

Come Boating! Cold Weather Rowing

2015-2016 Season

Monica Van Peski, Cold Weather Rowing Coordinator

Overview

- * Cold Weather Rowing Program Overview (30 mins)
- * Cold Weather Risks and Mitigation (30 mins)
- * Online Sign-up System (30 mins)
- * Feel free to ask questions at any point!!

Cold Weather Rowing Program Overview

- * History and Purpose
- * How the Program Works
- * Proper Care and Feeding of Gigs in Cold Weather
- * Some Answers to Questions you may have
- * Open Q&A

History and Purpose

- * **The Purpose:** to provide a program to safely allow rowers to row year-round, either for race training or recreational purposes
- * **The Origin:** training for the Snow Row
- * **The Evolution:** the addition of recreational rowing for those qualified ... we currently have 70 rowers who are winter qualified or have expressed an interest in winter rowing this year
- * **The Future: ...**

How the Program Works: Timing

- * While winter is the longest season in Maine, it is actually shorter than the Cold Weather Rowing Season
- * Cold Weather Rowing Season
 - * Starts: when the city docks are pulled in the fall
 - * Ends: when the city docks go back in in the spring
- * Shoulder Season: the “in between” times in the fall and the spring
 - * Late April/May: the official community program is not in effect but the weather starts to get nice and the city docks may be back in the water
 - * mid-October/Early November: from when the docks are pulled and/or the official community program ends to when the official cold weather program begins
 - * More flexibility is given during the shoulder seasons

How the Program Works: The Rules

- * The current Cold Weather Rowing Guidelines state:
 - * **All participants must wear Life Jackets**
 - * A full boat (6 rowers plus cox) for Cold Weather Rowing*
 - * Must have a minimum of 4 rowers
 - * Wind speeds cannot exceed 14 knots and the air temperature cannot be less than 20 degrees F*
 - * Gigs must stay within 300 feet of shore
 - * A float plan, with time out/in, must be established, along with a shore contact
 - * VHF and cell phone are on board
- * While not a rule or requirement, it is safer to have two gigs out on the water at one time

* The cox can deviate from this guideline if weather and water conditions are suitably favorable. Deviation from this guideline requires full agreement of all participants.

How the Program Works: Major Dependencies

- * **Weather and water**

- * Morning conditions are usually calmer than afternoon
- * Try to schedule rows for high tide
- * Avoid scheduling rows when the tide is at peak flood

- * **Daylight Hours**

- * Row start times: 8 AM to 2:30 PM
- * Note: during shoulder seasons, daylight may allow for earlier and later rows; coxes should use their judgment when scheduling

- * **Availability of Coxes**

- * **The Rowers Themselves**

- * Be flexible
- * Be patient
- * Be attentive to the coxes
- * Be collaborative in the whole process

How the Program Works: Logistics

- * **Sign-up Rows**

- * Any approved cold weather rower/cox can participate
- * Available rows will be posted online and/or communicated via email
- * Same rules apply as regular season: if you sign up, show up, otherwise, ensure you have canceled out appropriately

- * **Arranged Group Rows**

- * Set Group Rows: a particular group chooses to row together
- * Training Rows: for example, the Snow Row training
- * In either case, the schedule is set by that particular group and recorded appropriately to avoid conflicts

The proper care and feeding of gigs during the cold weather season

- * During the offseason, most of the gig maintenance takes place
- * We have two spaces at Front Street Shipyard but currently plan to only have one boat in use at a time
 - * TBD: using the face of the dock, once all other boats are pulled
- * The gigs must be kept clear of snow and water, since ice formation will damage the boats
 - * **Belle Fast and Selkie:** currently out of the water
 - * **Malcolm G:** On the dock and available for rowing with plans to pull her in early Jan 2016, when ice starts forming
 - * Creation of covering system in progress, using existing snaps for sun cover
 - * Will be pulled in case of severe storms
 - * Tentative maintenance schedule: Kevin Brown is maint coordinator
 - * Selkie is first in line with plans to have her in the water by January '16
 - * Belle Fast will be next, then Malcolm G

How the Program Works: The Row

- * Meet at the appropriate place; it may vary
 - * If we're launching from the ramp, meet at boatshed
 - * If we are on the docks, depends on where we are docked
 - * If not meeting at or near the boatshed, the cox is responsible for bringing the gear to the boat
- * Arrive at row time; allow for 90 minutes for entire row from beginning to end
 - * Extra time is needed for uncovering the gigs, clearing snow and ice from ramps or docks, and launching
- * Row and get warm!
- * Plan to stay after the row to help pull and/or cover the gig (10 – 20m)
- * **DO NOT GO ONTO THE DOCKS WITHOUT A SECOND PERSON PRESENT**

What might we encounter out there?

- * Ice, ice, ice
 - * On the docks, on the ramp, upriver, on the oar shafts
- * Bergy-bits
- * A complete absence of other boats
- * Sudden rise in wind, sudden shifts in wind direction
- * Stronger currents around the Front Street docks than the city dinghy docks
- * Snow (yay! well, most of the time)

What do I wear?

- * Life jacket
- * Layers
 - * Recommend layers of different weight wool with an outer layer of wind proof protection
 - * Must be easy to add/remove
 - * Wear your life jacket under the layers you think you may remove
 - * Have something handy to put on after we stop rowing
- * Hand protection: winter gloves, pogies
- * Head protection: waterproof recommended
- * Boots
 - * If launching from the ramp, having rowers with boots is essential
 - * Recommend boots with neoprene for warmth, even when wet

What do I bring?

