



# Seize The Oar Member Handbook

UPDATED: January 2020

Welcome! If you are reading this you are either a new, prospective, or current member of the Seize The Oar - thank you for your interest in inclusive rowing!

## What Is Seize The Oar?

Seize The Oar is the premier inclusive rowing organization in the Northwest: We champion inclusion in the sport of rowing through team training, outreach and thought leadership.

## Who We Are

Seize The Oar Foundation (STOF) is a registered non-profit organization, established in 2013.

## Programs

STO programs fall into three general categories: Skill level (Novice, Intermediate, Advanced) Age group (Juniors or Masters/Adults) and Interest (Racing or Recreational). Any of these can be indoor, on the water or both.

The club has two training seasons per year:  
Land Training - November - April - INDOOR  
Water Training - May - October - OUTDOOR

## Participation Options

- Team - Regular/High Performance
- Private Lessons
- Indoor Fitness

## Contact Us

We are always happy to answer your questions and hear your ideas and opinions.

For General Information, please contact us by emailing: [coachtara@seizetheoar.com](mailto:coachtara@seizetheoar.com) or call 206-854-1267. STO website: <http://www.seizetheoar.com>.

Follow on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram: @SeizeTheOar

## Seize The Oar Logo Design/Colors



Team Colors: Red, Black, Charcoal Grey

### How To Join Seize The Oar

First, Contact Us for Complimentary Guest Visit through our Facebook page or at [coachtara@seizetheoar.com](mailto:coachtara@seizetheoar.com)

Once you've paid a visit OR if you are a returning athlete/have prior eligibility:

1. Register and pay for programs [here](#)
2. Complete [Athlete Registration Questionnaire](#)
3. Join [USRowing](#) and sign your USRowing
4. Sign Risk and Release for your programs. Ask your coach for forms.
5. Get float test\* and medical clearance, if necessary. Form below.
6. Set up your iCrew Profile. This is our team management website.
7. Orientation/Read/Sign STO Team Handbook.
8. Read and sign the Code of Conduct (below).

### \*Float Tests and Rowing

Type of Float Test	Eligibility
Standard Float Test, as standardized by Seattle Parks and Recreation. Tread water for 9' and then put on a ski vest life jacket unassisted in the final minute.	Can row in any shell, 1x/2x/2-/4x/4+/-, 8+ Minimum safety precautions of PFD on board. Novices and AS/TA rowers use pontoons.
Deep Water Float Test, wearing a ski vest life jacket in the water for 10'.	Can row in 2x/4x or 8+ wearing a low-profile auto-inflate vest. Novices and AS/TA rowers use pontoons.
No Float Test	Restricted to land rowing.

## **Registering for Programs: Payment Options**

Cash, Check or Credit Card Accepted.

All programs are listed in the Seize the Oar Store at [www.seizetheoar.com](http://www.seizetheoar.com). The prompt payment of the dues and fees provide for the economic health of the organization. For those members with barriers to paying fees, payment plans, and scholarships are arranged at the discretion of the staff. Please don't hesitate to ask.

We also provide training to you on how to get yourself sponsored. Please just inquire.

Fees are determined on a seasonal basis and are due **one week prior** to the start of the training season.

## **Money Policies**

Payments become delinquent 30 days after their due date. If payment is delinquent after 30 days, a \$10 or 5% of the invoice total (whichever is greater) late fee will be added to the invoice. If payment is 60 days overdue, another 5% will be added to the invoice and participation will be suspended until payment is received. A member who fails to notify the office of a change in status (membership on hold, membership cancellation, or program participation change) and who doesn't pay membership invoices will be regarded as being delinquent of payment and may be subject to pay the entire balance of their unpaid invoices. A member may request a refund of dues for any reason. Cancellations & requests for refunds received at least one week prior to the start of the program will receive 100% refund unless stated otherwise in registration materials; Cancellations & requests for refunds received after the start of a program, but within one (1) week of the start of the program may receive a 50% refund unless a program specific cost policy that modifies the cancellation request period is included in the registration materials; Cancellations & requests for refunds received after the start of a program, but after one (1) week of the start of the program will receive no (a 0%) refund unless a program specific cost policy that increases the cancellation request period is included in the registration materials.

## **US Rowing Membership/Waiver**

The US Rowing Association is the governing body for the sport of rowing. Members of USRowing include clubs, universities, high schools and other rowing organizations and individuals. Seize The Oar is an organizational member of USRowing in the Northwest Region. All team members of Seize The Oar must be members in good standing, renewable annually. There are two levels of membership - Basic and Championship. Whichever you choose is up to you, but you must be current. To race in regattas you need to also purchase the additional Regatta Package.

To join, visit [USRowing.org](http://USRowing.org) and select Memberships/Individual. You'll be asked in your application to select "Seize The Oar" as your club. Club Code: 4AJPM

All current members of Seize The Oar must sign the annual participation waiver from US Rowing. To sign the waiver, log into your membership account at [usrowing.org](http://usrowing.org) and follow the steps.

