

Ocean City Crew Boosters, Inc.

PARENT HANDBOOK

GUIDELINES TO OC CREW

WELCOME!

The Ocean City Crew Boosters, coaches, and team members would like to welcome you! Your child is about to embark on an adventure into a wonderful, lifelong sport. He or she will build muscle, endurance and character, by learning the value of persistence, dedication and true teamwork!

This booklet of information is intended to help you better understand the crew program and what to expect during the upcoming season. The Ocean City HS rowing community is delighted to welcome you! Congratulations - you now have a rower, or two, or more in the family!

OCEAN CITY CREW BOOSTERS, INC.

The OC Crew Booster Club was the seed that began the OCHS Crew Program and was started by a caring, relentless group of parents, business owners, local educators and public officials. Because of this endeavor, the OC Crew Booster Club is a vital support group for the Ocean City rowing program. As non-profit organization, crew boosters provide the high level of financial assistance and support necessary to keep our team on the water year after year. We were only able to purchase the equipment that we have today through the generous contributions of local businesses, caring members of the community and parents like you.

Unlike parents' groups in other traditional sports, the crew booster club plays a vital role in the rowing program in every aspect, from purchasing equipment to the weekly logistical support. Crew is a wonderful sport for parents as well as for team members and their extended families. Crew parents share in the rower's pride and sense of accomplishment, creating memories that will last a lifetime. We encourage you to join one of the various committees that make this program a reality for your child and the school. If you don't think that you will be able to find the time, don't worry; there is a task that will fit anyone's lifestyle and schedule. *We welcome any and all hands!* This includes members of your extended family. In some cases, grandparents have been more than willing to pitch in and help where needed.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- The OCHS crew program's inaugural season was in the spring of 2004. The program was formed as a *competitive* crew team for Ocean City High School girls and boys with the objective of teaching rowing and fitness, and fostering team spirit. We have many National Championships under our belt, as well as top awards in Cities, States and Stotesbury competitions.
- The spring crew season traditionally begins in mid-January and ends around the Memorial Day weekend.

- The team has *daily* land practice at the 36th Street Erg Room and/or water practice at the 34th Street Bridge site, rain or shine, 4-6 days per week. The team will also schedule intense practices during *Spring Break and possibly the week prior to Stotesbury and Nationals*. Please mark your calendars now!
- The teams may compete in some or all of the following regattas on an annual basis:
 - Manny Flick series of regattas on Schuylkill River, Philadelphia, PA
 - Lake Lenape Sprints (3 races) & Atlantic County High School Rowing Championships, Mays Landing, NJ, The Sunday of Mother's Day every year, too.
 - St. Andrews Invitational, Middletown, DE usually the Saturday of Easter weekend.
 - New Jersey Scholastic Championships on the Cooper River (States), Camden, NJ
 - Mercer Sprints, Princeton, NJ
 - Philadelphia City Championships on the Schuylkill River (Cities), Philadelphia, PA
 - Stotesbury Cup Regatta on the Schuylkill River, Philadelphia, PA
 - Scholastic Rowing Association of America Championships-Nationals

The Crew Booster Club, in partnership with the OCHS, financially supports the established crew program. The high school supplies basic transportation to and from the regattas, covers the entry fees, uniforms and salaries for the coaches. The Crew Booster Club supplements general operating costs, purchases all equipment, and is in the process of soliciting support for an area boathouse. The Booster Club's main sources of revenue are donations and fundraisers; therefore it is *necessary for each rower's family to participate in Dinner Club and the 50/50 Raffle*. To date, the Crew Booster Club has raised and donated over \$500,000 in equipment to the OCHS Crew Program. **Our annual budget is approximately \$75,000 minimum, and as our program continues to grow, so does the budget.**

