

FCRC 2026 Code of Conduct and Commitment

To be successful in achieving our mission, it is essential that families, athletes, coaches and the Board work together as a cohesive team. We will, individually and collectively, do our part to create and maintain trust, respect, and care throughout First Coast Rowing Club. We make this commitment to ensure that each of us may grow both in knowledge and in wisdom and that we may leave this organization having enriched it by our presence and ourselves for being a part of it.

Failure to adhere to the rules and commitments as outlined below will result in disciplinary action and potentially dismissal from the team. Depending on the severity of the violation or disregard for our mission, consequences may include a warning, removal from a race line-up, removal from participating in or even attending regattas until behavior improves, suspension or even dismissal from the team. An athlete can and will be held financially responsible for any damage that the athlete causes to any FCRC property due to carelessness, negligence or simply a failure to adhere to team rules. This includes the requirement to be careful with and properly care for our equipment on a daily basis.

No refunds of dues will be issued in the event that an athlete is removed for a Code of Conduct violation. Similarly, in the case of voluntary departure from the team, no refunds will be issued nor will the obligation to pay for the entire season be waived.

First Coast Rowing Club grants the Program Director broad discretion in choosing and imposing consequences of conduct violations and/or general disregard for our mission. The Program Director, in consultation with the Board of Directors, has the ultimate authority over all questions of discipline arising out of any infraction. In the event an athlete's suspension or dismissal from the team has been imposed, the athlete and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be afforded the opportunity to appear before the Board of Directors no later than the next regularly scheduled Board meeting to appeal that decision. At that time, the athlete may present his/her case for reconsideration of that disciplinary decision. Inclusion, suspension or removal from a squad (e.g., Travel Team or Competition Team) or from a race lineup or regatta participation is at the full discretion of the Program Director and not subject to appeal.

Safety Protocols

FCRC athletes **must** adhere to rules set forth for their safety and the safety of others, both on and off the water. Deviation from those rules is not acceptable except when necessary for safety reasons. **Damages resulting from disregard of the rules will be the financial responsibility of the athlete in question.**

On the water, all FCRC athletes are to: **stay as far to starboard as possible when appropriate** such as when necessarily in the demarked channel; cross the river in a safe manner (as instructed by the Program Director); only proceed through a bridge after being directed to do so by an FCRC coach (except Cesery Bridge when warming up); not disrupt practice with chatter; and take seriously the risks of sharing a river with other boaters. All FCRC athletes are expected to learn and commit to memory the [FCRC boating traffic safety rules](#) posted at the boathouse and also found on our website. **By initialing this section you confirm that you have studied these [FCRC boating traffic safety rules](#).**

Proper safety also includes not *roughhousing* or engaging in any conduct that could bring harm upon another person or to oneself, or could damage equipment or other property.

Athletes should not leave the boathouse after practice until dismissed and thereafter depart the premises without unnecessary delay. Loitering in the parking lot is not safe, especially after dark.

FAILURE TO ADHERE TO THE FCRC SAFETY RULES CAN RESULT IN SUSPENSION AND EVEN DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM, DEPENDING ON THE FREQUENCY AND/OR GRAVITY

Responsibility Relative to Equipment

FCRC athletes are expected to take care of and maintain our equipment, which includes cleaning and storing equipment after every use. FCRC athletes are further expected to respect all of the club's equipment, both that which is used for on-water training as well as land training. This includes but is not limited to rowing shells and all its integral parts, oars, speed coaches, rowing and bike ergometers. This respect is evidenced by the care taken not just when using the equipment but also when cleaning or transporting the equipment. The consequences of disregarding the rules relative to the care and maintenance of the equipment and all FCRC property in general shall be financial and not just disciplinary.

Damages or loss resulting from negligent care of the equipment or disregard of the rules will be the financial responsibility of the athlete and his/her family. Damages and loss can include but is not limited to scratches on the hull of rowing shell due to careless handling or carrying of the shell, chips to an oar's blade caused by carelessly carrying oars (e.g., letting blades hit the ground while carrying oars, carrying more than two oars at a time), collision with another boat or fixed object in the river or on land, dropping parts or accessories in the river or leaving a part or accessory behind at a regatta, even if accidentally.

Any damage or loss to FCRC equipment caused by an athlete's carelessness, negligence or general disrespect of the rules relative to safety and equipment maintenance shall be the responsibility of the athlete's parent/guardian included in the registration. That parent/guardian must pay for any damage within 10 business days of FCRC informing the parent/guardian of the cost of repair or replacement. Failure to pay within 10 days will result in the athlete's suspension from the program until such time as payment is received.

