



## Rowing Canada/Rowing Canada Aviron

Source: <http://rowingcanada.org/try-rowing/rowing-jargon>

(Updated February 12, 2014)

### Rowing Jargon

#### [A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [V](#) [W](#)

##### A

**ADAPTIVE (see also Para-Rowing)** - Sweep rowing or sculling for people with physical or intellectual disabilities/limitations. FISA has now adopted "Para-rowing" as the term for rowing with physical disabilities.

**ALIGNER or JUDGE AT THE START** - Official who is on the starting line. He or she makes sure that the bows of each shell are exactly even on the start line (rowing boats are called shells).

##### B

**BLADE** - The end of the oar that is painted in a club's or country's colours. This part of the oar should be just covered with the water when the oarsperson is pulling the oar through the water. Good crews will keep the blade "buried" in the water from the catch to the finish of the stroke.

**BLADE WORK** - Action of the blade during the stroke, encompassing such techniques as "catch" and "feathering." Used to describe how the oarsperson handles his or her oar.

**BODY ANGLE** - Amount, at catch, of forward lean of rower's body from hips.

**BOW** - The front of the boat. The first part of the boat to go across the finish line.

**BOWBALL** - A small white ball at the front (or the bow) of the boat.

**BOWMAN** - The person seated closest to the bow of the boat. This person crosses the finish line first.

**BOW-COXED BOAT** - A boat in which the coxswain lies down in the front or bow of the shell. The coxswain's head is just visible.

**BREAKAGE** - Damage to equipment; breakage during the first 100 meters of the race is grounds for the umpire stopping the race and restarting.

**BUTTON** - A wide plastic ring placed around the collar of an oar. The button stops the oar from slipping through the oarlock.

##### C

**CATCH** - The point in the stroke cycle at which the blade enters the water.

**CATCH A CRAB** - When the blade gets caught in the water as a result of going too deep or not getting the blade out quickly enough at the release.

**CHECK** - Describes an up and down motion of the rowing shell. If the shell bobs up or down at the

catch or finish (release of the oar) it is called checking the boat. Any check interrupts the forward motion of the boat and slows it down.

**COURSE** - A recognized waterway where rowing regattas are held. Official courses are designated by specific rowing bodies and must meet specific requirements. All Olympic and World Championships are held on FISA-sanctioned courses. Also used to describe a section of water that the oarsperson will race over.

**COXED FOUR** - A shell that has four people rowing and a coxswain who steers and calls commands. Each person rowing has one oar. This is a sweep event.

**COXED PAIR** - A shell rowed by two people, each using one sweep oar. A coxswain steers the boat.

**COXBOX** - A speaker system that runs through the boat and has a microphone so the coxswain does not have to yell.

**COXSWAIN** - Member of the crew who sits stationary at the stern of the boat facing forward. The coxswain may lie in the front of the boat. The coxswain's main job is to steer the shell. Selected for their small size and savvy, he or she also calls the race strategy, helps the coach and motivates the crew. Men must weigh 50 kg (110 lbs.) or more, and women 45 kg (99 lbs.) or more.

**CRAB** - An action that slows the boat down. The oar is turned in the water incorrectly or goes too deep in the water, making it difficult or impossible to remove the oar from the water. Some crabs can result in the oarsperson being thrown out of the boat.

## D

**DECK** - Sections at the bow and stern of the shell covered usually by varnished silk, nylon or as part of the main shell material. The top part of the shell from the coxswain to the stern and the bowperson to the bowball.

**DOUBLE** - A shell which has two rowers each using two oars, one in each hand (four oars in total).

## E

**EASY** - Command used by many international crews to mean stop rowing. The command stop is used in emergencies. If the coxswain wants the crew to row "easy," he or she uses the terms row light or paddle.

**EIGHTS** - Term used to indicate an eight-oared shell; eight rowers, plus a coxswain.

**EMPACHER** - A shell manufactured by Empacher, a German boat builder. Usually identifiable by their yellow colour.

**ERGOMETER** - Rowers call it an "erg." It's a rowing machine that approximates the actual rowing motion. The rower's choice is usually Concept II, which utilizes a flywheel and a digital readout so the rower can measure strokes per minute, power output and distance covered. An ergometer test is usually used as part of selection criteria for national teams. Most tests are either six minutes, 2000 metres or 6000 metres in length. Shown here: Rowing machines at an indoor competition.

