



Session 4

Module 7&8 combined

Duration – 90 min

New Skills:

- Timing
- Full Crew Beginner Rowing
- Technique Drills

Prep

This is an **On The Water** session so make sure appropriate equipment is available. Review master checklist.

Alternative plan

Some of the drills surrounding timing can be completed on the ergs, so have enough machines available in case OTW is not possible. If some elements in this or previous sessions have been missed it is possible to add these to Modules 9&10.



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Crew Brief – This module is about progressing skills already learned in the boat, to the next level. The technique will continue to be broken down and the coach will start looking for more finesse and detail in the movements. Remind the crew that although a certain standard has been achieved, you, and they, should always look to be progressing and challenged in their skill level. Skills covered will be;

- Timing
- Full crew of beginners rowing together
- Relevant technique drills to correct faults and reinforce good technique
- Continued work on sequence and feathering.

Timing – The rower should have a basic concept of timing by now, so the purpose of this session is to give them tips to refine the timing in the boat.

- Once rowers are in the boat and pushed away from the slip have them start rowing in pairs/scullers, hands only. Instruct them to not only watch the blade of the person in front of them, but to also watch the elbows and hands in front as they move away from the body. Encourage them to feel the rhythm of the movement and move with the rhythm. Rotate through the pairs/scullers making corrections along the way.
- Once the timing is good and consistent at hands away, add body/reach to the stroke. Again, encourage them to not only look at the blades in front of them but also the hands, elbows and now body. Have them feel for the timing as well as look and listen for it. Move through making corrections along the way.
- When the crew shows good timing at the reach position start using the slide, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ then full. In addition to watching the blades, hands, elbows, and bodies in front of them they should also be watching the seat in front of them – their seat doesn't move until the seat in front of them moves. Move through the pairs making corrections along the way.
- Make sure the crew understands that good timing isn't just putting the blade in and out of the water together, but involves moving to every position of the sequence together. If they are not stroking the boat it is their job to follow the rate and timing of the stroke of the boat, even if it means adjusting their own stroke.
- As the timing improves in pairs start adding to the number rowing until you are rowing full crew or have a minimal number sitting the boat. Give encouragement when progress (no matter how small), is made and correction when needed. Try to focus on correcting faults in timing only, without being distracted by other issues.

Full Crew Beginners Rowing – It may have occurred naturally by now, but by the end of the session the full crew of beginners should be rowing together. It is important that the crew stay relaxed and expect that the boat is going to be unstable at the beginning. The best thing to do is to stay relaxed and concentrate on their own technique. Don't let frustration creep into the boat, remember they have been rowing a fairly stable boat until now with a sense of security, this is a change.

- Have the crew start rowing $\frac{1}{2}$ slides with bow (sculling) or bow pair (sweep) sitting the boat.



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- Once a nice rhythm has been reached add in bow/bow pair for 5 strokes only. Remind the crew to focus on their technique, they are in no danger
- Repeat adding in bow/bow pair for 5 strokes on, 10 strokes off until the crew begins to steady.
- Assess what is going well and what needs to be corrected in order for the boat to run more balanced (Hand heights, timing, blade placement) and make corrections along the way.
- As the balance and technique improves with all crew rowing start increasing the number of strokes bow/bow pair is rowing – go from 5 to 10, 10 to 15 etc...
- Keep the rate low and the stroke controlled, if the technique and balance start to suffer stop and repeat to build it up again.
- Once the crew is more confident you can lengthen out the stroke, using the same process, until you have the full crew rowing at full slides.
- Make sure to reassure them that boat balance in a novice crew is something that takes time, patience and a lot of mileage

Drills – Drills should be part of every outing, whether used to teach a new skill or to improve specific part of the stroke. This is not an exhaustive list of drills, just some of relevance to beginners. You should demonstrate any drills you have planned for the outing on land/on the ergs if possible, before you get on the water.

Grip drills

Square blades, Thumbs on top of handle

Method – In pairs/scullers have the rowers sit at back stops. They should change their grip so their thumbs are on top of the handle (stops cheating), and keeping the blades square, tap down, arms, body, slide, and draw through, whilst the boat is balanced by the remainder crew. Help the crew feel the difference in their grip by closing eyes while rowing.

Balance drills-

Chopping at back stops - Concentrating on getting the blade out of the water cleanly, squared, and in time.





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Method – In pairs/scullers have the rowers sit at back stops. They should chop the oars in and out of the water, in time and watching the height of the blade in and out of the water. You can vary the speed of the drill or add a pause when the blade is out of the water to practice balance.

Posture drills -

See Pause Paddling under Timing drills

Timing & Sequence Drills –

Pause Paddling – This drill can be used on any portion of the stroke and is used to ensure that the full crew is arriving at the part of the stroke at the same time.

Method – Have full crew row five full strokes to get the boat moving. On the sixth stroke have them pause at the hands away position with the blades feathered and off of the water. The boat should be balanced and all crew should be arriving at the same position at the same time. Make adjustments to body and hand positions as needed. Once everyone is in the same position call 'go'. Make sure the first movement, together, is to reach position and that the slide is controlled. Have full crew continue to pause at hands away position until you are satisfied that the balance and positions are improving.

Work up the rowing positions (reach, $\frac{1}{4}$ slide, $\frac{1}{2}$ slide, $\frac{3}{4}$ slide). You aren't looking for perfection, especially with new crews, but you are looking for an improvement.

Crew Debrief – This is a big module for the group, they have learned all of the basics of the rowing stroke and progressed them to a point of competency. All future sessions are working towards continued progression of competency and efficiency in the boat. Stress with them what the strengths have been and the areas that need to be focused on in the future. Make sure they are enjoying the experience and find out from the crew how they would like to progress their rowing.

Conclusion – At the end of the session rowers should be able to;

- Increase their precision of timing at every point of the stroke
- Row in a crew with all crew rowing, staying relaxed and focused.
- Understand and be able to participate in relevant drills to improve basic technique.