

Eastney Cruising Association Gig Section Rowing Handbook



Welcome to Eastney Cruising Association Gig Section!

This guide is designed to help you as a member of the Gig Section to navigate the world of rowing, but please don't be afraid to ask questions.

Established in June 2014, we have welcomed members from local communities and grown in significant numbers. We embrace diversity and inclusion and have established rowers from varying ages and abilities. Gig rowing provides great social aspects as well as good physical and mental wellbeing. We offer the opportunity to club row, learning vital skills on the water, gently building stamina and technique and for those who would like to, the opportunity to train for regatta competitions.

Situated in Langstone Harbour the Eastney Cruising Association (ECA) has excellent equipment and facilities. At present the club owns three Gig Boats, one wooden race specification Gig constructed in Cornwall and two Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) Gigs which are utilised for training and club rows. We also have all the ancillary equipment to enable club members to row in safety.

Social aspects include cooked breakfasts which frequently occur after early morning rows. Served in the Club House, which has excellent facilities including a licensed bar, Galley, showers, toilets, breakfast and the occasional barbeque have become very popular.

Pilot gigs

- Pilot Gigs are 32 feet long, no wider than 4 feet 10 inches wide (at the widest point) and are planked in Cornish Small Leaf Elm or GRP.
- They are built to weigh approximately 7cwt (355.6kgs).
- There are 8 thwarts (seats); one for the Coxswain, 6 for the rowers and 1 (the “Seagull”) for the Pilot.
- There are 3 rowers on each side of the gig.
- All gigs are built to the same specification and the Cornish Pilot Gig Club (CPGA) inspectors monitor each new gig during the construction.
- All modern gigs are built to the measurements of one gig – “Treffry”, which was built by Peters of St. Mawes in 1838.
- The old oars (sweeps) were usually made of ash and would measure up to 18 feet long but now closer to 13 feet
- Modern oars are made of silver spruce and differ in size according to the position in the gig.

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1. Getting started as a rower

Where the gigs are kept and where do we meet to go rowing

The gigs (boats) are stored at the ECA & rowers meet at the Club usually 30 minutes before the stated launch time.

What should I wear?

We recommend sports-based clothing suitable for the weather. We also recommend footwear you don't mind getting wet as they may get wet and that is supportive on the back of your feet! Trainers will suffice.

The team colours are Blue & Yellow and branded clothing is available from our team kit supplier.

What should I expect?

A short session in which the Cox (the person steering the boat) or an experienced rower, will train you in the basics of rowing. This will include how to row, how to reverse row and how to deal with catching a crab, term for the blade getting "stuck in the water".

If it's for me, what do I do?

If you enjoy the rowing; you can apply to join the ECA to become a member. We will ensure that you receive details of the launch dates by WhatsApp and access to allow you to reserve a time to row.

If it's not for me, what do I do?

That's ok, just inform a gig rowing representative. Any feed-back would be appreciated.

How do I progress?

Continued sessions in rowing will develop your technique and stamina, so time on the water is vitally important. Guidance will be given by the Cox and more experienced rowers. The Gig Section will offer "club" rows and training rows for race crews but also to allow new rowers to develop.

When do we row?

This does depend upon the tide & weather conditions; we can launch at all states of the tide.

We can only row in day light for safety reasons, so in the summer we often do evening rows, yet in the winter we are limited to mainly weekend rows.

A few general rules that the Gig Section follows when deciding to launch and row.

The ECA Coxes may cancel a row if the wind is seen to be making condition dangerous. It is ultimately their decision, and they will make it based upon whether they feel they could safely take a crew out and back without risk to the crew or the Gig.

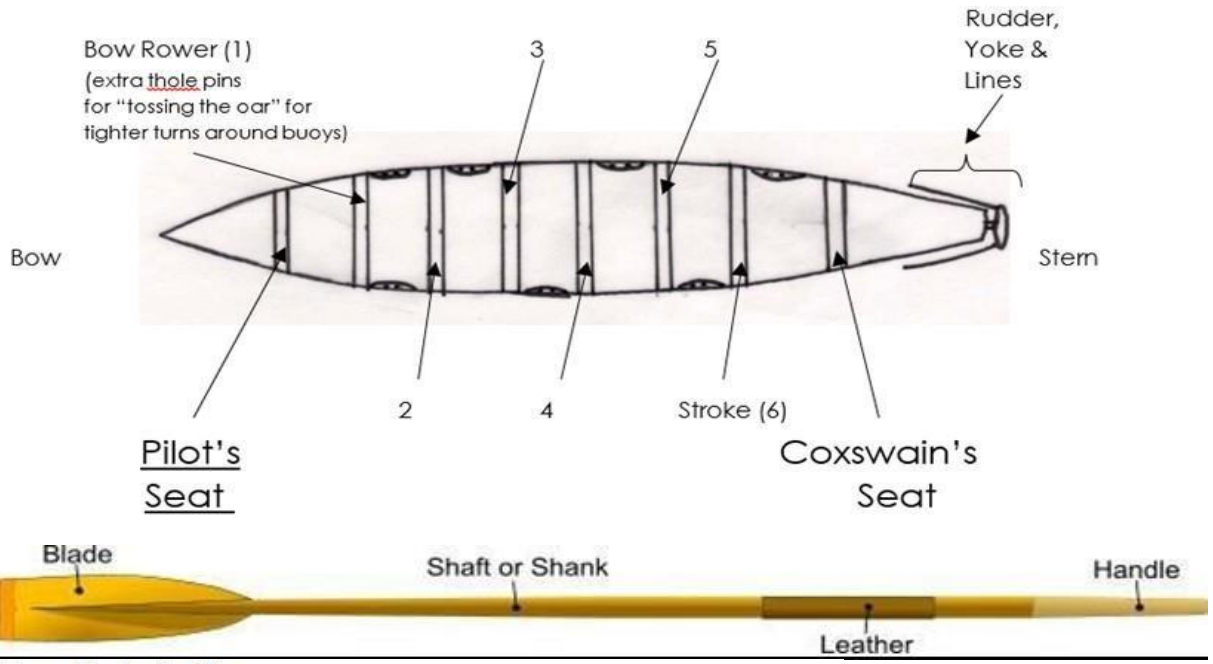
When launching the Gig into the water, rowing, recovering the Gig and putting it away, the cox is in charge; they must be listened to for safety reasons. If you are unable to comply with this, you will not be able to row in our club's boats.

Should you have a problem with a section member, cox, or coach, please speak to a Gig Section committee member.