While the evaluation of negligence may appear subjective, it is not. We rely on objective, observable standards when determining whether an athlete's actions constitute negligence or carelessness. These standards include whether: the athlete followed clearly communicated safety rules, proper handling procedures were used, the damage could have been avoided by a reasonable athlete using ordinary care, and coaches or supervising adults provided specific instructions that were disregarded. Determinations are based on visible evidence of mishandling equipment, nonobservance of safety protocols, and established expectations communicated to all athletes.

Required Forms

Swim Test: All FCRC athletes must have completed a swim test administered by a certified lifeguard per the guidelines set forth by the Program Director prior to the start of the season. An athlete will not be boated in a shell that is at risk of flipping (e.g., two-oared boat as in a single or pair) until the swim test has been completed.

Physical: Prior to participating in any practice session, all FCRC minor athletes must submit a Florida High School Athletic Association Preparticipation Physical Evaluation form (form EL2) prepared by a licensed health care provider or its equivalent prepared by a physician. These forms are valid for one year (12 months) and the form submitted must be valid through the end of the season for which you are registering.

Health Insurance: Athletes participating in a travel regatta unaccompanied by a parent/guardian must provide verification of health insurance coverage, to be submitted to the Program Director a minimum of five days prior to the regatta.

FSRA Required Documents: Failure to timely submit the items requested of competing athletes by the Florida Scholastic Rowing Association (e.g., birth certificate, photo i.d., evidence of scholastic status, etc.) can result in fines imposed by the FSRA and risks the possibility of not racing at those championship regattas.

Attendance and Signing Up For Practices

Athletes (rowers and coxswains) should attend every scheduled practice available to him/her in order to advance in the sport. This is a commitment we expect everyone to make if the desire is to improve and, especially, to race successfully or at all. No one is guaranteed to race every regatta. Those on the Development Squad may possibly never race prior to advancing to the Competition Team. Within the Competition Team there may be a Travel or High Performance group. Anyone who misses more than two practices per month should not presume he/she will remain part of that group.

As with most anything, to achieve full potential requires 100% dedication and to truly improve requires consistent commitment. To advance from the Development Squad to the Competition Team, attending the three practices per week is the bare minimum. Those athletes should supplement those sessions with sustained aerobic activity. Our goal is to properly prepare every athlete for success. For this reason, those not training with the team every available practice session should not expect to advance. This includes stepping up from the Development Squad to the Competition Team as well as qualifying for the Travel Team or High Performance group if on the Competition Team. Without full commitment to attending practices, one certainly can not expect to race, especially at the championship regattas.

Adhering to practice signup protocol is mandatory. Failure to do so will result in a \$10 fine per incident. These fines will not be waived. Athletes should indicate their intent to attend the next day's practice by 8:30 PM of the prior evening prior. Unexpected situations understandably may arise but are often known hours in advance of practice time. Not having ensured your SportsEngine signup is accurate at least 4 hours prior to the practice start time is rarely excusable.

If **not** coming to practice, the athlete should so indicate. If planning to attend, the athlete should so indicate. Selecting "Maybe" is only acceptable as a temporary indication of

uncertainty. A definite response (i.e., "Yes" or "No") must be indicated at least 4 hours prior to the practice start time. **Leaving SportsEngine signup blank is not acceptable. Indicating attendance and not showing up is not acceptable. Showing up without signing up timely is not acceptable.** Disregard of the signup protocol may result in not being assigned to a boat for practice **AND EVEN DENIED ATTENDANCE AND SENT HOME.** Just showing up without having signed up, or even failing to do so the prior evening, is disruptive to the program and disrespectful of coaches and teammates as is consistently arriving after the practice start time. In extenuating circumstances, athletes may contact a coach via email or text to advise of a change of attendance after the above prescribed hours. Sending a message to teammates or posting on SportsEngine chat is not considered contacting a coach.

Athletes are expected to arrive at the boathouse no later than the scheduled practice start times. Arriving before the scheduled start time is recommended. Arriving a couple minutes after start time is not considered "on-time." Arriving at precisely the start time and thereafter dawdling would not be considered "on-time." Everyone is expected to be ready to begin their warmup, take down their equipment, etc., at the posted start time; not merely amble up the ramp and pass through the door at the exact minute of the practice start.

If arriving late, the athlete should join the team expeditiously (i.e., not stroll in late and unhurriedly prepare for practice which means one doesn't slowly change into practice attire, casually meander over to fill up a water bottle, etc.). Traffic and other delays are inevitable and will be tolerated to a limited extent. Habitual tardiness (i.e., multiple times during the season) is not acceptable and is disrespectful to coaches and teammates. Failure to respect these basic rules will result in not being assigned to a lineup for that practice and even suspension from practice (i.e., sent home).

Failure to sign up for and/or attend all practices throughout the season for which an athlete is registered does not reduce or affect in any way the obligation to pay the full season training fees.

