

**CAPE CORAL ROWING CLUB**  
**MEMBER HANDBOOK**



# **WELCOME ABOARD!**

This member handbook is intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the Cape Coral Rowing Club to members of the organization. Membership information, safety policies, and organizational structure are included for reference. All members of the club should read this manual to make sure they clearly understand the expectations and benefits of membership.

Cape Coral Rowing Club is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that was founded in 2007 following generous donations from a local real estate business owner and the Cape Coral Rotary Club. The organization is comprised of volunteers and supported by our member programs and fundraising efforts. Our success depends on an active, engaged member group.

We are always delighted to welcome new members of our community to this sport we are so passionate about. Cape Coral is surrounded by an amazing system of navigable waters that are host to lots of interesting wildlife. We hope you enjoy improving your overall wellness with us in this gorgeous environment!!

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## **History**

Cape Coral Rowing Club was founded in 2007 with the help of local real estate developer, Will Stout. Mr. Stout donated both waterfront property and substantial funding to allow the club to establish our community nonprofit organization in the Cape Harbour area. The Cape Coral Rotary Club also made significant financial contributions to help the club get started. The first Learn to Row Classes were held in November of 2007. The club remained at the Cape Harbour location until the summer of 2022.

Planned development of the waterfront area in Cape Harbour was imminently expected, so discussions about an alternate location began with the City of Cape Coral in 2019. The club knew it would need to relocate and worked with the city staff and council to secure a place in a planned, new, waterfront park in the northwest part of town. Park development is set to begin in early December of 2024 with expected completion about a year later. In the interim, the club has secured a lease agreement with the city to operate from another city-owned parcel near the future park site. Relocation to this temporary site in the northwest area of Cape Coral was completed in the summer of 2022.

Shortly following the club's relocation to its temporary home, the city of Cape Coral was hit by Hurricane Ian on September 28, 2022 – one of the most intense and powerful storms to ever make landfall in the area. Two days after the club's grand opening at the new location, our facility and fleet were decimated by the storm. Rebuild efforts commenced immediately with the goal of salvaging the Youth Crew season that was originally scheduled to kick off three weeks after the storm hit. Against the greatest odds, we were able to rebuild to the degree necessary to launch our first boats on November 29, 2022.

Since its inception, the club has instructed hundreds of area youth and adults in the sport of crew rowing. Several of our youth athletes enjoyed collegiate rowing at numerous institutions. Both masters and youth crews have attended scores of regattas in Florida and elsewhere in the country. Our state offers very competitive rowing opportunities and features the most renowned venue in the country in Nathan Benderson Park (Sarasota). We also enjoy fabulous local waters to train on in the city of Cape Coral.

## **Mission**

The purpose of the organization is to educate and train youth and adults of all social and economic backgrounds in the physical skills, teamwork, and mental discipline required to become proficient rowers.

## **Vision**

The vision of the organization is to continually improve and grow our program offerings to reach greater audiences in our area. We aspire to continue development of targeted programs for military veterans and adaptive/para-athletes. In addition, we are interested in developing program offerings for corporate teambuilding and providing peripheral services to our student athletes (tutoring, mentoring,

etc.). Our long-term goal is to build a boathouse to store our equipment and greatly enhance our community program offerings.

## **Governance**

The organization is governed by a Board of Directors elected by eligible voting members. The organization does not have paid employees and is wholly managed by volunteers. Day-to-day business functions are managed by Committees which are composed of regular members and chaired by a member of the Board. Committees are responsible for executing the key missions communicated by the Board of Directors.

## **Service Requirements**

A volunteer run organization cannot succeed without the investment of its members. As a result, each annual masters member is required to contribute 25 service hours per year (12 hours for seasonal members) to the operation of the club. The following are examples of ways to accumulate required service hours:

- Time spent executing objectives of your assigned committee.
- Participation in general cleanup / equipment maintenance events
- Representing the organization at outreach events
- Coxing or rowing in Learn to Row crews.
- Purchasing and donating general supplies

Service hours must be logged and approved by the appropriate work leader (committee chair, board member, coach, etc.). Members who do not accumulate the required hours by November 30 of each year will be invoiced for every hour they fall short. Service hours will be invoiced at \$20 per hour.

In addition to contributing volunteer time to the management of the organization (service hours), all members are also encouraged to participate in club sponsored fundraising activities. Fundraising is required to continue operating the organization and is separate from the service hours requirement detailed above. Because our organization is not currently permitted to host a regatta event, we must engage in other forms of fundraising activities to assure financial stability and health. There is no pre-determined number of required fundraising hours. Members are expected to share the workload as equitably as possible to fulfill the organization's committed obligations. Members who choose to engage in fundraising activities can earn discounts against their membership fees.

## **Committees**

The organization employs several committees to help manage operations. Each member must volunteer for a committee. To ensure all committees are adequately staffed, each has a minimum

number of participants specified (in parentheses). Below is the list of operating committees active in the organization.

### **OUTREACH / MARKETING (5):**

The Outreach / Marketing committee is charged with recruiting new members of all ages and publicizing all club events to our surrounding communities. They are also in charge of optimizing club branding and advertising. Typical responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Managing Event Notifications on all Social Media platforms
- Working with local media on promotion opportunities
- Organizing, staffing, and hosting outreach events (e.g. Free Open House events, etc.)
- Approaching local businesses about team building opportunities
- Creating content for the website for special events
- Organizing social activities for existing, new, and prospective members

### **LEARN TO ROW (4):**

The Learn to Row Committee is charged with creating and maintaining a basic course outline for Masters' LTR sessions. They are also responsible for shepherding new rowers through the onboarding process to become club members. Typical responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Development and maintenance of training materials for new participants (e.g. recommended reading & video instruction, required safety info, etc.)
- Establishing class dates with the coaches and BOD
- Coordinating advertising with Outreach Committee
- Coordinating volunteer help for class sessions
- Coordinating coaching needs with coaching staff
- Coordinate with website administrator to add classes to SportsEngine and the website
- Work with SportsEngine Admin to create and maintain a database of attendees for follow-up
- Track and document all LTR inquiries and follow up with class dates, when scheduled
- Coordinate LTR social events

### **SAFETY (3):**

The Safety Committee is responsible for keeping all safety related instructional materials up to date and assuring that all Masters' members follow club protocols. Typical responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Maintain and update the Safety manual
- Monitor compliance information for masters' members (waivers, SafeSport, swim attestation, coxing certifications, critical medical info, etc.)
- Teaching and reviewing safety standards, procedures, and programs with membership (Coordinate with LTR committee for class participants).
- Maintain (stock) First Aid kits.
- Monitor condition and count of required safety equipment (PFDs, fire extinguishers, air horns, whistles, rowing shell navigation lights, lightning detector, etc.)