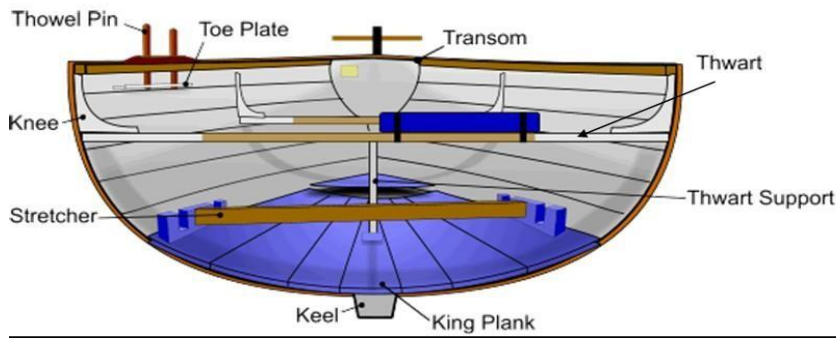
Knowing your way around the boat

Rowing positions: Bow rowers sit on the starboard side in positions 1, 3 & 5 and stroke rowers on the port side in positions 2, 4 & 6.

Key language



Internal Parts of a Gig



Term	Meaning
Oars up	Lift your blade vertically with spoon in the air
Oars down	Place the blade horizontally with the leather halfway between the pins
Ship oars/ Store blades	Place the oars down inside the boat. Running lengthways between your seat and the gunnels. Lay the blades down the side of the boat stroke to starboard/bow to port, handles towards stern
Forward & Ready	Sitting forward, arms straight, knees bent with the blade just out of the water ready to row. This is followed by "and row" or "make way". Start rowing following the stroke pair
Stroke	Number 6 oar is known as the 'stroke rower'. This is usually an experienced rower, who is responsible for setting the length and rate of the stroke.
Stroke side	Positions 2, 4, 6,

Bowside	Positions 1, 3, 5,
Back up/Back row	Row from stern to bow with square blade
Hold water	Dip your blade into the water to stop the boat or slow it down
Square blade	Spoon of the blade is at right angles to the water
Feather	At the end of the stroke rotate blade (spoon) 45 degrees to reduce wind resistance and aid the blade to skip over the water.
Go Easy	Stop rowing and sit with blades horizontal to the water. Tuck the oar under the inside leg if you need to use your hands.
Take off the	Continue to row but no pressure
pressure 1 or 2 up	Short stroke, arms only power stroke
Tap up	Short stroke, arms only no pressure
Leathers	Band of leather towards the top of the blade
Inside arm	Arm that is in the inside of the boat
Outside arm	Arm that is nearest the gunnels
Grip	Inside hand with knuckles to sky & outside with hand knuckles to the water
Spoon	End of the blade that goes in the water

Handle	End of the blade that is held by the rower
Term	Meaning
(Thole) Pins	Wooden pegs that the oar sits between. Hardwood goes towards the bow and softwood towards the stern
Stern	Back of the boat (where the coxswain sits)
Bow	Front of the boat
Stop	Emergency stop, square blade, lean forward & brace

Skimming	On return the spoon sits at 45 degrees on the water
Catch	When the squared spoon dips into the water at the start of the stroke
Wax leathers	Apply a film of wax to the leathers on each blade
¾ stroke	A shorter stroke, with very little lean back
Return	The part of the stroke when the blade is travelling out of the water
Stretchers	Are the pieces of wood you push your feet against
Crab	When your blade goes in sideways (not square) and gets dragged down into the water
Fend off	Use your hands to prevent the boat colliding with a boat or object

Upon a new rower attending the ECA for the first time they will be designated a “Buddy” for the duration of their first session. This “Buddy” will complete the Gig Induction Checklist (Annex A) with the new rower to ensure they have a consistent briefing and all relevant points have been covered. Gig rowing “Buddies” are made up of existing ECA Gig Section members that have identified themselves as happy to undertake this task.

It has been assessed that a formal structure of sign off at various stages of a rower’s path should be identified and assessed regardless of if a leisure or competitive rower. As such two levels of competence have been identified, beginner and intermediate. All ECA Gig rowers will be assessed against this. The checklists can be found in Annex B (Beginner) and Annex C (Intermediate).

2. Launch and retrieval of the Pilot Gig boats

New members to the Club will be shown the set-up of the Gig launch procedures by an experienced crew member.

Preparation of Gig prior to rowing:

- Remove cover (two persons) release retaining ropes and roll the cover from the Bow to the Stern.
- Remove cover frame and store with the cover.
- Visually inspect Gig: Note any damage or missing components. Locate and fit the BUNG (the bung allows water to drain from the Gig when it is removed from the water)!
- Ensure re-fitment of the bung is witnessed.
- Install seat pads, buckles to face the Bow and straps side up.
- Fit pins and leathers, hardwood pins (marked with blue paint) to the Bow, softwood pins (marked with white paint to the Stern). Apply dubbin or petroleum jelly to the leathers as required!
- Ensure set of spare pins in each seat or in the grab bag.
- Stow lifejackets in the Gig (must be worn by juniors and novices). Where possible position the lifejackets onto the Thwarts to prevent getting wet and dirty.
- Place oars into the Gig. Oars 1, 3 & 5 should be placed on the Stroke side, oars 2, 4 & 6 should be placed on the Bow side. The blades of oars 5 & 6 should face the Stern the blades of the remaining oars should face the Bow.
- Finally install the safety kit (Grab Bag) consisting of throw line, first-aid kit & thermal blanket, spare thole pins.

Launching the Gig:

Note the Gig /trailer combination is very heavy. A launch crew comprising of approximately 6-7, certainly no less than 5 must be available when launching a Gig. **The Cox (or nominated crew member) will coordinate the launch.** Observe appropriate manual handling techniques. Look after your own safety and your fellow rowers.

- Position the Gig at the level area at the top of the slipway. The Gig(s) are launched Stern first. Check that the Bow line is secured to the launch trailer.
- Attach the winch wire to the trailer the winch operation is only to be carried out by a winch qualified person who understands the launch procedure.
- Check the winch brake operation before going down the slipway.
- Warning! Ensure that the launch crew, or any observers, do not stand or walk into the path of the Gig as it is lowered onto the slipway.
- Please do not push the vertical docking arms at any time as they may break.
- The crew member with control of the winch oversees the launching operation of the Gig. The remaining launch crew should position themselves at the Bow and the sides of the Gig before the wheels.

- The launch crew positioned at the Gig should take firm grip of the sides of the Gig. Gradually lower the trailer onto the slipway, maintain tension to assist with controlling the rate of descent.
- Continue to lower the trailer and Gig into the water. Release the securing pin (GRP Gigs) & the Bow line to the gig ensure that one of the launch crew retains the Bow line and does NOT release it.
- Push the Gig into the water and withdraw the trailer. Park the trailer safely and in a place that will not cause obstruction at the top of the slipway. Pull the Gig back to the slipway via the bow line.
- Check the Cox has ship to shore and VHF radio and one onshore person to perform a radio check. The Bow line should be passed to the No.1 rower. The Gig is now ready to row.

Gig retrieval:

Retrieval requires similar manning levels to launch, plus it is advised to have at least one person acting as 'Shore Crew' if available.

