



Coxing





Coxing Course

Plan for the next two nights

MONDAY

- Safety and responsibilities
- Parts of the boat
- Equipment
- Commands and use of the voice
- Coach and crew relationships



Coxing Course

Plan for the next two nights

TUESDAY

- Getting boat on and off the water
- Steering hazards
- Steering and steering skills



What does the cox do?

List 10 things your crew wants from you

- To feel safe
- To take charge
- Clear instructions
- Good steering
- Accuracy
- Encouragement
- Technical knowledge
- Sympathy to crew
- Feedback (positive and negative)
- Looks after rhythm etc, not just constant driving
- Not too much talking/Lots of chatter!
- Ability to lighten atmosphere (eg before race or during difficult outing)



What does the cox do?

List 10 things your coach wants from you

- Understanding of what coach wants
- Ability to convey what coach wants
- Ability to act as deputy
- Partnership
- Good steering
- Focus on crew needs
- Ability to pick up previous outings' work, leaving coach free to concentrate on new points
- To be confident – and give an air of confidence
- Bright and quick to pick up ideas
- Daft/maverick side to personality



What does the cox do?

Why do we cox? What is in it for us?

- Technical challenge
- Psychological challenge
- To feel wanted/needed
- To win races
- Increase our confidence
- Learn new skills
- Fun
- Friendship
- “mother hen” instinct?
- Learn “transferable” skills



A Coxes Responsibilities are:

- Safety
- Steering
- Commands
- Safety
- Communication
- Discipline
- Safety
- Strategy
- Coaching
- Safety



A Coxes Responsibilities are:



Sydney Morning Herald





Legally:

- Cox held legally responsible for safety of crew (unless under 18)
- You need to make sure you have the tools to do this competently and confidently.



Looking after yourself

- Your own health
 - Do not cox if you are not up to it
- Weather
 - Appropriate clothing
- Water
 - Swimming ability
 - Personal buoyancy



Equipment

- Life Jacket
- Spanners
- Screwdriver
- Stopwatch
- Coxbox
- Hat
- Sunglasses
- Money
- Keys
- Socks
- Waterproof trousers
- Waterproof top
- Thermal underwear
- Layers of tops and bottoms
- Sun cream
- Wellies
- Water



Parts of the boat

- Bow
- Stern
- Port
- Starbord
- Bowside
- Strokeside
- Rudder
- Rudder strings
- Foot plate
- Stretcher
- Seat
- Riggers
- Gate



Positions in the Boat

- Bow, 2, 3, Stroke
- Why do we give crew numbers?
- Get crew to number off
- Calling a turn
- Calling onto a stake boat
- Into a landing stage



Commands



Commands

- Clear
- Consistent
- Concise
- Firm
- Simple



Commands

Can be allocated into the following categories:

- Instruction
- Information
- Technical
- Motivational / psychological



Commands

Instruction

- Firm
- Light
- Half slide
- Square blade paddling
- Easy



Commands

Information

- Wash coming in from Stroke side
- 1 minute to go
- Rudder going on



Commands

Technical

- Sharp on the catch
- Draw the finish
- Finishes clean
- Square early at 2



Commands

Motivational / psychological

- I've got their 2, give me their bow!
(also information)
- Drive the legs
(also technical)
- 10 on the finishes
(also technical)
- Last 10
(also information)
- Sharp in the bows
(also technical)

- Not what you say, but how you say it.....



Learning Commands

- Instructions first
- Then information
- Then coaching
- Then encouragement



Learning Commands

- How do we learn?
- How do we build a vocabulary?
- How do we improve?



Projection

- The voice is the coxes main tool with or without a cox box
- How a cox sits will affect the voice
 - Sit STILL
 - Sit straight



Projection





Projection

- The cox box
- How to use it
- What difference it makes
- How to look after it



Beyond the words

- The main tool available to a cox is the voice
- Communication (for coxes) is made up of:
 - Timing
 - Rhythm
 - Phonetics (The *sound* of the word)
 - Semantics (The *meaning* of the words)



Timing of commands

- During exercises ~ crucial to smooth transitions & effective training
- Key phrases for changes ~ “go”, “now”, “change”
- At the catch:
 - changes to/from square blades
 - changes in slide length
- At the finish:
 - changes in pressure



Exercise

- Going to do exercise on ergos
- Think about:
 - Timing of commands
 - Rhythm of commands
 - Clarity of what you say
 - Confidence
- Help each other out – positive criticism!



Exercise

- In groups using the ergos: take turns to:
- Start the “crew” from backstops
- Go from light to half pressure
- Go to 10 strokes firm
- Take them to light
- Change to half slide
- Change to full slide
- Easy crew



Phonetics

- The **sound** of a word often conveys the meaning as much, if not more, than the word itself
- Imagine you are annoyed to the extreme with someone, and you want to let them know
- Think of 5 words you might use:



Hard sounds:

- Hard consonants
- f ff gg k q p tt
- Short vowels
- agh i o u
- “spatula” easy word to put venom into



Hard sounds

- Short, sharp sounds fire up a crew, increase urgency and tension
- 10 coxing words used to fire a crew up
 - Firm
 - Action
 - Go
 - Power
 - Sharp
 - Kick
 - Jump
 - Quick
 - Drive
 - Now



Phonetics

- Imagine you are talking to a loved one on Valentine's Day
- Think of words you might use



Sssoft ssssoundz

- Soft consonants
- dh ll mm nn r ss sh v
- Long vowels
- aaagh ay ee eye oh oo you
- “luv yer” & “I love you” ~ which is more convincing?