## F

**FEATHERING** - Action of turning the blade, once out of the water, so it is parallel to the water. The blade is feathered as the oarsperson comes up the slide to the catch. Used to cut down wind resistance during recovery and to aid in passing over rough water.

**FIN** - A short piece of metal toward the stern of the boat on the bottom of the hull. This helps to keep the boat moving in a straight line.

**FINISH** - As part of the stroke cycle, it's the last part of the drive, usually using the arms to pull the oar to the body and then to take the oar out of the water. As part of the race, it's the end of the

race or final sprint to the finish line.

**FISA** - Short for Fédération Internationale des Sociétés d'Aviron. The international governing body for the sport of rowing, established in 1892.

**FOOTSTOP/FOOTBOARDS** - The shoe assembly into which each rower laces his or her feet in a racing shell.

**FOUR** - A shell with four rowers, each with one oar. The stroke or the bow steers the boat by a rudder, which is connect by a cable to their shoe. The rower then turns their foot to turn the rudder and steer the boat.

## G

**GATE** - The bar across the oarlock that keeps the oar in place.

**GUNWALES** - Located above the boat's hull, rowers sit between the gunwales and the riggers are attached here. One of the main purposes of the gunwale is to keep water out of the shell in rough conditions.

## H

**HEADS UP!** - Yelled by rowers when they are carrying a shell to warn you they are trying to get someplace and you are in the way. Best response when you hear "heads up" near you is to duck!

**HEAVYWEIGHT** - An oarsperson that is competing in an open-weight class with no weight maximums. Usually women are over ( 59 kg) 130 lbs. and men over (72. 5 kg)160 lbs. Most international heavyweight women are over 5'8" and 150 lbs. and heavyweight men over 6'2" and 185 lbs.

**HUDSON** - A rowing shell produced by Hudson Boat Works in London, Ont.

## I

**INBOARD** - The part of the oar that goes from the button to the handle

**INTERNATIONAL DISTANCE** - 2,000 metres (approx. 1 1/4 miles). Also the Olympic distance. The distance for Para-Rowing is 1000m.

## J

**JUDGE-ARBITRE** - A judge-referee holding his or her FISA or International licence.

**JUNIOR** - An oarsperson who has not yet turned 19 in the calendar year. FISA holds a junior world championships each year.

## K

**KASCHPER** - A rowing shell produced by Kaschper Racing Shells Ltd. of Lucan, Ont.

**KEEL** - Centre line of the rowing shell, running bow to stern along the bottom of the boat.

## L

**LAYBACK** - Amount of backward lean of an oarsperson's body at the finish of the drive (when the legs are down).

**LEG DRIVE** - Power applied to the stroke, at the catch, by the force of driving the legs down. Along with the hips, the legs are the main force behind pushing the oar through the water. The arms finish the stroke with a pull to the body as the legs are finishing.

**LENGTH IN THE WATER** - Term used to describe the length of arc the oar travels through the water. Taller rowers usually have a longer arc through the water. Work equals force x distance, therefore, taller rowers usually can make a boat go faster than a shorter rower of equal ability.

**LET IT RUN** - A command used to stop rowing.

**LIGHTWEIGHT** - A competitive category limiting the rowers by size. Lightweight men must weigh

no more than 72.5 kg (159.5 lbs.) and the crew, if there is more than one rower, must weigh an average of no more than 70 kg. The women must weigh no more than 59 kg (129.8 lbs.) and the crew must average no more than 57 kg.

## O

**OARLOCK** - U-shaped swivel holding the oar on the rigger, is the load point of the oar acting as a lever (the fulcrum being the blade locked in the water). It is mounted on the rigger "sill" and rotates on an upright pin with a "gate" at top to secure the oar.

**OUTBOARD** - The part of the oar that extends from the oarlock to the water. A distance from the button of the oar to the blade.

## P

**PAIR** - A shell rowed by two athletes, each using a single sweep oar (two oars total).

**PARA-ROWING** - The term for rowing with disabilities sometimes call "adaptive rowing." Para-rowing has been part of the Paralympics' program since 2008.

**PORT** - The left side of the shell, facing forward. For rowers, port is their right as they are facing backwards. Port oars are indicated by red markings.

