



Session 5

Module 9&10 combined

Duration – 90 min

New Skills:

- Stroking a boat (setting rhythm, rate, and example)
- Boatmanship - Steering/turning/manoeuvring boat
- Concept of a rowing 'journey' and what is required.

Prep

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

Alternative plan

This session can also be used to recap a module that may have been missed or cut short due to weather. Coaches should be critical in looking at the crew and make an honest assessment of where the weaknesses are and address these in this session. It would be useful to have the passports partly completed and available to the coach.



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Crew Brief - Explain any missing elements to be covered in this session with reasons, and outline the plan for an outing to encompass this plus stroking, boatmanship and journeying skills.

- **Stroking a boat** - The stroke is often considered a leadership position in the boat. The stroke sets the stroke rate and rhythm for the rest of the crew to follow. Stroke seat has to be a very calm and yet very competitive individual, who sets a good example for the crew to follow. A good stroke will lead a crew by bringing the best out of every rower in the boat. Some people may be obvious strokes while others may need time to develop. It is recommended that each member of the crew be given the opportunity to develop this skill. It also gives the athlete and coach more options when putting a crew together. Use the outing to try one or more people in the stroke seat who have not done this
- **Boatmanship** – the skill of handling a boat – is something to be encouraged in each athlete. It is easy, especially for those sitting in the middle of the larger boats, to become a bit of a ‘robot’ – doing what the coach or cox says but not feeling the boat for themselves. As a coach you should teach the crew how the boat moves and how their action affects the balance and direction of the boat. Additionally every person in the boat should know how to effectively spin a boat, line a boat up and the basics of steering a boat. Ways to achieve full crew involvement can include;
 - Balance Drills – See module 7 & 8. Ask questions of the crew about the balance of the boat so they are aware what it feels like when the boat isn’t balanced. As their skill and confidence increases ask them for solutions to balance issues instead of providing the answers yourself.
 - Ask different members of the crew to make the calls when spinning the boat. Give them time to make mistakes and figure it out on their own.
 - Practice having a crew stop and reverse a boat into a certain position, making sure they understand how the flow of the water or the wind will affect their efforts.
 - Crews learn by example so make sure that when you, as the coach, are giving directions you are clear and concise in what you want.
 - Stress a ‘boat first’ attitude in the crew. Getting the boat balanced and the crew moving together should be put before power or rate.
 - Practice emergency stops, holding water/checking on one side, and turning a boat quickly.

Journeying – Not everyone that comes into the sport will be suited for, or interested in, competitive rowing. It is important that they realize there is a place in the sport for them outside of competition. Tour rowing is growing in popularity in Ireland and can be a great way for people to continue with the sport. It doesn’t have to be one or the other. To demonstrate the idea of tour rowing the coach can plan an outing that has little to do with power, rate or speed and instead focuses on the destination of the outing. Things to consider;

- Make sure the crew is aware of the planned session ahead of time so they’ve allowed extra time and have additional supplies.



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- Tour outings can be longer than other training sessions so additional water and perhaps food will need to be brought in the boat.
- With tour rowing it is the journey that is important so brief the crew on where they are going and things of interest to look out for along the way.
- The rate is usually kept fairly low, and pressure fairly light. It's all about a comfortable pace that can be maintained, to reach the destination.
- As they may work less hard, additional clothing may be necessary.
- If you are rowing into an area you aren't familiar with make sure the crew has a map and are aware of any dangers or obstacles.

Crew Debrief – This module can be considered a kind of 'catch all' for the rowers. There is more theory in it than actual practice so as a coach you are going to have to ask questions to make sure they've understood. Rowers may not enjoy stroking the boat or tour rowing but it's important they've been exposed to it instead of rejecting it out of hand. Arrange the final session and suggest rowers come prepared for a fun competition and bring friends/ supporters.

Conclusion – At the end of the session rowers should have;

- Had the opportunity to stroke a boat.
- Practiced boatmanship and understand responsibility of every crew member to the boat.
- An understanding of tour rowing and competitive rowing from some experience of both.