

Regatta Survival Guide

Tips and Strategies to Ensure the Best Experience!

(Adapted from the Mountain Lakes and Bainbridge Rowing Club websites)

This year, Long Lake Rowing Crew will travel to regattas in Minnesota, Canada and Iowa (in the fall). Regattas are great events for both rowers and spectators, and with a little pre-planning and some understanding of what to expect, you can make sure your experience is a memorable one!

First Things First...

Before you do anything please give your prompt attention to the following three items:

1. Be sure each rower and at least one parent in your family is receiving team communications. If you aren't, contact longlakerowing@gmail.com ASAP and we will get you on the team email list. All team communications happen via email and on our website. You will need to alert Coach Sandi ASAP if there are any regattas you will not be able to travel to. Boat assignments, entry fees and practice schedules depend on each rowers participation, so it is important for the coaches to know who is participating. Remember, regatta fees are separate, and all fees must be paid before rowers may participate in a regatta.
2. BE SURE YOUR PASSPORTS ARE VALID! All rowers and spectators traveling to the Thunder Bay Regatta and the regatta in Kenora, Ontario MUST have a valid passport to leave and re-enter the US. Check to make sure your passports are valid before you sign up to participate in any of the Canadian regattas.

3. Please review the TRAVEL GUIDELINES section of the REGATTAS tab on the website in the coming weeks for updates and additional details about regatta travel.

Before the Regatta

Practice, practice, practice! The coaches work backward from each regatta to plan practices so that all rowers are prepared and can feel confident on the water. Rowers will always race in boats with other teammates, so if you are assigned to a quad and you skip practice, that means your three rowing partners are left, well, up a creek without an oar. Your absence affects your boat.

Getting Ready to Go

All LLRC boats and equipment is loaded on our trailer and hauled to each regatta venue in advance of the team's arrival. All junior rowers are expected to help with de-rigging and loading boats, usually right after practice on the day before the trailer departs for the regatta. If you are an adult participating in an upcoming regatta, this means you as well. This is a team effort. All new rowers will learn proper loading, securing and unloading procedures for our equipment. Boats, oars, slings, the team tent and other gear for the regatta are loaded, transported and unloaded at the venue, and all members of the team are expected to help.

The Regatta Venue

All the regattas we attend have open air spectator areas, usually right along the water. Our team sets up two areas:

1. The team tent: this is where rowers stash their bags, relax and prepare for their races. Food for the team is set up here. There is generally enough room for rowers and some parents to sit and take a break from the sun, rain or any other combination of weather conditions.

There is a first aid kit and a supply of sunscreen and bug spray in the team tent for rowers and parents.

2. The boat area: the trailer and all the boats, oars and gear is prepped and stored near where the boat launching area is. This is where rowers go to prep for their race and to get last minute coaching and race information. This is a busy area. Rowers are asked to keep this area free of bags and personal gear, which can be stored in the team tent. Tread carefully here! Our equipment is VERY expensive! Oars break when they get stepped on, and rigging gets damaged when boats get knocked off their slings.

As for overall recommendations about venues,

- Go early and plan to stay all day.
- Parking is always limited at regatta sites so if you are scheduled to arrive at the beginning of a regatta, get there early.
- Be prepared to walk longer distances if you arrive later in the day.
Some regattas do have police issuing parking tickets so pay attention to the signs. If you are transporting other rowers, you may have to stay all day as other rowers may be in races throughout the day.
- After the races are completed, all rowers are expected to help put the boats back on the trailer, pack up the tents and equipment, and will be dismissed when Coach Sandi says they are able to leave.
- Not all regattas have concessions, and when they do it's generally hot dogs, pizza, etc. Some of the bigger regattas offer more exotic fare, but for the most part, it's not the kind of food the coach wants the rowers to be eating.
- Restrooms are usually porta-potties so come prepared with toilet paper and hand-sanitizer if you prefer.