- * A personal life jacket, if you have one and prefer to wear it
- * If you like to wet your gloves for rowing, consider bringing warm water with you to do so
- * Shovels and brooms for clearing the docks and ramps; the more people we have clearing, the faster it goes (and the warmer everyone stays!)
- * Cell phone in a waterproof container
- * Baked goods and tea are always welcome 😊
- * Note: there are some cold weather specific items in the coxes' boxes like space blankets and heat packs

Questions?

Contact: Dick Fischbeck, Safety Officer

Cold Weather Risks and Mitigation

Water Temperatures in Our Area

Portland	Month	Bar Harbor
62	Aug	62
59	Sep	58
52	Oct	54
47	Nov	52
39	Dec	44
34	Jan	49
33	Feb	38
37	Mar	36
40	April	38
49	May	44
56	June	55
61	July	59

- * While November through March are the coldest water temps, the water is still very cold in April and May
- * Belfast Bay water temps are impacted by colder water flowing in from the Passy River

Two recommended videos on Cold Water Immersion

- * Cold Water Survival and Hypothermia Realities
 - * <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wz3gy5XyaBo>
 - * Although this scenario is one of falling through ice, the same techniques can be used for getting back in a gig; and the information about cold water immersion, hypothermia and after drop still applies!
- * Cold Water Boot Camp
 - * <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J1xohl3B4Uc>
 - * Note that this one takes place in 45 degree water ... materially warmer than Belfast Bay in the winter!

2007 Study: Recreational Boating Accidents (USCG)

- * In water 70 to 79 F, 8% of accidents were fatal
- * Drop the temp to 59 F or below, the fatality rate increases by a factor of 5 **to 40%**
 - * 60% died in water less than 50F
 - * 34% died in water 50 to 68F
 - * 43% were 6' from safety
 - * **90% were not wearing life jackets**
 - * Reasons people don't wear life jackets
 - * Being close to shore
 - * Can put it on once I am in the water
 - * Can swim well

Hypothermia: Signs and Symptoms

- * Mild/Moderate Hypothermia
 - * Shivering
 - * Shell Core effect
 - * Body Temp: 95 to 86F
 - * Lethargic, withdrawn, confused, or personality changes
- * It is impossible to die from hypothermia in cold water unless you are wearing a life jacket; without a life jacket, you won't live long enough to become hypothermic

Cold Water Immersion: What happens when you hit the water

Assuming you are wearing a life jacket:

- * Cold Response
 - * Gasping; you can't breathe
 - * Affects swimming function
 - * 20% drown in first 2 minutes by taking on water
 - * Heart Rate and BP are elevated
 - * Sometimes uncontrolled movement and thrashing
- * You can last longer than you think
 - * Stay still
 - * Stay visible
 - * Keep your back to the waves to avoid swallowing water
 - * In water 40F, it typically takes a full hour to approach unconsciousness
- * Hypothermia: 3rd Stage
 - * Consciousness is low
 - * Ability to rewarm is gone
 - * Physiology is fragile; arrhythmia

The 1-10-1 Rule

- * 1 Minute
 - * To get your breathing under control
- * 10 Minutes
 - * Of meaningful movement
- * 1 Hour
 - * Before unconsciousness due to hypothermia

Cold Weather Rowing Considerations: the Boat

- * Causes for cold water immersion
 - * Single Person Overboard
 - * Capsize
 - * Falling off Dock
- * Look to stop or prevent potential causes
 - * Avoid deliberately leaning the gigs to one side
 - * Avoid standing up in the gig; if it cannot be avoided, only 1 person should stand at a time
- * Take extra measures to be ready in the event of an emergency
 - * Ensure life ring is in the boat (and throw bag is under cox's seat, if available)
 - * If there is a rope on the ring, ensure it is flaked out
- * Think before acting
 - * Don't create a second victim
 - * "Don't just do something, stand there"

Cold Weather Rowing Considerations: the Rower

As a cold weather rower, you should:

- * Be skilled and competent for conditions
- * Properly hydrated
- * Consume the right amount of calories prior to rowing to maintain function
- * Dress appropriately in layers
 - * Dressed for activity and inactivity
 - * Dressed for rowing vs dressed for emergency
 - * Recommended: Wind layers, Neck Gaiters, Neoprene Gloves
- * Warm up before shedding layers
- * Watch your cox for signs of hypothermia
 - * As the least active participant, they are the most likely to fall victim to hypothermia (barring someone actually falling in the water)

Caring for victims of Cold Water Immersion: Short Term

- * If they are red, shivering violently, sound like they are in pain, or complaining ... they are **not** hypothermic
- * Short term:
 - * Get them on board
 - * Get them moving
 - * Get back to shore or dock
 - * Reassess
 - * Stay alert for “after drop”: the body initially deals with the cold by shivering and producing heat, then it gets to a point where it can no longer do that

Caring for victims of Cold Water Immersion: Long Term

- * Most Important thing is to get them out of the water
 - * Water conducts heat 25x faster than the same temperature air
 - * Wrestle them out and then be careful
- * Recover horizontally
- * Stay Calm – move deliberately; you being calm helps them to stay calm
- * Don't make them walk far – fragile cardio
- * Get them dry and move towards emergency care; prevent further heat loss
- * Keep them down – expect violent shivering so let the body do its thing; there is a lot of heat from shivering
- * Prolonged return – calories are better than hot liquids
- * Warm them gently; don't burn them (the blood has gone away from the skin so the skin will be supersensitive to burning)
- * Watch for “after drop” and maintain vitals

Contact: Rick Fitzsimmons
rick.fitzsimmons@gmail.com

Demonstration: Online Sign-up System

Back-up

Cold Water Immersion: Basics

- * Involves all 5 mechanisms for losing body heat
 - * Conduction
 - * Convection
 - * Evaporation
 - * Radiant
 - * Respiration
- * In a quick response (5 to 15 minutes) our physiology is on our side