- The Cox will endeavour to return the Gig (Bow first) in the optimum position for retrieval from the slipway, ensuring that approach to the beach is slow to prevent damage to the gig. The No.1 rower should take control of the gig from the shore.
- Once oars are satisfactory stowed, as above, The Gig crew can then disembark in reverse order to launching IE. 1 to 6.
- Lower the trailer into the water (taking care not to go too far too avoid the steep drop off on a spring low tide) push the Gig back into the water. Remember to keep a firm hold on the Bow line! .
Using the Bow line pull the Gig onto the trailer until it engages with the ring on the trailer handle. Secure the Gig to the trailer with the Bow line or securing pin (GRP gigs).
- The crew should assemble at the trailer the sides of the Gig and the rope. Do NOT stand or walk below the Stern of the Gig.
- Using the winch bring the Gig to the top of the slipway.
- The launch rope (Bow line) should be stowed in the gig.
- Remove equipment from the Gig (including pins and seat pads) and place tidily into storage.
- Transport Gig to the storage area.
- Check the Gig to maintain stability when in storage and remove the bung.
- Wash the Gig & trailer wheels as required.
- Once the gig is back in the gig storage area install the cover frame and replace the cover. The cover should be secured by passing the tie-down ropes under the Keel and tying off at the eyelets.

3. Rowing preparation

Remember - the Cox is in charge, so it is important that you do as the Cox commands as quickly as possible!

Do and Don'ts

- **Do** arrive 30 minutes before your row to get the boat ready
- **Do** allow 30 minutes at the end to put the boat away
- **Do** listen to coxes and do as you are asked whilst in the boat for instructions and safety reasons.
- **When events i.e. regattas, are happening you must sign up on the WhatsApp to show your interest to take part both as a rower and sometimes a helper. This must be done at the very latest 7 days before the event.**
- **Don't** talk when the cox has asked you to focus or row. Don't do anything that may put you or others at risk.
- **Don't** do anything to cause upset or harm to anyone else in the club.
- **Don't** carry more than one oar at a time, they cost £500 each so need to be treated carefully.
- **Don't** lift the wooden boats by the gunnels as this can damage them, reach further down to the thwarts of the boat to do this.

Pins are placed in the in the holes but, must not be pushed in tight. If you break a pin that is pushed in tight, you may not get it out.

- You will be given a rowing position number 1-6. (see figure 1 page 5)
- Sit down in your rowing position facing aft (towards the Cox) as quickly as possible.
- Check and adjust the position of the stretcher before you start rowing.
- Ensure that spare pins (1 soft-wood and 1 hard-wood) are present at the seat pad loops or in the grab bag.
- On command from the Cox lift your oar into a vertical position, between your knees and wait for further instruction from the Cox.
- In windy or rough weather, the Cox may ask you to fend off or back water as soon as you are in the gig and before you have adjusted your stretcher; in these circumstances, it is important that you react as quickly as possible to the Cox's instructions.
- If you are asked to fend off, you should use the shaft of the oar (never the blade)!

The Stretcher

- The stretcher is a wooden bar on which you rest your feet and is used to push against during rowing.
- When sitting in your rowing position, your feet should be on the stretcher, knee width apart, with your legs slightly bent.
- If the stretcher is not in the right position for you, remove the metal pin at the end of the stretcher by pulling it towards the bow of the gig. Lift the stretcher up at the pin side and slide it out of its fixing. Reposition the stretcher and replace the pin, making sure that it is secured correctly.
- If you cannot find a comfortable stretcher position, it may be necessary to place a block over the stretcher.
- After a few rowing sessions, you should become aware of your optimum stretcher position.

Your Oar

- The oars are long, heavy and your responsibility!
- Each oar is individual and has a number on the shaft close to the handle. You must make sure you have the correct oar for your rowing position.
- As soon as you are in the gig, locate your oar and await command from the Cox to lift it into a vertical position with the blade uppermost. Sit in your rowing position while holding your oar firmly with its shaft between your knees. This signals to the cox you are ready to row.
- As soon as the Cox commands, “blades down” put your oar between the thole pins, middle of the leather, with the blade just above the water.

Holding the Oar

- Hold the handle of the oar with two hands.
- The hand nearer the end of the oar should be cupping the end of the oar with the palm facing upwards.
- The hand nearer the centre of the Gig should be on top of the oar with the palm facing downwards and knuckles in line with the spoon in the squared position (90° to the water).
- Your hands should be approximately one hand width apart.

Ready to Row

- Hold the oar with the blade just above the water with the curve of the blade facing the stern.
- The middle of the leather on the oar should be on the gunwale.
- Straighten your arms pushing the oar handle away from you.
- Lean forwards with square shoulders, your hands no further forward than your feet
- Tilt the top edge of the blade towards the Cox so that it is at an angle of approximately 10 degrees.

The Stroke

- Put the blade in the water so that the whole blade is covered with water “the Catch”.
- Keeping your arms straight and pushing against the stretcher with your feet pull backwards “the Drive”.
- Breathe out during the Drive.
- The blade of the oar should now be vertical in the water.
- Lean backwards and then pull the handle of the oar towards your chest.
- At the end of the stroke, lift the blade out of the water “the Finish”.
- Push the handle away from you, straighten your arms and lean forward “the Return” The oar blade should be at a 45 degree tilt back.
- Breathe in during the return.
- Make sure the “Leather” on the oar is in contact with the gunwale, the ideal position is with the leather half way between the pins (never row on the wooden part of the oar)!
- DO NOT RUSH THE RETURN AS THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO BREATHE AND RECOVER

Holding Water

- Put the oar blade into the water so that it is vertical.
- Hold the oar so that it is at right angles to the side of the gig.

Backing Down

- This enables the gig to be rowed backwards.
- With the oar blade, vertically in the water, push the oar handle away from your body and lean forwards.

- Lift the oar blade out of the water and lean back.
- Do not rotate the oar.

Feathering your blade

- This is when you rotate the oar so that the top edge of the blade is tilted at 45 degrees towards the bow of the gig during the return of your stroke
- At the end of the stroke, roll the top of the oar handle towards your body for the return.
- Take care not to feather before the end of the finish of your stroke (otherwise, you will catch a Crab).
- The top edge of the blade should be tilted towards the bow of the gig.

Catching a Crab

This is when the blade of your oar becomes horizontal when it is in the water. You will feel it digging into the water and trying to push you back from your seat. It usually happens for one of two reasons:

1. Your blade was not vertical when you put it in the water.
2. You have tried to “feather” your blade before it was lifted out of the water.

If this happens, you need to act quickly to avoid breaking a pin, known as crab drill.

Crab drill

1. Lift the handle of the oar upwards (so your hands are vertical “hands up robbery style”) and out of the pins
2. Allow your blade to wash out to the side and down the length of the Gig and at the same time feed it, hand over hand, so the handle goes skyward to ensure you do not hit other rowers.
3. Lift and place back in-between the pins push blade out, ensuring not to obstruct other rowers and come back in on next stroke; ultimately this should be completed within three strokes.

