

## **MERCER JUNIORS PROGRAMMING PLAN 2015-2016**

### **2015-2016 Programming Schedule:**

Fall Start Date: Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Fall End Date: Monday, November 9, 2015

Winter Start Date: Wednesday, November 11, 2015

Winter End Date: Friday, March 4, 2016

Spring Start Date: Monday, March 7, 2016

Spring End Date: Monday, May 9, 2016 (For those who qualify for Youth Nationals - Monday June 13, 2016)

### **2015-2016 Fall & Spring Practice Times:**

Varsity - Monday-Friday 3:45pm-6:15pm (additional practices at coaches' discretion)

Novice - Monday-Friday 4:00pm-6:00pm

### **Attendance Policy**

This fall we are trying to standardize an attendance policy and procedure across all Mercer teams. As the program grows and we have more athletes rowing on every team, it is more important that our coaches are prepared to run practice. To facilitate this we are asking that all athletes give at least 24 hours notice for a missed practice. We are also asking all of our coaches to come prepared with the boatings for the day already assembled. If an athlete is boated and misses practice without notifying the coach, the athlete's boat will not go out on the water that day and the athlete who missed practice will not be boated the following day.

We have created an online form for athletes to fill out when they know they will miss a practice. The form is located on our website by clicking "Programs"->"Mercer Juniors"->"Program Forms". In the event that your absence is within 24 hours please attempt to notify the coach via email, text message, or phone call.

### **Regatta Registration**

Regatta fees are paid in addition to standard programming fees and are only required for away races. To register for a PNRA event or regatta, please go to the "Programs" section of our website and click "Mercer Juniors." The link to Regatta Central will be under the "Registration" section. Links will be posted at least 7 days before the event and should be paid by the day of the event. You will also be able to find links for registration on the MJRC blog.

### **MJRC Blog and Communication**

All of our additional communication for the 2015-2016 season will be posted on our programming blog. You can find the blog by going to our website, [www.rowpnra.org](http://www.rowpnra.org), and locating the "Programs" tab at the top. If you hover over the tab, a drop-down menu will appear. Find "Mercer Juniors," and another drop-

down menu will appear for “MJRC Blog”. Please check the blog regularly especially during racing season. Communication just among parents can be found on the “Parents of MJRC” Facebook page.

### **Injury Policy**

Athletes must inform coaches about injuries. Without knowledge of problems coaches could unknowingly continue to push injured athletes and cause more severe injuries. If an athlete has a injury they must also see a physician and give their coach a doctor’s note addressing the problem.

### **Nutrition**

Here’s a great read for those who are interested on what your athlete should be eating to fuel their growing bodies. Nancy’s more renowned clients that have relied on her expertise in diet for sports conditioning to gain a competitive edge have included members of the Boston Celtics (basketball) and Bruins (ice hockey), as well as many collegiate, elite and Olympic athletes from a variety of sports. She is Team Nutritionist for the Boston Red Sox baseball team.

<http://www.nancyclarkrd.com/books/sportsnutrition.asp>

### **Fall Racing Schedule**

#### ***Navy Day Regatta – Philadelphia, PA – October 10, 2015***

**Who is racing:** Top 4-5 Varsity boats

**Where:** Schuylkill River, Philadelphia, PA

**When:**

4:04 PM Men’s HS/Junior JV 8+

4:16 PM Women’s HS/Junior JV 8+

4:28 PM Men’s HS/Junior 4+

4:38 PM Women’s HS/Junior 4+

5:08 PM Men’s HS/Junior 8+

5:20 PM Women’s HS/Junior 8+

**Transportation:** Athletes will provide their own transportation. Athletes should be at the trailer at least two hours before their scheduled race time.

**Notes:** Coaches will announce who is going to the race by the end of practice on October 4th. We would really like to have all varsity athletes race, but race participation will be decided by factors listed in the Crew Selection Guide.

**Estimated Cost:** \$35

#### ***Head of the Charles Regatta – Boston, MA – October 16-18, 2015***

**Who is racing:** 2 Varsity Girls 8+, 1 Varsity Girls 4+, 1st Varsity Boys 8+ & 4+

**Where:** The Charles River, Boston, MA

**Race Website:** [www.hocr.org](http://www.hocr.org)

**Travel Plans:** All Mercer athletes will depart from the boathouse for Boston on the morning of Friday, October 16. We intend to get to the course in the afternoon to rig the boats and have a practice row. We will be taking four 12-passenger vans for this trip to be driven by parent volunteers. Athletes will return after racing on Sunday.

