



# GREAT BRIDGE CREW

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2021 - 2022

PARENT HANDBOOK



# About Our Club

Great Bridge Crew, also known as GBC or GBCC, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 1999. We are a year round rowing club open to all area students grade 8th-12th. From our beginnings, our club grew from 20 Rowers, and only 2 wooden Kashper Boats as well as 3 ergs to a team of an average of 40 rowers and a fleet of 20 boats as well as 20 Ergs for off season training. GBC first made its mark in 2002 at the SRAA Nationals in Oakridge, TN and have remained the premier Crew in the Hampton Roads area ever since. We are the best performing club on the water in this area. Known for our fast lightweights, we have medaled in every State Championships since 2007. Most of those years at least one of our boats brought home the gold.

## OUR MISSION

To promote confidence and excellence in the sport of rowing through teamwork, discipline and physical fitness.

## OUR VISION

To develop a competitive rowing club that promotes integrity, good sportsmanship and support amongst our rowers and within the community.

## OUR VALUES

We continue to uphold our commitment to excellence with the driving force of our rowers, coaches, parents and volunteers. Our guiding principles that set us apart and enable us to continue pushing forward by educating and training those that come after us.



# Our Parent Board

Great Bridge Crew is led by an elected group of volunteer parents, who each hold a position on the parent board and run the administrative side of the club. Board meetings are held once a month, typically on the first Thursday.

Nominations for the following year's board positions are held in the spring and are voted on at the following General Membership Meeting.

The 2021-2022 Parent Board is:

President - Meredith Hodge - [president@greatbridgecrew.org](mailto:president@greatbridgecrew.org)

Vice President - Eric Eberle - [vicepresident@greatbridgecrew.org](mailto:vicepresident@greatbridgecrew.org)

Secretary - Heather Eberle - [secretary@greatbridgecrew.org](mailto:secretary@greatbridgecrew.org)

Treasurer - Josh Hodge - [treasurer@greatbridgecrew.org](mailto:treasurer@greatbridgecrew.org)

Member at Large - Kylee Stewart - [memberatlarge@greatbridgecrew.org](mailto:memberatlarge@greatbridgecrew.org)

To communicate with the board as a whole, please send a message to [boardgbce@greatbridgecrew.org](mailto:boardgbce@greatbridgecrew.org)

Roles of the Board can be found in a copy of the Great Bridge Crew By-Laws. If you need a copy of the By-Laws, please refer to the documents section of Team Snap, or you can find a copy on the team website.



# Our Coaches

Great Bridge Crew has a Coaching Staff experienced and trained in rowing and safety. Our Coaches guide the workouts from jon boats (called launches) that follow the shells and direct the rowers on the water. Often, former Rowers come back to the club to give back to the program that gave so much to them.

## HEAD COACH

Giovanni 'Gio' Rodriguez  
coachgio@greatbridgecrew.org

## ASSISTANT COACHES

DON HUGHES  
PAIGE RABIDOUX  
BRIAN GUERTLER  
JUSTIN WILLIAMS



## JUNIOR COACHES

JAKE BETANCOURT

To get in touch with the coaching staff please email [coaches@greatbridgecrew.org](mailto:coaches@greatbridgecrew.org) or use the TeamSnap app

## WHAT DO GBC COACHES EXPECT FROM ROWERS?

Show up, work hard and have a good attitude.

If your rower has to miss practice, have them inform the Coaching Staff as soon as possible. If a Rower is really sick or hurt, the rower needs to get in touch with Coach Gio. The Coaches will thank you for not passing an illness around! No one wants students to row with an injury.



**Dues for the 2021-2022  
Season:**

**\$2600**

**Dues are paid Monthly  
by the 5th.**

**Pay your dues by  
teamsnap, Zelle, or  
check.**

**Fundraising  
opportunities to help  
offset the cost of dues  
are available  
throughout the year.**

**Scholarship Assistance is  
available to offset the cost of  
dues to those who qualify.**

**Send an email to  
treasurer@greatbridgecrew.org  
to request an application.**

## Membership Dues

As a 501© non-profit, all of the funding for GBC comes from membership dues or through external fundraising. As such, dues are paid to cover operational costs of the club during the respective Regular Season, which coincides with the school calendar year.

Parents of rowers from 8th-11th grades have the opportunity to use a 12-month payment plan. Please refer to the Financial Agreement for more information. Parents of seniors must be paid in full or have arrangements with the treasurer before the invitational.