## **FUNDRAISING (5):**

The Fundraising Committee is responsible for seeking, securing, maintaining, and staffing fundraising opportunities. The committee is also charged with securing sponsorships and donations to support the organization. Typical responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Coordinating fundraising opportunities with Hertz/Everblades Concessions Manager and staffing said commitments.
- Coordinating with Aramark to staff concession stand for Boston Red Sox Spring Training season at JetBlue Park
- Approaching businesses targeted by the BOD for sponsorships.
- Working with WCIND on grant opportunities (writing grant requests per BOD direction)
- Planning and executing fundraising activities (Erg Fundraisers, etc.)
- Seeking pertinent grant opportunities and executing applications for said grants.

## **EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE / REPAIR (6):**

Care of the organization's equipment and facility is the responsibility of ALL members. The Equipment Maintenance / Repair Committee is charged with leading efforts to keep the fleet and ancillary equipment in good working order. This committee is also responsible for leading general upkeep efforts at the boatyard. Typical responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Scheduling and staffing routine preventive maintenance work efforts.
- Educating members on basic maintenance operations (e.g., replacing shoes on foot stretchers, replacing wheels on seats, rigging and de-rigging shells for travel, etc.).
- Manage recycling and garbage disposal on a regular schedule.
- Manage weed control on the leased premises (enclosure, staging area, parking area, etc.).
- Manage basic supplies inventories (sponges, soap, hand sanitizer, antibacterial wipes, wasp spray, insect repellent, sunscreen, trash bags, batteries, etc.)
- Manage maintenance of all rowing shells
  - Report and communicate repair needs; coordinate repair efforts.
- Manage dock maintenance.
- Manage spare parts inventories (hardware, seat wheels, NK electronics, shoes, heel tie cord, etc.)
- Create and execute basic maintenance (flushing, etc.) schedule for the outboard motors.
- Manage preventive maintenance activities for all club trailers (shell, pontoon boat, jon boat, enclosed)
- Create and execute routine maintenance on all ergs (inspect and lubricate chains, check bearings, update monitor firmware, etc.).

## **Membership**

The Cape Coral Rowing Club operates year-round so the length of the rowing season is the calendar year. Experienced rowers can join membership at any time during the year. New rowers must

complete a Learn to Row session before they are eligible for masters' membership. Membership dues are prorated monthly, so there is no financial penalty for joining the club after the first of the calendar year. In addition to registering with the club, members are required to become Basic members of our National Governing Body, USRowing. USRowing membership includes execution of a waiver that is a pre-requisite for utilizing club equipment. Members that hold positions requiring interaction with youth crew members must also complete USOC SafeSport Training.

## **Membership Fees**

Membership fees are set to cover the costs of operation. Costs of operation include, but are not limited to, equipment maintenance and repairs, replacement parts, general supplies, land lease fee, commercial liability insurance, facilities expenses, utilities, travel expenses, and fleet insurance premiums. The Board of Directors reviews membership dues periodically and adjusts them as the market demands.

As an organization with no paid employees, annual members are required to contribute 25 hours of approved volunteer service per year and seasonal members are required to contribute 12 hours per season. Service hours are currently monetized at \$20 per hour. Members who fail to fulfill their service requirement by November 30 of the calendar year will be invoiced for the balance owed using the current exchange rate. Failure to pay this invoice will result in the suspension of club membership.

Since the club is unable to host regatta events to raise funds, it must engage in various other fundraising activities to cover the costs of growth and operation. Members are expected to participate in club-sponsored fundraising activities. Fundraising activities are ***not included in*** the service hour obligations listed above. The club secures fundraising opportunities with local event hosts (Hertz Arena and JetBlue Park/Aramark) which require appropriate staffing to execute. Club members enjoy the facility and equipment made available through these fundraising activities and are expected to contribute to the staffing of these opportunities. **Fundraising service does not carry a set number of volunteer hours and is not to be confused with service requirements or committee work.** Fundraising work should be shared amongst the available members as equitably as possible until club obligations are met. Members who choose to engage in fundraising activities can earn discounts against their membership fees.

Annual members who own private single sculls may be permitted to secure rack space at the club facility for an additional fee. Rack rental fees are included in the online membership registration form and are dependent upon available space at the facility. Please check with the board about rack availability before registering and paying for a rack. In the temporary facility location, the club has VERY limited rack space so one should not assume availability of a storage rack. Rack rental requires prior approval of the board.

Peripheral costs for items such as racing uniforms, regatta fees, or branded club gear will be the responsibility of participating members. The club does not bulk order and re-sell team gear or branded merchandise.

## **Member Programs**

Cape Coral Rowing Club offers programs for youth and adults (masters). All programs are open to our surrounding communities. The club is the only crew rowing organization south of Sarasota on the west coast of Florida, so the outreach area covers multiple counties.

Masters' rowing includes two levels of membership – annual and seasonal. Annual masters are those members that reside solely in SWFL and participate in rowing year-round. Seasonal masters are those adults that spend only winter months in SWFL. Seasonal memberships are available for two lengths of time - 3 months and 6 months. All adults new to the sport of rowing are required to complete a Learn to Row course. Learn to Row (LTR) courses typically include about 12 hours of coached instruction, spread over a three-week period. The club offers several LTR courses each year, based on demand. Graduates of the Learn to Row classes have the option to join membership as Novice rowers.

The club offers the Youth Crew Program to middle school and high school students from all over the area. The Youth Crew Program uses a 2-week trial period in the fall to onboard new rowers. This trial period is essentially the equivalent of the Learn to Row classes offered for Masters. Following the trial period, youth rowers have the option to join the crew. The Youth Crew is a competitive team that typically attends all seasonal regattas within a 150-mile radius. All youth practices are supervised by coaching staff.

The club occasionally hosts guest rowers that are in town on business or vacation. Guest rowers must have relevant prior experience and need to complete an online registration and have a signed waiver on file with USRowing. In cases where guests are not current USRowing members but have relevant rowing experience, they must execute a USRowing waiver before using club equipment. Coaches may extend an invitation to a rower who is interested in a trial run before joining membership or hold a club sanctioned and supervised Open House event. These are instances in which guest rowers can use club equipment without an executed online registration. Unauthorized visitors will not be permitted to use club equipment.

