



Frequently Asked Questions (updated January 2024)

What is Ridgewood Crew?

Ridgewood Crew introduces Ridgewood, NJ high school-aged youth to the traditions, athleticism, sportsmanship, techniques and camaraderie of the sport of rowing. Founded in 2004, the team rows on the Passaic River in northern NJ and competes in the sport's premier regattas held throughout the Northeast.

In the program's history, our youth, board, and parent volunteers have moved Ridgewood Crew forward by leaps and bounds. That success is represented by the widespread individual and team achievements of each of the student-athletes on the roster. To facilitate that success, Ridgewood Crew continues to make investments in coaching and new equipment. The coaching staff is one of the most experienced in program history.

Ridgewood Crew athletes compete in the Philly Flicks on the Schuylkill River as well as at the highly competitive Stotesbury Cup Regatta, SRAA Nationals, Philadelphia City Championships, Cooper Cup, and Garden State Championships. Additionally, the team's overall performance continued to attract interest from top rowing colleges and universities including: Bucknell, Boston College, Boston University, Columbia University, Drexel, Duke, Fairfield, Fordham, George Mason, Georgetown, Harvard, Holy Cross, Lehigh, Marist, Notre Dame, Syracuse, Trinity College, University of Delaware, Williams, and others.

Ridgewood Crew offers several ways for you to experience our mission: join the team, volunteer or donate.

What opportunities are there to row in the off season?

Ridgewood Crew Provides programs for Summer and Fall as well as the Learn to Row program. Head Coach Boris Roque-Alvarez, along with his team of skilled assistant coaches, work with athletes both on and off the water to develop a thorough understanding of the sport. Young rowers are immersed in technique, physical training, and race preparation, as well as the basics of maintaining boats and equipment. Rowers may participate in regattas per season, at the coaches' discretion, depending on performance in practice, 2k erg testing and technical evaluations.



Frequently Asked Questions (updated January 2024)

What's rowing all about?

Rowing is one of the original Olympic Sports. Rowing is an exciting, competitive sport involving skill, teamwork, strength, and endurance. Crews are identified by the number of rowers in a shell or boat, typically eights, fours, doubles, or singles. An on-board captain, known as the coxswain, is in eight-person, and sometimes four-person, boats. In high school competition, they generally race against each other on measured 1,500- or 2,000-meter courses. To learn more about rowing, go to www.usrowing.org.

Can I letter in crew?

Yes. Ridgewood High School does recognize the program with varsity status and thus provides Varsity Letters to qualifying crew members. Varsity Letters are awarded at the Spring Banquet to rowers and coxswains who:

- Have completed two seasons of rowing as a Varsity rower, and
- Consistently participate in mandatory and non-mandatory practices and activities such as derigging for a regatta, re-rigging and racking boats after a regatta, and workout sessions with the coaches, etc.

Do I have to be a good athlete to do crew?

If you are willing to work hard and are able to pass a basic swim test, you can become a rower. Crew demands endurance, strength, discipline, skill, and teamwork. All students can develop endurance and strength through regular training. Coaches and other experienced team members teach discipline, skills, and teamwork. The crew program provides opportunities for students with a wide range of athletic abilities.

I've never rowed before, can I still do crew?

Yes. Most students who join the team have no previous rowing experience.



Frequently Asked Questions (updated January 2024)

Are there any height or weight requirements for rowers and coxswains?

Not really. Although rowers in some boats (classed as lightweights) must be within a weight limit (typically 130 pounds for women and 155 pounds for men), there are no upper or lower weight limits for rowers in most boats. Although height can be an advantage for rowers, strength and endurance are more important. Coxswains are usually small and light. The best coxswains are smart, light, verbal, confident, and have some rowing experience.

Do I have to try out for the team? What is required to be a member?

