



# ROWING HANDBOOK

2025-2026

Rototuna High Schools  

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Connect. Inspire. Soar



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## About Us

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Welcome to the 2025/2026 rowing season.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information for parents and caregivers, rowers and supporters of the RHS Rowing Team. It contains information about rowing at RHS and Hamilton Rowing Club, including dates, costs and expectations.

We endeavour to provide as much rowing information in the handbook as possible.

If you cannot find an answer to your question, please contact the Rowing Manager.

Ainslee Watts: [ainzwatts@gmail.com](mailto:ainzwatts@gmail.com)

RHS Sport: [sport@rhs.school.nz](mailto:sport@rhs.school.nz)



## Overview of Rowing at RHS

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RHS Rowing is a relatively new squad, who are striving to put RHS on the map. Our Novices performance last season was remarkable, where we accomplished A Finals at the Nationals and won a B Final at Maadi Cup. Our aim is to achieve great success on and off the water and to be recognized amongst the rowing community.

Our Rowing Squad is affiliated with the Hamilton Rowing Club (HRC) where they provide us with a scheduled programme, Coaches and throughout the season, we row under the Club and School colours. Strength and Conditioning classes are held at School and overseen by our PE Department. These classes are designed to help our Rowers amplify their performance on the water and to also teach the importance of stretching and muscle work.

Rowing promotes the importance of teamwork which is about recognising that every member of the team has a role to play. It is this concept of shared purpose that tightens the bond and connection between each member of the team.

Rowing is a summer sport and racing takes place in terms four and one. Training starts in term three with the Learn to Row programme before fully committing to rowing for the season.

The rowing squad participates in a number of weekend regattas in terms four and one. These regattas build up to the New Zealand Secondary Schools Rowing Championships. Not all rowers will necessarily attend NZSS Rowing Champs, and the selection criteria will be made clear to all rowers.



## Our Vision

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The Rototuna Rowing Squad is driven, dedicated and focused on achieving our goals. We work hard on and off water, constantly pushing ourselves to improve our technique, strength and endurance. We support each other as a team and are always striving to be the best we can be. We have a strong sense of pride in our accomplishments and represent our school with honour and integrity. Our purpose is to help inspire ourselves and others and make Rototuna's presence known amongst the rowing community.



## Key Dates:

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28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2025 - Karapiro Club Regatta | Karapiro

11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> December 2025 - Christmas Regatta | Karapiro

12<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026 – | Ngāruawahia TBC

23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026 - North Island Club Champs | Karapiro

6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026 - Waitangi Camp | TBC

13<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> February 2026 (TBC) – Junior Regatta | Karapiro

17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> February 2026 - NZ Rowing Nationals (Club) | Karapiro

6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> March 2026 – North Island SS Champs | Karapiro

23<sup>rd</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> March 2026 – Lake Ruataniwha | Twizel

31<sup>st</sup> July 2025 – Meet and Greet at HRC for Learn To Row Programme

30<sup>th</sup> August 2025 – Boat Flipping for LTR | Te Rapa Pools

4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> October 2025- Learn To Row | Epworth Camp

11<sup>th</sup> October 2025- Club Muster Day at HRC

24<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025 - Pre-season Camp for everyone | TBC

1<sup>st</sup> November 2025 - Clive Steenson Memorial Regatta | Karapiro

15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> November 2025 - Karapiro Memorial Regatta | Karapiro

\*Novice & Intermediate only\*

# Communication and Expectations

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Our primary communication platform for updates and reminders is Whats App, where you we can organise rides, or inform each other of who cant make training at School or at the Club.

HRC uses the Stack Team app for schedules and events and Whats app for communicating with the Coachess. We ask all rowers and parents to download the app and join the Hamilton Rowing Club and RHS Rowing groups.

On occasion emails will be sent to school and parent email addresses so please turn notifications on or check frequently.

Please contact the Rowing Manager with all enquiries. Rowers need to take responsibility to communicate any training absences as early as possible and if you need help to arrange transport.

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RHS Rowing aims to establish ourselves among the best in Waikato and New Zealand. The highlight of each season is full squad attendance at the North Island Secondary School Championships at Lake Karapiro, and then selected rowers/ coxswains attend the New Zealand Secondary School Championships (Maadi).

