



**MATHEWS HIGH SCHOOL CREW
P O BOX 38
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MATHEWS, VA. 23109
804-725-5886**

February 18, 2015

Dear Parents and Budding Novice (1st year) Crew Members,

On behalf of myself, Mr. Vernon Rowe and Mrs. Christina Tomcany, we would like to extend a hearty welcome to the Mathews H.S. Crew program for 2015. You have shown an interest in undertaking a very different, demanding, and highly disciplined sport. All returning crew members and the coaching staff are excited about our latest recruits and the upcoming season. We are looking forward to setting goals and building a team that will be very competitive in both Northern Virginia and national regattas. This year we are planning our 27th Annual MHS Crew Regatta on May 2nd, and two smaller local regattas on April 4th and 18th for local and Tidewater crews. There is also a pot luck dinner/info meeting for parents and team members at 5:45 pm on Friday, March 6th, location Williams Wharf. More information on the regattas, practice, the supper etc., can be found throughout your information packet.

All novice crew members will be introduced to rowing technique, physical training, and equipment care from the basic level. They will learn how to work and train as a team, dress for the weather, and be responsible to each other. They will also learn how to take great care in keeping their equipment and rowing facility clean, and how to pack for away races. We are here to help you learn how to train and maintain your body and row competitively with a carefully developed program that is designed to build strength and confidence slowly. As you train and learn how to row, you will discover the fun and satisfaction of strength and balance in groups. One of the most rewarding benefits of crew is the pride and confidence your boat team will develop as a group. There are no individual stars and our crew's performance is judged as a whole from the fastest Varsity boat to the newest, youngest, and tiniest boat. Collective wins show a team spirit that is very difficult to master in high school rowing...We have it!!!

A good pair of running shoes, foul weather and workout clothes that fit closely, a racing uniform, a daily water bottle and a mature attitude towards attendance and team rules are the basic requirements for all participants in the rowing program. Crew members will need cash for food, commemorative T-shirts, etc. on trips to regattas on each Saturday that we race in Northern Virginia. We leave for races at 4-4:30 AM from behind the High School where the buses are kept. Team member racing uniforms are required and can be ordered from the coach. Both sweatshirts at approximately \$40 - \$45, and rowing jackets around \$185-\$205 are optional, but they provide effective protection in practice and racing and if your child is interested in rowing 4-5 years, it is a good investment.

The Crew account will pay hotel accommodations for all members who compete in the Northern Virginia Championships and national level regattas. The crew also pays for all equipment and operating expenses. Insurance, the bus itself, fuel, two coaching stipends, and taxes on our rowing facility are paid for by the Mathews County School Board. The annual budget needed to fund MHS Crew is raised by your coach and funding sponsor. The majority of this funding comes from the community, local businesses, foundations, and out of town benefactors. This money pays our expenses, builds funds for shell and equipment maintenance, expansion, and replacement, and provides support for rowers who need economic assistance for expenses, uniforms, etc.

A crew program is a carefully balanced activity that requires flawless attendance and commitment. If working or outside activities conflict with the crew practice and racing schedule (including AM's during Spring Break) then a decision must be made as to which activity the student and parents feel is more important. Conflicts to crew that will be considered are: health problems, family problems, and school problems. Please make dentist, hair, and other appointments at a time that does not conflict with practices as it is very hard to develop specific team boats and balance when someone is missing ; forcing other crew members to work with or adjust to someone not normally in their boat. The interruption of physical training due to absence also disrupts an athlete's physical progress. More than two unexcused absences will result in dismissal from the team. The incredibly short time we all have to teach a novice crew how to row and pick up speed does not permit the luxury of many lost days when a crew can't row together.

The novice year is a great season for learning and developing. We look forward to developing this year's group and the foundation for great future boats and fine athletes. The prospects for collegiate scholarships are excellent in crew. Our crew has developed a good reputation and I receive constant requests from college coaches who recognize that our success comes from well trained athletes who have developed the drive and work ethic that comes from competitive rowing. The operative word here is "Developed". All the great rowers that have come from our crew started out as new novices like you. From our viewpoint, that is the magic of crew. It is a level playing field waiting for you to come and play and we are here to urge you on.

The MHS Rowing Program will give any student or parent a great source of pride and accomplishment. It is growing every year with a winning tradition that our whole community has come to admire and the rowing community in general has come to respect. Please keep in mind that your child will be following a balanced and proven training program and undergoing a lot of physical training. Try to plan healthy meals and good breakfasts and additionally encourage the consumption of at least eight glasses of water a day.

Please look over the attached information packet. Put this packet where you can refer to it in future; IT SAVES A LOT OF QUESTIONS AND CONFUSION!! A roster will be coming out soon for your communication convenience. It has addresses and parents names and emails, as well as phone numbers of crew members, you will find it extremely useful and will refer to it often so put it in a convenient and safe location . If there are any questions please don't hesitate to call me, Mr. Rowe or Mrs. Tomcany; or ask any of our experienced team members or parents. We are looking forward to working with you. Remember, regular crew practice will start on Monday, February 23rd, at 3:15 PM. (Team catches bus parked behind MHS Auditorium) We look forward to working with you and are keen on getting a good start and a jump on the competition!

Yours Truly,

Tim Ulsaker
Head Coach &
Sponsor
693-5160 home

Vernon Rowe
Asst. Varsity
Coach
725-3678 home

Christina Tomcany
Novice/JV Coach
725-4127 home