Athletes are also expected to participate in the entire practice session. The need or preference to depart early may arise but is very much frowned upon, particularly for Competition Team members. An early departure disrupts the practice for everyone, especially if it necessitates cutting water time short. In our sport, one cannot simply walk off the field. Therefore athletes and families should plan around practice times and reconsider attending on a day that conflicts with personal plans, bearing in mind it may affect Travel Team status. Parents should also consider their child's health as sending an ill athlete to practice can disrupt the session if they are unable to complete the on-water workout and, depending on the illness, may pose a health risk to the entire club.

Every effort will be made to adhere to the scheduled end of practice sessions. Occasionally the end time is delayed. Any such possible delays do not excuse the requirement of parents to be prepared to pick up their son/daughter in a timely manner (i.e., within 5 minutes of the official practice end time).

SafeSport Training

All athletes who are 18 years of age or will be during the season are required by USRowing to complete applicable SafeSport certification prior to their 18th birthday. Failure to do so can result in ineligibility to participate in regattas. Younger FCRC athletes are also expected to have completed an age-appropriate SafeSport course by their first month of the season.

Pursuant to USRowing guidelines, parents in regular and/or frequent contact with the athletes (e.g., carpool driving, presence at FCRC regatta spectator tent, boathouse service hours while the athletes are present) are expected to complete SafeSport certification.

Athletes and parents should be aware that coaches are required by law to report misconduct that rises to the level of abuse, harassment or bullying, whether inflicted on or by an athlete.

Boathouse Access

Adults, including parents, are NOT permitted within the "compound" (area beyond the parking lot) without prior authorization from the Program Director except to fulfill service hours. Parents are not entitled to enter the boathouse unscheduled. Adhering strictly to USRowing and SafeSport requirements, parents who frequent the boathouse beyond the parking lot need to submit to a background check.

The following adults have pre-authorized access: coaches, tenants (masters storing boats), and Board members, all of whom are required to be SafeSport trained with background checks.

Respect for Our Team and Others

Our athletes are representatives of FCRC at all times, whether at practices, at regattas, on team trips, at any other team events or functions, and even outside the program (e.g., at school). Our athletes are expected to: act responsibly and ethically; adhere to all FCRC rules and policies; observe all safety and security rules whether at practice or a regatta, or when on a bus/van/carpool commuting to/from practice or a regatta; respect property; and act in accordance with the directives of the coaches, chaperones, race officials, and other persons of authority. Our athletes are expected to exhibit good sporting behavior and to maintain a polite and respectful manner to all persons in all situations.

Disrespect, abuse or improper behavior or language involving a teammate, coach, parent, race official, member of another team, member of the rowing community, or even a member of the general public will not be tolerated and may establish grounds for suspension or even removal from the team. All athletes and parents are expected to be familiar with the standards of behavior included in this Code of Conduct and the FCRC Manual (available on our website), as well as the FCRC, FSRA (Florida Scholastic Rowing Association), NOARA (North American Rowing Association) and USRowing waivers, as they may be revised from time to time. Any behavior contrary to ethical, legal and appropriate conduct standards, as set out in any FCRC, FSRA or USRowing policy or rules, or the spirit of these policies and rules, including orally presented rules, may result in suspension or removal from the team.

Family Responsibilities and Behavior

Our athletes' safety and wellbeing are of paramount concern, whether on the water, at races, at school, and even in their own homes. In this spirit, we ask that FCRC families, as members of this community, work cooperatively with FCRC to ensure the wellbeing of all the athletes. Families are expected to comply with laws designed to safeguard young people, such as those surrounding consumption of alcohol, marijuana and other controlled substances. FCRC presumes the use of common sense and responsibility by FCRC parents and/or guardians and that they will support their athlete's commitment to the sport and this team.

FCRC parents are to show respect for all athletes and coaches, including those of opposing crews; race officials; and other parents and spectators. **Parents must accept and should respect the informed decision-making of the coaches** regarding participant qualifications, squad and practice assignments, and boat and seat placement both in training and for regattas. If a parent feels a need to communicate a concern regarding his or her child, a coaching decision or another rowing matter, the parent should address that concern to the Program Director. Only in the eventuality that the parent's issue pertains to the Program Director should a parent address a Board member with any such concern. At regattas, parents should be respectful of the need for athletes and coaches to focus on racing, and for safety reasons **stay clear of the boats and trailer area(s)** unless invited to assist by one of the coaches. The improper conduct of a parent may also result in the suspension or dismissal of an athlete from a regatta or even from the team.

