



OPEN-ROW QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

Final qualification for the three tiers listed at the end of this document is subject to the discretion of the head coach (currently Jacob Jordan) and the open-row coordinator (currently Kathe Mills). If all qualifications listed herein appear to have been met, but the head coach/open-row coordinator nevertheless is unwilling to qualify the rower for open row, the rower must be provided with specific reasons for the refusal.

No one may row alone under any circumstances.

WhatsApp will be used for communication.

Requirements

- Current NWC and US Rowing annual memberships
- All participants, regardless of whether using a club shell or a private shell, must be registered for open row.

Experience and skills

- Ability to swim 100 meters and tread water for 10 minutes
- At least two seasons of sculling clinic at NWC, or demonstrated equivalent experience
- Demonstrated proficiency in sculling basics in a narrow-hull (racing) single, including steering *while* rowing, backing, 180° stationary turn, and quick stop
- Ability to re-enter a narrow-hull single after a capsize
- *At least 7* sculling round trips of approximately 4 miles/6400 meters (to the bridge and back or to Plum Point and back) in a narrow-hull single. These trips can be made once the sculler has been provisionally accepted into Sunday open row.

Evaluation of conditions for safety

- A water temperature of at least 50°F, regardless of air temperature
- A combined air/water temperature of at least 90 °F
- Situational awareness of river conditions, both at the start of and during the session: underwater hazards; times of high and low tide; current/wind speed and direction; and potential interactions between current and wind
- Understanding that in our area of the Hudson River, the times of high and low tides are not the same as the times of maximum flood and ebb currents and that the latter are generally more important for our purposes
- Awareness that predicted tides and currents can be affected by river discharge rates (e.g., heavy rains can strengthen ebb currents), storm surge (can strengthen flood currents), and atmospheric pressure (e.g., low pressure may bring higher water levels and stronger flood currents)
- Understanding that one should always launch against the current; if launching at slack water before ebb tide, then launch north; if launching at slack water before flood tide, then launch south
- Awareness of our guidelines for turning around: if an apparent change in wind, water, or weather conditions persists for more than 5 minutes, turn around and head back to the boathouse; if the change persists for more than 10 minutes, immediately turn around and head back to the boathouse **at the fastest safe speed**.
- Demonstrated history of and willingness to exhibit common sense and err on the side of caution if conditions are, or may become, unsafe
- Willingness to always use the club's digital logbook—one entry per boat preferably—to file a float plan and record safe return to the boathouse

Preparation to launch

- Knowledge of which boats/oars belong to the club and which are private
- Knowledge of how to remove boats/oars from racks and carry to slings/dock—with assistance if necessary
- Awareness of necessity for checking and adjusting equipment before launching: hull and skeg integrity, rigger nuts and bolts, oar locks, foot stretchers, shoes, seat, wheel tracks
- Knowledge of how to attach a bow light
- Ability to consistently install oars securely in oar locks in the correct orientation, enter the boat from the dock, and launch safely

On-water safety criteria

- Demonstrated knowledge of and ability/willingness to follow the accepted traffic pattern (closer to shore when heading south, farther from shore when heading north; that is, boats traveling in opposite directions pass each other port-to-port)
- Knowledge of and ability/willingness to follow the accepted docking pattern: row to the smokestack just past the water-treatment plant, turn toward shore, and then, if necessary, turn again to approach the dock on a southbound course roughly parallel or at a slight angle to the shore; do NOT cut in front of other docking boats by approaching the dock on a course perpendicular or near perpendicular to the shore.
- Ability to make minor adjustments to equipment (e.g., to foot stretchers, spacers), if necessary, **while on the water**
- Ability to watch for and maneuver around river debris and other vessels
- Ability to remain calm upon swamping or capsizing and knowledge of what to do if unable to re-enter the boat
- Awareness of possible ditching locations and of how changes in water level due to the tide will affect where to stash the boat once it's on land
- Required safety equipment: cell phone (or other communication device) in waterproof pouch; **in a party going out on the buddy system, at least one person must have a PFD available in their shell**
- Suggested suggested safety equipment: waistpack PFD; whistle; rearview mirror; bilge pump/bailer; emergency (mylar) blanket; sun protection; water; eyewear strap

Docking

- Ability to dock, exit the boat, and remove oars safely with little to no assistance
- Knowledge of how to lift a boat out of the water, carry to slings, clean/dry, and rerack—with assistance if necessary

Qualification Tiers

As scullers progress from tier to tier and are deemed by either the head coach or the open-row coordinator to have sufficient skills, they may be offered provisional opportunities, water and weather conditions permitting, to participate in the next highest tier, under close supervision by the head coach or open-row coordinator, with the goal of accumulating additional mileage on the water.

- **Open-row qualified (highest tier):** *Is permitted to coordinate rowing sessions on any day of the week on a buddy system with **at least one other person who is open-row qualified***
 - Meets or exceeds all the requirements listed above under “Experience and skills” **in a narrow-hull (racing) single scull**
 - Must be capable of independently handling rapid changes in water conditions, ditching onto soft shores, assisting others who’ve capsized, and calling for help in emergencies
- **Sunday open-row qualified (second highest tier):** *Is deemed to be safe and responsible enough to scull uncoached in a 1x or 2x as part of a larger group*
 - Has displayed broad competencies within the sculling clinic program and is working on achieving open-row qualification and has thus been invited to begin attending Sunday open-row sessions
 - Is still developing/acquiring open-row competencies, is adding mileage to their resume

- **Sculling clinic qualified (lowest tier):** *Is not qualified to scull on their own or without a safety launch present*
 - Is learning to scull or is working on sculling fundamentals within a controlled, coached environment
 - Is gaining experience and knowledge to achieve Sunday open-row qualification