



Start Platforms and Starts

The Heart of Texas Regatta and Texas Rowing Championships will use a starting platform. Please review these "How Tos" of backing into the start platform, and rules regarding start sequences and the first 100 meters of a race.

START PLATFORM

The start platform may be entered from either lane 1 or from lane 7. Please be aware of what lane you are assigned so that you align yourself to pull into the correct lane. You should be in position to enter the course no less than 5 minutes before the start time of your race. Make sure to wait until the Starter calls you onto the course before you begin your lane entry.

- Row into your lane approximately one boat length away from the starting platform. Way-enough with the middle of your boat centered in the middle of your lane.
- Turn your boat so that the bow ball is pointing toward the finish line and the stern is lined up with your stake boat holder.
- The coxswain or stroke seat should communicate with the stake boat holder so they know you are approaching the platform.
- Begin backing slowly and evenly using only stern pair or stern four. As you get closer to the platform, use stern pair only.
- Rowers must back boats with blades turned to bow, with arms and back movements ONLY and not use the legs. Attempting to use the legs or attempting to back without reversing oars is one of the great causes of instability and loss of direction when backing.
- Rowers and coxswains must put their rudders in a zero or neutral position when backing and resist any urge to use the rudder when the boat is being backed.
- Bow coxed fours must establish this entire routine with the stroke seat rower prior to getting on the water to facilitate a smooth backing operation.
- You should be locked on no less than 2 minutes before your race is set to begin. (See USRowing rule 2-301).

ALIGNMENT

Remember that a referee's command overrules a coxswain command. All rowers should be aware that if the referee calls them they need to react immediately, particularly bow pair. Whenever a boat is locked on a stake boat, but changing its point, the stroke or coxswain should raise a hand high in the air (elbow to ear) so that the starting referee knows that the boat is not ready. If the boat has a hand in the air, the boat should be doing something to correct its point.

- If a boat is held by a stake boat holder and conventional rowing strokes are used to keep the shell pointed down the center of the lane, the leverage generated will overcome the stake boat holder's ability to grasp the stern of the boat, causing the boat to break free, lose its point and potentially delay the race.
- The term "sculling" describes a special technique employed at the start platform where a crew uses one or more of its oars to overcome conditions in order to achieve a straight point down the center of the lane at the start of the race, swinging the bow of the boat laterally without moving the boat forward and without generating leverage which overpowers the stake boat holder.
- For example, if a boat is being blown to port by wind, the coxswain will ask the port side rower in the bow pair to pass up his oar handle to the rower seated directly in front of him. With only his port hand gripping the end of the handle like a sculling oar, the recipient rower will then extend that borrowed handle sternward, bringing the oar nearly parallel to the boat and swinging the squared blade towards the bow of the boat. The blade will enter the water as close to the boat as possible, with the sculling rower using **short, rapid, firm** strokes, about two strokes per second, with no feathering motion.



- Only in very windy weather and **only in 8s** is it recommended to use both 2 and 4 to scull or both 3 and 5 to scull. Otherwise, keep it to one person only.
- Quads are also able to safely 'scull' to correct a bow point but it is not recommended for doubles.
- 'Sculling' should be practiced prior to racing so all rowers are comfortable with the motion.
- Be aware that in windy conditions, you may need to over-correct, since the boat will continue to be pushed by the wind once you stop 'sculling.'

STARTS

Once all boats are locked on, the Starter will poll all crews. (See USRowing rule 2-305). Rowing races can have a variety of starts depending on the weather and body of water, so it is important that both the coxswain and the crew be aware of all start possibilities. (See USRowing rules 2-306 through 2-310).

- The regular start: In calm conditions the general rowing start progresses once all boats are locked on and all hands are down. The command to begin the race is "ATTENTION GO."
- The quick start. If the aligner is having trouble getting the boats aligned the Starter may dispense with the polling of the crews and announce that a Quick Start will be used. They will then quickly call "ATTENTION GO." The coxswain and boat need to be aware and race ready once they are locked on to the stake boat.
- A countdown start: If the wind is picking up and the aligner is unable to get all boats aligned the starting referee will call a countdown start. When countdown starts are initiated, hands will no longer be recognized. The starting referee will then begin the call "5...4...3...2...1...ATTENTION GO."
- It is the coxswain's responsibility to be aligned by the time the referee calls "GO." Sculling is to be used if necessary during the countdown, but all rowers should be holding onto their own oar and at the ready position by "GO."
- All crews are permitted to refuse to start if they are not ready, but risk a penalty if they do so. (See USRowing rule 310).

THE FIRST 100 METERS

- The first 100 meters of a race is considered the 'breakage zone.' The breakage zone will be marked with red buoys. Should a piece of equipment legitimately break during your time in the red buoy zone, way-enough immediately and signal to a referee that you have breakage. (See USRowing rule 2-311)
- Make sure you have legitimate breakage! Catching a crab or jumping a seat is not breakage!
- If your breakage can be repaired on the water the boats will be brought back to the start and restarted after the repair. If a part needs to be brought from shore or a boat can no longer be used, all boats will be taken off the course and the race will take place later in the schedule once all repairs are completed.
- If you have breakage past the breakage zone, keep rowing to the best of your ability, there are no restarts past 100 meters.

Please review these materials and practice several different starting situations with your crew. This will help all our races start on-time and all racing to run fairly, safely and efficiently.

Austin Rowing Club wants you to have a great race!