

## Upper St. Clair Crew Team Responsibilities, Expectations, and Code of Conduct

To Parents and Rowers:

This guide is specific to the Upper St. Clair rowing program. These expectations and rules need to be read and understood. They must be signed by both rowers and parents and returned to the coach on the first day of practice. Please go through this guide and be fully aware of what is contained within.

The Upper St. Clair Crew Team is a competitive sports team. All rowers are new to the sport and have an equal chance to become strong, contributing members of the team. Novice rowers will spend a year learning rowing technique, and building skill, strength and endurance. JV and Varsity team members are expected to be athletes dedicated to improving their rowing and contributing to high performance boats.

Note that Upper St. Clair Crew recognizes that athletes learn this new sport at different rates. USC Crew welcomes all athletes who are dedicated to their team and conscientiously work toward improving their performance – regardless of their current skill level.

### **ATTENDANCE AT PRACTICE**

- Rowing is unique in its demand for extremely high attendance and effort during the on-the-water seasons. You have decided to make a commitment to the crew, and your coaches and teammates depend on you to fulfill that commitment.
- Rowers whose attendance drops below 90% seriously jeopardize the performance of the boat in which they row. Coaches reserve the right to exclude rowers from racing and/or attending regattas if their attendance is less than 90%.
- You are expected to get to the bus on time Monday through Thursday. You are also expected to be on time to the carpool on Saturdays.
- Excused Absence: Excused absences for practices are allowed for academic, family, health, or religious reasons. Remember it is the responsibility of the **ATHLETE** to contact the coach as far in advance as possible to inform them of their inability to attend a practice.
- If you are going to miss practice for any reason, it is the rower's responsibility to make sure that your coach knows *in advance*. You may contact them by e-mail as long as it is at least one day in advance or by cell phone if it is the same day. This includes missing for illness. Please understand that anyone missing practice for any reason disrupts the entire team, as people have to be shifted around, and in some cases, entire boats cannot practice. **Parents:** Please try to avoid scheduling doctor's appointments, tutors, and the like for your child during practice hours unless it is absolutely necessary.
- Practice is held in all weather. Please dress appropriately. If high wind or thunderstorms preclude an on-the-water practice, a land workout will be held at the boathouse. In some extreme cases, practice may be held at the high school. **Rowers:** please listen to the afternoon announcements.

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### PRACTICE RULES

- Practice is not social hour – do not waste time.
- Come prepared. Spandex rowing shorts are required for practice.
- As soon as you arrive at the boathouse, you have 10 minutes to change, lock up your belongings, fill up your water bottle, use the bathroom and get to your designated meeting place. Do not delay your team.
- Do not interfere with any other team's practices. This includes talking to people on other teams while they are launching from or returning to the boathouse.
- If you see another Upper St. Clair boat needing assistance, please help them. Clear this with your own coach when possible.
- Coxswains are required to check the equipment they will be using that day before they go out. At the end of practice, Coxswains are responsible for ensuring that the shells are wiped dry and making sure everything is put away.
- Absolutely **no horseplay** in or around rowing equipment will be tolerated. It is expensive! No horseplay at the docks or waterfront. No horseplay at all.
- Only students with special permission from the board are allowed to drive to practices, and then:
  - only for special circumstances and time constraints (i.e. work schedules)
  - without any other students in the car
- We are very fortunate to have a bus provide for us on weekdays and parent drivers on Saturdays and want to make use of that service and travel as a team whenever possible.

### TESTS

- SATs I & II, and ACTs: If possible, please try not to schedule tests during the months of October or May as that is when most of our races occur. While these tests are extremely important, if they can be scheduled outside of those months it will avoid causing you to miss a race, and minimize the impact on your fellow rowers.
- AP Exams: Please plan for them. They come in late spring during the most competitive part of the season. It is vital that you carefully schedule study time so that you can practice and prepare for your exams. You must learn to budget your time wisely and balance your commitments to your schoolwork and to the team. Remember, if you miss practice, you are affecting other people who have just as much schoolwork as you do! Email your AP Exam Schedule to your coach as soon as it is available.