High school tryouts are scheduled for early January. The development team does not have tryouts. The tryout consists of an erg, fitness and running tests. Prior to tryouts, a valid physician clearance form must be submitted and approved by the school nurse. At the tryout, rowers should bring the first fee installment and the signed RC Expectations and Permission slip forms. Ridgewood Crew accepts all interested and motivated students. No previous rowing or athletic experience is required. All new athletes, must do the following:

- Pass a swim test consisting of
 - 1) a 50 meter (2 laps) swim in a swimsuit;
 - 2) 25 meter swim in sweatshirt and sweatpants;
 - 3) treading water for 5 minutes in sweatshirt and sweatpants
- Complete a Learn-to-Row program
- Complete all required paperwork (visit our [Forms](#) section on the website)
- Pay required fees.
- Attend practices regularly.
- Participate in mandatory club fundraising activities.

How much does it cost to participate?

For the 2024 spring season, the fee was \$3,300 per student. There is a discount for families that have multiple rowers, i.e. 20% off the second and subsequent rowers. These payments may be made in three payments. The registration form has payment options.



Frequently Asked Questions (updated January 2024)

Are there any other required/optional expenses?

Yes. While freshman and novice rowers have their uniform cost included in the season fee, rowers may choose to purchase a new uniform (a one-piece, sleeveless unitard). Optional team apparel (sweats, shirts, hats, visors, jackets, etc.) also can be ordered at an additional cost. Rowers traveling to out-of-town regattas pre- and post-season, (i.e., SRAA Youth Nationals, US Rowing Youth Regatta), will be required to provide and pay for their own travel expenses (transportation, hotel) in addition to the additional shared coaching/boat transportation costs.

Must parents do anything other than pay the bills?

Yes. Every family must contribute to the effort by participating in fundraising activities and volunteering.

What is the schedule for crew? When does the season start?

Crew can be four-season sport at Ridgewood High School. The basic schedules below provides general timelines and will give you a good idea of how each season practices and regattas are typically scheduled.

- Fall - During the fall season (September/October), returning rowers and novices practice three – five weekday afternoons, Saturday mornings and attend three or four regattas on a weekend. Learn-to-Row and the Development Team sessions are conducted over the weekends.
- Winter - The winter season begins in November. Practice is up to five weekdays. These sessions enable rowers to intensify their training and conditioning. The rowers workout with weights in the weight room, and do cardio/erg training in the cafeteria at RHS.
- Spring - The spring competitive season runs from late January through late-May. In January and February, practice is typically 5 days per week. Beginning in March, the team transitions to water practice where practice is up to six days per week (Tuesday – Saturday) with regattas on Sundays and some Saturdays. Monday's are typically off.



Frequently Asked Questions (updated January 2024)

- Summer - The summer session starts at the beginning of June and runs through late July/early August. The practices can be early in the morning or late afternoon. The summer rowers may row in two – three regattas. Additionally, Learn-to-Row (LTR) sessions are conducted over the weekends in June and early July. Athletes who complete a LTR are eligible to participate in a 2 week novice program in late July.

Does this mean I can't participate in any other sport at Ridgewood High School?

Absolutely not. Many rowers participate in other fall and winter sports including soccer, football, volleyball, basketball, cross country and swimming. Rowers who plan to participate in another sport should discuss this with their crew coaches.

Where does the team practice?

During the spring, summer, and fall seasons, Ridgewood Crew row on the Passaic River at the Passaic River Rowing Association (PRRA) boathouse. For directions to PRRA, visit the Directions section of our website. Transportation is provided from Ridgewood High School to PRRA on weekdays. In addition, Ridgewood Crew provides transportation to full-team regattas during the spring season. Parents are responsible for transportation to and from practice during the fall and summer seasons, and transportation to other regattas.

What if there is a change to the schedule?

On occasion changes to the practice schedule (i.e., weather) may occur. Attempts are always made to minimize changes, and inform rowers and parents as soon as possible. If there are any changes to the practice schedule, regatta transportation, etc they will be communicated via the Groupspot.

How are crews (or "boats") selected?

