

## Noank Rowing Club (NRC) Class Policy

Friends of Fitch Crew is a 501c-3 corporation that was established in 2000. Since 2011, Fitch Crew Club is doing business as Noank Rowing Club to more accurately reflect the variety of participants and members of the club. Class participants include youth rowers that attend Fitch High School and students who do not, as well as collegians and adults. Noank Rowing Club offers rowing classes to the public. This policy is written for participants who take such classes.

**Attendance:** Rowing is one of the ultimate team sports. There are no superstars in the rowing. Each person must participate and contribute to the overall success of each crew and the club overall.

*Every student* is expected to reliably participate in every class. Nine individuals are needed for an eight person shell to row on the water, while five individuals are needed for a four person shell to row on the water. If people do not show as expected, a crew may not be able to go on the water or people may have reduced opportunity to row. Uneven numbers of crew may mean people will spend part of the class riding in the coach's launch or on the shore if water conditions do not permit riding in the launch. The coaches strive to ensure that everyone will have an opportunity to be in a shell for at least a portion of every class when crews are on the water. Class participants are also expected to stay until the end of their class to ensure that equipment is cleaned and stored properly. The coaches appreciate the opportunity for a short review of the day's class as well as to discuss the schedule for the next class(s). Please notify the coach in advance if you expect to be late or need to leave early for any class.

*Club members* are encouraged to attend as schedule allows, unless they are ill or injured. Club members are expected to arrive no later than the scheduled start time to meet fellow members, ready to row. Club members are also expected to properly clean and store all equipment. If equipment is damaged or a concern is noticed, please mention this to a coach or note the concern in the Rowing Log.

**Mutual Respect:** Rowing is a traditional sport based on respect, sportsmanship, and exemplary conduct of teamwork. Respect starts between coaches, coxswains, and rowers. The NRC coaches make a significant commitment in time and energy to make the NRC classes and rowing programs possible. They strive to treat each rower as an individual as well as coach individuals to achieve their goals as a team and gain knowledge of the sport. Although the coaches may appear demanding and will provide constructive criticism, they will never berate or belittle an athlete for their sincere efforts. In return, coaches expect mutual respect from athletes. Coaches should always be referred to as coach and not by their first or last name alone. Athletes must follow the coach's instruction during class. If you disagree with the coach's approach, discuss it with that coach after class, in private. However, remember that the coach must consider the safety first and equal opportunities for the entire crew over the wishes of an individual.

Respect must also extend to fellow teammates and competitors. Arguments or conflicts between teammates on or off the water are to be resolved as they detract from the team effort that is necessary for success in the boat. This applies to both coxswains and rowers. On the dock and in the shell the coxswain is in charge. If you disagree with the coxswain's approach or a teammate's efforts, this should be discussed with the coach in private, not in the shell, nor on the dock.

This requirement for respect also applies when competing within the club or at regattas. Incidents will arise on the water or on the dock. Under no circumstances will a NRC participant engage in an argument

or conflict with a member of another crew. Inform your coxswain or coach of the incident and it will be addressed with the opponent's coach or regatta officials.

**Being Prepared:** The success of a crew depends on each individual making a personal commitment to contribute their best to the team as a whole and be ready for class activities. Be prepared for the physical activity. This includes submitting waiver forms in a timely manner and having proper clothing for the class or races. Weather conditions in rowing can be harsh and change rapidly. Hypothermia is a real and serious risk for rowers; especially during spring season. Rowers must always bring clothing for wet and/or cold weather rowing. Dressing in layers with comfortable, but not loose clothing is best. Fleece layers and wind-proof light jackets are highly recommended for the spring season. Although the air temperature on shore may be quite comfortable, the water temperature may be quite cool. As a result, it is easy to get chilled with a breeze off the water. Also remember that cotton clothing wicks warmth away from the body when wet. Thus, fleece or wicking clothing is strongly recommended. Since rowing can be an intense physical activity, proper hydration is very important. Especially in warmer weather, drinking water while in the shell is strongly recommended.

**Safety on the Dock and Water:** Any activity on the water can be hazardous if proper precautions and procedures are not followed. The first priority of NRC coaches is safety of the crew and equipment, in that order. Although the goal is to row each day that class is scheduled, weather conditions such as high wind or thunderstorms may dictate that it is not safe for on-water activities. As such alternate training or physical activity will take place. In addition, our ability to provide these rowing opportunities depend on the integrity of the shells we row, which can be valued at \$3,000 or more per seat. For this reason, on the dock and on the water, rowers must focus their attention on the shell and the direction of the coaches and/or coxswains. While on the water, rowers are expected to keep their attention focused on what is happening in the shell and to keep idle conversations to a minimum. When moving the shells from the shell rack to the dock or back to the shell rack, fooling around will not be tolerated. The shells are fragile and can be damaged very easily, especially when people are not paying attention to where the shell is going and what is happening around them.

**Care and Maintenance of Equipment:** In order for NRC to provide the rowing programs, the rowing shells and oars must be properly maintained. This requires a concerted effort from the coaches, NRC volunteers, and most of all the athletes who row the shells. Athletes must make themselves available before and after classes, to help load, unload, and maintain the shells, oars and equipment. All equipment must be rinsed with fresh water after each use to minimize the salt and corrosive damage that occurs due to salt water. Shells must be securely strapped on the racks at the end of each class.

**Fund Raising Activities:** Noank Rowing Club exists largely due to the fundraising efforts, and volunteers who maintain the rowing equipment. Rowers are expected to participate in fundraising activities as scheduled the same as they are expected to participate in the rowing programs. Without these fundraising efforts, NRC would not be able to provide and maintain the rowing equipment for the rowing programs.