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### **PRIORITIES**

Remember to keep things in their proper place: family comes first, academics come next, and finally everything else. We understand that crew may be one of several interests you have. You should understand, however, that rowing at Upper St. Clair makes an unusually high demand of your time and of your commitment for roughly two months of the Fall and Spring semesters. Be certain you are willing to make that commitment.

By now, you should be well aware of the academic demands at Upper St. Clair. It is your responsibility to do your schoolwork and to finish it in a timely fashion so that you do not need to miss practice to make it up. Learning to balance and budget your time is essential. Of course, extenuating circumstances will occur. Just remember that all of your teammates are facing the same academic rigors as you are, and they depend on your participation to prepare a boat for competition.

Parents: When considering to keep your child home for whatever reason or to take your child away on a trip during the season, please be aware that this affects many other families and rowers as well.

- It disrupts the assigned crew in their boat, as well as the kids in the other boats, as lineups will have to be shifted around just to get out on the water.
- It also is unfair to the parents and families of the other kids on the team who have rearranged their lives and schedules to work with the teams' schedule.

The key to a successful crew is the unique and delicate blending of the rowers and a coxswain in the boat; inserting a new person can cause major disruptions. In many cases, if several people are missing, entire boats can't practice, the coach's workout can't be implemented, and valuable water time is wasted.

Please be sensitive to the unique nature of this team sport.

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## **ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR**

Be considerate of your teammates and coaches. Disrespect, disparaging and abusive comments or other improper behavior towards or about teammates, coaches, members/coaches of other teams, and adults will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Such behavior is incompatible with fostering a harmonious and successful team environment.

**The Upper St. Clair High School Ethics Statement:** *Equality, Teamwork, Honesty, Integrity, Character, and Social Conduct.* These pillars serve as underpinnings of our academic, extracurricular, and service missions. All Upper St. Clair students are expected to demonstrate the highest level of conduct, sportsmanship, and behavior whenever they represent the school and the community. All members of the Upper St. Clair community must consider their actions carefully and be responsible for them. Students at all times are expected to do their best to uphold the Upper St. Clair High School Ethics Statement.

- Always remember that bad language and poor behavior reflects badly on yourself, your coach, your team, your school, and your parents. With our bright red USC Crew bags, you become an immediately identifiable ambassador of USC High School and the Upper St. Clair community; it is expected that you will represent the community well.
- Remember that we are all working together toward common goals. You don't have to be best friends with everyone on the team, but to be successful, you do have to work together and treat one another with respect.
- Team members found to be violating the rules in this section will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action by the coach. After a major violation or three minor violations, the Parent Association Executive Board will be notified and may choose to impose further disciplinary actions including suspension from practice, suspension from competitions, or suspension from the team.

While team captains are not expected to police other team members, they are expected to lead by example and may need to remind members who are violating any of the above restrictions that such behaviors will have a negative impact on the team and are cause for disciplinary action.

## **WORK ETHIC**

In addition to consistently working to master rowing technique, and increasing strength and endurance, all members of the USC Crew team are required to share equally in the work necessary to maintain and manage equipment. Rigging and derigging boats, loading and unloading boats, carrying equipment to the race site, setting up tents at the site, getting boats in and out of the water (both at races and at practice), and winterizing boats for the off season are to be shared equally by all members of the team.

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### COMMUNICATION

Open communication among athletes, coaches and parents is essential to a healthy and effective team. Coaches will not be able to resolve conflicts that they don't know about. The board will not be able to address issues they are unaware of. Parents are unable to assist coaches with problems if they do not know about them. It is essential that problems and potential problems be brought to the attention of all concerned parties (coaches, parents, rowers and the board) before they become major issues.

--- THE FOLLOWING CONTENT WAS TAKEN FROM THE STUDENT - PARENT HANDBOOK---

Coaches are responsible for communicating information regarding the athletic program to parents. Parents are responsible for understanding the athletic program's rules, regulations and requirements and the coach's expectations.