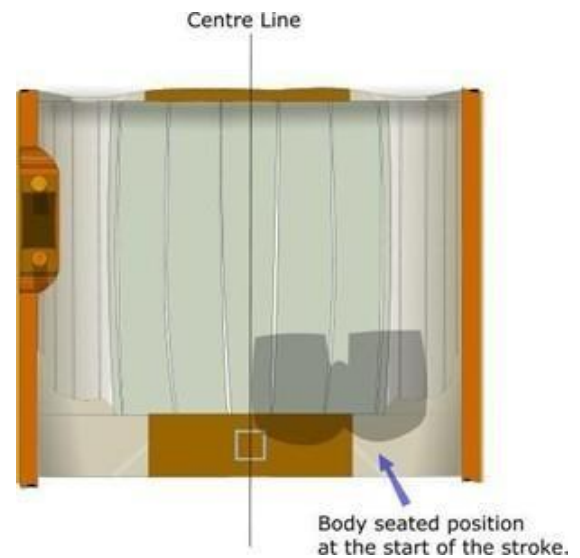
Seat, Hand and Oar Position

The body position is a key element, not only to the rowing stroke but also the balance/drag of the boat itself.

A poorly balanced gig will run far less efficiently than that of a gig that is balanced, giving a big disadvantage to its unbalanced crew when competing or training.

The correct positioning at the beginning of the stroke is shown in the diagram above. The inside hip coincides with the centre line of the thwart and thwart support. This ensures that the rower's body weight is kept as close to the centre line of the boat as possible and is to be maintained all the way through the stroke. Being seated in the correct position will help the rower reduce twisting and the possibility of back problems.

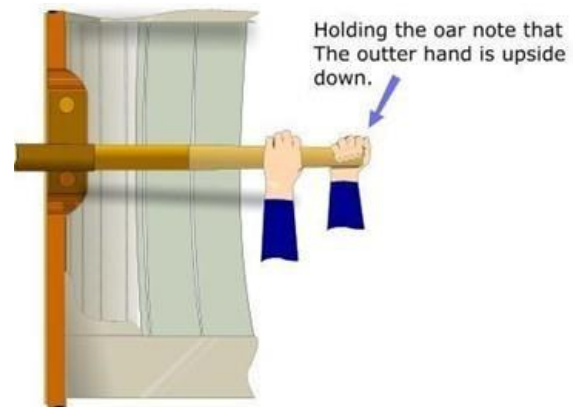
Positioning of the hands is shown in the diagram to the right. Please note the outer hand being turned upside down on the oar handle.



Holding the oar

Note that the outer hand is upside down. The way in which a Cornish Pilot Gig is rowed differs to a normal rowing boat or sliding seat style craft.

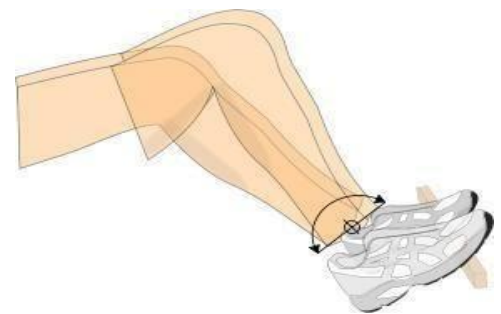
The hands in the above position allow the rower to increase their length of stroke as the outer hand passes over the chest, finishing with the outer hand's thumb sitting next to the inside chest/nipple of the rower, whilst also feathering the oar at the end of the stroke.



Feet Positioning

Silly as this might sound but the position of your feet will make a big difference in which direction your body will transfer the power when implementing the explosive catch from your legs.

If the rower is using the arch of the foot on the stretcher it will drastically limit the rower's ability to angle their leg drive in a backward direction resulting in some power being lost in an upward direction.



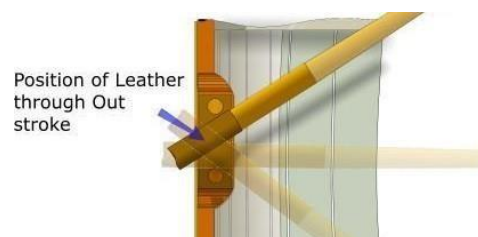
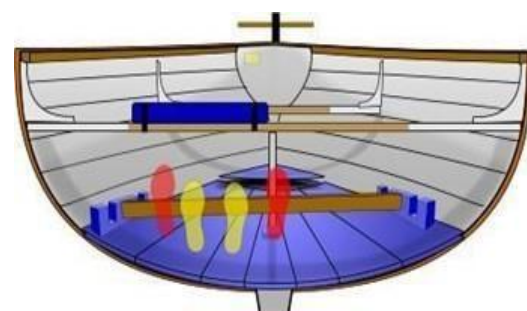
The ball of the foot being used on the stretcher with the heel of the foot on the bottom boards. This gives the rower the ability to push with a firm footing spreading the load over the ball and heel area of the foot allowing more muscle groups in the foot to be used, plus using the ankle to angle the power from the catch.

Using the arch of the foot causes the heel to be away from the bottom boards making the foot pivot on the stretcher. The pivot action on the arch of the foot occurs as the leg straightens making the initial catch a slightly upward movement rather than a straight back one. In this position the heel of the foot is also unsupported which restricts the ankle in adjusting the direction of the catch.

The correct foot stance is shown by the yellow footprints, the heel of the foot on the bottom boards and the ball of the foot against the stretcher. The feet should be no more than shoulder width apart as this helps the rower drive from both legs equally.

The red footprints show the rower has spread their stance, far past shoulder width and has used the arch of the foot, with the stretcher being very slightly angled. This promotes the leg drive (catch) of the stroke being driven from one leg more than the other giving far less power.

The oar position never changes with the top third of the leather being used to pivot on the thole pins as in the diagram.





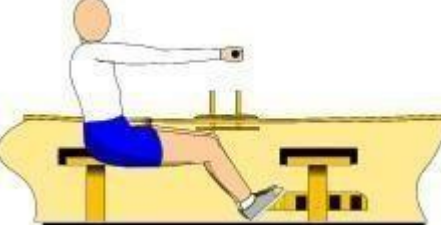
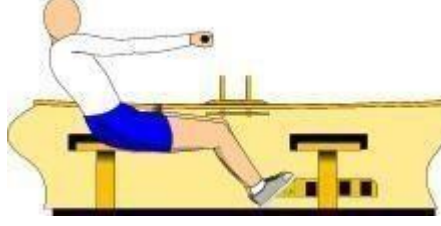
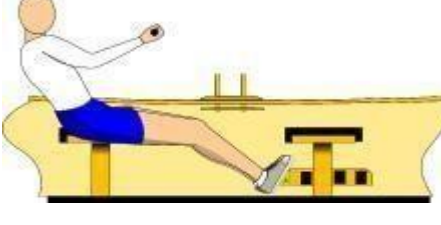
Blade work

The illustration below shows the entry/ exit of the blade during the stroke.