All members of the rowing squad who complete the training programme successfully will be given the chance to race at local regattas.

It is expected that all members will attend all prescribed training sessions, camps, and regattas as listed in the season planner.

Rowing is a competitive programme that has the main aim of offering our Rowers the opportunity to row at the highest level of which they are capable. This can be achieved by:

- A supportive but challenging environment
- A fun, competitive and well-structured training programme
- A programme where everyone is empowered to strive to be the best they can be
- The opportunity to create lasting friendships
- All members and supporters complying with RHS Sport Codes of Conduct

# Mindset

**Consistency:**

Continually aim to improve and progress my development.

**Challenge:**

Make sure I am pushing myself to increase my knowledge.

**Wellbeing:**

Look after myself by training hard, good sleep patterns and fuel my body with good food.

Positive Environment! Include everyone and build each other up. We win together, we lose together.

**Earn It:**

Always aim for positive results on and off the water.



“Soar through  
the water, leave  
nothing behind.”

# Training

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As rowing is a technical sport, your child will need to spend a lot of time on the water training with their fellow Rowers. It is essential that all Rowers and Coxswains attend training so that they don't let the team down. The performance of a boat can be compromised if rowers/coxswains miss training. It may result in a crew not being able to train OR a crew trains with others who are not normally in that boat which can make the session far less productive for all involved. Attendance at training is very important.

Training sessions are compulsory and the latest schedule can be found on the Stack Team app and will be communicated by your Coach on their preferred platform.

## **Training includes:**

Strength and Conditioning at the RHS school gym, on-water training, land-based training, ergs, running, biking.

Trainings can be weekday mornings, afternoons, and weekends, dependant on your timetable.

Training does continue over the school holidays and includes camps. Please refer to the Key Dates.

Please communicate with your Coach and Manager with any leave of absence, lateness or holidays, so both are aware of what is happening.

Always bring a pre-training and post training snack. This helps with recovery, and muscle growth and repair.

Nutrition recommendations are on the Stack Team app.

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# Regatta Protocols

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Everyone is responsible for organising their own transport to and from regattas, however as the days can be long, we can work as a Team and support each other with transport. Where needed, we can look at taking the School Van, however there will be a small extra cost to cover petrol. Crew members only are allowed in the Boat Park and there is a supporters tent that we share with Hillcrest High. It is an enjoyable day out and great way to get to know other rowing families.

The marquee will be set up at various locations through out the Regattas, and we ask parents to support to put up and pull this down where you can. Bring a chair, binoculars, food and drink, sun protection and raincoats etc.

## Regatta and Racing Schedules

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Once crews have been entered, the Rowing Manager will send out a RHS day sheet including report times.

Please note this can be late at night once the crews have been finalised. You can find the full regatta details and view immediate results at [www.rowit.nz](http://www.rowit.nz)



## Boat Park

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The regatta boat park is a busy area of activity during regattas. For health and safety, and to allow the crews space to focus, we ask that parents and supporters respectfully do not enter the Boat Park. Before a race, athletes need to focus on their performance and the Coaches' input. After races, crews need space to debrief, warm down, refocus. This is a universal rule and you will notice signage at the regattas.

We all handle stress in different ways - some like to be able to talk their way through it while for others it is preferable to be left alone to think quiet thoughts undisturbed. Please try to recognise your Child's needs at this time. There will be times of celebration for some and great disappointment for others. Give them space.

Leave advice on boat set-up or race plans to the Coaches as these are specific to a crew and to the particular boat being rowed at the time. All gear, oars etc must be taken to and from the water by the crew. They are responsible for ensuring nothing is left behind. The launch pontoons are for competitors and the coaching team only. Parents and supporters must stay behind the barriers at all times.

## Boat Loading and Unloading

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Our Rowers will be rowing in several regattas as per the season calendar. They are generally held on weekends at Lake Karapiro, culminating in the North Island Secondary Schools (NISS) Championships at Lake Karapiro. Races are generally 2000m long, with the occasional 1000m race or long distance race (6-11km) Each rower or coxswain can have between 1 and 4 races per day.

Loading and unloading the boats onto trailers is required at HRC before and after travelling to regattas. All Rowers and Coxswains are required to attend and participate in boat loading and unloading. Your Rower will become very adept with practice but please note this can take up to two hours.