- **At each regatta, the OC Crew Booster Club supports the teams and their families by providing food on the river & lake banks. To make this a reality, each family will be asked the following:**
 - Everyone is needed to volunteer multiple times during the season with food prep, setting up, breaking down, and organizing the food tent.
 - If you are able we also need people to tow the food trailers to and from the events.
 - Volunteers are also needed during the week to help with various clean-up and restocking tasks. Details will be explained at The First Stroke Diner.
 - To volunteer for the many committees and various events that are held throughout the year please go to our website and click on the **Volunteer** tab and sign up. If you do sign up, however you are asked to participate the entire shift, other than times that your child/children may be rowing.
 - To financially support the hospitality/food tent through the **annual payment of a rower's tent fee: \$150.00 (\$75/additional rower in a family) in addition to a \$200.00 work bond. The work bond will be returned at the end of the season if the required volunteer time regarding the food tent has been completed. All tent fees are due at the "Kick Off Meeting" each year.**
- A possible one time out-of-pocket payment for the boats that qualify for the following national medal races (includes accommodations and a boat dinner). These fees will be the responsibility of each rower that attends the Scholastic Rowing Assoc. of America Championships (Nationals) which is approximately \$200.00 per rower.
- The Booster Club is a non-profit corporation set up as a publicly supported organization under the Internal Revenue Code. Its primary purpose is to support the OCHS crew teams. Each crew family

is automatically a member of the OC Crew Booster Club. There is no membership fee required to participate in the organization's efforts - everyone is welcomed to join and help out in this endeavor!

COMMUNICATION

O.C. Crew Boosters, Inc. Network & Web Page: The OC Crew Booster club has created an interactive site for news, information, schedules, and coaches' updates and up to the minute communications. You are encouraged to join this website at www.ochscrew.com.

E-Mail: E-Mail will be the primary means of communication with the OC Crew Booster members to ensure everyone is well-informed of planned activities and schedules. Rower and parent e-mail addresses will be obtained at the Kick-Off Night and First Stroke Dinner. Updates and changes to e-mail addresses should be sent to secretary@ochscrew.com as they occur throughout the year.

FUNDRAISING EFFORT

This year, and for years to come, the majority of the funds needed to support the crew program will have to be raised by the parents and athletes themselves. This season we are going to put our efforts toward three fund raisers: the Dinner Club, a 50-50 Raffle and Team Sponsorships. **It is imperative for each rower's family to participate in both the Dinner Club, and the 50/50 Raffle. Any contributions or donations made above and beyond these fundraisers, throughout the year, are greatly appreciated but cannot take the place of initial fundraising program. Thank you for your understanding.**

The success of the crew program comes from many sources: coaches, support from local educators and public officials, dedicated athletes, friends and caring, active parents. Without the financial backing of the OC Crew Booster Club, the program would not exist as we know it today! We thank you for all of your continued and future support!

THE DINNER CLUB

Each crew family will be required to sell (15) \$20 raffle tickets for chances to win a \$50.00 dinner gift certificate to area restaurants. There will be drawings over the course of the season. Dinner Club ticket packets will be distributed to each family at Kick-Off Night. Tickets and money will be due back on or before the First Stroke Dinner. **Each ticket will stay eligible for all drawings.** Dinner gift certificates will be mailed to the winners promptly after the drawing has taken place and be posted on our website.

THE 50/50 RAFFLE

In order to achieve our goal, all crew family must sell four (4) 50/50 Raffle tickets at \$50 each. If you are selling a ticket to a group of people, each name must be written on the ticket. Awards will only be given to the names on the winning ticket. Distribution of these tickets will be at the First Stroke Dinner. The 50/50 Raffle ticket will be pulled at the end of the year banquet in June.

END OF THE YEAR BANQUET

At the end of each season the coaches, rowers, and their families to celebrate the successes of the season

and say good luck to the departing senior class in one last tear-jerker of a night. Stories are shared and memories are relived on film as we close the next chapter of OCHS Crew. This is held at the Great Bay Country Club and all are welcome to attend. Costs for rowers and their families will be announced closer to the event. This is also where we name the honorees of the *Brian Fitzpatrick Memorial Award* and pick the winning ticket from the 50/50 raffle.