In addition to dues, there are uniform requirements for each of the rowers. These are separate from your dues, please contact our uniform coordinator at [gbccuniforms@gmail.com](mailto:gbccuniforms@gmail.com) for more information

## What Do We Get For Our Dues

Rower dues are calculated by the operational budget set by the board at the beginning of the season. The treasurer and president are responsible for compiling the information from previous years financial statements. Your dues go towards

- Annual rent of the GBC Boathouse
- Insurance for the club as well as our fleet our trailers and launches
- State vehicle registration and taxes
- Fall Practices 2/3 days a week for two hours
- Spring Practices 5 Days a week for two hours a day
- 4 to 5 Person Coaching Staff
- Entry Fees for Regattas your Rower participates in
- Rower Hotel Paid at Team Travel Events
- One Week All Expense Paid for Spring Break Training Camp
- Initial Team Uni-Suit
- Rental Vehicle to Transport Boats
- Boats (not the newest, but they are good)
- All Necessary Support Equipment
- Maintenance of all Support Equipment
- MUCH, MUCH MORE!

For any questions regarding the budget please email [treasurer@greatbridgecrew.org](mailto:treasurer@greatbridgecrew.org)



# WATER PRACTICES

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Crew is a competitive sport and GBC is a competitive team. No one is cut from the team and everyone rows, but the competitive boats and singles are hard to get in. Ability, seat racing, erg times, conditioning and attitude all play a part in determining the makeup of a boat. Illness or injury can be a factor from week to week. Coaches aim for fast boats that can win on a given day. Lineups are determined by the Coaches based on all of these factors including attendance at practice. So practice is imperative to the continued growth of your rower.

## Practice Times and Location

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Drop Off and Pick Up of Rower – All rowers are required to run if going to practice or allowed to walk when leaving practice from the AYB to or from the Boathouse. Parents/Coaches are not permitted to drive onto the property without prior permission from a board member.

### Morning Practices

In the fall, most practices will be in the mornings. Due to safety reasons, we ask that all rowers and parents park their cars or drop off and pick up at Wells Fargo bank parking lot for morning practices. Rowers will meet there and run down to the boathouse together.

### Afternoon Practices

Rowers meet at the barrier wall at the end of Basin Road at the start time of practice. If there is no one standing there waiting, just hang out in your car for a few minutes until a coach or a board member shows up.

Coaches typically park along the side road there and are hanging out until rowers arrive. We will provide you a board members phone number beforehand, in case you need to get in touch with us.

Parents or rowers that drive themselves: Please drive to the barriers at the end of Basin road, make a U-Turn and park or drop off to keep your rower of traffic to the Atlantic Yacht Basin. We try to be respectful to the staff and the guests of AYB who may be arriving or leaving for the day.

Need help with an occasional ride to or from practice?

Let us help.

You can reach out to the board or in the team chat in our teamsnap!

# CHANGES TO PRACTICES

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Due to this being a water sport and the rowers and coach's commitment to dedicating as much time as possible to rowing on the water, practices maybe canceled or moved to the Erg House at the last possible moment. This is due to the fact that conditions maybe different at the water than they are at your house, such as fog, higher winds, chop, tidal surge, etc. The main priority of the coaching staff is safety first. That means there maybe times where you have dropped your rower off only to get a call to turn around and come back. We understand this can be frustrating, but it all comes down to safety concerns. Weather is very temperamental in this area and we do our best to keep the kids on the water for as long as we can.

Cancellations or changes will be provided via team app.

## LAND PRACTICES

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The team moves to Land Practices in the winter season. Coaches want to keep the kids on the water as long as possible, so it is hard to pin down an actual date for our winter season to start. It is typically driven when the combined water and air temperatures fall below a calculated number. Once that occurs, we move the rowers off the water and hold workouts at the Erg House.

### ERG HOUSE

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The Erg House is located to the back right hand side of Great Bridge High School in a portable building next to the school.

Parents can drop off rower in the senior parking lot on that side of the building.



# UNIFORMS

**Practice Uniform.** During early morning practice all Rowers must wear a WHITE TOP, there are no exceptions and the color will not be discussed or negotiated. This is due to safety. During the early morning fall practices, it is still dark outside, and this will ensure your rower is able to be seen by the coaching staff.

- White outer garment top – MUST BE WORN
- Thermal Lined Spandex pants/shorts
- Thermal Lined Spandex Top

**Mandatory Uniform Items** - These items are required by the Coaching staff and are required for your Rower to attend practice and/or compete at various events. The uniform vendor we use is only open at various points during the season. This is due to the mandatory minimum order requirement for the various items and discounts the club receives for bulk purchase of items.