Communication/information parents should provide to coaches:

- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
- Specific concerns with regard to the coach's philosophy and/or expectations
- Information regarding student injuries and medical conditions

Appropriate concerns for parents to discuss with coaches:

- Treatment of their child
- Ways to help their child improve
- Concerns about their child's behavior

Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:

- *Rowing seat positions/boat assignments [added by USC Rowing – see “BOAT LINEUPS”, below]*
- Other student athletes

All rowers and parents should come to the head coach and/or board members with any concerns so they may be addressed early. Coaches will communicate the teams' expectations to the athletes at each practice. Assessments of each rowers' athletic progress, teamwork, work ethic will be sent to parents at mid season and at the end of each season.

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**REGULATIONS FOR AWAY MEETS AND REGATTAS**

The following regulations shall apply to all Crew Team away meets and regattas:

- Room assignments are specifically designed by the coaches and chaperones, and are final.
- Curfew will be the sole decision of the head coach and the chaperones and will be determined at the race site.
- Students must stay in their assigned rooms after curfew. Room checks may be made at the discretion of the chaperones or coaches.
- Students may not leave the hotel area, the race site, or other designated areas without the consent of a chaperone or coach.
- Room damages, missing items and other miscellaneous extra charges (i.e., phone charges, movie rentals, etc.) will be the responsibility of those individuals sharing a room, unless a single responsible person can be identified.
- No student will be allowed to drive to or during away races.

Failure to abide by any of these regulations may result in the student being immediately sent home at the parent or guardian's expense, in addition to enforcement of any other provisions in this document.

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### ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Use of these substances is unacceptable and incompatible with your status as a minor, your status as a student at Upper St. Clair, and your status as an athlete. Anyone found to be violating this rule during practices, regattas, and/or on away trips will be referred to the Upper St. Clair High School administration and sanctioned as dictated by the following:

--- THE FOLLOWING CONTENT WAS TAKEN FROM THE STUDENT - PARENT HANDBOOK---

#### **Rules Concerning Substance Use Among Club Sport Participants**

The following rules will apply to pupils who use alcohol, tobacco or other controlled substances. Any pupil who violates these rules will be subject to the appropriate school consequences in addition to the following:

- **For the first offense** – Any pupil using alcohol, tobacco, or other controlled substances on school property will receive a suspension from school-sponsored activities.
- **For a second offense** – The participant will receive a two-week suspension from activity participation.
- **For a third offense** – The participant will be suspended from the activity for the remainder of the current school year.
- A pupil who violates these rules off school grounds will receive a three-day suspension from activity participation or will be subject to the coach/sponsor's rules if they are approved by and on file with the Athletic Director and/or Principal.
- After each offense, the pupil will be counseled by his coach/sponsor.
- The school district Drug and Alcohol Policy will be enforced where applicable.

In addition, the USC Crew team will impose and adhere to the following regulations:

#### **Substance Use Violations**

1. Use or possession of cigarettes, cigars or chewing tobacco.
2. Use or possession of alcoholic beverages, non-prescription drugs, controlled substances or performance enhancing drugs.
3. Use or possession of weapons.

For the welfare of each student, each chaperone and/or the head coach shall maintain *in loco parentis* and as such, may enter a student's room and search his/her belongings if there is reason to believe that any one of these rules may have been violated.

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### **Consequences for Substance Use Violations**

1. Any student who commits a substance use violation will be immediately sent home from any event at the parent or guardian's expense, in addition to enforcement of any of the consequences below.
2. Any individual who commits a substance use violation will be subject to an immediate suspension from the Upper St. Clair High School crew team for a period of one year from the date of the infraction. No refunds will be issued and no athletic letter will be awarded for any season of that school year. This is a no tolerance policy and supersedes the suspension rules outlined in the Parent-Student Handbook.
3. A written report of the major violation will be given to the Upper St. Clair High School Athletic Department for their review.
4. Individuals who have committed a major violation may choose to appear before the board to discuss the violation. However, the decision of the board is considered to be final.

Comment: you are an athlete spending countless hours building up your strength and fitness. Using these substances negatively affects all the work you have put in. Quite simply, use of these substances has no place on an athletic team. The team is a self-policed unit – all rowers watching out for one another. Ask yourself if you would want to go to the starting line of a race knowing that one of your crew is not in top condition because they are under the influence.