BRIAN FITZPATRICK MEMORIAL AWARD

Brian joined the Ocean City High School Crew Team as a sophomore the year the program began. The coach, Greg Tracy, had an interesting challenge with Brian because he was a big, strong kid, but not particularly athletic. He played football, baseball, and basketball when he was younger without much enthusiasm and preferred sitting in front of the TV playing video games. He always loved the water.... kayaking, surfing, and was part of the OC Swim Team. He was a quiet, gentle person with a great sense of humor and an incredible affinity for chess. He was an average student and struggled occasionally with his schoolwork.

Something about crew sparked a fire in Brian. He had an unusual calmness that the coach recognized - a quality that can't be taught but is a true gift in endurance racing. That first year the team's spring training took place in freezing temperatures in the bay behind Ventnor. They waded waist deep in the cold water and boarded the 8 person shell one at a time to row in windy choppy conditions. This built bonds and friendships and character no other sport can do. The success of the teams' races in the regattas against long established schools drove his enthusiasm and created a great seasoned athlete, but moreover changed his demeanor. He was now a confident and social young man with a sense of responsibility and commitment to the coach and crew. All of this carried over into his school work. He planned to become a chemistry teacher and attend St. Joe's. Brian was competitive yet an exemplary team player.

Brian's tragic death in a car accident occurred early in his senior year on October 3rd, 2005. The crew family at the time all felt the impact. Along with a shell bearing his name, the crew family established this memorial award to be presented to one boy and one girl each year. Each recipient recognized and embraced the hard work and commitment the sport demanded. Each recipient showed determination and dedication to the team as well as to their personal goals. It was not Brian's goal to be better than everyone else; it was his goal to be a better man, teammate, friend and mentor.

This award is chosen by the coaches for one senior boy rower and one senior girl rower who **embodies this spirit!**

BASIC CREW POLICY, PROTOCOL & PARTICIPATION

OCHS and rowing protocol dictate rules that each rower must follow in order to participate. Each rower **must** have a physical form turned into the school nurse, turn in a “Red” participant card and pass a basic swimming test, for safety reasons. Rowers must also register each season with the boosters at ochscrew.com and at usrowing.com.

Crew Protocol & Traditions: Tradition has it that a coxswain cannot get his/her feet wet and is carried to & from the boat. A rower cannot purchase a team jacket until he/she has rowed for one full season. OC crew jackets will be offered for sale at the end of the season (May). Boat dinners are traditionally held the night before a regatta. Some boats rotate to a different rower’s house each week, while others find a main home and never leave. Whichever way they do it is alright with us! The goal is to afford the members of the boat an opportunity to load up on pasta and carbohydrates giving the rowers’ time to psych themselves for the next day’s race. Some families choose to share in this event with another family. These are great bonding experiences and a way for rowers and families to come together. This fosters true team-work and close friendships that can last a lifetime!

Nutrition: Rowers will be directed by their coaches concerning their diet during the crew season. Basically, they will be instructed to load up on carbohydrates the night before a regatta and protein-enriched foods the morning of the regatta. Also, lots of fluids in the form of water are important to help prevent dehydration the day of the race.

EVENTS, HEATS & BOAT SELECTION

It’s very competitive! Boats compete against other boats, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. In order to make the boats as competitive as possible, the athletes compete against each other for a seat. Different kids have different abilities and rowers will change positions and boats during the course of a season.

Why do we have fewer competing boats towards the end of the season? Due to the limitations of the Regattas, classifications are eliminated or redefined in some races and not all boats will go through to the end of the season. *The coaches will make switches to fill each boat with the best possible lineup that is available to them at that time.*

How do the coaches determine who is in which boat? Through a combination of erg times, attendance at practices, observation of rowing technique, age, weight and on water competition (seat races), and the coaches will determine who races in which boat. There are many factors that the coaches must take into consideration before making this important determination. **PLEASE REMEMBER, THAT THIS IS SOLELY THE COACHES DECISION AND THAT PARENTS SHOULD REFRAIN FROM TRYING TO PRESSURE THE COACHES AS TO WHO WILL BE PLACED IN WHICH BOAT AS THE SEASON PROGRESSES.**

Do the parents or booster club help the coaches decide on actually who rows? NO!!!! The purpose of the booster club is to support the coaches and athletes. The coaches’ job is to train, coach and strategize, **and their decisions are considered final!** The coaches try to be objective as they can; they use accepted standards and protocol for evaluation of each athlete.

