

Swan Creek Rowing Club (SCRC)

Youth Program Policies

Youth Program Athlete Certifications and Limitations Policy

Policy: All youth participating in the SCRC Youth program shall join SCRC, complete certifications as required by SCRC, follow SCRC rules, and follow SCRC Youth policies and rules.

Rules and Guidelines: Below are SCRC membership and SCRC Youth Program participation rules and guidelines.

- The age guideline for a youth participant is between the ages of 13 and 19. It is expected that all participants are in middle school or high school. A participant must be mature enough to take coaching instruction, follow the rules, and work with a team. Physically, a participant must be tall enough to fit in a club boat.
- All youth and parents/guardians shall complete an SCRC Membership Application and pay the appropriate dues. All Youth Program participants must be members of Club in good standing.
- All youth program participants shall provide a completed swim test witnessed and signed by a YMCA/YWCA, Red Cross or certified swim coach. The swim test starts with treading water for 10 minutes wearing rowing clothes, putting on a flotation device that was thrown into the water and finishing with continuously swimming for 100 meters.
- No Youth Program athlete may row by him/herself unless or until they have successfully demonstrated knowledge of river safety, navigation, and boatmanship. An SCRC Coach or Youth Coach shall complete the SCRC *Basic Skills Checklist for Scullers and Coxless Crews*. In addition to completing the checklist, a youth must complete a flip test and secure his/her parent/guardian signature on the checklist. Finally, the Coach notifies the SCRC Board of the successful completion, and the SCRC Board must approve.
- All youth participants are expected to attend a minimum of 80% of practices and to notify the coach when they will not be at practice.
- Youth are expected to arrive at the practice start time. A youth who arrives at practice after the boats are on the river has missed the practice time and should leave (to avoid being at the site unsupervised).
- All youth participants are expected to participate in Club maintenance and site clean-up days as well as youth program fundraisers.

Youth Program Coaching Policy

Policy: SCRC Youth Committee and SCRC Board shall approve anyone coaching the SCRC Youth Program.

Procedure

- The SCRC Youth Committee searches for, interviews, approves, and recommends individuals to coach the SCRC Youth Program.
- SCRC Board shall approval all SCRC Youth Program coaches.
- During Youth Program activities, coaches shall have exclusive instructional discretion – parental/other individual interference during such times is inappropriate and will not be tolerated.

- Youth athletes or parents/guardians having questions about boat seating, coaching philosophy or any other matter relating to Youth Program shall direct contact the Head Coach privately outside of Youth Program activities. Any youth or parent/guardian who is not satisfied may contact the SCRC Board President.

Youth Program Staff Member and Volunteer Safety Training Requirements Policy

Policy: Youth Program coaches and volunteers shall be trained to provide emergency assistance when participating in Youth Program activities (e.g., on-water rowing, regatta attendance).

- Coaches shall attend any safety presentation scheduled by the SCRC Board (e.g., Eagle Fire Department providing a safety presentation). Any coach that cannot attend shall notify the SCRC Youth Program Head Coach.
- SCRC Youth Program Head Coach shall conduct an annual coaches meeting to review safety procedures. The Head Coach shall publish notes from the meeting, and any coach not attending shall confirm review of the notes.
- Coaches shall complete an incident report for any incident occurring during an SCRC Youth Program activity or involving a youth member.

Youth Program Safe Rowing Weather and River Conditions Policy

Policy: Youth shall row when weather and water conditions are deemed safe for rowing.

Rules: SCRC uses a safety Flag System to inform club members of known weather and water conditions. However weather and river conditions can change quickly. The following rules are established to ensure safe rowing. Because all possible criteria cannot be anticipated, individual rowers and coaches are expected to evaluate current weather and water conditions to determine if safe rowing is possible. All decision for permitting rowing shall be based on safety (e.g., not based on the fact that a boat is competing in a regatta or parents/youth had to drive a distance for the practice).

- **Flag System**, as shown on the [SCRC Website](#) and at the boat site, shall be followed. A flag can only be downgraded (e.g., go from Red to Yellow or go from Yellow to no flag) by board members.
 - Red flag indicates no rowing is permitted.
 - Yellow flag indicates caution. Youth are permitted to row following the Four Oar Rule (permitted boats are 2x, 4x, 4+, and 8+) and with a coach in a launch.
 - Blue flag indicates cold water. Youth are permitted to row following the Four Oar Rule (permitted boats are 2x, 4x, 4+, and 8+) and with a coach in a launch.
- **Weather Rules**
 - Water temperature must be at least 45°F.
 - The air temperature plus water temperature must equal 100°F or more.
 - No rowing if winds are 15 mph or if there are whitecaps/heavy chop. Coaches/teams need to evaluate if wind is from the south even if under 15mph
 - Rowing is not permitted if lightening or thundering.
 - Rowing is not permitted in foggy conditions if the free bridge cannot be seen from the launch site.
 - If weather radar/maps show a storm passing through the area, rowing is permitted after 30 minutes of the last occurrence of lightening or thunder.