### **Uniforms/Gear**

STO rowers must wear standard and matching uniforms for competition. This includes the official racing jersey (black tank), and black bottoms (can be leggings, pants, or shorts). A tight white tank, tee, or long sleeve can be worn under the racing jersey for extra coverage if needed. You will need your jersey prior to your first competition - orders will be placed once/year. For practices you need to be wearing hi-visibility clothing, i.e. jackets, hats, vest (provided).

### **Personal Belongings**

STO staff and volunteers and athletes are in no way responsible for loss, theft, or damage to your personal belongings.

### **Volunteers**

STO welcomes volunteer staff at practices and events. All volunteers must contact the coaches before they attend a practice. An orientation and training may be appropriate and necessary. STO will sign paperwork to vouch for community service hours for high school students.

### **Guests**

STO welcomes guests at practice to ride in the launch boat or stay on the dock while practice is underway. All guests will be required to wear a PFD when on the water. Guests who are rowers may opt to row with their host athlete, depending on the practice objective.

### **Committees**

STO asks that its athletes participate in team committees (Coming 2020!) Committees will be: Equipment, Regattas, Fundraising, and Outreach and service on the RRC Management Committee.

### **Gear Loaner Program - ergs, seats, accessories**

Equipment is available for loan at the coach's discretion. Equipment could include fixed seat and/or rowing machine. An Equipment Loaner Agreement form must be completed by all athletes who borrow equipment. STO may request return of borrowed equipment at any time, depending on the needs of the team.

## **Common Sense Policies - lights, safety, hi-vis, traffic patterns, boat handling, boaters**

The STO policies cover many areas of safety and many house rules, however it is expected that everyone – Members, Coaches, Staff, Guests, Juniors and Adults, Rowers, Scullers, and Coxswains alike – to use Common Sense in applying safety procedures and rules in situations that are not covered, or if needed, to recommend alterations to these policies when safer and better solutions arise.

- Know yourself, those with whom you row, and the conditions;
- Be observant of all conditions, especially weather/water conditions;
- If in doubt about whether or not something is safe, it probably isn't;
- Be aware of the risks at all times, be observant of changing conditions, consider the state of the equipment and know your and your crew's ability;
- Follow the rules about lighting and safety on the water and in the boathouse;
- Know the necessary phone numbers (911), and the location of the nearest hospital;
- Following safety rules and proper procedures can increase the chances that if anything does go wrong, it will be more of an inconvenience than a disaster.
- STO has implemented the following policies to help Members, Coaches and Staff make informed decisions and better ensure the safe practice of our sport and the use of our building.

## **Priorities**

The first priority of all participants is the safety of all persons on the water and on land. The second priority of all participants is the safety and maintenance of all rowing equipment. The third priority of all Members is the safety and maintenance of the RRC, STO equipment and RRC equipment. Failure to follow STO Safety policies can be grounds for suspension of member privileges or expulsion.

## **Code of Conduct**

Seize The Oar's reputation depends on our ability to do the right thing, even when it isn't easy. This Code of Conduct is a collection of rules and policy statements intended to assist participants in making decisions about their conduct while using or representing Seize The Oar. The Code is based on our understanding that no one should ever sacrifice integrity, or give the impression that they have, even if they believe it would help the STO. The Code applies to all participants and staff and advisors of STO.

As such you are required to comply with the terms of the Code of Conduct as a condition of your continued participation. Some provisions of the Code continue to apply after a relationship here has ended. If you violate the Code of Conduct, you may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of membership. STO prohibits retaliation of any kind against members or employees who have made good faith reports of violations of the Code of Conduct. Report violations to Executive Director Tara Morgan or Head Coach Emma Bennett.

The Code of Conduct serves as a reference for decisions in a variety of circumstances. No rulebook can anticipate every situation.

- Obtain, use, and share confidential information about STO members, and staff only as needed.
- Use STO's assets, including equipment, voicemail and email, for the conduct of STO business and in a manner that does not reflect negatively on STO.

- Conduct your personal business and other activities in such a way as to ensure that your interests do not conflict with the interests of STO
- Members and employees shall not have any direct or indirect financial interest, except a remote interest, in any contract, purchase of materials, or activity financed from STO funds. In the event that a transaction gives the appearance of a conflict, the member or employee shall provide a complete and transparent accounting of the transaction to the CEO upon request.
- Members shall take no private actions that will compromise STO. It is considered a gross violation of this Code of Conduct for any member or employee to request or receive, directly or indirectly, anything of value for or because of his or her vote or influence with respect to any act or proceeding of STO.
- Gifts and entertainment provided for employees and management by members, parents, and others doing business with the STO are generally discouraged. When in doubt about a situation, the proper chain of command is direct to CEO.
- All members of STO are responsible for staying current with happenings at the STO via reading emails, text message, Facebook postings, and iCrew. When joining STO, you will be invited to our iCrew site, from which you'll receive our practice and racing schedule, and other updates. We will never give your contact info out without your permission. We try to disseminate information in multiple ways to ensure all members are made aware of events and issues. We need your support to have an informed membership.