**Race Times (all on Sunday, October 18th):**

Youth Men's 4+: 9:26 am

Youth Men's 8+: 10:23 am

Youth Women's 4+: 12:07 am

Youth Women's 8+: 1:01 pm

**Travel Note:** Head of the Charles is a unique event. First, it is incredibly difficult to get an entry through the open lottery system. The only way to avoid the lottery and guarantee an entry for the next year is to finish in the top half of your event. As this is the second time in a few years that Mercer has five guaranteed entries -- three in the youth 8s and two in the youth 4s -- we want to ensure that we have the best possible chance of finishing in the top half of each race, so future Mercer rowers have the opportunity to participate at this great event.

The second unique aspect of the Charles is that it is an incredibly difficult course to navigate for a coxswain. There are a couple of extreme turns, six bridges, and many boats to pass along the way. Therefore, we want to make sure our coxswains are prepared, because one false move could cost us a good result and guaranteed entry for next year. The ability to get athletes out on the course for a row on Friday, and then to the coxswain clinic on Saturday, will help them be relaxed and prepared for the race on Sunday.

**Hotel Details:** PNRA has secured rooms at the Boston Marriott Newton for athletes and coaches.

**Hotel Address:** Boston Marriott Newton, 2345 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02466

**Dinner Saturday:** Bertucci's Newton Corner

**Lineups/Selection:** Lineups and events will be tentatively announced by Saturday, October 5. While there is a possibility one or two seats may change after this date, the majority of athletes will know the lineup and the event they are racing by this date. Final lineups will be announced by October 11th.

**Estimated Cost:** \$400

***Mercer Challenge – Mercer Lake, NJ – Wednesday, October 28, 2015***

**Who is racing:** All varsity and 1-2 boats of novice athletes

**About the race:** This race is an intra-boathouse race among Mercer, Peddie, and Lawrenceville. Varsity athletes will race around the lake while novice athletes will race shorter distances. The race will be run during our normal practice time.

***Head of the Halloween – Mercer Lake, NJ – October 31, 2015***

**Who is racing:** All Varsity and Novice Athletes

**Where:** Mercer Lake – West Windsor, NJ

**When:** 10:00 am until around 1:00 pm

**What to wear:** The best Halloween costume of your life

**About the race:** Head of the Halloween is a fun intra-squad race. We try to create boats that contain two varsity girls, two varsity boys, two novice girls, and two novice boys. We then race over a 1000m course. Last year there were two heats and a final. Parents are encouraged to come watch and partake in a small Halloween party after the racing.

***Frostbite Regatta & Bill Braxton Memorial Regatta – Mercer Lake, NJ – November 7 & 8, 2015***

**Who is racing:** First 4-5 Varsity boats, plus all novice boats that safely can compete

**Where:** Mercer Lake – West Windsor, NJ

**Race Times:** For the Braxton, 1st Varsity 8s and 4s have heats in the morning with finals in the afternoon. JV (2-5 boats) and novices have finals only in the afternoon. Times are not posted, but below is the schedule from last year. Expect times to run within one hour of last year’s times.

**2014 Bill Braxton Memorial Regatta**

**Heats**

8:00 Women’s HS Varsity 4+ (Braxton Family Trophy) Heat - Top 6 Places to Finals

8:15 Men’s HS Varsity 8+ (Coletta Family Trophy) Heat -Top 6 Places to Finals

8:30 Men’s HS Varsity 4+ (Rafferty Cup) Heat - Top 6 Places to Finals

8:45 Women’s HS Varsity 8+ (Theresa Braxton Trophy) Heat - Top 6 Places to Finals

**Finals**

<b>10:40 Women’s HS Novice 4+ Final 1</b>	<b>12:10 Men’s HS Novice 8+ Final 5</b>
<b>10:46 Women’s HS Novice 4+ Final 2</b>	<b>12:16 Men’s HS Varsity 8+ (Coletta Family Trophy) Final</b>
<b>11:04 Women’s HS Varsity 4+ Final (Braxton Family Trophy)</b>	<b>1:58 Men’s HS Novice 4+ Final 1</b>
<b>11:10 Men’s HS JV 8+ Final 1</b>	<b>2:04 Men’s HS Novice 4+ Final 2</b>
<b>11:16 Men’s HS JV 8+ Final 2</b>	<b>2:10 Men’s HS Novice 4+ Final 3</b>
<b>11:22 Men’s HS JV 8+ Final 3</b>	<b>2:34 Men’s HS Varsity 4+ (Rafferty Cup) Final</b>
<b>11:28 Men’s HS JV 8+ Final 4</b>	<b>2:40 Women’s HS JV 8+ Final 1</b>
<b>11:34 Men’s HS JV 8+ Final 5</b>	<b>2:46 Women’s HS JV 8+ Final 2</b>

