



## **2023 Team Membership Handbook**

RULES > POLICIES > PROCEDURES

RIVERSPORT's mission is to inspire excellence, enhance communities, and change lives through Olympic watersports and outdoor-urban adventures

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## Welcome to RIVERSPORT!

RIVERSPORT is your passport to all the exciting sports on the Oklahoma River, at Lake Overholser and Lake Hefner. A program of the RIVERSPORT Foundation, RIVERSPORT offers community rowing, kayaking, dragon boating, stand up paddle boarding, whitewater paddling, surfing, skiing, cycling, and fitness activities. RIVERSPORT Adventures offer day and season passes for a full range of adventure activities on land and water. Coached programs, group and private lessons, team building, summer camps, and guided excursions are all available through RIVERSPORT.

### RIVERSPORT Juniors Rowing

OKC RIVERSPORT Juniors Rowing offers competitive rowing for youth ages 14 to 19 and programming for non-competitive athletes throughout the year. Rowers come from all backgrounds and all levels of athletic ability. The Juniors Rowing program has a men's and women's team, with participants competing for their age group (U19, U17, U16, or U15) or the Novice team in their first year of rowing. Youth can try this sport during a Learn-to-Row summer camps offered in June and July.

Young adults between the ages of 11-13 also can row with the OKC RIVERSPORT Middle School team. The OKC RIVERSPORT Middle School team offers young adults the chance to understand the dynamics of a rowing team, being outside on water/in nature, in a non-competitive environment.

### RIVERSPORT Junior Canoe/Kayak Team

RIVERSPORT Junior Canoe/Kayak offers kids ages 8+ a fun program to learn a sport they can participate in for life. The fun is in learning to kayak – the excitement is in racing. Paddlers can join as a recreational, developmental or competitive team athlete. Junior paddlers can give this sport a try during a summer camp or by visiting a practice to learn more.

### RIVERSPORT Youth Rowing League

The RIVERSPORT Youth Rowing League launched in 2009 with a single high school rowing program; today it includes rowing for middle school and high school students. The program is designed to use the power of water sports as a catalyst for student achievement in the classroom, on the water and in life.

## RIVERSPORT Masters Rowing Team

RIVERSPORT adult rowers, known in the rowing world as "masters," come from across the RIVERSPORT metro area. Some are highly competitive; others row just for the fun of it. Whether you're interested in competition or recreation, RIVERSPORT has a program for you. Just complete an introductory rowing course or private lesson and you'll be on the water with our masters rowing team in no time!

## RIVERSPORT Masters Canoe/Kayak Team

RIVERSPORT adult paddlers take to the water to paddle canoes or kayaks, this program offers adults the chance to be competitive or to pursue these sports for the fun, recreational and social aspects that go hand-in-hand with paddling.

## RIVERSPORT Corporate Rowing League

The RIVERSPORT Corporate Rowing League offers local corporations and groups the opportunity to build camaraderie both on and off the water year-round. Participants practice once a week with a RIVERSPORT coach and coxswain for 10-12 weeks before racing 500-meter sprints under the Boathouse District's stadium lights.

## RIVERSPORT Dragon Boat League

Teams of 11-15 paddlers practice for 90-minutes, one day a week for 10 weeks with a RIVERSPORT coach, which will also be your steersman. A spring and fall season are offered and cumulate in a 200-meter race under the Boathouse District's stadium lights. Paddlers enjoy working together in an oversized canoe with a dragon head and tail, paddling to the beat of a drummer.

## Team Program Financial Policy

### Monthly Dues & Fees

Families and members have three options for payment of program dues and fees:

1. Monthly payment; credit card on file is required.
2. Semester payment, due at the start of each semester (Fall in August, Spring in January).
3. Annual lump payment, due the first day of the month program cycles are due to start

Payments are considered past due after ten days. If payment has not been received, or a payment agreement has not been made, athletes will not be eligible to practice with programs or teams. Athletes will not be allowed to practice or race with the team if there are any outstanding balances for previous dues, incidental fees or travel costs.

## On-Boarding Documentation

Documentation may be specifically required per program. Athletes are expected to have any required waivers and forms submitted by the due date of the first payment of the month or year. Paperwork required to compete in a regatta, either by the RIVERSPORT or a National Governing Body, will be due two weeks prior to the event.

