.
- Sometimes multiple crews will pass the starting line and/or finish line in quick succession. Be prepared to receive and record a lot of information in a short period of time on both the primary and secondary timing systems.
- One of the roles may be as a "Spotter" to help identify the bow and/or back number of approaching crews and binoculars would be helpful in this role.
- Recommend these volunteers bring a chair & binoculars (if you own a set).
- No cheering for teams from the start or finish lines. Volunteers MUST remain impartial in this role.

- Finish line transportation instructions provided regatta week.

Dock Team (Washington's Landing & Millvale)

Date	Shift #1	Shift #2
Saturday, October 3, 2026	6:00am - 11:00am	11:00am - 4:00pm
Sunday, October 4, 2026	6:00am - 11:00am	11:00am - 4:00pm

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- Guide and assist coaches and crews with launching/landing their boats, assist with the pre-launch safety inspections and other various tasks.
- Assist referees with boat safety checks (heel ties, bow ball, bow number, etc.)
- Ability to communicate with dock volunteers between Washington's Landing & **Millvale (MV Sunday only)** and referees as needed.
 - Radios will be available for the dockmasters for day-of communication between Washington's Landing & **Millvale (MV Sunday only)**.

Skills Needed:

- Friendly demeanor
- Authoritative voice
- Ability to stand for long periods of time.
- Clear understanding of who can and cannot be in the launching/landing area.
 - No parents, family & friends. Coaches & athletes only.
- Clear understanding of the importance of equipment safety: bow numbers, secured shoes, etc.
- Ability to communicate effectively and work in a team environment.

Things to Keep in Mind:

- There will be a USRowing Referee in charge of the Launch dock. Those volunteering on the Launch Dock will work with the Referee to ensure safe and efficient launch procedures.
- Only athletes and coaches should be in the launch/recovery area. This includes the lower boat yard and on the docks themselves. It is not uncommon for parents to try and get on the dock or stand on the ramps. We must keep the entire Launch & Recovery area clear so be prepared to kindly (and assertively) ask people to leave the area.
- Each team will receive wrist bands in their race packet for athletes and coaches. No one is permitted in the dock area without a wrist band.
- People may snapback at you. If you encounter an aggressive parent, coach or athlete, step back and find a race official or the Regatta Directors (Bob Oltmanns or Matt Logue).

Launch Drivers

Date	Shift #1	Shift #2
Saturday, October 3, 2026	6:30am - 4:00pm	
Sunday, October 4, 2026	6:30am - 4:00pm	

To ensure all boats are safe and racing is fair, Safety Launches are positioned throughout the entire course. This includes but is not limited to, the warm-up area, the race course itself, and the back channel. Some of the Safety Launches will have USRowing Officials, others will be Race Marshalls. **Launch training will be provided prior to race weekend.**

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- Each launch is responsible for ensuring safe and fair racing throughout the duration of the regatta.
- **Saturday:** End of day launches move buoys to shore line after all races are complete.
- **Sunday:** End of day launches, pick-up course buoys after all races are complete.

Skills Needed:

- Familiarity and comfort operating a launch on the river and docking in all weather conditions.
- Rowing experience recommended but not required.
- Ability to assist with a water rescue if needed.
- Ability to communicate clearly with your cell phone in the event of an emergency.

Things to Keep In Mind:

- Once you launch at the start of the day, volunteers will remain on the water for the duration of the race unless there is an emergency. Volunteers will be on the river the entire day unless a bio break is needed. The break can be at the nearest bathroom location or launch may go to the boathouse and return to the river position. Please inform the group of your movement away from your post via the radio in your launch..
- Snacks are provided. You are encouraged to bring lunch/snacks.
- Potential responsibilities include:
 - **Start Area Marshall:** Putting crews in numeric order as they arrive at the starting area and/or ensuring safe operation of crews in the warm-up area.
 - **Official Boat:** You will be partnered with a USRowing Official and will be responsible for ensuring safe and fair racing. The launches remain “static” during racing unless there is an emergency.
 - **Escort Launch:** Responsible for safely and slowly escorting recreational boaters and jet skis through the race if they need to traverse the Allegheny River.
 - **Static Launch:** Remain in the location on the river during the race.
 - **Finish Area Marshall:** Ensuring crews are safe after crossing the finish line and are able to safely turn back upstream and return to the landing doc.
 - **Channel Marshall:** Ensuring safe and efficient on-water operations in the back channel.

- Recommended volunteers bring layers of clothing for heat, cold & rain as well as snacks, water, sunscreen, cell phone in waterproof floating case, portable cell phone charger & work gloves (for buoy removal).