## **Facility Policy**

The club operates from a facility located on city-owned land. This land is made available to our nonprofit via a legal contract with the City of Cape Coral. As such, all members of the club must comply with all aspects of this legal agreement and be good stewards of the property. This includes the observance of specified operating hours (6 am – 8 pm). In addition, the organization has a substantial amount invested in facilities and equipment on the property. Members are expected to care for all

aspects of the facility as they would their own property. The equipment enclosure, shed, and enclosed trailer are to be locked at all times when there are no members present at the facility.

It is also our responsibility to keep our entire area clean and maintained. This includes collecting and removing all trash and recyclables as well as weed control on the premises. Until we have a boathouse to call home, we must strive to keep our facility as clean and organized as possible.

## **Equipment Policy**

**Club Boats:** The club owns a modest fleet of boats that are available to registered members with some restrictions. The primary qualification for usage of club boats is a demonstrated ability to handle them safely and competently. This is particularly true for equipment that is utilized without the supervision of a coach. Coaches maintain a list of member certifications to help rowers clarify which equipment is available to them based on their current skill and experience levels. Our fleet is a mix of sweep and sculling shells of various sizes. Each boat is designed for a certain average crew weight range and a few shells are specifically designed for advanced or racing crews only. These shells are only available to row with a coach's approval.

- **Safe Operation of Club Equipment:** The demonstrated ability to safely operate club equipment is a pre-requisite for use. Stern coxswains in sweep boats must be approved as qualified by the coaching staff as they are charged with the safety of all crew members and equipment. Stern coxswains in training must be supervised by a coach or boated with a crew consisting of at least one qualified coxswain and one experienced rower. Scullers wishing to row club equipment must have either passed a swim test or affirmatively self-attested to their swimming capabilities during the registration process. Members wishing to use club owned single sculls need to demonstrate their ability to properly self-rescue (pass a capsized test). They also need to be supervised by a club coach until such time they are deemed safe and competent operators of a given shell. Scullers wishing to row club double and quadruple sculls may only do so if the proposed crew includes a member who is bow certified by club coaches for the requested shell. More information regarding Bow Certification can be found in the Safety Rules below. Registered guest rowers are generally invited to group practices to assure they are crewed with experienced members who are familiar with our waterway. Registered guest rowers must be approved by the coaching staff to row club equipment outside of masters' practice sessions.

**Privately Owned Equipment:** The club can store a limited number of privately owned boats as rack space is available. Private equipment storage is only available for single sculls on a first come, first served basis for an annual rental fee. Boat owners requesting rack storage should be regular users of their equipment. The club does not have enough rack space to provide storage for members who rarely row their boats. Members who rent racks but do not row regularly may be asked to remove their boats from the club facility. Members with privately owned oars are permitted to store them at the facility, but the club does not provide locked or isolated storage for them.

**Safety Boats:** The club's safety launches are generally for coaching use only. On occasion, safety boats will be employed for the supervision of special events (Open Houses, etc.). Safety launches are only to be operated by coaches and members who have had boater safety training.

**Equipment Care:** All equipment should be meticulously cared for by members. Rowing shells must be cleaned after every use. Our waterway is heavily brackish and salt water is very destructive to our equipment. After rowing, wash down boats inside and out. Seat tracks must be cleaned after every use. Oar handles should be cleaned with fresh, soapy water. If oar handles are holding residue, they should be cleaned thoroughly with alcohol.

Before and after each outing, crews should check all equipment in the shell. Are the shoes in good condition and tightly fixed to the shoe plate? Are the heel ties on the shoes properly fixed to the stretcher board? Is there any loose hardware in the rigging or foot stretcher? Does the seat slide smoothly in the tracks? Are the tracks clean from prior use? Are the oarlock spacers intact and the bushing properly seated? Does the audio system work properly (coxed boats)? Does the steering cable/rudder assembly function properly?

Any minor issues found in a shell prior to launch should be addressed before the outing, if possible.

**Equipment Damage:** If equipment becomes damaged before, during or after use, promptly report said damage to the coaching staff and Equipment Maintenance Committee Chair. Damaged shells need to be tagged as unusable until repairs can be made. The coaches or Committee Chair will communicate status to the membership.

All incidents or accidents, however minor, must be reported to the Equipment Committee Chair. It is possible to incur damage following an accident that is not readily noticeable. Reporting incidents allows our maintenance team to thoroughly inspect affected equipment to determine whether it has been compromised.

If equipment damage is found to be the result of member negligence or non-compliance with club policies (e.g., rowing a shell you are not certified to row, failing to properly strap or secure a shell, etc.), the member(s) involved may be held responsible for the cost of repairs. The Board of Directors will assess such situations on a case-by-case basis.

Proper equipment care allows us to save the costs of repairs and lengthens the life of our boats and oars. Money saved on maintenance is money available for procurement of newer equipment. It also allows us to keep our operating costs and membership fees low.

## **Safety**

The sport of rowing has a long history of ensuring safety above all else and the Cape Coral Rowing Club wholly embraces this emphasis. Our club policy recommends following a comprehensive plan in accordance with safety guidelines set forth by our national governing body, USRowing. A full complement of resources and guidance from USRowing can be found [here](#). These resources provide an excellent knowledge base and all members should read and practice these protocols at all times.

All members should be aware of the rules and regulations of the waterway we call home – the North Spreader Waterway (NSW). The entire rowable length of the NSW is designated by the city as a “Slow Speed zone for manatee protection purposes” according to City Ordinance 10-15.1(c)(1). Slow speed is defined by the city as follows: *A through-the-water speed slow enough that the boat is neither planing nor moving with an elevated bow. A vessel that is operating on a plane or is in the process of coming off plane and settling into the water is not proceeding at slow speed. A boat that produces no wake or minimum wake and is completely off plane is proceeding at **SLOW SPEED**. It shall also mean no speed greater than that which is reasonable and prudent to avoid either intentionally or negligently annoying, molesting, harassing, disturbing, colliding with, injuring or harming manatees and which comports with the duty of all persons to use due care under the circumstances.*