## Fall Season

Rowing Tank - \$40

Rowing Trou - \$44

Team Polo - \$40 *embroidery available for an additional charge*

## Spring Competition Season

One team uni-suit is paid for with your dues, and provided by the club. A replacement or additional requests will be at the rower's expense

## How to Order

Traditionally our vendor will open a team store at the beginning of the Fall Season and again in January and will only remain open for approx. two weeks. A notification will be sent out to all the Parents by the Uniform Coordinator when the store is opened and again to remind parents at the beginning at the ordering begins coordination with Boathouse or other vendors with an anticipated time period of when items can be purchased.

## If your rower is in middle school, purchase the uniforms for the high school they will attend (ie. Great Bridge/Grassfield)

Any other items are procured by the Rower during the Boathouse or the specific vendors open shop period.



# PARENT VOLUNTEERS

When a student joins GBC, his/her Parents also become part of the club as non-rowing members. Both Rowers and Parents are expected to participate in fundraising activities for the Club. In addition to dues, members will participate in a combination of fundraising and volunteer hours to support GBCC. There are several volunteer opportunities. Serving on one of our volunteer positions or on a committee is a major way to Support our Crew.

Parents are encouraged to become actively involved with club and attend our monthly meetings. Rowers and Parents provide the manpower and financial resources necessary to sustain the club. GBC does not receive funds from the school system but relies on dues, donations, and fundraising to maintain our operating budget and build capital for projects, equipment, maintenance, competitions, as well as scholarships for those who need assistance with dues.

## JOIN A COMMITTEE

Committees are the key to keeping our club functioning. Novice parents are encouraged to take up an alternate position their first year, to take over as the varsity parents leave the club.

## OVERVIEW OF COMMITTEES

The Vice President of the board is the committee chairs conduit to the board and establishes the duties and responsibilities, expectations, guidance and budgets for each committee.

As outlined in the GBC Bylaws, standing committees shall be appointed within 30 days of the start of the season. The standing committees are Maintenance and Fundraising

Committees chairs are responsible for organizing any additional volunteers needed for their committee, as well as reporting the progress to the Vice President/Board and the membership if required.

## Our Committees

Maintenance  
Hospitality Committee  
Planning Committee  
Fundraising Committee  
Photography  
Regatta Planning  
as well as many other  
volunteer opportunities!

Have a suggestion to make  
our club more efficient?  
We would love for you to  
help make it happen! Send  
an email to the VP!  
(You will be asked to take  
the lead if approved!)

*Get Involved!*



# PRACTICE PARENTS

*Our most important parent volunteer*

## Overview

The main roles a practice parent play are to observe the waterway for incoming boat traffic, and in the rare case of an emergency, assist the coaching staff as well as call parents or emergency personnel if necessary.

## Before/During Practice

The Practice Parent is granted permission to drive down to the boathouse AFTER dropping their rower off at the drop-off. Once down at the BH the practice parent *assists* the coaches by:

- Opening up the Boathouse
- Pulling two laundry baskets from inside and walking them to the dock
- Removing duck gate and sweeping any excess bird droppings
- Opening the coaches shed
- Turning on the main bridge to bridge radio
- Pulling the launch safety equipment (10 items per launch)
  - fuel can
  - lifejacket
  - paddle
  - soft bag (filled with life jackets)
  - Pelican box (filled with safety gear)
  - (2) square life preservers
  - towel
  - handheld walkie-talkie (set to channel 72)
  - bullhorn (batteries are charged next to the walkie-talkies)
- Have a radio for yourself and other Parents on shore
- Observe the waterway during the kids practice ensuring transiting vessels know we have Rowers on the water.
- Communicate with coaches as needed
- Pull GB boat slings out from the BH for the first few rowers that come off the water
- Be on the dock when the first few boats return to the dock to ensure they do not crash.
- Assist the coaches in returning safety gear to the coaches shed
- Ensure the main bridge to bridge radio and the lights are turned off (except the main switch)
- Depart BH to wait for rowers at the turnaround.

Towards the end of the regular competition season as the coach informs your Rower if they have been selected to participate at States, Nationals, etc, a signup sheet will be provided, and Practice Parent duties are split between those families participating.

Not only is it easy, but it's also a GREAT way to see your child out on the water, and get an up close look at how the team works together. It's awesome to watch as they progress throughout the season.

\*\*If you are unable to participate due to health related or other various reasons, please contact the Member At Large.





## Transportation to and from Regattas

The location of the Regatta will be posted in the TeamSnap app in the Schedule section on the appropriate date.

Rowers are NOT allowed to drive to and from Regattas.

In the event you are unable to drive your Rower to the event please coordinate with other Parents or please contact the board in advance and arrangements will be made to support your Rower.