Course Installation

Date	Shift #1	Shift #2
Saturday, October 3, 2026	5:00am - 7:00am	
Sunday, October 4, 2026	5:00am - 7:00am	

Ensure all buoys are positioned correctly throughout the entire course prior to racing each day. This includes but is not limited to, the warm-up area, the race course itself, and the back channel. Buoys will need to be moved FROM their overnight position along the shore line TO their racing position in the river. There will be a detailed map and explanation provided at the regatta. We are looking for both launch drivers and volunteers to operate as 2-person crews to install the course safely and efficiently.

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- Move the buoys from the shoreline into racing position.
- Launch driving experience, or willingness to learn, required.

Skills Needed:

- Familiarity and comfort operating a launch on the river in all weather conditions.
- Ability to lift up to 30-pounds and tie knots (if necessary).
- Ability to communicate clearly with your cell phone in the event of an emergency.

Things to Keep In Mind:

- Recommended volunteers bring layers of clothing for heat, cold & rain, cell phone in waterproof floating case, and work gloves.

Parking

Date	Shift #1	Shift #2
Saturday, October 3, 2026	5:30am - 11:00am	11:00am - 4:30pm
Sunday, October 4, 2026	5:30am - 11:00am	11:00am - 4:00pm

In the interest of full transparency, the Parking Volunteer is one of the most difficult jobs at every regatta. Everyone has a reason for wanting to park on the island and no one likes being told no. We greatly appreciate the sacrifice of sanity you may incur during your shift.

We have developed a system over the last few years that works well when followed and ensures that both regatta and non-regatta traffic operate as smoothly as possible.

We have multiple stations for parking volunteers and everyone will work as a team to ensure all cars end up in the proper parking area.

A detailed map of all parking lots and a list of who can enter the island will be provided prior to regatta weekend.

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- Communicating with various parking station volunteers and working as a team.
- Ensure vehicles are permitted to park on the island

Skills Needed:

- Friendly demeanor
- The ability to stand up to people who disagree with you.
- Strong communication skills.
- Clear understanding of who can and cannot park/visit the island and where to direct them.
- Ability to work with a team.
- Be prepared to stop vehicles, including moving vehicles.
- Clear understanding of who can and cannot come on the island and where to direct them.

Things to Keep in Mind:

- If anyone is overly aggressive or disrespectful, make sure the Regatta Directors are aware. **If there are any identifying features that indicate which team the aggressive/disrespectful individual(s) are from, please share that with the Regatta Directors.**
- Residents of Washington's Landing, including boat owners who dock at Washington's Landing Marina and customers of RedFin Blues are permitted to access the island during racing.
- We will have more detailed information about lot location and drop-off zones, including the map closer to regatta weekend.
- Parking volunteers should wear hi-vis and/or reflective gear and bring a flashlight and have a cell phone

Zero Waste Heroes

Date	Shift #1	Shift #2
Saturday, October 3, 2026	10:30am - 1:30pm	1:30pm - 5:00pm
Sunday, October 4, 2026	10:30am - 1:30pm	1:30pm - 5:00pm

TRRA and the Head of the Ohio Regatta partner with Zero Waste Pittsburgh to make our event as Green as possible. Working with Zero Waste Pittsburgh, we have established an event goal of 90% or greater of waste diversion over the race weekend (in 2025 we achieved a rate of 64.95%).

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- Assist with cleaning up the grounds around the boathouses including, but not limited to, the dock area, parking lots, athlete village, and street/vendor areas once racing is complete each day.
- Zero Waste PA will be on site all weekend to help with garbage disposal and there will be various dumpsters for both garbage and recycling on the island.

Skills Needed:

- Ability to lift and sort items
- Ability to work in a team environment.

Things to keep in mind:

- Bad weather (rain, wind, etc.) will have an impact on this role. Work needs to be done regardless of weather conditions.
- We will have golf carts and plenty of garbage bags to help with the transportation of clean up materials.
 - Golf cart keys will be provided by Donna Bower on race day. Report to the volunteer check-in upon arrival. They will help you notify Donna to retrieve the golf cart key.
 - Be sure to return the golf cart key to Donna before leaving Washington's Landing.
- Recommend volunteers bring work, yard or medical gloves for trash pick-up.

Live Stream Announcer

Date	Shift #1	Shift #2
Saturday, October 3, 2026	7:00am - 11:00am	11:00am - 4:00pm
Sunday, October 4, 2026	6:00am - 11:00am	11:00am - 4:00pm

Head of the Ohio will live stream in partnership with Overnight productions in 2026. We are looking for individuals who are passionate about our sport and enjoy public speaking to sign-up as announcers for our live stream.