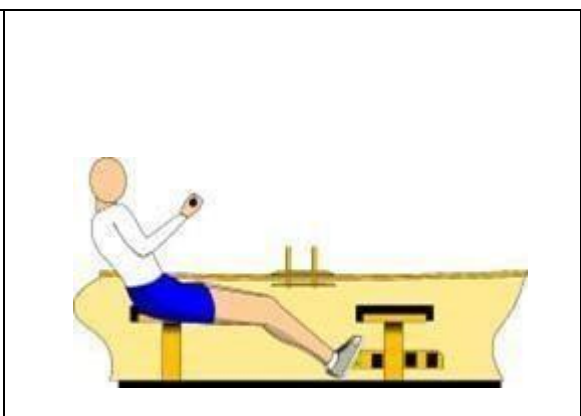


Note the blade returns fully to the start position before being dropped into the water. The blade enters the water (the catch) at 90 degrees to the water line and remains at this angle until the blade reaches the very end of the stroke, where the blade is feathered to the surface. The time taken to exit the blade from the water is normally referred to as the pause or end of the stroke. This gives the rower the appearance that the oar has stopped at the end of the stroke when the blade is constantly moving in the water but the feather of the blade allows the blade to spill off any water before the start of the return.

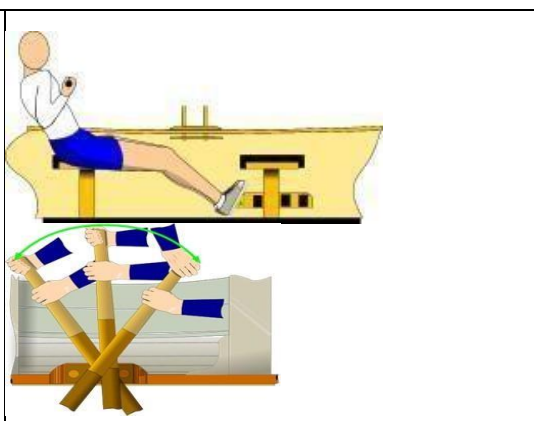
This action combined with the rower's body weight pausing behind the seat allows the boat's speed to remain at its optimum for a longer period. Once the blade has spilled all the water it then remains feathered until a couple of inches before the oar is fully returned and ready to be dropped in for the catch. **The Body position throughout the stroke**

<p>Position one: The body start position with arms straight, back and body core taught. Make sure that the lower back has a curve projecting the shoulders back. This is known as the 'strong position' when the body is at its strongest. At this point your bottom should be at the front of the thwart, positioned just offset from the thwart support. If rowing stroke side your left hip will be in line, and on the bow side your right hip will be in line with the seat support. Legs bent ready for the start of the stroke.</p>	
<p>Position two: The catch. This is when the body and legs use their potential energy making the legs explode from the stretcher and the body core pulling backwards into an upright position which starts pulling the blade through the water, ensuring arms remain locked straight.</p>	
<p>Position Three: At this point the body is now at an almost upright position and has used most of the power stored from the leg's muscles. The rower must use their body weight and back muscles to force the body square backwards increasing the speed at which the stroke is pulled through the water, giving the stroke sustained power.</p>	
<p>Position Four: The oar will be at a 90° angle to the side of the boat. This is at the point when the blade is at its most efficient allowing the delivery of the most power at any time throughout the stroke. Your body should be at full acceleration to deliver maximum power into the stroke.</p>	
<p>Position Five: The boat should be at optimum speed and the body has used its full potential of power. The body and legs will almost be straight. The body stays back past the thwart as the rower starts to relax the power off the oar handle.</p>	

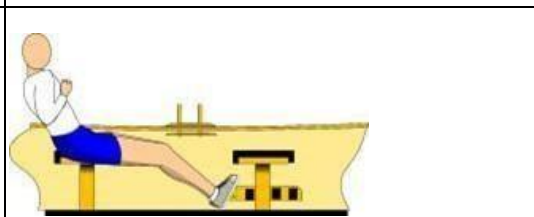
Position Six: The oar travels through the water with the rower ready to angle (feather) the blade at the end of the stroke allowing the blade to rise to the surface of the water. (Feathering of the stroke is done with no effort on the oar and at the very end of the stroke). The blade is allowed to drift to the surface at the end of the stroke keeping the inner elbow (elbow on the inner most of the boat) alongside the body. This will help guide the oar handle toward the side of the trunk area of the body.



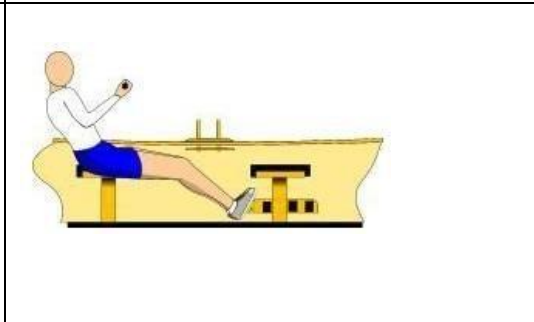
Position Seven: The inner hand has twisted the oar handle backwards fully turning the blade into a feathering position (Min 25 degrees) which causes the blade to float on the surface efficiently. The outer hand has moved across the chest with a loose grip on the handle allowing the oar to move in an arch around the pins, also stopping the oar being pulled into the boat.



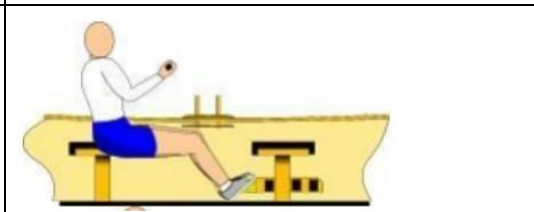
Position Eight: The finish position of the stroke, the body and the oar are in a stopped position. This allows the blade to totally free itself from the water and the boat keeps its momentum as the blade isn't acting as drag in the water.

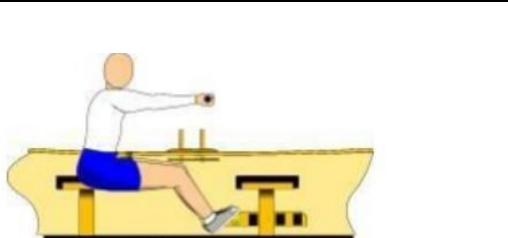



Position Nine: Return with your hands. First allow the body to stay past the thwart then slowly move the body to an upright position leading with your hands and the leg starting to recover into the bent position. The oar should still be in the feathered position and the blade about 6 inches (15cm) above the surface of the water.



Position Ten: The hands start to move away from the body with the blade of the oar still feathered. Between positions ten and eleven the speed in which the hands move away from the body increases.