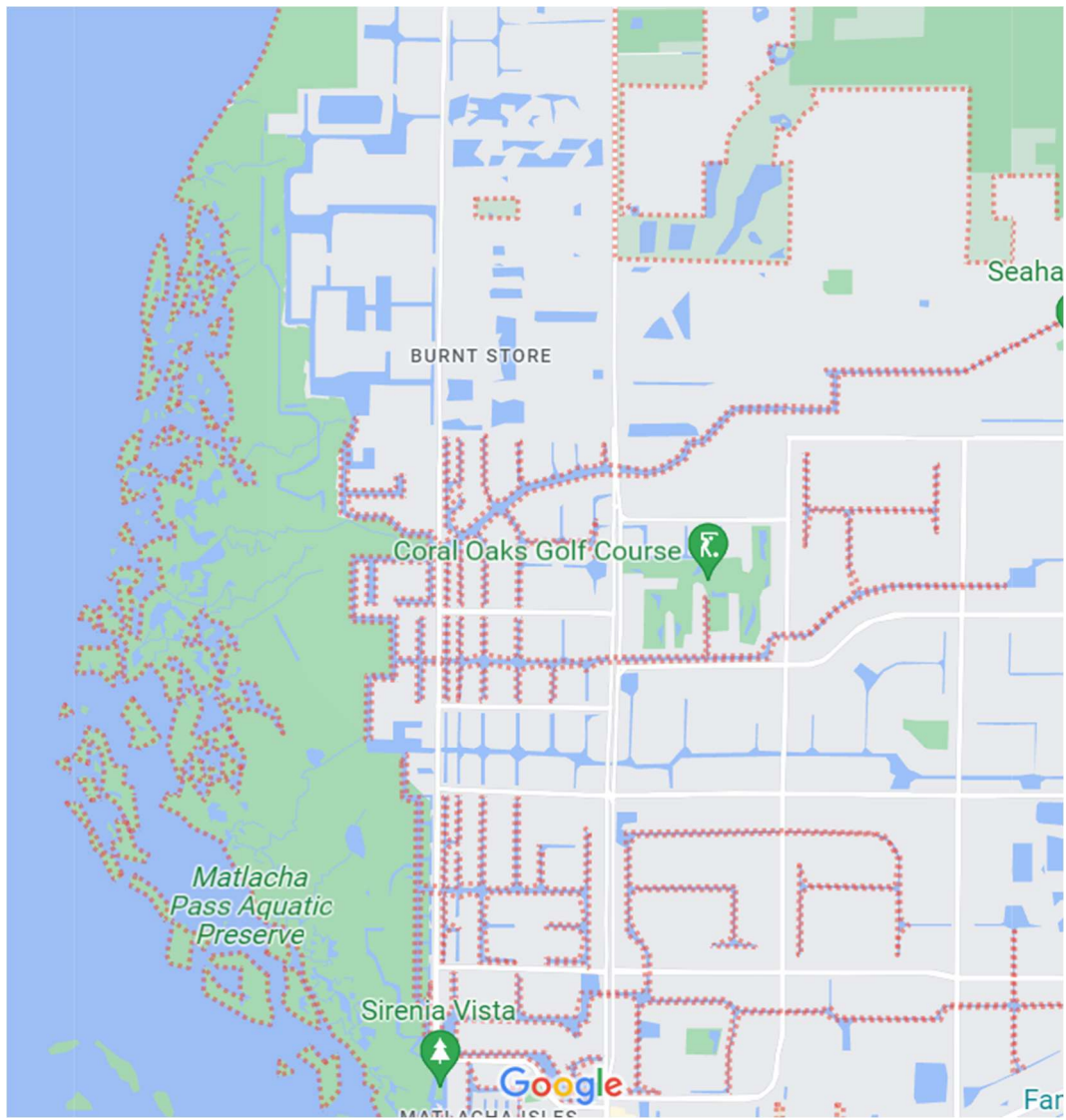
As non-motorized users of this waterway, we need to be alert and vigilant at all times. If you are on the water and see violations of the slow speed ordinance that put your rowing shell at risk, it is important to note the registration number of the offending vessel. If you can take a picture of the vessel without putting yourself at further risk, this information will help with enforcement efforts.

The NSW is a tidal waterway, so depth and current fluctuate depending on the tides. Please be aware of this and make sure you understand the tidal conditions at the time of your outing. This is particularly important for members rowing in small boats, but a strong outgoing or incoming tide can also impact the maneuverability of large crew boats. Navigating the turns to and from the dock and within the NSW can be much more challenging in certain tidal conditions. At low tide or the tail end of an outgoing tide, the water in both the Martinique and Santa Lucia canals is quite low. The turn north from the Santa Lucia Canal onto the NSW needs to be taken with care in low tide conditions (see Figure 1). While the tides typically do not vary enough to present a capsize danger, their impact on navigation should be considered and accounted for. There are numerous apps you can download to your smartphone to help you understand the current tide situation before any outing. Here’s a link to a useful one: [Tide Charts on the App Store \(apple.com\)](https://www.apple.com/appstore/search/1446841424) The graphical chart should help you understand what kind of impact to expect from tidal movement in the waterway at any given time.

Figure 1



## Map of North Spreader Waterway



The North Spreader Waterway is the westernmost canal in the above picture. It is the primary route to the open waters of Matlacha Pass, Pine Island Sound, and the Gulf of Mexico. All vessel owners with access to the NSW utilize it to get to open waters. The rowing club generally utilizes the NSW north from Sirenia Vista Park. The water adjacent to and south of this area is typically rougher than the water to the north. The waterway also narrows at the location of the former Ceitus Boat Lift (southern part of Sirenia Vista Park), creating unsafe conditions when multiple vessels are making their way through the corridor. For these reasons, venturing south of the straight run adjacent the Seven Islands is not permitted in club equipment without the supervision of a coach in a safety launch.

## ***Navigation***

The traffic pattern on the waterway is similar to that on roadways – keep to the starboard side. Even if there is no boat traffic in the waterway, it is always best to stay in your navigation lane and be a predictable vessel operator. In larger shells, navigating tight elbow turns in traffic could result in having to stop the shell and hold water on one side in order to make the turn into the proper lane. All coxswains (stern and bow) should err on the side of safety when making turns on the NSW. Turning wide around a blind 90 degree turn results in your shell occupying the incoming traffic lane and an approaching vessel may not have time to slow or stop to avoid a collision. Always manage your turns so that you move into your proper navigation lane as the turn is completed.