All boat selection decisions are made by the coaches. They consider many factors when making these decisions, including attitude, attendance, and consistency; racing performance and past experience; and ergometer scores. Boat assignments may change during the regatta season.



Frequently Asked Questions (updated January 2024)

What about safety?

Although crew is a water sport with some inherent dangers, safety is the club's top priority. First and foremost, we emphasize boat safety and the proper use of all equipment. Our coaches are trained to handle emergency situations. Boats are supervised by coaches in motor launches at all times. Safety procedures are in place and periodically reviewed to continue to ensure the safety of all club members.

How will my son/daughter get to the boathouse for weekday practices?

Ridgewood Crew hires a bus to take all rowers to the boathouse after school five days a week during the spring rowing season. No bus is provided for the summer, fall, or winter practice. Additionally, Ridgewood Crew hires a bus to transport the team to some spring regattas..

What happens during spring break?

Ridgewood Crew will hold mandatory practices for all rowers. Generally the rowers practice earlier in the day.

It can be really cold in early spring and late fall and really hot in summer. What should my son/daughter wear to on-the-water practice?

When it's cold, the key word is layering. Athletes should wear at least three layers: a base layer that is thin, form fitting, and will wick moisture away from the skin; a layer of insulation that is thicker than the base layer but not bulky (synthetic fleece sweats work well); and a wind block layer (which should be water-resistant but breathable). The uni or tight-fitting shorts and a tank top are the perfect first layer; a long-sleeve lycra or UnderArmor top and long tights or pants make a great second layer. Avoid cotton and down, both of which get heavy and lose their ability to insulate when they get wet. Avoid loose-fitting sweats or basketball shorts, since they can get caught in the slides. Coxswains generally will need to dress more warmly than rowers, since they won't get warmed up exercising. Many rowers wear a stocking cap in all but the warmest weather. As rowers warm up, they can remove layers and place them in the boat by their feet. After practice, they can quickly layer up again. When the weather is hot, most rowers just wear unis or tight-fitting shorts and tank tops, but encourage your athlete to bring along a tee or



Frequently Asked Questions (updated January 2024)

sweatshirt to cover up with when they cool down after practice. We strongly suggest that you or your athletes label ALL their clothing-you'd be surprised what gets left at regattas and practices!

What do the athletes need to take with them to the boathouse?

They should always have a water bottle with them, as well as sunscreen and good running shoes for land training. A change of clothing-particularly dry socks-is also useful (even on dry days, rowers can get splashed and soaked). For after-school practices, they should bring a healthy snack to eat before going out on the water--something that will sustain their energy level, such as fruit, sandwiches, granola bars, etc.

My son's/daughter's hands are developing blisters from the oar. What should I do about this?

Blisters are a hazard of rowing that affects everyone at the beginning of the season, until their hands develop protective calluses. Medical tape and/or adhesive bandages may help protect blisters until calluses form. Iodine can also be helpful (but painful) in drying out the blisters. If your rower has concerns, please have them talk to their coach.

I have a question for my kid's coach. What's the best time to ask him or her?

Appropriate concerns for parents to discuss with coaches include, ways to help their child improve, concerns about their child's behavior or progress, injuries, and nutrition. Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches include, crew formation, seat assignments, coach assignments, coaching decisions, or other student athletes. Specific concerns can be forwarded to the VPs Administration (admin@ridgewoodcrew.com) and President of Ridgewood Crew (president@ridgewoodcrew.com) by email first. We will do our best to respond in a timely manner. If you need to speak to us personally, please request this in an email, and we can set up a meeting. All rowers should feel free to speak with their respective coaches about any questions/concerns.



Frequently Asked Questions (updated January 2024)

What's the best way for a parent to learn more about crew?

Volunteer to help! The club relies on its parents to provide a lot of volunteer labor. Call or email the board member or committee chair responsible for the type of work you're interested in—they'll be thrilled to hear from you! Many of the adults involved in leadership roles this year are the parents of seniors who will be leaving the club at the end of the year, so please start thinking now about which roles you might be interested in filling next year.

