

DC National Rowing Club



Fall Rowing Handbook 2026

Who Is This For

Our Fall High School Competitive Program is for athletes who want to train and compete as part of DC National's high school team. It is designed for rowers who are ready for a serious team environment: consistent practice, strong coaching, technical development, racing, and clear expectations around effort, attendance, and attitude. Athletes do not need to be finished products when they arrive, but they do need to be willing to work, learn, compete, and contribute to the team.

Our Values & Culture

DC National's identity is built around three qualities: Brotherhood/Sisterhood, Discipline, and Drive. These are not slogans. They are the standard for how we train, race, travel, handle adversity, and treat each other.

They are also what we want people to notice when they join the team or compete against us: a team that is connected, organized, tough, and serious about getting better.

Brotherhood/Sisterhood

Brotherhood/Sisterhood means having each other's backs.

You don't have to be best friends with everyone on the team. You don't have to agree on everything. You don't even have to like each other every second of the day.

But you **do** have to care what happens to each other.

When someone is struggling, you do not pile on. You help pull them through. When someone is new, you bring them in instead of making them prove they belong. When someone screws up, you hold them accountable without turning your back on them. When someone succeeds, you are proud of them instead of threatened by them.

If we are out for ourselves, we are not a real team. If we all have each other's backs, we can become something great.



Disciplined

We define a disciplined rower as someone who does what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, regardless of how they feel about it.

Discipline shows up in the everyday moments: being ready for the meeting, carrying equipment correctly, listening for the first time, checking your hardware, bringing water and staying focused throughout practice.

The crews that perform at a high level are not doing extraordinary things. They are consistently doing ordinary things exceptionally well. The standard you accept from yourself every day becomes the standard you can deliver when it matters most.

How you perform in important and high-pressure moments is a reflection of how you prepared in ordinary ones.

Discipline also means emotional control. We can be tired, frustrated, nervous, or disappointed without becoming self-pitying or selfish. We do not make excuses every time something gets hard.

Discipline builds trust because it gives people evidence that they can count on you.





Driven

Being driven means caring deeply and bringing energy, pride, and belief to what you are doing.

A driven rower does not show up just to “see how it goes.” A driven rower shows up to attack the work. Every warmup, drill, piece, lift, and race is an opportunity to improve. Driven athletes do not wait for the important moments to be focused. They understand that important moments are earned through consistent effort in ordinary ones.

Drive also means treating yourself like an athlete 24 hours a day, not just when you are at practice. Sleep matters. Nutrition matters. Hydration matters. School habits matter. Recovery matters. The choices you make when no coach is watching show up in the boat.

Drive is what turns potential into performance.





The Commitment

DC National is a competitive team, and the fall is a real commitment. Practices are six days per week. Athletes are expected to attend consistently, arrive prepared, and take care of the details that allow the group to train well.

That commitment is a big part of why our athletes improve quickly and why the team has had success. This year, DC National won its first Youth National Championship, and from 2024–2026, 28 of 37 DC National graduates — about 76% — went on to row competitively in college.

This does not mean every rower follows the same path. It means the program is serious, the standards matter, and the work adds up over time.

Season Dates & Weekly Schedule

Item	Details
Fall season	Monday, August 24 – Sunday, November 15, 2026
Weekday practice	Monday–Friday, 4:10–6:40 PM
Saturday practice	Saturday, 9:00 AM–12:00 PM

Practice Locations

Location	Address / Use
Outdoor location (default)	Riley's Lock 13015 Riley's Lock Road Poolesville, Maryland 20837
Indoor location when needed	Carderock Swim and Tennis Club 8200 Hamilton Spring Court Bethesda, Maryland 20817

Fall practices will be held outdoors unless unsafe weather conditions prevent us from rowing or a scheduled rowing machine test is planned. In those cases, practice will take place at our indoor location.

Communication Expectations

GroupMe (Rowers): This is our primary communication channel for athletes. Join the team GroupMe. Practice plans, boat assignments and workout reminders are posted here. Check your assignment before each practice.

Email (Parents): Weekly newsletters and schedule changes are sent to parents by email. Make sure your family reads each update.

Absences: Notify your coach of an absence in writing as soon as possible — ideally when you know and no later than 12 PM on the day of practice. Provide a reason and return date.

If you are unable to attend a race, please let the coaches know prior to the first day of practice.

Practice Meetings: We start each practice with a short team meeting. Be circled with your boat or assigned group at 4:10 PM (M–F) or 9 AM (Sat).

Practice & Training

Fall practice takes place at Riley's Lock unless coaches communicate otherwise. Arrive dressed and ready. If you need to change, do it immediately.

Schedule: Monday–Friday 4:10 PM – 6:40 PM; Saturday 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM.

Facility & Gear

Every day bring/wear:

- Reusable water bottle
- Running shoes
- Tight-fitting rowing clothes
- Weather-appropriate layers
- Hat/sunglasses if needed

- Change of clothes if needed
- Any required medication, inhaler, etc.