Can rowers miss any practices? There are eight seats in a boat, four oars on each side. If somebody is missing, the boat can't row (three oars on one side and four on the other). Please remember that this is a true team sport and that recurring absences of a single rower will affect the progress and success of the boat to which they have been assigned. Absences from scheduled practices should be avoided when and where possible.

What about scheduled family vacations? The sport's events and practices take place in the spring – including the entire spring break. **Spring break practice is mandatory.** Practices may take place 2 or more times daily during this week. Please make your vacation plans accordingly to accommodate our schedule. We fully understand that the parents of our newer rowers have not received much notice and that they may have already planned a family vacation. If this is the case, please be sure that this information is passed along to the coaches as soon as possible in order that they may make the necessary accommodations.

Events & Heats: Each category is referred to as an event, such as a “Women Freshman Eight +1” (girls freshman eight boat plus a cox). In each event, there are multiple heats if there are more boats competing than there are lanes. Regattas will also use heats to determine the semi-finals. Each regatta has different events; consequently not all boats will participate at each regatta. The regattas are typically full-day events that last from early morning until late in the afternoon. **The primary regattas in which the OC Crew Team participates vary from year to year and include some or all of the following:**

Manny Flick Series: (PSRA) This is a series of regattas held on Sundays throughout the months of March and April on the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia. The races take place just south of the Strawberry Mansion Bridge. Spectators watch from the Kelly Drive side of the river. The Boosters arrange for a Port-O-Potty to be placed adjacent to the food tent for the use by the O.C. rowers and family members.

Lake Lenape Sprints: This is a series of regattas held on Saturdays during the months of March and April on Lake Lenape in Mays Landing, NJ. At these races, our boats compete against the other South Jersey teams, which have traditionally been our best competition. These races are especially family-friendly because of their relative proximity to Ocean City. The rowers are based on one side of the lake, and the parents on the opposite side, with free shuttle service between the two sides. These races provide an excellent opportunity for friends and family who cannot devote the time to the more distant locales to observe a crew regatta. A well-maintained restroom facility is located in the park.

New Jersey Scholastic Championships (States): These are the State championships, held on the Cooper River in Camden County (Pennsauken/Cherry Hill area). The first of the medal races in which we participate, this regatta is held in late April. This site is located in a very picturesque area of Camden County. Port-O-Pots are provided by the regatta organizers. Additionally, the County has built a new boathouse at this site for the area schools to house their equipment & boats. This event will have many national vendors that offer a varied array of rowing related apparel & items.

Philadelphia City Championships (Cities): These are the City championships, held on the

Schuylkill River in Philadelphia. We must participate in at least three (3) of the Flicks (see above) in order to qualify for this regatta. This is a medal race. It is held in early May. The races take place in the same location as the Manny Flicks. Again, the Boosters arrange for a Port-O-Potty to be placed adjacent to the food tent for the use by the O.C. rowers and family members.

Stotesbury Cup Regatta: This is the oldest, largest and most prestigious regatta in the continental United States. High schools from all over come to compete in this regatta. One of the medal races in which we participate, this regatta is held the third weekend in May over a three-day period on the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia, from Thursday to Saturday. Everyone is welcome to attend this unbelievable event!! The hospitality tent will be available on Friday and Saturday for everyone to enjoy. Please remember that we will need many individuals to help us with the meals and the setup and breakdown of the site. Also, please note: **this often falls the same weekend as the OCHS Prom.** Our rowers have always managed to make it to the Prom after their day on the river, so your rower need not miss either event.