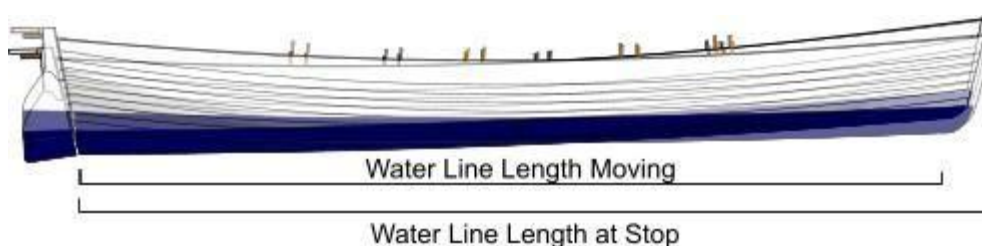
<p>Position Eleven: The arms are almost fully extended moving away from the body. Legs are fully recoiled ready for the start of the next catch.</p>	
<p>Position Twelve: The body is back in the power position with the taught abdominal and back muscles shoulders spread ready to start the next stroke</p>	

What am I trying to achieve?

The thought behind the style in which we currently row is to try and make the boat move forwards at the fastest speed possible with the least amount of effort. To achieve this there are a few factors that need to be considered.

These are:

1. Boat length and wet area.
2. The trim of the gig.
3. The shift of weight/movement of the crew.



The above image shows the water length. The water length equates to the physical speed that can be achieved by a gig. A very basic overview would be that the longer the boat is, the faster the speed it can achieve.

As the image above shows when the boat is moving the waterline will decrease meaning that the boat speed will reduce. Keeping your body past the seat at the end of the stroke forces the bow down lengthening the boat's water line length and allowing it to run faster for longer.

A further way to increase the boat length is to load the boat so the heavier crew are in positions, 2, 3 and 4 with lighter rowers in 5 and 6. This means when stopped the gig is bow heavy and with momentum levels out, maintaining the faster boat speed with less effort.

Remember the cox is in charge from the moment the boat leaves the trailer to until the moment the boat is returned to the trailers, it's a matter of safety

5. Being a member of the ECA

Membership of the ECA is not compulsory in order to row but is encouraged & if you row regularly it works out cheaper.

Club fees: Will apply on an annual basis. The Club Secretary will be able to advise on the current annual fee.

Making Payments to the club

BACS payment, cheque.

Membership

Once you are an ECA Gig section member the Secretary will provide you with the link to register yourself onto WhatsApp and view the available rowing sessions and race events. You can then allocate yourself to specific time, dependant on the rowing available i.e. training, racing or social rowing.

How should I use the WhatsApp calendar?

Select the appropriate event at the top of the page. You can view the highlighted rowing dates within a month.

Select the dates you require within the event enter your name & tick your availability.

Classification of rowers

The Gig world has designed different classifications of rowers to be an inclusive activity.

They are defined as:

- **Adult** – anyone over the age of 18 who rows in the club and has a full membership.
- **Novice** – a person just starting to learn the core skills and build their strength as a rower.
- **Intermediate** – a person developing their skills and stamina so that they may then enter the more advanced boats.
- **Crew rower** – a person whose skill level and fitness level makes them suitable to enter race crews.
- **Club rower** – a person who chooses not to race but to row only in non-competitive crews.
- **Vet** – a rower over the age of 40 years.
- **Super Vet** - a rower over the age of 50 years

- **Masters** – a rowers over the age of 60 years

Rowing kit

We have official club kit, but to train and row socially you don't have to have this unless entering a race as a crew member. Subject to the weather, which can be unpredictable at best; most rowers would keep the following kit in their wardrobe. Below, in the graphic is a list of kit that you may choose to wear.

The kit ranges from our basic racing vest, which comes in male or female, sizes small to extra-large. Other official kit items comprise of Hoodies, T-shirt, baseball cap, winter beanie, waterproof jacket, and fleece.

See the grid below for suggested rowing personal equipment.

				
Lycra shorts	Jogging Bottoms	Vest Top	Training Top	Light Weight Coat
				
Trainers	Lifejacket	Sun Cream	Dry Bag	Cap
				
Gloves	Vaseline	Plasters	Water Bottle	Hand Towel

Crew selection

This happens based upon several criteria as follows:

1. Whether you are deemed able to compete in a race based upon your skill and fitness level. This is decided by your Captain and based upon your Captain's assessment of your readiness in conjunction with the feedback from coxes and coaches.

2. Availability of people to row, we are a competitive Gig Section and seek for the best possible results by putting best teams out that we can. Yet we also know that we need to give new people a chance to row and so we will often seek to give people a chance to row at regattas that are suitable for people's first few times. The races in the summer are often a good chance for this to happen.
3. The difficulty of the race itself, some races are harder than others, with more swell, or tighter turns or simply a lot longer. Your Captain will know about these races and will select people to suit the conditions, and that might well be you! There will be occasions when individuals may not be selected for particular races due to type of event and ability gauged by the captains and coxes. Please remember we will always try to maintain fair selection criteria and feedback can be provided.

Regattas

The Chairman will have an overview of the events throughout the year and with the Captains and Vice Captains will plan the regattas that the Gig Section will enter so that a fixture list will be available. Organisation is key to make these work and we appreciate the support from gig members to enable this to happen. The format of regattas and selection will be as follows:

1. Captains or NTM administrator's produces fixture calendars.
2. Rowers confirm their availability for the event primarily via WhatsApp (NTM) so the Captains can see who has registered an interest. This should be typically, a minimum of two weeks prior to the event.
3. Selection team (Chairman/Captains/coxes) nominate race crews and confirm to the rowers.
4. Captains & NTM administrator's sends out details of regatta and crews at least one week prior to event
5. Selection team debrief after regatta

Some events may incur a cost to enter; costs will always be explained prior to the event and published by the event organiser.

Meetings

The Gig Section is run by a group of members that have been elected to key roles to form the Gig Section committee. The Gig Section will hold specific meetings as follows:

- **Gig Committee meetings** – These are meetings carried out by the committee members monthly to enable the effective running of the Gig Section. Only gig committee members are expected to attend these.
- **Gig Members meeting** – These are meetings open to all gig members and we welcome your attendance at them. They are your chance to raise anything and where the main decisions are made in the Gig Section.
- **Gig AGM (Annual General Meeting)** – held once a year in November and all members of the Gig Section should attend if possible. It is at this meeting the Gig

Section roles are voted upon for the following year and any changes to the rules and constitution are ratified.

Fund raising

We try to keep the cost down for all our members every way we can as we want everyone to be able to afford to take part in our gig section. This does mean that through the year we will be seeking to raise funds at our regattas, selling food, running a raffle and by doing quizzes or activities or sponsored challenges. Please get involved in these where you can even if it just to say you have an idea or you have a raffle prize you can spare.