Every Rower and Coxswain needs their own 10mm ratchet spanner for rigging and de-rigging of boats.

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# Camp

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During the 2025/2026 season there will be three overnight camps. Camps are a compulsory part of the rowing season. It is an opportunity for the team to spend quality time together to bond as a team, and also train together on still water.

**CAMP ONE:** 24<sup>th</sup>- 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025 | Pre-Season Camp |

Get the season started with the Pre-season camp for all returning Rowers and Coxwains and those that would like to join for the upcoming season. Location to be confirmed

**CAMP TWO:** 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026 | Jan Camp | TBC

The entire squad will attend the January Camp. This is a competitive camp to see where each individual is in their progress and development. Camp can involve seat racing and crews may be set for the season. Location to be confirmed

**CAMP THREE:** 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2026 | Waitangi Camp | TBC

The entire squad will attend the Waitangi Camp. This is a competitive camp just prior to the start of the school – location to be confirmed



## Sleep

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The physical demands and early starts imposed on Rowers require them to adjust their timetables to ensure that they get the sleep they need to be able to keep going with their training, stay alert at school, and get their homework done. It can be a battle at first, but with age and experience comes wisdom.

## Blisters

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Blisters on hands are par for the course for Rowers and yes, they can hurt. Hands can be conditioned by applying methylated spirits to toughen the skin, and over the season calluses will form. Blisters can be treated by using a sterilised needle to pierce the skin and drain fluid. If plasters are required, first cover the blister with a fabric plaster then overlay with sports tape. Keep as dry as possible, short showers, wear gloves when doing the dishes, limit moisturiser and sunblock on the area. Please self-monitor and if you have any signs of infection see a Doctor.

## Equipment

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All equipment is regularly washed. There is a first aid kit in each boat, one at HRC and for camps and regattas. Coach boats meet the regulations outlined in the HRC Boat Safety Policy and Rowing NZ Water Safety Code 2016. All Coaches have had boat safety training.



# Nutrition and Hydration

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Rowers need a lot of good fuel to keep them going and in an important part of their success on the water.

While training, they need a balanced nutritional diet of complex carbohydrates for concentration, 'good' fats, protein for muscle recovery, and lots of fresh fruit and vegetables for their micronutrients and antioxidants. There is nutrition information from New Zealand High Performance Sport on Stack Team app, below is a brief overview:

With the training load, expect appetites to increase.

On race days timing of food intake is important. Have a high carbohydrate meal 1-4 hours before a race. Eg:

- Slow release carbohydrate
- 1 cup raw oats + milk + banana
- 3-4 Weetbix + milk + banana
- 2-3 slices of bread + peanut butter

Athletes must not skip meals including breakfast prior to a race. It is about training the stomach to eat at that time of the morning and eating enough to make it through racing and training.

Between races with little downtime athletes need to top up their energy with a high carb, low fat, snack. Eg.

- Banana, meusli bar, lollies
- Raro with a pinch of salt

Recovery nutrition, just remember the 4Rs. **Refuel. Repair. Rehydrate. Revitalise.**

Within 30 minutes of any race or training have recovery food, a high protein, high carb snack. Eg.

- Chocolate milk, banana smoothie, cereal with milk
- Banana, Avocado, fruit
- Nut bar, meusli bar or bliss balls
- Eggs, tuna, chicken with toast

**Stay HYDRATED** and water is best. It is very important that your rower stays hydrated for training and regattas.

They will need to have two full water bottles of their own with them at all times, and should drink throughout training and regattas. Be aware that many sports drinks contain a lot of refined sugar and are not suitable.

# Fees

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RHS Rowing 2025/2026 season fees are \$2,400 for Rowers and \$1,200 for Coxswains.

Learn to Row / Pre-season training is \$200.00 and if you continue for the rest of the season, your remaining seasonal fee will \$2,300.

All payments are made directly to HRC – where you can create a payment plan to help assist with costs. Please note – Maadi Cup fees are not included, nor is the RHS uniform, which is charged separately to your Kindo account.