At “T” intersections where vessels are approaching from the inland side of the canal, a non-motorized shell should ALWAYS be the stand-on vehicle with the right of way to proceed in its navigation lane. However, the state of Florida does not require boaters to be licensed and many do not have safety certifications or good base knowledge of boating rules and regulations. If a vessel entering from the inland side of the waterway does not give an indication of slowing for your rowing shell, you should err on the side of caution and stop your shell to give way to the approaching boat. It is not worth jeopardizing the safety of the crew or the equipment for the many vessel operators that do not understand right of way rules.

## ***Launching & Landing***

The club’s floating dock is only 48 feet in length, making efficient launching a priority for large group practices utilizing multiple rowing shells. Crews should always carry their oars down to the racks on the dock prior to portaging their shell. Coached crews should launch with their assigned coach and safety launch. Rowers should always adjust foot stretchers and oarlock heights on land to save time on the dock. Crews should aim for 90 to 120 seconds on the dock for each launch when multiple boats are queued.

Landing boats need to hold in the Santa Lucia or Martinique canals if other shells are occupying the dock. If small boats are landing and there is dock space for more than one shell, crews should walk their boats north to the end of the dock (gangway end) to make room for a second landing.

## ***Rowing Conditions***

All rowers should assess current conditions prior to each outing. In Southwest Florida, weather conditions can change in minutes, so it is critically important to be aware of the immediate forecast, as well.

- ***Rowing in Low Light Conditions:*** Club hours are 6:00 am to 8:00 pm. Rowing is not to take place outside of these times. At certain times of year, this means that crews could be on the water in low light or dark conditions. All crews should be aware of sunrise and sunset times on each day they row. Here’s a great resource to check these times: [Sun & moon times today, Cape](#)

[Coral, Florida, USA \(timeanddate.com\)](http://timeanddate.com). Only experienced crews and coxswains should attempt to navigate club equipment in low light conditions. If your outing has you launching or landing in low light conditions, you must fix a proper (red/green) bow light to your rowing shell. It is recommended that a white stern light also be fixed to the boat. Reflective clothing is also encouraged for crew members. If you are out with a coach in a safety launch, the launch lights must also be illuminated. A noise maker (i.e., whistle / air horn) should also be carried by the coxswain and on the safety boat in case an audible warning needs to be sounded to any approaching vessel.

- **Rowing in Fog:** Fog can roll in at any time of day but is more common in the morning hours. Southwest Florida experiences fog conditions more uniquely than many other areas. It is quite common to experience clear conditions at an early launch (e.g., 7 am) only to have fog roll in while a crew is out on the water. Instead of fog lifting as it gets later in the morning, it is not unusual for it to descend. Always check the local forecast before launching and never launch if you do not have at least 100 yards of visibility. If you do find yourself out on the water when fog starts to descend, turn your shell around to return to the dock. Proceed slowly and be prepared to stop quickly. It is best to routinely carry a loud sound making device (i.e., whistle) with you for morning outings. If you do not have a device with you, be prepared to loudly and clearly announce your position to any oncoming vessels that might not see you. Maintain your navigation lane to the best of your ability and row a predictable course.
- **Rowing in Wind:** Avoid rowing in high winds. High winds create waves on the water that can swamp your rowing shell. A shell that takes on copious amounts of water can sink. Although our waterway is reasonably sheltered, high winds still introduce risk. Based on the shape of the NSW, all wind directions can produce enough fetch (wind across the water) to create dangerous waves. Crews should not launch in high wind conditions. If you are already on the water and high winds blow in, turn your shell around and proceed back to the dock if it is safe enough to do so. Otherwise, proceed to shore.
- **Rowing in Excessive Heat and Cold:** In hot and humid weather, rowers are at risk for dehydration and heat exhaustion. Symptoms of both conditions include dizziness, headache, muscle cramps and nausea. When you know you are going to practice in high heat conditions, start hydrating in advance of your outing. Always carry water with you in the boat. If you tend to perspire heavily, consider treating your water with an additive that will help replace electrolytes throughout your session. Some popular choices are LMNT powder, NUUN tablets, Liquid IV, or Skratch Labs Exercise Hydration Mix. Experiment with one you like and use it to stay hydrated during oppressive summer heat and humidity. In the event a crew member does experience heat-related stress, the appropriate response is to cease strenuous activity and take on fluids in a shaded area. In severe situations, efforts should be made to cool the affected crew member while awaiting medical attention. While Southwest Florida doesn't experience truly cold weather, the risk of hypothermia under certain conditions should not be ruled out. An outing in colder than usual temperatures when the water temperature is also below normal could combine to create risk. Hypothermia can set in very quickly when the combination of cold

weather and moisture work together to lower core body temperatures. In only a matter of minutes, an adult can become incapacitated by hypothermia. You don't have to have capsized your shell to be at risk. Moisture from splashing or cold rain can stress your body enough to lower your core temperature and put you at significant risk. Symptoms of early hypothermia include rapid, constant shivering, loss of strength and coordination, slurred speech, general confusion, and poor decision-making. Anyone suffering from these symptoms should be transferred to a warm environment as quickly as possible. Should any member of a crew exhibit these types of symptoms in abnormally cold and wet conditions, the crew needs to start treatment as quickly as possible. This generally means a quick return to the boatyard or extraction onto a safety launch. Cold, wet clothing should be removed and efforts should be made to increase the affected team member's core temperature as quickly as possible. In severe cases, medical attention should be sought.

- **Storms; Thunder & Lightning:** Southwest Florida is home to some serious storms, especially during the summer months. Weather can change in minutes, so crews must be aware of the current conditions as well as the forecast for any scheduled outing. If you hear thunder or see lightning while preparing for a launch, do not proceed to launch. Launching can only occur 30 minutes after the LAST peal of thunder heard or lightning spotted. If you are already on the water and spot lightning in the area, move immediately to shore. Exit the shell safely and wait out the storm. Do not try to row back to the dock in an electrical storm. If conditions look favorable for storm development prior to any launch, coaches or crews should utilize the club's lightning detector to determine whether it is safe to launch. The lightning detector should be turned on as soon as possible prior to the scheduled practice to allow it to accumulate adequate data upon which a solid decision can be made. The detector is set to pick up activity at three preset radii – 30 miles, 14 miles and 8 miles. Lightning detection at the 8-mile radius means all outdoor activity must cease and members should move to shelter.
- **Crew Responsibilities:** In addition to following club safety protocols, members must also either pass a swim test or complete a swim attestation at registration. Members must be able to swim 100 yards using any stroke or combination of stroke styles, tread water for 10 minutes, and put on a personal flotation device (PFD) while still in the water following the treading test. Members who are unable to fulfill these requirements will be required to wear a PFD in the rowing shell at all times. In addition to meeting swim requirements, members must also execute a liability waiver upon registration. Each member of the club is also required to watch the [US Rowing Safety Video](#) upon registration. Rowers of single sculls should try to partner with another sculler to utilize the 'buddy system' for outings as frequently as possible. Rowers wishing to use the club's small shells (single sculls, double sculls and sweep pairs) must be able to demonstrate proper self-rescue technique in the event of a capsize. These requirements are the personal responsibility of each member wishing to row club equipment.
- **Bow Certification Requirements for Double and Quadruple Sculls**  
This section outlines the process involved in achieving bow seat certification in coxless sculling and sweep shells at CCRC. Safety is the primary consideration in requiring members to be bow