**POWER "10" or "20"** - Maximum effort by an oarsperson for designated number of strokes. Used in racing strategy.

**PUDDLES** - Whirlpools left in the water by action of the blade building pressure in the water.

## Q

**QUAD** - A shell with four rowers (correctly called scullers), each with two oars (eight oars total).

## R

**RACING START** - First strokes of a race. Usually a series of three to five shorter and quicker strokes than normal to get the shell in motion.

**RATE** - Number of strokes per minute being rowed by the crew. This usually varies from 42 to 48 on the start, 34 to 40 during the body and 40 to 44 at the finish. Smaller shells (fewer rowers) do not rate as high as the eight and the quad, the two highest rating shells.

**RECOVERY** - Part of the stroke cycle in which the oar is feathered and returned to position for the catch and the drive. The duration of cycle from release to catch when the rower is moving to the stern of the shell on his or her moving seat (slide).

**RELEASE** - Part of the stroke cycle in which the blade is removed from the water.

**REPÊCHAGE** - The second chance race given to those crews which fail to qualify for the final from an opening heat. All the heat losers are drawn again and the repêchages are raced. "Rep" qualifiers move onto semifinals or finals depending on the number of entries. Used in international racing.

**RIGGER** - The outrigger that is fixed to the shell. The oarlock is on the rigger and the oar is placed into the oarlock.

**RIGGING** - Adjusting and altering moving parts of the shell such as riggers, footstretchers, tracks, sliding seats, etc. Adjusting the rigging can "lighten" or "load up" the rowers making them work harder or not as hard. A heavy rig means it is hard to pull the oar through the water generally resulting in a lower stroke rate. Coaches consider rigging an "art" and spend hours finding the best rig for their crew to race with.

**RUDDER** - Steering device at the stern of the shell or just behind the coxswain. The rudder is on the bottom of the boat. The coxswain steers the boat by ropes attached to the rudder post. Coxless boats steer by moving their right shoe to which are attached the rudder cables that, in

turn, run to the rudder post.

**RUN** - The run is the distance the shell moves during the phase of the stroke the blades are out of the water. This can be measured by the distance between the puddles made by the same oar from one stroke to the next.

## **S**

**SCULLS** - Smaller oars used in sculling events.

**SCULLERS** - Rowers that row in a single, double or quad. A sculler uses two oars, one in each hand.

**SENIOR B** - Also called Under 23 age category.

**SHAFT** - The long "stick" part of the oar.

**SHELL** - The correct term for rowing boats.

**SKYING** - Term used to describe a blade that is too high off the surface of the water during the recovery.

**SLIDE** - A term used to describe the seat on which rowers sit. The seat has wheels underneath it and the wheels sit in tracks. This way the rowers can "slide" sternward to the catch.

**SLIDE CONTROL** - The oarsperson's command of speed at which he or she moves toward the stern of the boat to prepare to catch the water for the next stroke. Difficult to learn good control as the shell is moving forward underneath the rower!

**STAMPFLI** - A rowing shell manufactured by Stampfli of Zurich, Switzerland.

**STARBOARD** - Right side of the shell facing forward. Starboard is on the rower's left. Oars are indicated by green markings.

**START** - Official start is ATTENTION- GO.

**STARTER** - Official that starts the race by giving the start commands and by using a flag as he or she says the commands.

**STARTING GATE** - A structure at the starting line of the race. The shell is "backed" into the starting gate. Once in the gates, the stern of the shell is held by a person who is lying on the starting gate, which ensures an even start. When the starter says "GO" the 'boat holder' lets go of the shell.

**STERN** - Rear of the shell.

**STRETCHERS** - Cross bracing in the shell to which the shoes are attached; usually called footstretchers. Also refers to the wood or metal devices used on which the shells are placed when they are out of the water. These are also called slings.

**STROKE** - The oarsperson that sits closest to the stern. In the eight he or she sits facing the coxswain. The stroke sets the rhythm for the rest of the crew to follow.

**SWEEP** - Refers to events in which the rowers use one oar each (pair, four, and eight). A sweep oar is longer than a sculling oar.

**SWING** - The hard-to-define feeling when near perfect synchronization of motion occurs in the shell, enhancing performance and speed.

## **V**

**VESPOLI** - A rowing shell produced by Vespoli USA.

## **W**

**WASHING OUT** - When the blade of the oar comes out of the water during the drive. The blade should remain covered with water from the catch to the release of the stroke cycle.

**WEIGHTS** - A bag of sand required to be carried by those coxswains who weigh below their

minimum.