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**ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY**

--- THE FOLLOWING CONTENT WAS TAKEN FROM THE STUDENT - PARENT HANDBOOK---

**ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR  
STUDENT ATHLETES AND CLUB SPORT PARTICIPANTS**

The following guidelines have been developed by the Upper St. Clair School District to monitor the academic performance of students on athletic teams: At the beginning of the sports season, initial academic and attendance eligibility will be governed by PIAA and school district requirements. In season, weekly monitoring of an athlete's eligibility will be as follows:

- The Athletic Director will chart students by courses as they are submitted by teachers.
- Coaches will be officially informed by the Athletic Director of all such referrals by Friday.
- Any student athlete who is not passing four full credit courses will be ineligible to practice and [compete] for one week. This student will remain ineligible until he/she has achieved a passing grade in four full credit classes.
- Any penalties or sanctions imposed on students will begin on the following Monday.

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### **BOAT LINEUPS**

Selection Process: Everybody in good standing on the team races. Any and all decisions regarding where an athlete will row are coaching decisions. Understand that selecting a boat is an art and not a science. There are many factors to consider, some objective, some subjective.

The coaches consider erg scores, technical ability, attitude, responsiveness to coaching, the results of seat races, and the ability to blend in with the athletes already selected for the boat. The coaches also rely on their own instinct – while this is a purely subjective method of selection, it is one they rely on to a great degree. Things like grittiness, determination on the erg, the desire to finish first during an erg piece or run, or to lift more than anyone else is all taken into account. Many times, those who are willing to do what it takes to row in the 1st boat successfully will clearly rise to the top on their own. It will often be as clear to the rowers as it is to the coach who is deserving of a seat in the 1st boat.

Creating a line-up that will go fast is a unique blend of many things, not just the eight fastest erg scores. While performance on the erg is an important factor, it is not the only factor considered. We start the selection process on the first day of training. The coaches do not always claim to be correct in selecting the right people. However, the line-ups put out are what are considered to be the best at that time. If you are in a situation where you are unhappy about what boat you're in, it is not time to complain or take it out on others. Your job is to make your boat go as fast as it can by cooperating with the crew of that boat. If you continue to do good things on and off the water, it will get noticed, and you will get a shot at a higher-level boat. Line-ups are never set in stone, and the coaches reserve the right to change anyone's seat at any time.

The coaches' job is to help you achieve your goals. Your job is to show up to practice motivated to do well, to improve, and to work very hard. Those traits cannot be given, but the coaches can help you find them. It is your responsibility to want to be on this team, to want to work hard, to want to succeed, to want to improve, and to want to prove to yourself and to others what you're made of. Give us that, and the coaches will do their best to help you achieve what it is you want to achieve through rowing at Upper St. Clair. If you cannot be trusted to bring to the team what is outlined above, and you don't trust the coaching staff to help you, then nothing will be accomplished.

### **A Final Note**

This Crew Team Expectations document is a lot to digest, but it is hoped that it will clearly outline what is expected of you as a rower at Upper St. Clair (and as a parent of an Upper St. Clair rower). Please feel free to email or call about anything related to the team. As USC Crew is a Club Sport and not an official Varsity Sport, please address any questions, comments or concerns to the Parent Association Executive Board. The Upper St. Clair High School Athletic Department will refer you to the board.

The best way to reach the coaching staff and parent board is through email.

R.J. Pisani, Head Coach – [rj\\_pisani@comcast.net](mailto:rj_pisani@comcast.net)

Hope Feldman, Novice Coach - [hoperealestate@yahoo.com](mailto:hoperealestate@yahoo.com)

Pierette VanRyzin, President – [pierette@vanryzin.org](mailto:pierette@vanryzin.org)

Thank you for your time. Let's have a great season!

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We have read and understand the information contained in the Upper St. Clair Crew Team Responsibilities, Expectations, and Code of Conduct. Parents have also read and understood the information contained in the Parent Handbook. Both documents can be found at <http://www.usccrew.org/index.php?id=resources>

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Rower Signature

Date

Print Name

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Parent Signature

Date

Print Name

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Parent Signature

Date

Print Name

*After signing, return only this page to the **Parent Association Executive Board.***