certified. Sculling shells and coxless sweep shells (2- & 4-) must be safely steered and landed. At CCRC, these shells are maneuvered by either rower pressure or a shoe-operated rudder. While rudder controls can technically be placed in any seat in the boat, we choose to locate them in the bow seat. In all coxless shells at CCRC, the bow seat rower is considered the coxswain. This seat affords the best visibility forward, so, is most ideally positioned for steering a safe course. As coxswain, the bow seat rower is charged with the safety of the entire crew and the safety of the equipment. All registered rowers must either have a minimum of one year of qualified sculling experience or a coach's approval (in cases where the experience threshold is not met) to pursue bow coxing certification.

- **COXING FROM THE BOW SEAT:** Coxing from the bow seat is often referred to as “blind coxing” for obvious reasons – the rower is facing opposite the direction of travel. Clearly, this makes bow seat coxing much more challenging than stern seat coxing. Just like a stern coxswain, you are charged with the safety of the crew and equipment and are expected to command the shell. It is your responsibility to be aware of the weather and water conditions so you can responsibly determine whether it is safe to take a shell out. You are expected to be very familiar with the waterway and its safe navigation. You need to have read the Safety Guidelines in the Member Handbook and should have significant rowing experience on the local waterway. It is your responsibility to cox the shell out of the rack and down to the water. You should know how to set foot stretchers for proper finish position and how to rig the shell you plan to row. You will be in charge of all commands in the shell, with safety being your primary focus. This is why stern coxing is such a clear pre-requisite for learning to bow cox.
- **SAFE HANDLING OF THE SHELL:** As coxswain, you are in charge of launching, steering and docking the shell safely. In boats without shoe-operated rudders, you will be responsible for pressure steering a safe course. A bow coxswain must be intimately familiar with how to pressure steer and have a good feel for the amount of pressure needed to steer each club shell. Steering singles is different than steering doubles. The weight of the shell, its inherent maneuverability and the composition of your crew will directly impact your ability to steer a safe course. In pressure steered shells, understand that the bow of the boat is most maneuverable and seat your crew accordingly. Members who are approved to row club singles unaccompanied are good candidates for obtaining certification to pressure steer club doubles. Foot operated rudders are installed on both club quads and can be installed on two of the club's double sculls. Although each boat handles differently, certification to toe steer a quad should qualify a bow coxswain to toe steer a double scull. However, learning to toe steer a double scull does not automatically qualify a bow coxswain to toe steer a quad. The larger shell is far less responsive and trickier to maneuver around the tight turns in the spreader canal system. For this reason, it is recommended that toe steering be learned in a quad. The club also owns coxless sweep boats. The club's Vespoli quads have sweep rigging and can be rowed without a coxswain, if necessary or desirable. The club also owns two pair/doubles which can be rigged for coxless sweep rowing. Bow coxing sweep shells is

- completely different than bow coxing sculling shells and depends greatly on the teamwork and composition of your crew. Pairs (2-) will generally be pressure steered since the rudders are typically not installed for sculling and they are more frequently used in that configuration. Pressure steering a pair takes a significant amount of practice and an engaged stroke seat. Pair rowing should only take place with a coach's approval and a certified bow coxswain or under direct coaching supervision. Similarly, a coxless 4 (4-) should only be crewed with a certified bow coxswain and very experienced rowers. The 4- is steered using a foot operated rudder, so, members who are already certified to bow cox quads are excellent candidates for gaining bow certification in the 4-. When training to row the bow seat in a pair, a rower must crew with a certified 2- bow coxswain in the stroke seat or be accompanied by a coach in a safety launch. In the 4-, a bow coxswain-in-training should crew with at least two certified bow coxswains in the shell (one located in the 2 seat) or be accompanied by a coach in a safety launch.
- **HOW TO OBTAIN CERTIFICATION:** The ideal track to bow certification for new rowers would start with achieving competency in sweep rowing (including stern coxing), completing beginner sculling lessons, rowing with experienced rowers in doubles and quads in seats other than the bow, and training for certification in the bow seat under the supervision of a coach. Current members who are not already certified but desire to be should request a review with a club coach. Coaches will assess members' current skills and experience and determine what will be involved in obtaining certification. For some rowers, this could be as simple and painless as a check row with a coach in the shell. In other cases, it could translate to a few training sessions with experienced crew under a coach's supervision. Clearly, the path to certification will vary for members who will be grandfathered into the program. Regardless of progression, all members seeking certification will need to meet a standard list of requirements.
  - **BOW SEAT SCULLING CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**
    - Experience stern coxing sweep crews
    - Familiarity with waterway; clear understanding of routes, traffic pattern, and hazards
    - Demonstrates knowledge of safe rowing conditions (water, weather, wind, tides, etc)
    - Understands how to rig each shell and properly adjust foot stretchers and oarlock heights; performs equipment check before launching
    - Checks rudder operation before launching (if applicable)
    - Safely enters and exits the shell
    - Demonstrates ability to look behind the shell during the drive to check course
    - Demonstrates ability to maintain a straight course while rowing continuously
    - Demonstrates ability to steer to port and starboard using both pressure and foot operated rudder (where applicable)
    - Demonstrates safe navigation of corners in the spreader canal system while rowing continuously
    - Demonstrates safe 180-degree river turns

- Demonstrates ability to manage crew with proper coxing commands throughout an on-water session
- Demonstrates ability to back the boat in a straight line for 10 strokes or approximately 50 meters
- Demonstrates ability to safely and cleanly dock the shell without assistance
- Demonstrate ability to safely extract shell from the water and rack it properly