## Rules & Regulations

### Dress Code

Athlete practice attire will be monitored by the coaches and RIVERSPORT staff. Any inappropriate attire will be immediately corrected. Athletes should always be respectful of others when choosing their attire for rowing, paddling and working out. All athletes are required to wear a shirt at all times when training and competing for RIVERSPORT. Athletes should be prepared with clothing and shoes appropriate for water and land training sessions each day.

### Noise

Athletes are expected to be respectful of others and keep loud behavior to a minimum while on RIVERSPORT grounds. Athletes engaging in inappropriate, disruptive or dangerous behavior will be asked to stop. If the behavior continues, athletes are subject to being sent home from practice that day.

Music should be kept to a respectable volume and should be clean of profanity. Music and/or volume in violation of this regulation will be turned down or shut off. If athletes or members do not comply with a request to change music or volume, they will be subject to minor disciplinary action including loss of control of a sound system.

### Cleanliness

Program athletes are expected to make an effort to help to keep RIVERSPORT grounds clear of trash and debris. Equipment should be cleaned and/or sanitized after each use and returned to proper storage locations. Athlete's and/or member's personal belongings should be kept inside their respective locker rooms during training to keep gym floors clear.

## Disciplinary Action

The coaching staff is responsible for administering appropriate disciplinary action for violations of any RIVERSPORT policy or regulation. Minor disciplinary actions include, but are not limited to:

1. Verbal warning
2. Loss of specific equipment privileges
3. Loss of water privileges for a specified time
4. Written/verbal apology

Repeat minor violations, or violations that create unsafe conditions for others, will be considered more significant and result in a major disciplinary action. Coaches must inform their supervisor of any major disciplinary action which would result in one of the following:

1. Long term loss of water/practice privileges
2. Long term loss of equipment privileges
3. Loss of race privileges
4. Suspension from team/program
5. Expulsion from team/program

The person affected must be made aware of the allegations against him/her and must be given a chance to respond to any allegations. Any disagreement with the implementation of disciplinary actions should be appealed directly to the Head Coach of the appropriate program.

## Traffic Policy

It is Foundation policy that any persons or vessels on the water on the Oklahoma River should follow a standardized traffic pattern. The intent of this policy is to ensure safety of persons on the water by setting a traffic pattern and light policy to avoid collision or other on the water incidents related or caused by traffic flow and/or visibility. It is expected that any program or person participating on the water will adhere to the following guidelines as they pertain to the section of water between Walker Ave and Eastern Ave.

## Policy Guidelines

### **2k Race Course**

All rowing shells must stay to the right-hand side of the river. When passing, slower crews, shells will yield to the middle of the river. All beginner and recreational paddlers (including kayakers, canoers, stand-up paddle boarders) must stay in lane 0 & 8, the southernmost & northernmost lane. Launches are prohibited from motoring in lane 0 or 8. When a paddler or pod of paddlers pass a rowing shell, the rowing shell should stay their course and the paddlers will maneuver around them. When the paddler passing policy is in question, the paddler will tuck into the shore.

**West of Lincoln Blvd**

All rowing shells must stay to the right-hand side of the river. When passing, slower crews, shells will yield to the middle of the river. All experienced paddlers must stay to the left of the river. Kayakers will cross the river at the Pipe Bridge for visibility. When a paddler or pod of paddlers pass a rowing shell, the rowing shell should stay their course and the paddlers will maneuver around them. When the paddler passing policy is in question, the paddler will tuck into the shore.

**Turning**

Turning crews do not have the right of way. Please ensure there are no oncoming vessels before turning your boat. Turning is prohibited under I-35. Please paddle or row through the I-35 bridges before spinning. Turning is prohibited at the 2k finish line. Please paddle or row through the finish line before spinning.

**Lights**

All rowing shells, kayaks, dragon boats, and safety launches must have lights visible from the bow and stern while on the water in low-light conditions. A red light on the port side and a green light on the starboard side should be mounted on the bow. A white light should be mounted on the stern. In the event a rower or paddler cannot attach a white light to the stern, the light can be worn.

**Other Traffic Rules**

The rowing barge must stay in the middle of the river and between the Pipe Bridge and I-35. Dragon Boats must stay in the middle of the river.

If you need to stop your coaching launch to talk to your athletes, please be aware of oncoming traffic. Stopped boats forfeit their right-of-way. Best option is to stop your boat at wither dam or at the 2k finish line. Second option is to move your boats to the center lanes.