Soft sounds

- Long, soft sounds relax, reduce tension and encourage control
- 10 coxing words used to calm a crew down
 - Down
 - Loose
 - Smooth
 - Long
 - Draw
 - Relax
 - Away
 - Feel
 - Glide
 - Slow



Accentuation

- Using crescendo
wind it UP
- Or its opposite (caliendo)

Wind it down

- Emphasises the meaning



Rhythm

- The rhythm of the voice can set the rhythm of the crew
- Short, sharp phrases in the drive
- Long, soft phrases on the recovery



Rhythm

- Use combinations of the sounds to create the rhythm
- 5 phrases that you hear/say
 - Tap and relax
 - Drive and release
 - Sharp away
 - Draw smooth
 - Draw there
 - Tap the catch.....there
 - I've got their 2, give me bow!



Semantics

The meaning of a word or phrase

- Same words, different meanings
- Same meaning, different effects

The use of positive statements



Same meaning – different effect

- “Control the slide” ~ puts the concept of control into the rower’s brain.
- “Don’t rush the slide” ~ puts the concept of rushing into the rower’s brain



Same meaning – different effect

- “You’re late, 2” ~ you are wrong, you are a failure, you are letting the side down!
- “In earlier, 2” ~ here’s what I want you to do to have an even greater impact!



Same meaning – different effect

- “Give me 5 for Nancy” ~ Nancy tries harder
- “Nancy, you’re slacking” ~ Nancy is made to feel a failure



The use of positive statements is best exemplified by the;

- “I’ve got their 7” (We’re already up)
- “Give me their 6” (This is what I want you to do)
- Effect on opposition.....



Exercise

In groups using the ergos: take turns to:

- Start the “crew” from backstops
- Give a technical comment
- Go from light to half pressure
- Go to firm
- Give them some encouragement
- Wind down and easy



The coach and the crew and your relationship with them

“Earn the respect and trust of the crew”



Coaching Coaches

- What can the coach do to help the cox?
- PLAN AHEAD or ORGANISATION!!!
- Make sure you have the outing plan in advance



Planning ahead

Exercises

Look to see what exercises the coach is planning and make sure you:

- Understand what he means
- Understand what it is for
- Practice the relevant commands
- Think about *where* in the river you should do the exercise



Planning ahead

Pieces

Look to see what pieces the coach is planning and make sure you:

- Understand what he wants to achieve
- Understand where it fits in the long term plan
- Practice the relevant commands and think about where crew may need motivating
- Think about *where* in the river you should do each piece



Relationship with Coach

- You become “right hand man”
- Need to *earn* the trust
- Need to be consistently in control



Relationship with Crew

How to be part of the crew, but still in charge





Relationship with Crew

You need to *earn* their trust and respect by

- Being consistently in control
- Being confident and firm
- Remembering that you are in charge of their safety

Make sure you make genuine friendships outside the boat



Coping with “Feedback”

The coach needs to:

- Needs to learn to coach you, while maintaining the crew’s trust in you
- The cox has a unique position in the boat ~ Part crew, part coach

Steering – matter between you and coach

Commands – discuss openly with crew



Coping with “Feedback”

Rules could be

- Positive comments only
- Negative comments to be accompanied by positive alternative
- No more than 1 comment per crew member per outing
- You do need to be thick skinned ~ people say things without thinking, especially when tired or frustrated with their own performance



Racing

Or – “Help I’m in charge”!



Racing

How does it feel to race if you are a crew member?

- Sick, scared, excited
- Want to be able to concentrate on YOUR job
- Need to know that someone else will get you to the start on time, and ready to race.
- Crews brains stop working – you have to take charge!



Racing

How does it feel to race if you are a coach?

- Sick, scared, excited
- Out of control
- Coach focus on crew and very nervous – you have to demonstrate that you have taken charge!



Racing

- Cox is completely in charge
- What can you do to prepare yourself?



Racing

In Training

- Practice stake boat starts
- Practice normal race plan

- What if crew catches a crab?
- What if they hit something?
- What if something breaks?



Racing

Race day

- Checked the equipment
- Weigh in in plenty of time
- Carry spanners etc
- Walk the course (with the coach)
- Plan pushes and check for obstructions
- Make sure you know where warm up areas are
- Make sure you know where you have to be and when
- Make sure you know where the finish is!



Learning Outcomes

- Safety and responsibilities
- Parts of the boat
- Equipment
- Commands and use of the voice
- Coach and crew relationships



What does the cox do?

What makes a “perfect” cox?

- Organisation
- Forethought
- Sympathetic to needs of others
- Experience
- Good steering
- Knowledge of rowing – ability to coach
- Sense of humour



Thoughts to go away with

- Step out of any crew that isn't positive
- PLAN your own progression and agree it with the coach
- Be ambitious, but realistic – get the basics right first
- Be aware of your own skills and be proud of them



The future.....?