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- Each announcement team will be given talking points about each crew provided to the regatta by the coaches & athletes.
- All announcers must remain impartial.
- Announcers will be provided with ad reads for our sponsors.

- All the equipment will be provided by our production team.

Skills Needed:

- Ability to talk confidently and clearly
- A personable communicator
- Ability to work in a team environment

Things to keep in mind:

- Report to volunteer check-in for details on announcing booth location & contact person.
- TRRA will provide the majority of talking points and announcers are encouraged to add their own, family-friendly, flair to the broadcast as well.
- Recommend volunteers bring a chair.

Photographers

Date	Shift #1	Shift #2
Saturday, October 3, 2026	7:00am - 11:00am	11:00am - 4:00pm
Sunday, October 4, 2026	7:00am - 11:00am	11:00am - 4:00pm

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- Take both action shots, candid photos, award presentation photos and any other photos that may catch your eye throughout the weekend.
- These photos would be shared with TRRA for promotional purposes and each photographer will receive photo credit.

Skills Needed:

- Your own camera, which may be a phone or a personal camera.
- A creative eye

Things to keep in mind:

- We will work with all photographers to discuss photo use and sharing systems as we get closer to the regatta.
- Recommend that cameras are protected from water and have a floatation device attached.
- TRRA reserves the right to use all photos free of charge.
- TRRA is not responsible for any damage to cameras.

Floating Volunteer

Date	Shift #1	Shift #2
Saturday, October 3, 2026		11:00am - 4:00pm
Sunday, October 4, 2026		11:00am - 4:00pm

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- This role is a “catch-all” role and will require a great deal of flexibility and adaptability on race weekend. If you signed up for this role please take the time to read through the descriptions of all the roles in this handbook as you may find yourself stationed in multiple locations throughout the day.

Skills Needed:

- Positive Attitude
- Adaptable mindset.
- Sense of adventure.

Things to Keep in Mind:

- Though seemingly non-specific, this role is critically important. Many of our volunteers wear multiple hats (racer, volunteer, parent, etc.) on race weekend. It is not uncommon for someone to run late from a race, get slightly delayed while watching their kid race, or get stuck on the shuttle bus.
- This role helps fill the gaps when necessary and ensures both land and water operations run smoothly throughout the course of the weekend.
- Recommend these volunteers bring a chair, multiple layers of clothing and work gloves.
- This role helps fill the gaps when necessary and ensures both land and water operations run smoothly throughout the course of the weekend.

Post Race Clean Up

Date	Shift #1
Saturday, October 3, 2026	3:00pm - 7:00pm
Sunday, October 4, 2026	3:00pm - 7:00pm

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- This role will prepare for Sunday or clean-up at the end of regatta weekend. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - Reset the interior of the boathouse

Skills Needed:

- Ability to lift and sort items.

- Willingness to work on a variety of tasks

Things to keep in mind:

- This role may not take the full amount of scheduled time. Once all the work is completed, the shift is over.
- Recommend volunteers bring work or medical gloves for trash pick-up and heavy lifting such as cinder blocks, boat launch, tables, tents, etc.

Digital Race Communications

Date	Shift #1	Shift #2
Saturday, October 3, 2026	7:00am - 11:00am	11:00am - 4:00pm
Sunday, October 4, 2026	7:00am - 11:00am	11:00am - 4:00pm

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- This volunteer will enter the upcoming race details such as first & second calls for races for online/virtual communications.
- Required to be inside and sit in front of a computer entering data for the duration of the shift.

Skills Needed:

- Basic computer skills
- Familiarity with GroupMe or similar text platforms
- Willingness to sit in front of a computer for the duration of your volunteer shift, entering and updating race information.

Things to Keep in Mind:

- Upon check-in to the volunteer tent, find Donna Bower to let you into the boathouse. Please note when your shift is over and you leave the boathouse, you will not be permitted back-in. Remember to take your belongings after your shift.

Regatta Operations Assistant

Date	Shift #1	Shift #2
Saturday, October 3, 2026	6:00am - 11:00am	11:00am - 4:00pm
Sunday, October 4, 2026	6:00am - 11:00am	11:00am - 4:00pm

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- Assist the Regatta Director and team on the Island and at the Finish Line.
- Also assist with other roles when needed
- Responsible for reporting any issues or concerns back to the Regatta Director as needed throughout the weekend.

Skills Needed:

- Friendly demeanor
- Energetic work ethic / positive attitude
- Strong communication skills.
- High level of accountability and attention to detail
- Ability to work as part of a team.

Things to Keep in Mind:

- This role will have responsibilities both inside and outside.
- A radio will be provided for the volunteer. The volunteer is responsible for returning the radio to the radio charging station at the end of the shift.