6. Gig Section Roles

Behind the scenes

We have a variety of non-committee roles and committee roles. The non-committee roles tend to require less input of time than the committee roles. We vote people into roles at our annual AGM and we always welcome new people taking up roles. They are listed below for you to have a look at.

We will often need help to do something and if you can help out, please let us know often there will be an event on the calendar which you can put your name so please get stuck in!

Chair

The Chair is the gig section representative for all matters that are not the responsibility of the Treasurer, Secretary, or the Rowing Captain. The aim has been to separate on and off water responsibilities with the former being the Rowing Captain's territory. The Chair is responsible for gig section strategy in terms of expansion, financial matters including sponsorship and facilities such as premises and equipment.

An important part of the job is also public relations both internal and external to the gig section. The gig section has different aspects which have varying priorities, a key task for the Chair is to try and balance these and allow the gig section to move forward for the benefit of all.

Captains (Men's/Women's)

The Captains and Vice Captains are elected members who have experience of rowing and can act as the voice for the general rowers. Captains represent the gig rowers internally and externally. They are a part of the gig committee, and act as a point of contact within the gig section, coordinating and making decisions on gig section activities on a day to day basis.

Captains lead on crew development and training, advising and assisting with the development of the general rowers. Captains are also in charge of race crew selection. They will pick people to row in crews based upon the rower's indicated availability, the fitness, skill and level of commitment that the rower has shown. If you have any problems or want something to change then your Captains are the first port of call for you.

Secretary

The secretary will have general experience of the Committee structures and processes. They will:

- Process membership applications, renewals, and subscriptions.
- Be responsible for the organisation of regatta entries on behalf of the Gig Section and liaising with the Captains/Vice Captains of the proposed event dates and availability of crew members
- Assist with management of the WhatsApp.

- Organise AGM and committee meetings.
- Organise working parties.
- Liaise with the ECA Management committee.

Coxes

Please do as they say!

Coxes are the people who steer the boat and give you instructions. Just like you they may be experienced or learning and are giving up their time to help other people row so please listen to them when they ask you. Coxes may also be coaches or race coxes depending upon their experience level and skill set.

They are important in getting the gig into the water at the start the session, for the safety of the crew and boat and then getting the boat out and the put away safely at the end of the session. So please listen and do what they ask of you as they are doing it for you own good. If you want, ask why later they please do so.

Should you have any issue with your cox please speak to your Captain or the cox.

We are all responsible for ourselves in rowing and that means that you legally row at your own liability. However, we also need you to think of others, be considerate and seek to avoid letting people come to harm by carelessness. We have quite a few “It’s how it’s done” in rowing. The main reason for this is safety of the crew, the boat, and the people around us. So please look out for yourself and others throughout your session. If you have an injury, please let the coxes know as soon as possible.

Coaches

Are experienced rowers who help us to develop our technique and stamina throughout the year. This may be a coxswain, or it may on occasion be a person who just coaches. Please listen to them and have a go at what they ask you to do, not everything will be clear to your at once and exercises may be designed to help you solve a problem you don’t know you have or to help a different member of the crew. If you really don’t feel that your coaching is hitting the right spot for you, speak to the cox/coach after the row about what you are looking for and they will try to adapt to include this where possible. If you have a cox and a separate coach in the boat often the cox will be in charge getting the boat out on the water and then when you come into land. With the coach being in charge the rest of the time. If the cox does need to interrupt the coach for safety reason you should at that time listen to the cox as they are in control of the boat.

Safeguarding officer

Responsible for safeguarding matters, It is a requirement of the Eastney Cruising Association that when we or hosts junior rowers that a Welfare Officer is present.

Social Secretary

Responsible for social events of the gig section.

Bosun

Responsible for the maintenance and repair of gigs and associated equipment.

Communications Officer

Create/maintain an external link to raise the profile of the gig section in both the local community and the wider gig community.

Health and Safety Officer

To maintain the existing risk assessments as identified within this handbook and where required undertake further assessments.

As the gig section evolves, further roles may be required to facilitate the expansion.

7. ECA rules & constitution

Behaviour and Communication

All club members will treat others with respect, where individuals are valued and treated with fairness.

Bullying, Harassment, Victimisation and Discrimination are forms of abuse and will not be tolerated in any circumstances. If you witness such behaviour or are uncomfortable with certain behaviour, please challenge it, alternatively report it to either the Club Secretary or gig rowing Captains or chairman.

As members of the ECA we are all bound by the ECA Disciplinary Code of Conduct.

We use several forums in the gig section to communicate with our members email, a WhatsApp group, Instagram and our ECA Facebook page. Club members sending communications through any of these forums must always remain appropriate and respectful. Misuse of these forums will not be tolerated. Consideration must be always given to the audience receiving these communications and the main principles of respect for difference and cultural diversity, transparency, equity, and fairness are vital.

Any behaviour that does not value these principles will be addressed by the Gig-Committee and thus the ECA Management Committee and its Disciplinary Code of Practice.

Safeguarding

ECA and Gig Section acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice.

We aim to ensure that regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, all children:

- have a positive and enjoyable experience of rowing at the ECA and associated events in a safe and child centred environment
- are protected from abuse whilst participating in rowing at the ECA and associated events or outside of the activity.

Safeguarding Key Messages

- Child abuse can affect any child and may be carried out by anyone. It is usually carried out by someone well known to the child.
- Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility.
- Safeguarding ourselves is important
- Abuse has a profound emotional and/or physical effect on not only the child, but also their families and the wider community.
- All adults who work with children need to know what their responsibilities are.

If you are worried about a child, a young person under the age of 18, or a vulnerable adult you should contact the Club Secretary.

Annex A Gig induction checklist

ECA Gig Induction Checklist

The following is to act as an aid memoir for the initial introduction to the club and gig rowing and is subdivided into sections. It covers orientation, safety, gig specifics and how to row. There is a diagram of a gig to explain features as you run through the checklist as well as a list of the basic commands.