How do I sign up?

Parents of interested students should attend the informational meetings as posted on our website or contact admin@ridgewoodcrew.com.

I still have a few questions, who can answer them?

Please contact Ridgewood Crew at admin@ridgewoodcrew.com

What, when, and where are regattas?

Regattas are organized boating competitions. Ridgewood Crew races mostly in regattas on the Schuylkill River (Philadelphia, PA), Cooper River (Camden, NJ), and the Passaic River (Lyndhurst, NJ). For a list of when and where we are racing this spring, see the Race Schedule and Results page on the website. Parents are responsible for providing transportation to regattas held in the summer, fall, and winter. RC will provide transportation to and from most spring regattas. During our overnight regattas, we will ask parents to chaperone and help transport rowers to and from the regatta/hotel. Regatta schedules usually are available a night or two before a race, and will be emailed as soon as possible. Coaches will notify rowers when they need to arrive on the day before the event. Lightweight rowers also typically arrive early for weigh-ins.

Can my child leave the regatta as soon as his/her race is over?

After their races, rowers are responsible for getting their boats back to the trailer and de-rigging them. For summer, fall, and winter regattas, rowers are allowed to leave after they have



Frequently Asked Questions (updated January 2024)

de-rigged their boats. It's generally considered good sportsmanship to stick around until the end of the regatta and cheer on the rest of the team. Your child's responsibilities continue even after the end of the regatta. When we race at other locations, our boats must be taken back to PRRA and unloaded. In general, rowers should check in with their coach before leaving the regatta site. For spring regattas, all rowers must stay after their race and ride home with the team back to Ridgewood/PRRA.

How does Ridgewood Crew get its boats from the boathouse to other regatta sites?

The coaches pull our trailer to regattas. This means that rowers typically need to de-rig their boats and load them on the trailer at the end of their Friday practice, and will need to help set them up again before Monday's practice. Derigging and unloading the boat trailer are mandatory for the rower.

Is there food available at the regattas, or will my kids need to bring a lunch with them every Saturday?

Ridgewood Crew sets up a "food tent" at some spring regattas to provide food for the rowers, coaches, and their families. Each family will be asked to volunteer to work/bring a food item once during the season. Parents take turns buying, preparing and putting out food, cooking, keeping the area clean, and taking the tent down and packing up the trailer at the end of the day. There may be a 'food tent' or just the tent for shelter at some regattas (mostly in the fall). At some regattas, there are concession stands where food can be purchased.

Is there anything else I should know about the food tent?

Only that it's a great place to hang out with other parents, catch up on race results, and meet your kid at the end of the regatta!

Is it ok to miss a couple of practices a week due to other commitments?

During the summer, fall, and winter training the rower may miss a practice or two due to other commitments. The coach should be notified if your rower is going to be out a specific day each week. During the spring season, all practices and regattas are mandatory for rowers. If your



Frequently Asked Questions (updated January 2024)

rower will miss a practice due to an approved excused absence (as outlined in the RC Expectations), the coach, VPs Administration, and VP Logistics should be notified as soon as possible. No crew athlete is allowed to be absent for spring break. There are absolutely no exceptions to this rule. Anyone who cannot fulfill this commitment should not try out for the crew team. Any athlete who is absent for any reason, other than extenuating circumstances that are cleared by the Head Coach and VPs Administration, can be removed from their boat and the team, with immediate effect.

What are the excused absences? How do I request an absence that is not on the approved absence list?

Acceptable Absences are listed in the rower's contract form annually and include religious observances, illness or injury, college entrance exams, mandatory scholastic events. The rower's contract is updated annual with specific information. As a rule, there are no acceptable absences for Water Practices. Excused absences are allowed in extenuating circumstances. Remember it is the responsibility of the ATHLETE to contact the Head Coach and the VPs Administration, as far in advance as possible, to inform them of their inability to attend a practice and request permission to be absent. Vacations are NOT extenuating circumstances.