- ***Capsize or Swamping of Crew Boats:*** In spite of our best efforts, accidents occasionally happen. This is why we encourage our members to acquire base knowledge of how to respond to various situations. Capsize and swamping are two very real risks in rowing shells. If you are in a crew boat that capsizes, everyone must **stay with the boat**. If the boat does not have sealed compartments, turning it to a hull-facing-up position will provide more buoyancy until a rescue can be executed. If you are accompanied by a coach's launch, this will be your avenue of rescue. If you are rowing accompanied by a coach, your coxswain should be carrying a cell phone in a waterproof case. Once everyone in the crew is accounted for, a call should be made to a coach, safety committee chair, or first responders (in an emergency). Crew members should spread out along the overturned hull and tread water until help arrives. A similar process is followed in the event of swamping. A swamped boat is one that is filled with water to the edge of the hull. In a shell with open compartments (i.e., seat compartments that are not sealed underneath), severe swamping can both sink and damage a boat. As soon as it becomes clear that the water level is too high for a return to dock, the coxswain must command all rowers overboard in a calm and orderly manner. If the boat can be overturned to a hull side up position, it should be rolled as quickly as possible to avoid its sinking. Once overturned, crew members should hold onto the hull and await rescue, just as they would in a case of capsizing. In the event of the ejection of a single crew member from a shell (ejector crab), the coxswain should immediately stop the boat and wait for the crew member to surface. Crew members inside the boat should offer assistance to bring the ejected member back into the shell. Once the rower is safely back in the boat, his or her condition should be assessed to determine whether continued rowing is recommended. Both of these situations are covered in the USRowing Safety Video that all members are required to watch.
- ***Self-Rescue in Small Shells:*** Rowers who have been cleared to use the club's single sculls, double sculls, and sweep pairs need to be prepared to self-rescue in the event of a capsize. In a single scull, you must first right your boat (if it has rolled hull up) and get control of your oars. Holding your oar handles in one hand, use the other to pull your torso up onto the hull like you would pull yourself up out of a swimming pool. Once your torso is over the hull, maintain balance with the oars and rotate your body into the cockpit. Situate yourself back on your seat and row to safety. Here is a video showing how to manage this situation in water that is too deep to touch the bottom: [Deep Water Self-Rescue](#). In certain waterways, it is possible to locate shallow areas near shorelines that allow a rower to stand. The NSW does have some of these areas adjacent to the mangrove preserve and on the shores of undeveloped properties. If you have capsized near a shallow water area, you can swim your boat over to where you can

stand to re-enter the shell. Here is a video showing how to manage this type of self-rescue: [Shallow Water Self-Rescue](#). If you capsize in a double scull, the basic recovery technique is the same. You just enter the shell one crew member at a time. The rowers should place themselves on opposite sides of the shell before re-entry. The first rower to enter will perform a standard self-rescue while the other rower stabilizes the shell from the water. Once the first rower is safely back in the boat, he or she must use the oars to hold a hard set for the second rower to facilitate re-entry. The most challenging self-rescue process of the three small boat classifications is that for the coxless sweep pair. Most rowing organizations do not permit pairs on the water without an accompanying safety launch for this reason. In the event of a capsize in a coxless pair, the recovery procedures are very similar to those for a single scull. Roll the boat over if it is deck side down in the water. Have one crew member gain control of both sweep oars and hold them flat on the water for stability. This will be much more awkward than holding sculling oars because the oar handles are so far apart. The crew member holding the oars (and, therefore, the boat balance) should be on the opposite side of the shell as the one attempting to enter. Once you have managed to stabilize the shell with the oars, your crew mate will need to pull his or her body up onto the boat deck and into a seat. Your crew mate must find a stable position in the shell and then take over holding both oars so that you can pull your own body up and in. Once you have both re-entered the shell and managed to reclaim your oars, you should be ready to row immediately back to the dock. If, at any point, it becomes clear that you will not be able to successfully re-enter the shell, you should abandon this effort and swim the boat to a safe location or shallow water, if possible. Once you have made it to safety, you should call for help as you would following a large crew boat capsize.

## **Code of Conduct**

Cape Coral Rowing Club aims to provide a positive sporting environment for the benefit of all members. All participants, coaches, parents, supporters, and committee members bear responsibility, when representing Cape Coral Rowing Club or during any activity held by or under the auspices of Cape Coral Rowing Club, to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, consistent with this Code.

### ***General Conduct Expectations:***

Cape Coral Rowing Club Members shall:

1. Be positive role models.
2. Be responsible, especially when dealing with people under 18 years of age.
3. Complete USOC SafeSport self-attestation; complete SafeSport Training if serving Youth Crew in any capacity (coaching, administration, volunteering, etc.).
4. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person regardless of their level of participation, gender, race, cultural background, religion, sexual orientation, ability, or disability.
5. Be intolerant of any harassment, bullying, abuse of, or aggression towards others.

6. Refrain from using profane, insulting or otherwise offensive language. This standard applies to all forms of communication, including but not limited to emails, texting, social networking, and personal contact.
7. Consider the safety and well-being of participants at all times, ensuring a safe environment for rowing, training or other activities.
8. Care for and respect all boats, equipment, and property.
9. Abide by (where appropriate) USRowing rules, regulations, and policies.
10. Abide by the local waterway laws, regulations, and rules.
11. Respect the role of regatta officials in ensuring that competition is conducted fairly and according to the regatta rules.
12. Abide by the letter and the spirit of Cape Coral Rowing Club rules, policies, and standards - particularly safety policies - and respect the decisions of Club Officials
13. Uphold the generally accepted standards of fair play and conduct oneself in the spirit of good sportsmanship, both on and off the water. Sportsmanship is defined as conduct becoming to one participating in a sport, including fairness, respect for one's teammate or opponent, and graciousness in winning or losing.
14. Refrain from any behavior that may bring Cape Coral Rowing Club or the sport of rowing into disrepute.
15. Refrain from using performance enhancing drugs or illegal substances.

***Conduct Expectations of Rowers:***

In addition to the General Conduct Expectations, Cape Coral Rowing Club Rowers (including coxswains) shall:

1. Respect the talent, potential and development of fellow rowers and competitors.
2. Be frank and honest with coaches concerning health issues, illness and injury, and ability to train within the program requirements.
3. Respect the directions and decisions of coaches.
4. Do not act in a reckless manner that could put the athlete, his/her teammates, youth rowers, or any others at risk of injury.