- Rowing is not permitted when the National Weather Service has issued severe thunder storm or tornado watches/warnings for Bucks, Hunterdon or Mercer Counties.
- **River Rules** are based on the river gage at Trenton, NJ. (See the National Weather Service Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service for the Delaware River at Trenton.)
 - Rowing is not permitted if the river level is above 12 feet.
 - If the river level is between 11 and 12 feet, all youth rowers must be accompanied by a coach in a launch and adhere to the Four Oar Rule (permitted boats are 2x, 4x, 4+, 8+)
 - No youth boat shall row south of the SCRC launch site.

Youth Program on Water Support Policy

Policy: On-water support shall ensure that coaches can provide appropriate coaching as well as react to on-water emergencies while ensuring the safety of all assigned youth.

- **Launch to youth boat ratio.** The ratio of coaching launches to youth boats may require many different combinations depending on the number of attending youth and coaches as well as the availability of boats and launches. Therefore the following guidelines shall be followed.
 - Guidelines is one coaching launch to two 8+s or one launch to three 4+s.
 - A coach in a launch shall not have the responsibility of more than 16 youth at any one time.
 - The coach and coxswains shall ensure that the assigned boats stay together so that the coaching launch is near all assigned boats.
 - Goal of youth boat assignment is to avoid having un-seated youth at the site unsupervised and to avoid carrying extra youth in the launch.
- **Launch Equipment.** Each coaching shall carry the following equipment in the launch.
 - Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) for assigned rowers and coach
 - Noise making device (e.g., whistle)
 - Anchor
 - Rope
 - Ladder
 - Flashlight
 - Cell phone
 - Paddle

Youth Program Athlete Privilege Policy

Participation in the SCRC Youth Program is a privilege not a right, and participants are expected to treat coaches, other participants, and volunteers with respect. A completed swim test and club membership is a prerequisite to participating in any youth programs.

- **Abusive language, harassment, intimidation, and bullying shall not be tolerated.** If such behavior is observed, the following actions shall be taken.
 - First observation: coach speaks to youth athlete
 - Second observation: coach speaks to the youth athlete and parent
 - Third observation: coach completes an incident report, notifying the SCRC Board. The SCRC Board shall determine remediation, which may include removal from Youth Program or removal from SCRC.
- **Dangerous behavior shall not be tolerated.** At any time that a coach determines that an athlete presents a danger to or creates an adverse rowing environment for him/herself or others, the coach

may suspend youth athlete's participation immediately until danger/adverse condition is resolved to coach's satisfaction or decided by the SCRC Board.

Youth Program Communications Policy

Policy: The success of the SCRC Youth Program is dependent on keeping open lines of communications with athletes and parents/guardians. The program shall communicate using only the email addresses provided by participants.

Guidelines

- Youth Program coaches, youth, and parents/guardians shall use Teamsnap to communicate current activities and requirements. Teamsnap is an invitation only website set up for the team; sensitive information is identified as *private* so that only coaches can see phone numbers, email addresses, medical info, etc.
- Youth athletes and parents/guardians are encouraged to provide an email address that is regularly checked and an up-to-date phone number.
- Youth athletes and parents/guardians shall provide advance notification when a youth cannot attend a practice/regatta/activity via Teamsnap. Notification is requested to be no less than 5 hours before practice time so that coaches can pre-determine boating arrangements.
- A coach may use texts to communicate updated weather/water/safety conditions affecting times/locations of practices/regattas/activities.
- Communication with Learn-to-Row participants is typically via email, not Teamsnap.

Youth Program Fee Policy

SCRC Club budgets are set each year, and Youth Program budgets are set at the beginning of each program. SCRC dues and Youth Program Registration fees shall not be refunded if a youth athlete no longer participates, except in extraordinary circumstances.

Youth LTR Clinic Policy

Policy: Learn-to-row participants shall comply with all of the rules and requirements of SCRC and SCRC Youth program as stated in this document.