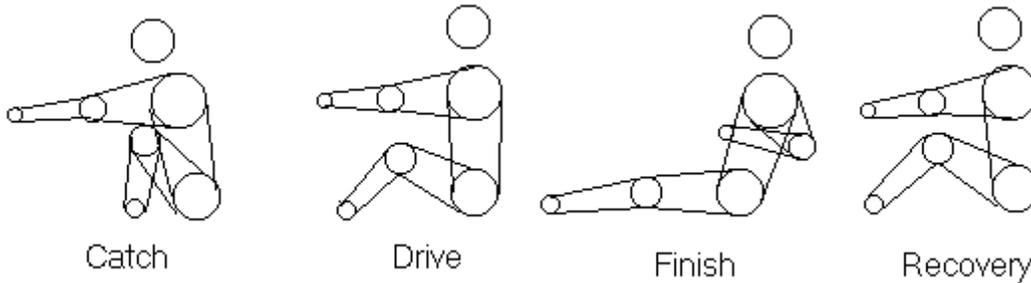


Rowing Basics

Rowing looks like an upper body sport; but while upper body strength is important, the power of the stroke comes from strong legs. The rowers move back and forth on seats that roll on a track about 2 1/2 feet long. Their feet are in shoes that are attached to the boat. They hold one oar with both hands (sweep rowers, sculling is when a rower holds one oar in each hand) and the oars have swivel oarlocks. Rowing looks graceful and fluid, but don't be fooled - Pulling oar blades smoothly and effectively through the water while balancing a boat is very difficult work.



The racing shells themselves are light and streamlined, made out of a special composite of honeycomb and fiberglass skin that is less than an eighth of an inch in thickness. For example, an 8 oared shell is sixty feet long and weighs less than 230 pounds, but it can carry a crew weighing as much as 1800 pounds.

Boat Positions - There are eight rowing positions in a racing shell. Seats 1 and 2 are referred to as the bow pair (bowman is referred to as "bow"); they are the first in the boat to cross the finish line in a race. This pair is responsible to "set the boat" i.e. to keep it level which maximizes speed. Rowers in these positions must have smooth and fluid technique and tend to be lighter so the bow does not plow through the water. Seats 3, 4, 5, and 6 are referred to as the power, or engine room seats. Rowers in these positions tend to be large and strong. Seats 7 and 8 are referred to as the stern pair. They set the stroke for each side of the boat. The 8 seat is usually the hardest to row; it is referred to as the "stroke". The coxswain (pronounced cox-in> is the eyes and ears of the boat and also controls the rudder for steering. The coxswain has to be a good motivator because, once the race begins, the coxswain is the only one who can talk to the rowers.

It is important to remember that all three sections of the boat are equally important. A good winning boat consists of eight people rowing in unison under the direction of their coxswain.

What to look for - Crews are held stationary at the start and take off at the commands, "Attention - go!". Should a crew anticipate the command and cause a false start, the crew