**Weather Closure Policy**

RIVERSPORT youth programs weather-related closings will be made in accordance with OKC Public Schools closing due to road conditions and in accordance with a general closure of RIVERSPORT offices and facilities. If conditions improve by the afternoon, practices will be deemed optional at the discretion of the coach. Once a decision has been made, assistant coaches will be notified through text or call. Athletes and parents will be notified via mass email or text. In the case of the Youth Rowing League, school sponsors will be notified.

RIVERSPORT adult program closures will be at the discretion of the coach and in accordance with a general closure of RIVERSPORT offices and facilities. The decision to cancel will be made no less than two-hours prior to practice, so team captains can notify their teams. Team captains will be notified through email. Coaches will be notified through text.



RIVERSPORT offices and facilities will be closed when, in the judgment of the Executive Team, weather conditions make it unsafe to travel on the roads (ice, snow, flooding) or to stay in the Boathouse District or other RIVERSPORT facilities/locations (tornado or severe storm threat).

If the weather has the potential to make it unsafe to open the next day, the Executive Team will make a decision and notify staff and the public/members by 10pm. Staff will be notified by email and group messaging (when available). Members will be notified by email, and the general public will be made aware via Twitter, Facebook, web site posting, and phone system messaging.

## Cold Weather Policy

It is Foundation policy that when water temperature drops below 50 degrees and/or air temperature drops below 40 degrees, ALL rowers and paddlers must be under the direct supervision of a staff coach and must stay within sight distance of the coach's safety launch.

### Coached Programs

In addition to adhering to cold weather policy guidelines, coached programs are advised to practice in larger team boats to reduce risk of participants ending up in the water. Coaches should advise participants on the RIVERSPORT cold weather policy and guidelines, as well as go over a strategic plan of response to any accidents to ensure adequate and efficient response times.

### Open Rowing

Open rowing/paddling will be held during daylight savings time. Weather permitting, weekend open rowing/paddling will be available on Saturdays 1-3 pm and Sundays 7-10 am when rowers and paddlers will be provided coach and safety launch supervision.

## Water Safety Policy

It is RIVERSPORT policy to ensure the safety of employees and members through establishing standardized safety protocols. The intent of these protocols is to establish and provide a safe environment for our staff and patrons to enjoy.

### Lightning

It is expected that coaches and rowers recognize the dangers associated with being on the water in the presence of lightning. In alignment with USRowing & the ACA, RIVERSPORT will recognize lightning as a threat to safety for on the water activities when lightning strikes are reported within 10-miles of the Boathouse District. RIVERSPORT employees and members are expected to assume the responsibility of awareness of a storm's location and movement in proximity to the Boathouse District.

In the event lightning falls within these guidelines, all on the water activity will be put on hold until there have been no reports of lightning strikes within the 10-mile radius, and/or 30 consecutive minutes have passed without report of lightning activity. If lightning is detected outside of the threat radius, programs may go on the water but employees and members are expected to remain in close proximity to the boathouse so as to be able to return to the dock in a safe and efficient manner in the event the storm approaches the Boathouse District.

## Severe Heat

Practices and classes will be held as regularly scheduled during a heat wave, but will be shortened to a more manageable length of time and level of intensity. Specifically, when the heat index reaches 95 degrees, programming will be shortened to one hour. Additionally, practices being held in severe heat will be limited to skill/drill days to avoid intense exertion that could result in a heat related illness. Practice length and intensity is the responsibility of the RIVERSPORT employee in charge of the program. These decisions should be based on fitness, experience, and demographics of program participants and members within their respective programs.

## Wind

Programming will be held on the water as long as wind speeds **do not exceed 25 miles per hour**. In the event wind speeds reach this limit, practices will be continued indoors. Wind conditions are a judgment reserved for RIVERSPORT staff. If water conditions are adversely affected by wind conditions, thereby creating an unsafe environment for rowers and staff, a call may be made to stay on land despite wind speeds and regardless of experience or ability level.

# Equipment Usage

## Facilities

All athletes are expected to make a conscious effort of maintaining a clean and safe boat bay and fitness center environment to prevent injury or equipment damage.

## Use within Programs

All the equipment is assigned for use in certain programs, and within those programs, further assigned by skill level. It is the coach's responsibility to place individuals at given seats in certain boats for each practice. Rowers, and paddlers should be placed only in boats they are qualified to use while under proper supervision. The goal is for athletes to be comfortable in their boats, to improve, and at the advanced level, to develop maximum speed in each category.