Athlete Behavior

Our athletes are the spokespersons for FCRC in the rowing community and beyond, whether on our rivers, at regattas, in school or simply out in public. Their actions can be viewed by family and friends, opposing athletes, the community at large, and even the media. Their display of good sportsmanship will show the most positive things about themselves, their team, their coaches, our program and this sport. Integrity, fairness, and respect are inherent principles of good sportsmanship. With them, the spirit of competition thrives, fueled by honest rivalry, courteous relations and graceful acceptance of the results. Swearing and inappropriate gestures are not permitted at regattas thus unacceptable at FCRC. Our athletes shall base their actions on honesty, integrity, and concern for the welfare of others; in doing so they will not curse, lie, cheat or steal and will not condone such action on the part of others. Our athletes shall respect both the person and the property of others as well as that of FCRC. Our athletes shall behave respectfully toward one another and towards our competitors. Our athletes shall refrain from bullying or harassment of any kind (sexual, physical or emotional) or any criminal act. Such inappropriate conduct on FCRC property or when representing FCRC at a regatta is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated and shall establish grounds for suspension or removal from the team. Disrespect, abuse or improper behavior or language involving a teammate, a coach, a parent, another team or member thereof, a race official, or any member of the community or public will also not be tolerated and may establish grounds for suspension or removal from the team.

Regatta Behavior & Travel Rules

Our athletes are expected to represent FCRC in a positive light, using good judgment and best manners. Our athletes should be respectful not only of team members, coaches and chaperones, but anyone with whom they come in contact.

Athletes may travel with team members in prearranged carpools but may not drive themselves or others to regattas without prior written parental consent and approval of the Program Director regardless of the athlete's age. Athletes are expected to stay at the team hotel unless otherwise approved by the Program Director. They must stay with the group at all times and may not leave the regatta, the hotel or the restaurants unaccompanied by a chaperone, coach or parent unless previous approval is granted by a head coach or the Program Director. At regattas, athletes may not depart the venue or hotel merely with parental consent; a head coach or the Program Director must approve.

While on FCRC travel, our athletes will not be in the hotel room of any athlete of the opposite sex nor permit anyone of the opposite sex in their room, unless a FCRC coach or chaperone is present. Similarly, athletes of the same sex should not be in unassigned rooms without the approval of a FCRC coach. Interaction of a sexual or intimate nature of any kind, anywhere while on a team trip, is strictly prohibited. Athletes are expected to be in their assigned hotel room at the curfew time established and are not to leave after that. *Lights out* is no later than the time set forth by a head coach or the Program Director. Athletes should be mindful of costs and not make purchases of any kind charged to their hotel room without express consent from a parent, coach or chaperone.

These rules apply to all FCRC athletes regardless of age.

Drugs, Tobacco and Alcohol

The use of controlled substances (e.g., alcohol, marijuana, tobacco in any form, and drugs), as well as illegal and/or performance enhancing drugs is **strictly prohibited** for all FCRC athletes, whether a regular FCRC athlete, a participant in an FCRC camp or summer program or simply a guest at FCRC, regardless of age. Participants in any FCRC program may be subjected to scheduled or random drug testing at the Program Director's discretion. The well-being of our athletes is our primary concern. **Controlled and unregulated substance use runs completely contrary to both the well-being of our athletes and the spirit of the sport.** The Program Director and FCRC coaches are the primary enforcers of this team policy and are responsible for addressing violations directly with the athletes but parental support is expected. The Program Director, who will

communicate any violations to the parents/guardians, has discretion in determining the consequences that violators will face. In the case of repeat offenses or disregarding a coach's instructions, the Program Director has the responsibility of bringing the matter to the attention of the Board. The Board will review such cases with the Program Director and may require a suspension or dismissal from the team, depending on the gravity of the offense(s).

Social Media

FCRC athletes who access social media sites (e.g., Instagram, SnapChat, WhatsApp, FaceBook, X, etc.) should act responsibly and show respect for themselves and for the rights and feelings of others whether viewing, recording or posting, whether on FCRC property or elsewhere.

Gossip, insults, and defamatory, demeaning, inappropriate or derogatory images or statements, or negative or offensive comments of any nature about others, especially teammates, coaches or the First Coast Rowing Club are strictly prohibited, even if believed to be in jest. Threatening or harassing statements or images are also strictly prohibited. Comments about competitor rowing clubs and their team members in a false, derogatory, or disparaging manner will not be tolerated. Bullying or harassment and any other form of misconduct towards anyone, especially fellow athletes, whether from FCRC or a competitor team, will not be tolerated. Athletes should exercise appropriate discretion when using social media for personal communications with the knowledge that behavior on social media may result in disciplinary action.

Any use of TikTok on FCRC premises or to depict or in any way reference FCRC is prohibited.

The unauthorized creation and/or use of any social media presented in a manner that suggests it officially represents First Coast Rowing Club will be grounds for suspension. All postings in the name of First Coast Rowing Club, whether directly or indirectly representing the club, must be pre-approved by the Program Director or someone specifically designated by the Program Director.