Scholastic Rowing Association (Nationals): This is considered the nationals of rowing. Last of the medal races in which we participate, it is held over Memorial Day weekend, from Thursday to Saturday. The location alternates every year. If the coaches decide that the rowers should stay overnight near the race site, the accommodations for qualifying boats will be made through the booster club for the two-night stay. The approximate cost is \$200.00 and it will be rower's responsibility to cover this cost. Accommodations & food will be arranged through the Crew Booster Club, however, rowers must contribute to these costs. The preliminary and semi-finals are Friday, and finals are held on Saturday. Once again, there will be many vendors selling almost anything that you can imagine that is related to the sport of rowing. Please remember that everyone is welcome to attend!! The Food Tent may be available, depending on the number of rowers attending on Friday and Saturday. Families are also welcome to reserve a room through the booster club. Once again, details will follow as the season progresses.

SOME RACE DAY TIPS & THE FOOD TENT

Race Day Tips: Check for informational e-mails a couple of days before the regatta. It will include roll call, the regatta schedule, directions and any other important details. Please try and get to the regatta early if you would like a good parking spot (7:00 a.m. is not really considered early at these events). Watch the weather in advance, and dress accordingly. When you arrive, please look for our hospitality tents. It's a long day, and there will be a lot of down time, so bring comfortable chairs, bikes, and something for the younger kids to do. On clear days sunblock and a hat are a must! The hospitality tents will be available at each regatta, which usually includes limited beverages and a lunchtime meal. Extended families and their friends are always welcome, and donations are always happily appreciated to help defer our event costs.

The Food Tent is one of the most visible ways the Crew Booster Club supports the team, for it is our home away from home. The hospitality tent provides rowers and their families with food along the river/lake banks. It's a place where rowers can get something to eat and drink, and parents can

congregate and watch the events on the water. The Food Tent Committee will gain input from the coaches as to food choices and times in which the athletes will be eating at the races. Before and/or after your athlete races, the coach will allow them to visit the food tent. At these times, families are expected to “clear the way” for the athletes as their time is very limited. Food donations are always welcome and appreciated.

Like everything else that is worthwhile, it takes lots of volunteers and financial support to make something of this magnitude a reality. We’ll have tents, lots of good food and port-a-potties available at the majority of the events. The regatta schedule will determine the time that we arrive and depart, and if we’re serving meals that day. Each family will be asked to volunteer at minimum four events. We buy the food and supplies in bulk, accept donations and use any avenue possible to keep the cost down. *The food tent is financially supported solely through the food tent fees.* **If your family has financial concerns in this area, please feel free to speak with the treasurer, to make the necessary arrangements that may better fit your budget.**

Transportation/Parking at the Races: see ochscrew.com for directions Carpooling is always highly recommended between parents and families. You will find that in most cases prime parking is very limited and that any available spaces will fill up quite early in the day. At some events, we are not even permitted to bring our hospitality trailers onto the site and thus we must trek everything from a remote lot. If an individual or family requires handicap parking, please be sure to bring and display your permits as required. Limited handicap parking is available but can’t be guaranteed.

In the case of the Schuylkill River races, the school receives a limited number of passes to park along Kelly Drive. These must be set aside for the Booster volunteers that tow the trailer and set up the food tent. General parking is available in Fairmount Park. Spectators should be prepared to walk approximately ½ mile to our site along the river. There is also a trolley that circles the route free of charge.

Lenape Sprints has ample parking available in the parking lot located within the Lake Lenape Park for a fee (usually around \$5). The fee is used to pay for the Jitneys that shuttle the rowers between the park and the boat launch area. Parking is prohibited in the Young’s Skating Rink lot. Vehicles parked in the skating rink lot will be ticketed and towed. Please note that there is no bus transportation to the races on Lake Lenape. The rowers must arrange for their own transportation, and car-pooling is encouraged.

On-street parking at the Cooper River site is available along North Park Drive. Lots are available in Cooper River Park but are usually filled with crew trailers. Once again, it gets crowded early, so please be prepared to walk a short distance.