## Use by Individual Members

RIVERSPORT members may use specifically designated boats if the boat is not already being used in a program and that the athlete is of the appropriate size and skill level for the boat. Please see the RIVERSPORT Level Classification System for more information or speak to a RIVERSPORT coach. Individuals must complete the required Learn to Row, Private Learn to Row or Discover Rowing/Kayak classes as a prerequisite for usage of RIVERSPORT equipment.

## Privately Owned Boats

Rack space is available to members who own their own boats and have an active RIVERSPORT membership. Members are free to use their boats anytime the boathouses are open to the public per RIVERSPORT Weather Policy or other safety concerns prevent anyone from getting on the water.

Members with private boats need to provide their own insurance and maintain their boats with the proper safety features, including proper lighting for use in the darkness.

## Guest Use of Equipment

Experienced sport-specific athletes who are personal guests of RIVERSPORT members may use RIVERSPORT equipment or private equipment upon approval by a RIVERSPORT coach. Rowing and paddling guests may be subject to a level test.

The hosting member is responsible for any and all actions of the guest, including damage to any club equipment or property and may be held financially liable.

Guests who expect to frequent the Boathouse District and use equipment more than once a year must make arrangements with RIVERSPORT management so they can complete appropriate forms and a certification test (for club equipment only). Day passes are available for visiting out-of-state guests who have been certified and approved to row via completion of a level test with a RIVERSPORT coach.

## Rowing Equipment Checkout

To check out rowing equipment, please use the online logbook via Smartphone. In the event a boathouse program is using this equipment, the program has priority. Please check with coaches before taking any equipment during scheduled program times. Rowers will only have access to boats in their assigned level. You must check back in after your row and make note of any damaged equipment or safety concerns. Rowing outside of the scheduled rowing times can be done through coordination with a boathouse certified coach.

## Paddling Equipment Checkout

To check out paddling equipment, please check with a paddlesport coach.

## Damage to Equipment

All members must be attentive during docking and while handling the boat. In the event of negligence or a violation of a boathouse safety rule, the member will be expected to pay for the cost of the repair. Damage should be reported immediately, either to a supervising coach or in the online logbook, to ensure timely repair.

## Equipment Maintenance

The following procedures must be followed when using an RIVERSPORT Boat:

- Before Use
  - Inspect boat for damage and tightness of nuts and bolts
  - Only use boats you are level-qualified to use and that are of the appropriate weight class
- After Rowing or Paddling
  - Thoroughly rinse and clean all equipment
  - Open all vents to ensure proper ventilation for the boat during storage
  - Ensure towel is free from dirt or objects that could be abrasive to the boat
  - Report any damage in the online logbook and to Boathouse Management immediately after damage occurs or is discovered.
  - Return boat to proper storage location

## Racing and Regattas

### Schedule

The list of regattas OKC RIVERSPORT will attend will be available from RIVERSPORT coaches at the beginning of each racing season. The RIVERSPORT rowing programs are divided into three seasons: winter training, spring championship season and fall head race season.

Specific race schedules can be found in the sport specific Athlete HUB, your designated program manager will share this information with each athlete/parent.

### Race Participation

Several weeks before each race, coaches will inquire whether members wish to participate in a specific race. Participation includes the cost of entry fee(s), trailer transportation costs, and coaching fees. Once a member signs up to race, s/he has committed to that event. Coaches then make line-ups that will race together in specific categories. In the event someone has an emergency and a substitute must take that person's place, the original member who signed up to race still incurs the costs of that regatta. Depending on the situation, the substitute may be willing to reimburse the original racer, but this is handled directly between the members. If a participant or group decides not to race, that individual or group will still incur the costs for that entry; the host organization may also charge a 'scratch fee' in addition to the entry fee(s).

The opportunity to race can be a valuable experience as it helps to improve skills at all levels. Racing is not, however, a requirement of members.

When many RIVERSPORT staff, boats and members are at a regatta, regular practice may not occur, and non-racing members will be encouraged to use the ergs, weights and indoor cardio equipment.

## Selection for National Events

For those advanced rowers and paddlers who wish to race at national caliber regattas, the selection process can last several weeks. Entry into these boats carries certain skill and fitness standards that are age adjusted. The process includes availability, teamwork, erg-testing, seat racing on the water, and a significant training commitment. A certified RIVERSPORT program coach has the discretion to select the lineup for the race.

## Travel Costs

Travel costs are not included in program or membership fees. Travel costs include: entry fees, trailer use, and coaches' expenses including coach hotel. Travel costs are added together and divided among the whole of the group travelling to the event.