11:40 Men's HS JV 8+ Final 6	2:52 Women's HS JV 8+ Final 3
11:46 Men's HS Novice 8+ Final 1	2:58 Women's HS Novice 8+ Final 1
11:52 Men's HS Novice 8+ Final 2	3:04 Women's HS Novice 8+ Final 2
11:58 Men's HS Novice 8+ Final 3	3:10 Women's HS Novice 8+ Final 3
12:04 Men's HS Novice 8+ Final 4	3:16 Women's HS Varsity 8+ (Theresa Braxton Trophy) Final

**Race Notes:** Unlike most of our fall racing, this race is a 2000m sprint. This race will mark the end of the fall racing season.

**Estimated Cost:** \$0

### **Winter Training Trip: December 27, 2015 – January 2, 2016**

**Who will go:** Top 16 athletes from both boys' and girls' varsity teams by invitation

**Location:** TBD

**Estimated Cost:** TBD

### **Winter Racing Schedule**

***Peddie Erg Challenge – Peddie School, Hightstown, NJ – Date and Time TBA***

***CRASH-B Indoor World Championships – Boston, MA – Sunday, February 28, 2016***

**Travel Notes:** This trip is not an official team trip. PNRA will not organize travel arrangements or race entries. In the past athletes and parents have come together to organize the details of the trip.

### **Preliminary Spring Schedule (Subject to Change)**

***Steve Neczypor Regatta -- Camden, NJ -- April 2, 2016***

***Gonzaga/CRI Scrimmage – Details TBD***

***Mercer Lake Sprints – Mercer Lake, NJ – April 16-17, 2016***

**Who:** Varsity and Novice – all boats

***Saratoga Invitational – Saratoga, NY – April 22-24, 2016***

**Who:** 1st through 3rd Varsity boats for both boys and girls.

**Travel Details:** We will be taking a 54-passenger bus, departing from the boathouse on Friday night at 4:00 pm and returning to the boathouse on Sunday night after racing.

**Hotel Details:** We are currently looking into switching hotels. Information will be posted to the blog as soon as plans are set.

## ***US Rowing Mid-Atlantic Regional Championship – Mercer Lake, NJ – May 7-8, 2016***

**Who:** 1st through 4th varsity and novice boats

## ***USRowing Youth National Championships – Mercer Lake, – June 9-12, 2016***

**Who is rowing:** Qualified varsity crews only. Qualification happens by coming in top 3 at the Mid-Atlantic Regionals in a varsity event. Not all boats or athletes who qualify will compete. Only boats that will be able to compete within the top 12 crews in the country will race in Nationals.

### **Guide to Boat Selection**

#### **What are the qualities coaches look for in an athlete?**

At Mercer, we try to focus on fostering the experiences that help our athletes learn the best lessons the sport has to offer. Leadership, sportsmanship, perseverance, competitiveness, and compassion are all important qualities in rowing, and we look for our athletes to demonstrate these qualities over the course of the season.

Rowing is an extremely challenging sport, both physically and mentally. We are looking for people who are up to the challenge and are ready to approach the challenge enthusiastically, all the while knowing that even the most talented rowers are often humbled repeatedly by the sport.

#### **How do you determine who makes the 1st boat and who makes the 4th boat?**

Coaches rely on a wide range of data to ensure that the people who make the boat go the fastest end up in the fastest boat. Before we point out the major criteria for selection, we should add that we want our athletes to be good at everything. In other words, having a strong erg score but a bad attitude will probably not get you into the seat that you desire. Likewise having a great attitude and a great erg score but bad technique won't get you there either. **We want our athletes to be complete rowers, and having athletes that strive to succeed in all aspects of the sport will make our boats go fast.**

### **Criteria for Selection**

#### **Erg testing:**

*“Erg testing is to rowing as the SAT is to college admissions, you have to have a competitive score, but it is only one part of the puzzle.”*

Physical testing on the rowing machine allows athletes to demonstrate fitness capacity, power, and mental toughness. Mercer coaches will primarily use distance tests of 5-6 kilometers in the fall, and transition to 2k tests in the spring. These distance tests last anywhere from 19 to 24 minutes.