Rower Name: _____ Date: _____

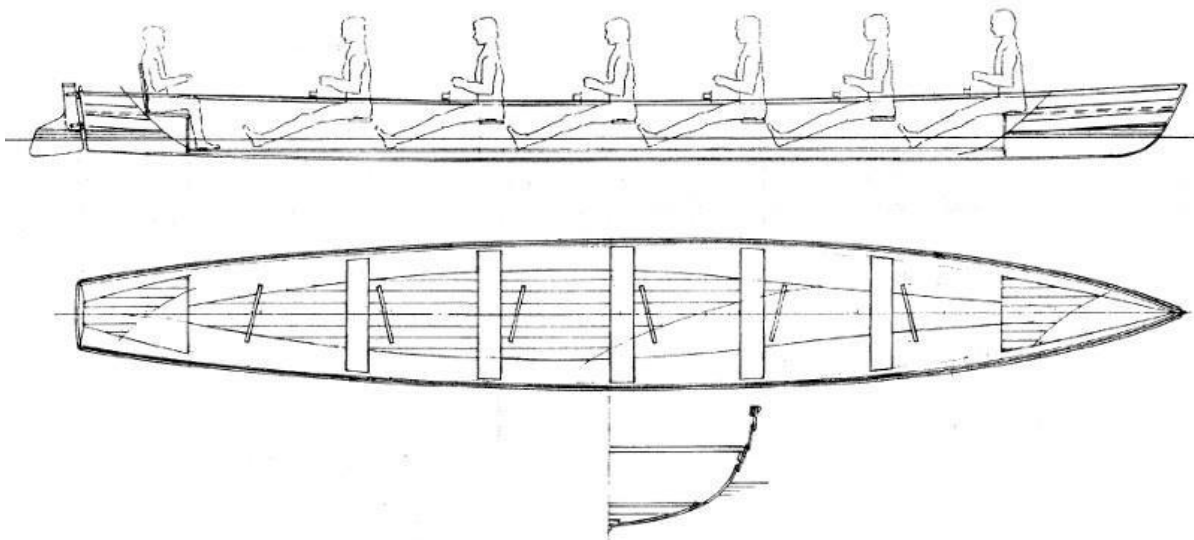
Member Name: _____

Section	Subsection	Topic	Completed
Orientation	Location of	Toilets	
		Coffee, drinks and importance of hydration	
		Parking	
		First aid/defib	
		Slipway, pontoon	
	Emergency procedures	What to do in case of emergency	
	Safeguarding	Policy in place for all members	
Safety equipment	Lifejackets	Location	
		Fitting	
		Deployment	
		Rules for using – juniors, cox, new rowers, passengers	
	Throwing rope	Location (store and gig)	
		Deployment	
	Grab bag	Location (store and gig)	
		Contents	
Radios	Explain how to use a VHF		
Clothing	Discuss suitable footwear and clothing for rowing		
Gig	Setup	Equipment store	
		Setting up a gig	
	Entrance/exit to gig	Slipway	
		Pontoon	
		Moving around the gig – one at a time	
Seating positions	Stroke/Bow sides, numbering		

		Seat fitting and purpose	
		How to sit on the seat	
		Stretcher setting	
	Pins	Purpose	
		Difference between soft/hard pins	
		Spares	
	How to Row (Seating	
		Oar storage location (in boat)	
		Handing the oar	
		Holding the oar, leather position	
		Rowing action	
		Timing	
		Catching a crab procedure	

Section	Subsection	Topic	Completed
Gig	Cox	Purpose	
		Responsibility	
		Authority	

Layout of a gig



Opportunity to discuss the types of Gigs that we have and the differences between them.

Basic commands

The following is a list of basic commands that the cox will use during the initial sessions:

Command	Meaning
Oars up	Rowers raise their oar handle down and blade up vertically
Oars down	Rowers lower their oar into their pins
Forward and ready	Prepare to row; start of the stroke position
And row	Start rowing on the "row"
Bow side	Rowers 1, 3 and 5. Will generally be combined with another command
Stroke side	Rowers 2, 4 and 6. Will generally be combined with another command
Go easy	Stop rowing
Hold water	Blade in the water to stop the boat
Tap up	Small stroke, arms only
Back row	Reverse stroke, blade in normal rowing position
Stow oars	Oars are placed back in the boat 1-4 blades to the bow, 5 & 6 to stern

This list of commands is not exhaustive but is enough for the first few sessions.

Induction Complete

Signed

Rower

Member

Annex B Beginner rowers sign off sheet

Topic:	You should:	Coxswain's initials/date
Rowing terms	Be familiar with the vocabulary used by the coxswain.	
Parts of the boat	Be able to name parts of the boat, blades and identify which side is which.	
Launching the Gig	Be able to competently participate in the launch and retrieval procedure(as advised within the Risk Assessment)	
Rowing technique	Be able to complete the 3 parts of the rowing stroke – catch/drive/finish	

Backing up	Be able to back up the boat when needed.	
Emergency stop	Be able to perform an emergency stop when rowing.	
Catching a crab	Know how to respond when you catch a crab.	
Stroke lengths & ratios	Be aware of the different ratios and stroke lengths using in the boat.	
Handbook	Be familiar with the ECA Gig Section Handbook	
Name:	Signature:	Date:

Annex C Intermediate sign off sheets

Topic:	You should:	Coxswain's initials/date
Different strokes lengths and stroke rates	Be able to transition between different stroke lengths and rates.	
Strong square blade	Able to make a strong square blade at the catch	
Control blade depth	Be able to control the depth of the blade (spoon) on the catch and through the stroke	
Drive through water	Be able to alter the speed of the blade through the water to increase or decrease the power.	
Finish	Be able to ensure that the blade is feathered at the correct angle – no more than 45 degrees (fast hands)	
Recovery	Be able to control the speed of the body on the return of the stroke.	
Racing start	Be able to do a racing start.	
Buoy turn	Be able to do a buoy turn from both sides.	
Rough water training	Have spent time with a more experienced crew rowing on rougher water conditions so that they feel confident prior to being passed out for crew boats	
M.O.B.	Be aware of the procedure for Man Overboard.	
20 minutes continuous rowing	Need to be able to sustain technique for a 20 minutes continuous row	
Row-both sides & different positions	Experience rowing on both bow and stroke, and row in a range of positions.	
Name:	Signature:	Date:

Loaning Out or Borrowing Gigs & Equipment.

Our cover has been extended to cover loaning out away from our home club & the difference between damage to the gigs and third party liability.

We can borrow another club's gig anywhere as follows.

- 1) The other club lending us the gig must have their own insurance for damage/loss and will be responsible for damage or repairs. They might require us to pay for minor damage and/or for their policy excess should they have to claim for major loss or damage.
- 2) We will be liable for third party liability while using their loan gig for which our policy will cover us i.e. if we crash in to someone causing damage or injury.

We can lend our gigs to other clubs anywhere as follows.

- 1) The other club must be a proper established rowing club with experienced regular rowers.
- 2) We will be responsible for damage to our gigs and will have to claim from our own policy in the event of damage or loss.
- 3) Each gig will only be covered up to £30k and maximum liability is £40k. Same cover re oars etc as when we use our own gigs.
- 3) The other club will be liable for third party liability while using our gigs for which our policy will not cover us i.e. if they crash in to someone causing damage or injury.

I propose that we need to have two waiver forms to cover each scenario.

- 1) Clubs borrowing our gigs need to confirm that they have sufficient liability cover and that they will pay for minor damage and cover our insurance excesses (claim excess and premium increase) for damage claims.
- 2) Clubs that lend us their gigs need to confirm that they have sufficient damage cover and we should confirm that we will pay for minor damage and cover their insurance excesses (claim excess and premium increase) for damage claims.