## **COSTS INCLUDED IN FEES**

- HRC / WRA / NZSS Affiliation fees
- Regatta entry fees, tent site fees, amenities (excluding NZSS)
- Boat repair and maintenance, equipment
- HRC prizegivings
- Pre-season camp, Jan camp, Waitangi camp
- Insurance and administration
- Some HRC uniform items

# Fundraising

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Fundraising initiatives are a family affair and can include boat holding and medal assisting at regattas, Bunnings BBQs, and Hamilton event marshalling. Any ideas or suggestions that you can offer the group of Rowers is always welcome

# Sponsorship

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We are keen to seek sponsorship opportunities for the coming season.

# Complaints

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If a Rower / Coxswain / Parent wishes to raise an issue or complaint at any time during the season please contact the Rowing Manager first. All team members are encouraged to ask coaches for feedback and raise any matters of concern directly with the Head Coach or Rowing Manager. Compliments are also welcome.

# Uniform

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Rowers will require the uniform and equipment listed below. Some items are included with the HRC membership, RHS gear will be available to purchase before Nationals The first half of the season the squad race under HRC in the club regattas and will wear the HRC uniform, the school regattas make up the second half.



# HRC Uniform

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## Provided by HRC with fees:

- HRC Training top
- HRC Hat

## To be purchased from HRC:

- HRC Racing singlet (Novices only)
- HRC Rowsuit (Returners only)

# RHS Uniform

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## To be purchased from RHS:

- RHS Rowsuit
- Optional gear purchased from RHS:
  - RHS sports jacket
  - RHS tracksuit pants

Thermals underneath can be worn if required and you can never have too many pairs of socks! Slides and Crocs are the most common form of footwear when loading the boats into the water. Running shoes are required for on land training sessions.

10mm ratchet spanner required for de-rigging and rigging boats  
As the weather is very changeable ALWAYS be prepared with extra warm clothing, a towel, and snacks. It is essential to bring running shoes to all regattas and trainings regardless if a water session is scheduled or not. The water level of the Waikato river can be very changeable and if it gets too high we are not allowed out on the water.



# Glossary

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**Blade** - The spoon or cleaver shaped end of the oar. Also used to refer to the entire oar

**Bow** - The front of the boat, first to cross the finish line

**Bow Ball** - An essential small, soft ball, 4cm diameter, attached to the bow of the boat. Primarily for safety

**Bow Number** - A card displaying the race alpha and lane number of the boat. Eg. B4 is race B, lane 4

**Bowside** - Starboard side. Derives from the the tradition of having the bow Rower's oar on the starboard or right side of the boat

**Bucket rigged** - A way of rigging a boat so that a pair of Rowers both row on the same side of the boat, contrary to rigging on alternate sides

**Canvas** - The deck of the bow and stern of the boat, which were traditionally covered with canvas

**Catch** - The part of the stroke where the blade enters the water

**Crab** - A rowing error where the blade becomes caught under water in the flow of the water past the boat. The result always slows the boat down. Referred to as 'catching a crab'.

**Collar** - A wide plastic ring placed around the sleeve of an oar. The collar stops the oar from slipping through the oarlock

**Cox Box** - An electronic device connected to speakers in the boat which allows the Cox to give directions to the crew. Also monitors stroke rate and time

**Cox** - Short for Coxswain. The person in a coxed boat responsible for steering and race strategy

**Erg** - Short for ergometer, an indoor rowing machine

**Feather** - To turn the oar so that its blade is parallel with the water. Opposite to square

**Footplate** - The place in the boat to which a pair of shoes are attached, which allows the Rower to adjust their position relative to the slide and oarlock

**Gate** - The bar across the top of the oarlock, secured with a nut, which prevents the oar from coming out of the oarlock

**Novice** - Rowers who have not competed in a prior season

**Oarlock** - The rectangular lock at the end of the rigger which attaches the oar to the boat

**Rigging** - Metal struts that support the oars; these are removed from the boat during transport

**Seat number** - Number one seat is in the bow and the stroke seat is number eight

**Sculling** - Each Rower has two shorter oars

**Square** - To turn the oar so that its blade is perpendicular to the water. Opposite to feather

**Stern** - Back of the boat

**Stroke** - The Rower that sits in the stern of the boat and controls the rating (strokes per minute)

**Strokeside** - Port side. Derives from the tradition of having the stroke Rower's oar on the port or left side of the boat

**Sweep oar** - Each Rower has one long oar



# Rototuna High Schools

Rowing Handbook

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