Dress for everything

No matter the time of year, a long regatta day can feature all types of weather—cold, heat, wind, sun and rain. The better you prepare, the more you'll enjoy the day. Mornings are almost always chilly and sometimes it's a long day in the rain. Take plenty of layers and warm socks. You'll need a change of clothes or shoes if it's raining. Rain gear is recommended. The regatta venues are often muddy even without rain, so Wellies or some other type of boots or water shoes are good to have on hand. Bring a hat and a good pair of sunglasses – if the sun does come out you'll be looking at water and the reflection can be very strong.

Bring anything you might need

At most regattas there are stores nearby, but a driving distance away and you do not want to lose your parking spot. Bring whatever personal items you might need, including your favorite snacks and drinks. Food and healthy snacks will be provided for rowers throughout the day at the team tent. Parents will be on their own for food. Please make sure your kids are aware of their own food allergies and make it known to the people who are overseeing the food, so they can be aware if there is any potential risk. We try our best to provide gluten-free bread and protein bars for those who require them. Your best bet is to bring what you need.

How to watch the races

We keep a white board at the boat trailer to list race times. Your rower will walk with their boat down to the launch area about 45 minutes to an hour before the race. If you go to that area to take photos, be aware of loading and unloading zones which are designated for rowers only, and don't get too near the boats and official launch area. Sprint races are generally 2000 meters long, and there can be as many as 7 lanes for each heat. During a Head Race, rowers are sent down two lanes about 20 seconds apart and for about 45-60 minutes after they leave the launch area, their boat will be off in the

distance beyond what you can usually see. Bring a good pair of binoculars to see the boats when they come down the course until the last 500 meters. Be sure to cheer them on because they can hear us from the boat! You will soon learn that taking pictures can be disappointing without a strong telephoto lens at some of the regattas where the kids are far away. Video cameras are also great for rowers to see their boat and can be helpful as a training tool as well.

What to do the rest of the day

Regattas days are long days. The best way to pass the time is to volunteer and socialize with other parents. We need help with set-up and tear down, with food prep and service at the tent and trailer where the kids are, and there is cleaning up as well. Sometimes parents are needed to run errands (pick up coffee, sandwiches, etc.). We will ask for volunteers before races via email if help is needed. Bring a chair, a blanket and even a book or computer to pass the time. At some locations there are great trails and paths for walking or running. Volunteers are always welcome!

Keeping yourself nourished

The club provides food for rowers and coaches. Regattas do have food tents (be forewarned: these aren't always healthy choices). Regattas are not usually in areas where stores are within walking distance, so bring enough food and drink for the day if you are planning to stay for the whole time. Bringing your own full water bottle is always a good idea.

Other things to know

The boat area can get very congested. It is meant for coaches and rowers who are rigging or de-rigging boats and getting ready for races. The coaches do not want parents to be at the trailer area, but if you need to speak with your child, please do not disturb them when the coach is speaking with them

or if they are meeting with their boat in preparation for a race.

Most large regattas sell T-shirts and other rowing gear. If you're interested, buy early as they run out of sizes by the afternoon. It's good to bring extra cash with you for vendors and parking as there won't be ATMs nearby.

Support our team! Please purchase and wear your LLRC fan gear to the regattas! We have terrific items this year for sale, and 10% of your purchase goes back to the club. **Online ordering is available all season!**

Pack and load the car the night before.

Help your rower prepare the first time but encourage them to be independent in their sport. Mark all their clothes, especially their unis, with their names. They should only carry one bag with their things—with lots of rowers it can get very chaotic and personal items often get lost. Many rowers bring homework to do during the time they're not racing.

What to bring

Rowers

Team Uni

Team Hat and Team Jacket

Team t-shirt or Team sweatshirt

Cold weather training top and bottom

Slip-on/off shoes for docks

Waterproof shoes or boots

Dry clothes for after race

Socks – 3 or 4 pairs at least

Homework, iPod, books

sunscreen

Money – for T-shirts or food

Warm hat
Food for return trip
Blanket or chair for the tent
Refillable water bottle

Parents

Sunscreen and sunglasses
Rain gear (including an umbrella)
Layers of clothing
Comfortable walking shoes
Binoculars
Camera
Chair
Blankets
Snacks, beverages, water bottle
Directions to the regatta

Finally, check out the regattacentral.com and usrowing.org websites. These are great resources for just about any kind of rowing related information you might need.