***Conduct Expectation of Coaches:***

In addition to the General Member and Rower Expectations, Cape Coral Rowing Club Coaches shall:

1. Provide a safe environment for learning which includes completion of the USOC SafeSport training programs and all pertinent refresher courses.
  - a. USOC SafeSport Requirements: The U.S. Olympic Committee and Center for SafeSport have required SafeSport programing to be adopted by each National Governing Body. Our NGB, USRowing, has adopted policies and procedures to meet this requirement and expects each of its member organizations to do the same.
  - b. SafeSport Program Elements: The USRowing SafeSport program addresses six areas of misconduct: sexual misconduct (including child sexual abuse and/or grooming

behaviors), emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, bullying, hazing, and harassment. To protect athletes and all members of the USRowing community, members of the Board of Directors, coaches, volunteers that have direct access to or interactions with athletes are required to receive SafeSport education and training, and be familiar with the USRowing SafeSport reporting, investigation, and hearing process. The Center for SafeSport has developed a comprehensive online program, which is free to all USRowing members. It focuses on both identifying misconduct and the steps needed to prevent it.

- c. Required Training Course(s): All Relevant Adult Participants as defined by USRowing are required to complete SafeSport training. Please consult the Frequently Asked Questions page on USRowing's website for the definition of Relevant Adult Participants: <https://usrowing.org/sports/2022/12/20/safesport-faqs.aspx>
- d. Links to Critical Program and Policy Information: USRowing has updated their SafeSport policy manual. Here is a link to the manual: [SafeSport Policy Manual 10-12-2023](#). Please read it and make sure you are familiar with all elements, including reporting procedures.

### ***Conduct Expectations of Club Officers:***

In addition to the General Member Expectations, Cape Coral Rowing Club Officers shall:

1. Know and abide by the Cape Coral Rowing Club's rules, policies, and standards, and encourage all Members to do likewise.
2. Resolve conflicts fairly and promptly in accordance with Cape Coral Rowing Club's rules, policies, and standards.
3. Maintain impartiality.
4. Respect the confidentiality of information which comes to them in the course of their duties.
5. Be aware of Cape Coral Rowing Club's legal responsibilities.
6. Conduct themselves appropriately (per Robert's Rules) in board meetings
7. Advocate for the success of the organization

### ***Expectations of Youth Crew Rowers:***

The Youth Crew Handbook is posted on the Youth Program tab on the club website. It is also distributed to youth crew parents at the start of each crew season.

### ***Grievance Procedure for Disputes Among Members:***

1. In most cases, disputes or issues between members can and should be resolved by an open dialogue between those involved, and without intervention from CCRC coaches or the Grievance Committee.
2. If the aggrieved individual(s) feels that the situation cannot be resolved in this manner or does not want to approach the offending individual(s) then he/she should bring the issue to the attention of a CCRC coach. The coach shall address the issue and report back to the aggrieved individual within 48 hours.

3. If the coach feels he/she cannot rectify the situation or if the aggrieved individual(s) feels that the matter has not been rectified to their satisfaction, then the individual(s) can proceed with an escalation of the issue to the Grievance Committee Chair.
4. Within 48 hours upon receiving a report of the issue, the Grievance Committee Chair shall acknowledge receipt with a date/time established for the Grievance Committee to convene to discuss an appropriate response. The date of the committee meeting shall not be more than 72 hours from the date the grievance was escalated. The Chair shall also inform the person(s) which the grievance is being lodged against of the meeting date and specifics of the grievance. The person(s) the grievance was lodged against shall be given the opportunity to respond to such allegations in writing.
5. Once the grievance has been received and acknowledged by the Grievance Committee, all individuals involved shall refrain from further communication with any committee member, unless specifically solicited in the context of investigating the incident.
6. At the Grievance Committee's discretion written statements may be required from all parties involved, including witnesses. If a meeting with those involved is required, then all parties shall be invited to attend the meeting so that they may respond.

#### ***Disciplinary Process:***

The Cape Coral Rowing Club reserves the right to enforce all policies and rules at any time and with an appropriate penalty that aligns with the club's governing bylaws. Decisions made regarding the enforcement of club rules and policies and the severity of the level of action taken, including recommendation for termination, shall be the final responsibility of the Board of Directors. In the case of disputes between members that escalate to the point of engagement of the Grievance Committee, the Board will receive the committee's recommendations regarding appropriate action. Termination requires ratification by the Board of Directors.

Possible consequences resulting from not adhering to club policies and rules:

- First offense: Written reprimand. The first offense may also include up to an immediate 3-day suspension from all club related activities, including regattas.
- Second offense: Immediate 10-day suspension from all club related activities, including regattas.
- Third offense: Immediate suspension from the Cape Coral Rowing Club for a minimum of a year.
- Notes: First and Second offense suspensions only impact days involving CCRC events, practices and regattas, and not necessarily consecutive days. For example, the masters' weekend practice constitutes two days whereas Friday, when there is no practice, is not included. Offenses/disciplinary actions are consecutive regardless of the type of offense. Records of offenses shall be maintained by the CCRC Secretary. If no further disciplinary actions are required in 3 consecutive years all records shall be expunged. Grievances that did not result in a disciplinary action shall not be kept on record.

***Protest / Appeal Process:***

Any disagreement with the implementation of any such actions should be appealed in writing directly to the Board of Directors within 48 hours of notification of the ruling. The Board can convene an Executive Session to review said appeal, if warranted.

***Grievance Committee:***

The Grievance Committee is an ad-hoc committee that shall be comprised of three CCRC members: Vice President (chair), one Member at Large, and one Coach. The Board of Directors shall appoint the Member at Large. The Chair shall appoint a coach for the individual grievance incident based upon the circumstances of that grievance. Recommendations regarding enforcement shall be communicated by the committee chair to the individuals involved and the Board of Directors.

***Conflicts of Interest:***

If, at any time, a Grievance Committee Member has submitted a grievance or is the subject named in the grievance, that committee member shall temporarily recuse themselves from the committee for the duration of the grievance proceeding. In the event the Member at Large needs to recuse her/himself, the Board of Directors shall appoint a temporary replacement. In the event the Grievance Committee Chair needs to recuse her/himself, the Board of Directors shall appoint a temporary replacement. A Grievance Committee member is permitted to bear witness in a grievance proceeding. A Grievance Committee member shall not be named in a grievance issued as a result of a Grievance Committee recommendation.