In the spring athletes will test 2000 meters. A great 2k time for Boys would be 6:15, while a great time for girls would be 7:15. For lightweight boys, a good time for 2k would be 6:30, and for girls around 7:30.

We understand that not everyone is capable of pulling these times right now, but we are always looking for improvement over the course of the athlete's career. Generally an athlete capable of producing one of those scores is a junior or senior who has been athletically competitive in rowing or another endurance sport for 3-5 years. It is important to us that no matter where the athlete starts out, they continually are striving to improve as the training continues.

**Technique:**

Similar to golf, technique in the boat is critical to being effective. Coaches spend a great deal of practice time working on drills to help athletes understand the best way to move the boat. It is important that the athletes are listening during drilling and other instructional parts of practice so that they can form an understanding of what the coach is looking for. Just like they study math or science, when they are at rowing practice they are students of the sport of rowing, and their coach is their teacher.

With technique, coaches are looking for improvement, “coachability,” and for the athlete to take individual ownership of his or her progress. All athletes will receive feedback on and off the water; however, when an athlete is not responding to that feedback, coaches will eventually move on to athletes who are responding, and selections will be made based on that experience.

Practice will include many drills and concepts that athletes can do on an erg on their own. The boathouse is equipped with mirrors to provide immediate feedback for them to make changes, as long as they understand what the coach is looking for.

**Seat Racing:**

Seat racing is an on-the-water test of one athlete’s boat moving ability versus that of another athlete. Generally seat racing will take place in coxed 4s and will involve a series of intervals at a set time or distance. After one interval, the two athletes will switch boats and race the interval over again. The coach will look for the change in margin between the two intervals to determine which athlete had a greater effect on boat speed and thus makes the boat faster when he or she is in it.

Seat racing can be useful in certain situations, but it is certainly not the sole deciding factor in who makes the boat. Seat racing is used as a final selection procedure, often between two athletes who have performed similarly when all aspects of the selection criteria are taken into account. **Therefore, not everyone is entitled to a seat race for every boat, and due to time constraints it would be impossible to seat race everyone against everyone.** The coaches will do their best to determine the depth chart of their team and conduct fair seat races with transparent outcomes when they feel necessary.

**Attitude, Work Ethic, Attendance, Competitive Spirit, Enthusiasm:**

As we have previously stated, rowing is physically and mentally demanding. Coaches are constantly challenging athletes to be the best they can, and through the response to this challenge athletes gain a level of confidence, determination, strength, and mental toughness that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

We look for athletes who are team players and for those who bring a positive, can-do approach to practice. Furthermore we look for athletes who will handle the competitive nature of the sport with grace and react well to the difficult situations that come with selection and competition. We want athletes to work hard and demonstrate the desire to achieve their best performance through putting forth a relentless level of effort.

Finally, athletes can't show us anything if they are not at practice. While we understand things come up and rowing isn't everything all of the time, attendance at practice is crucial for making progress and contributing to fast boats.

### **Coaches' Judgment:**

We are lucky to have a highly experienced junior coaching staff at Mercer. Our coaches have been successful at the international, national, collegiate, and youth levels both as athletes and coaches. We trust them with all aspects involved with teaching, training, and assembling the fastest crews we can possibly put on the water. In certain circumstances when two athletes are extremely close, they may be forced to make a judgment as to who is a better fit in a particular crew.

*Example:* Athlete A is just a little smoother and more experienced technically than Athlete B, but A is slower on the erg and narrowly lost a head-to-head seat race versus B. However, Athlete A demonstrates the ability to blend in better with the top lineup of athletes and ultimately makes that boat go faster. In this example Athlete A might allow the other rowers to row technically better, and thus he or she adds an element that is hard to extract through the other parts of the selection process. In this example the coach will have to look at all the data and ultimately make a judgment call about what is better for the crew.

### **Parent Coordinators:**

#### **Boys**

Karoline Borup - [kborup@me.com](mailto:kborup@me.com)

Nanci Levine - [mercerv.nanci@hotmail.com](mailto:mercerv.nanci@hotmail.com)

#### **Girls**

Lorena Miller - [lorenamjrcgirls@gmail.com](mailto:lorenamjrcgirls@gmail.com)

Amy Lustig - [amymjrcgirls@gmail.com](mailto:amymjrcgirls@gmail.com)