Keep the facility neat and throw away any litter you see. Everyone is responsible for any trash left out.

Handling equipment: Rowers should carry two oars per person when bringing them to and from the dock. Place them neatly on the dock, tucked in so they are not in the way of people bringing their boats down. Carry your boats with care. If you make a mistake (hitting a rigger, not splitting correctly, not pushing off together, etc.) do it right 3x before proceeding.

Attendance Policy

Athletes are expected to make rowing a priority during the season. The target attendance standard is 90% or better.

Valid absences include illness or injury, family emergency, school-required commitments communicated in advance, and official college visits within reasonable limits.

Unexcused absences affect lineups. After repeated unexcused absences, an athlete may be held out of racing or removed from the program.

Selection & Racing

Selection Philosophy: Coaches build lineups with the greatest chance of success. Rowers and coxswains compete for seats, and coaches select the athletes they believe will make each boat go fastest on race day.

Selection is ongoing. Lineups may change during the season based on performance, attendance, fitness, attitude, coachability, race entries, team needs, and what gives the program the best chance to succeed. A boat can change even if it is doing well. Coaches may move athletes because the team is prioritizing a different event, because a different combination creates more speed overall, or because the race schedule changes what we need from each group.

There is also a hierarchy within the varsity and novice groups. Some boats and events will be prioritized over others depending on the goals of the season and the regattas we are attending. A lineup change is not always a punishment or a sign that a rower is doing poorly. It is part of building the strongest team.

New rowers will train in the novice group and compete in events appropriate for their experience and readiness.

If a rower is unhappy with a placement, they should ask for feedback. Coaches will explain their reasoning, but final lineup decisions are made by the coaching staff.

Fall Race Schedule & Travel Logistics

Regatta	Location	Date
Head of the Charles (select crews only)	Boston, MA	October 16–18, 2026
Head of the Schuylkill	Philadelphia, PA	October 25, 2026
Frostbite Regatta	West Windsor, NJ	November 7, 2026
Bill Braxton Memorial Regatta	West Windsor, NJ	November 8, 2026

Transportation & Lodging: Parents arrange travel and lodging. We'll connect families in the same crew to coordinate carpools and housing when needed.

Team Travel Expectations: Be in your room by 10 PM. Hydrate and off your feet to be fresh for racing. More detailed race-day instructions will be sent before our first regatta.

Trailer Loading & Race-Day Routines

Trailer Loading & Equipment: We load boats methodically. Crews clean and check boats. Coxswains bring their own cox boxes, speed coaches and chargers. Know your seat hardware and inspect your seat and rigger before derigging.

Race-Day Routine: Arrive in DC National gear at least two hours before your race (90 minutes if already rigged). Hang bags, unstrap and rig quietly, check your seat and oarlock, then walk oars to the launch together. Be ready one hour before race time for dynamic warm-up; "hands on" 45 minutes before launch. Coxswains should survey the venue, check equipment, attach bow card and make sure their crew remains on schedule.

Nutrition & Race-Day Preparation

The Night Before: Eat a familiar, balanced meal with carbohydrates, protein and vegetables. Avoid heavy sweets or new foods. Be in your room by 10 PM and ask yourself whether each choice helps you perform at your highest level.

Race Morning: Eat breakfast three hours before your race. Oatmeal with fruit, toast and bananas or eggs with toast and fruit are good options. Hydrate as soon as you wake up and sip water throughout the morning. Don't try new supplements on race day.

Program Expenses

Families should expect the following categories of expenses. Fall 2025 amounts are listed below for reference:

Expense Category	Fall 2026 Amount	Notes
Program fee	\$2,000	Covers coaching, equipment usage, and race entry fees for the season. Travel, transportation, and lodging for races are not included.
Tent fee	\$50	Covers food, drinks, and tent setup at race venues for rowers and families.
USRowing membership	\$65	Paid annually and required to race at USRowing-sanctioned regattas.
Team uniform package	\$330	Required team gear.

Uniform & USRowing Requirements

All athletes need an active USRowing membership before racing. Families will receive instructions for completing or renewing membership after registration.

All athletes are expected to race in DC National gear. Uniform ordering details will be sent after registration.

Safety & Conduct

SafeSport & Athlete Protection: Our club participates in SafeSport. Coaches are mandatory reporters; if misconduct is suspected we will report to SafeSport and local law enforcement. Treat everyone with respect and speak up if something feels wrong.

Team Conduct: Support your teammates, show respect and represent the team well in and out of competition. Your behavior at school, online and in public reflects on the club.

How To Register

Registration for the Fall 2026 HS Competitive Program will open in July.

Families will be able to choose between:

- **Full Fall Season Registration** — for rowers who are ready to commit to the full season.
- **Two-Week Trial** — for new rowers who want to try the team before committing to the full season.

New rowers who join the HS Competitive Program will train in the novice group and compete in events appropriate for their experience and readiness.

Registration links and final program fees will be posted once registration opens. Questions can be sent to dcnationalrowing@gmail.com.