With some exceptions, racing at regattas requires trailering boats to and from the venue. Signing up to race should be considered a full-day obligation and racers attending regattas are expected to assist in trailer loading and unloading. The boats are usually loaded the day before, during practice time, and unloaded and rigged upon return at a time designated by RIVERSPORT coaches. It is realized that it is not always possible to make every aspect of the boat loading and unloading process. If you must miss a significant portion of the work, you may be asked to perform a make-up service in the form of volunteer hours equal to the time missed in assisting your teammates.

For additional travel costs associated with junior or adult programming, please check with your coach.

## Athlete Behavior

OKC RIVERSPORT team members are expected to exhibit the highest-level of sportsmanship and conduct themselves as an ambassador for our community, our sport and our organization. Please be sure to thank hosts at every event and leave each location in as good or better condition than when you arrived.

## Equipment Allocation

Prior to submitting entries to each regatta, the athletic department staff will review all the entries from each program and allocate the appropriate boats, oars and paddle equipment for each entry. Some regattas allow multiple entries into the same event and others do not. If there is a conflict between the timing of races and the available equipment, RIVERSPORT coaches will decide how the entries are to be ranked, typically by anticipated speed, and submit them accordingly. All RIVERSPORT-sponsored programs receive priority use of boathouse equipment. All coaches work together to ensure all members have opportunities to race and have a positive experience doing so.

## USRowing

USRowing is the National Governing Body for the sport of rowing in the United States. Members who race in USRowing sanctioned rowing events are required to join this organization as well as complete required SafeSport training, and all rowing-related members are encouraged to join. One of the greatest benefits of USRowing membership is the individual liability insurance that comes with it.

USRowing supports and develops Olympic rowing teams for the United States and provide our sport with the Rules of Rowing, the safety officials and referees at all local, national, and international venues, at no charge.

## American Canoe Association

The ACA serves as the National Governing Body for Olympic and Paralympic paddlesports.

## Uniforms & Affiliation

Members representing OKC RIVERSPORT at regattas are required to wear team uniforms.

Racing shirts, racing shorts and other OKC RIVERSPORT clothing can be ordered through online team stores that are open periodically throughout the year. Athletes will be notified when apparel is on sale and stores are open.

Wearing team uniforms on the water shows personal pride and respect for your team and competitors.

In situations of poor or cool weather, athletes should plan to layer under their team uniform.

All members utilizing RIVERSPORT equipment must register under the name "OKC RIVERSPORT" when completing regatta registration.

## Volunteerism & Entry Fees

In an effort to promote and enhance volunteerism in the Boathouse District, members of coached programs competing in RIVERSPORT-hosted regattas will have the opportunity to volunteer in exchange for waived regatta and equipment rental fees. Coached program members who opt not to volunteer will be subject to a flat rate regatta fee. Volunteer hours will not be rolled over throughout the year within this program. For example, competitors registered for The Head of the Oklahoma Regatta Festival will be asked to volunteer during or in the week prior to the event.

For more information on this program, please speak with a member of the RIVERSPORT coaching staff.

## RIVERSPORT Coaches and Private Coaching

### Overview

RIVERSPORT supports the efforts of experienced coaches to provide services that enhance the skills of members. Private lessons and coaching are provided by RIVERSPORT coaching staff.

### Coach to Rower Ratio

Once a program reaches consistent attendance of more than 18 members, the program size is adjusted. This may occur by adding a second coach or an additional program may be created. It is the coach's responsibility to keep multiple boats within sight for safety, give each boat the workout plan for the session, and divide coaching time reasonably among the participants.

### Private Lessons & Coaching

Private lessons and coaching are available through RIVERSPORT. In order to ensure proper training, only RIVERSPORT coaches or approved volunteers can provide lessons. Private lessons/coaching are single-session arrangements between a coach and one individual/one crew. These may occur any time during regular RIVERSPORT hours and fees are to be paid to the front desk.

#### **Requirements**

- All coaches must be approved by RIVERSPORT management
- Coaches are responsible for the safety of all participants and the proper care of all equipment
- RIVERSPORT-sponsored programs have first priority on RIVERSPORT Foundation-owned equipment
- All equipment used for private coached programs and lessons should be reserved in advance of each session.

### Thank You!

We appreciate having you as a member of RIVERSPORT's athletic community! Please let us know if there's ever anything we can do to improve your RIVERSPORT experience!