### **Infractions and Discipline**

STO operates on the basis of trust and individual responsibility for one's actions. Failure to follow Safety and other House Rules, boat and launch lighting rules, and other policies and rules can be grounds for discipline including forfeiture of privileges, coaching privileges, or expulsion from participation. Failure to abide by sportsmanlike conduct is grounds for dismissal or revocation of privileges.

- "Unsportsmanlike conduct" shall include, but not be limited to, failure to heed the instructions of Race Officials, use of obscene language or gestures, delaying a Race without just cause, intentional or flagrant disregard of principles of safety and fairness, or abusive behavior toward a coach, fellow rower/racer, Race Official, Team member, or spectator as witnessed by a Race Official.
- Depending on the severity of an infraction, the CEO and Management Committee have a variety of disciplinary avenues.
- Each case will be treated individually. In general, management will follow a progressive system ranging from warnings to termination. STO athletes, coaches, and professional staff may issue numerous verbal warnings that will not initiate progressive discipline;
- However, if it's determined that an act is worthy of a higher level of discipline, they will write a report and submit it to the CEO. If the CEO concurs, the report will be logged and placed in the athlete's file as a Documented Offense.

## **SEIZE THE OAR** **PARTICIPANT CODE OF CONDUCT**

While at a team practice, team event or regatta, on Seize The Oar property and/or during participation in a Seize The Oar program:

1. I will demonstrate good sporting behavior. I will treat all participants, coaches, officials, volunteers, other teams, and spectators with respect and dignity, as it is essential for amateur competition and fair play.
2. I understand that derogatory conduct toward my teammates online or in person, such as physical, mental or verbal abuse, or unsporting conduct will not be tolerated while a part of the STO team.
3. I agree to attend and take part in all scheduled practices and activities. If you are signed up for a regatta, you are required to attend all practices, for up to 4 weeks before the regatta.
4. I understand that alcohol, controlled substances, and weapons are prohibited at any Seize The Oar practices or races, including away events.
5. I will be respectful of other people, as well as their possessions and property, and will refrain from activities that cause damage to any of the above. I understand that I am financially responsible for any damage I may cause when disobeying rules.
6. When traveling, I will be respectful of other participants, realizing that my behavior affects others with whom I travel.
7. I will respect the facilities and equipment of Seize The Oar and our host organizations.
8. I will not use remarks based on race, religion, gender or ability as such comments are disrespectful and lets down your teammates and coaches.
9. I will not use information technology to deliver, make or post inappropriate comments against teammates, fellow clubs and athletes, coaches and staff, officials or volunteers which is discriminatory or offensive or degrading. Information technology includes, but is not limited to email, instant messaging, text messages, voice mail, digital images, and posting on websites or social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, blogs, etc.

**I understand that my failure to abide by these rules will result in dismissal from the team.**

Participant's Signature

Print Name

Date

Elect Team captains x 2

## New Athlete Protocol

1. No matter how they got in touch with us, you always schedule a live phone call. This is a more welcoming and warm response. Phone call points:
  - a. History
  - b. Current Happenings
  - c. What's coming up next that they could visit/come observe
  - d. Next session of opportunities and any requirements/eligibility
  - e. Promise to send a follow up email and secure first visit
2. Follow-Up Email
  - a. Thank you for your interest in Team Seize The Oar, inclusive rowing in the PacNW. Since 2013, we've offered novice and competitive rowing training on land and on water in various locations in the PacNW. We travel and compete in regional regattas as well as in Boston, MA. We host two competitive camps every year as well (this year in Canada and Everett, WA.). Currently land training is at CrossFit RE: Columbia City, and water training will be at Renton Rowing Center, Renton WA.
  - b. We provide all the equipment and training and work with you to make it fit.
  - c. Spouses, caregivers, friends and family are invited to be on the team during Winter and Spring training and, in some cases, Summer on the water training.
  - d. Your first visit is observatory and FREE. Subsequent participation is available for Drop-In, Punch Card and full membership, as well as annual packages.
  - e. Next Up for Team Seize The Oar.
  - f. Follow us on Instagram and Facebook.
  - g. Links: iCrew, Seize The Oar store, Athlete Questionnaire - fill this out now or after you've come for a visit.
  - h. Cell phone, email of main contact.
3. First Visit
  - a. Have it on the calendar - "XXX" is visiting and secure a basic time frame
  - b. Make sure they have your cell phone so if you are on the water, it's not a glitch
  - c. Before they leave, have them do the athlete questionnaire and link to purchase.
4. Next
  - a. Invitation to iCrew
  - b. Add to Facebook group
  - c. Get Instagram handle