It is highly encouraged that families come to see their rower compete, but it is understood this is not always possible.

# Regattas

Regular Season Regattas begin in October and proceed through June of the year. Only a few of the Regattas take place within the immediate local area. The big events are in late April and May - Regional Championship at Botanical Garden, Virginia Championship at Occoquan Reservoir at Sandy Run Regional Park, Stotesbury Cup in Philadelphia, and the Scholastic Rowing Association "Nationals."

## Typical Regatta Season

Traditionally, GBC participates in the following Regattas but this changes year to year.

- Head of the James
- Head of the Layette
- Botanical Garden
- Matthews / Mobjack
- Albemarle
- Intracoastal Duals - Sponsored by GBC
- Regional Championships - Botanical Garden
- \*Stotesbury Cup - Philadelphia
- \*Virginia States - Occoquan
- \*Nationals - Varies
- \*Northeast ERG Pull

\*All Rowers have the opportunity to be selected to participate in each of these events. The Coaches select Rowers and boat crews based on performance, attendance, and drive. Each of these events will allow any boat crew to be entered into the event, however, GBCC enters only boat crews and Rowers that the coaching staff feels are able to compete at these higher levels.

\*Additionally, Hotel rooms will be provided at cost to the club for ROWERS selected to participate in these events. Rowers are required to share a room with other Rowers selected to participate in these events.

Chaperones will be designated by the club (another awesome volunteer opportunity). Parents/families are highly encouraged to attend the events but room accommodations will be at their own expense.

# REGATTA TIPS

The first time you ever experience a regatta is like no other experience. Be sure to attend the regattas, and allow yourself plenty of time to get to the race site. A report will be provided to your rower by the coach and will be posted on TeamSnap. In most some cases, you may have to walk quite some ways from the parking area, and race schedules can change unexpectedly. Don't miss the race you came to see! Additionally, your Rower must be on time to begin offloading the trailer and preparing for the race day.



## DIRECTIONS

Directions to the event will be posted in TeamSnap. If you are having difficulties pulling up the location, please reach out to the Member at Large. Please remember the team area will not be known until the trailer is parked at the venue. This is also true of the food trailer and tent.

## LOOK FOR THE GREAT BRIDGE TENT

Once you have arrived at the Regatta site look for the Great Bridge Tent. Usually set up on the race course, it's a place where Rowers get something to eat and drink, and hang out in between races. The Parents tent is usually nearby where we can all congregate and watch the events on the water.

Parent volunteers do it all - set up the tent, prepare the food, and make sure everything runs smoothly. It's tailgating on a grand scale! (And who doesn't love tailgating?)

Once you've found the team, wish your rower well, give them a big hug and kiss (be sure to embarrass them in front of all of their friends) because they are now the COACHES. It may seem throughout the day things might be slow, but, for the Rowers it is not. They will be prepping their boats and helping their team where needed, and working with the coaching staff throughout the day. They help other Rowers launch and recover their boats, and it's important they focus on their Team and stay with their boat lineup. If you need to speak to your rower, please get with a member of the board first.

To learn more about what your rower is doing on  
<https://www.greatbridgecrew.org/post/what-is-crew>

## PLAN FOR ALL DAY EVENTS

Even though the Rowers may not be on the water for more than a half hour, they have to prepare the boats and load them on the trailers, unload them at the race site and set them up, and then stow them back at the Boathouse at the end of the day. The Coach will provide your Rower a time to meet back at the boathouse to offload the trailer. The time will also be announced via various electronic means and as updates become available they will be posted. Additionally, plan on departing the Regatta and proceeding directly to the Boathouse for trailer offload.

## PACK A BAG

The weather can become unpredictable and standing all day beside a river or lake can get pretty miserable if it's cold and wet. Additionally, at most all locations there are no permanent structures you will be exposed to the elements throughout the day. Some mornings it may begin chilly and as the day wears on become hotter with a monsoon somewhere in the middle. This is not a joke and it has happened.

Our Rowers race rain or shine. The following items are highly encouraged and will help to make your regatta experience much more bearable.

- Clothing should be able to cover a full spectrum of weather.
- Jackets, sweats, hats and gloves are necessary at most regattas at one point of the day or another
- Keep a change of dry clothes in the car.
- Mud Boots (it does get very muddy at the various locations)
- Lawn Chairs (no seating is provided at most of the sites)
- Sunscreen
- Bug Spray
- Canopy if desired
- Food and water for yourself and guests.
- A wagon to transport your belongings

Any Parents tent items that you sign up to bring.

If there is anything specific you may want please bring it with you.

Food is coordinated for the Rowers. At most of the various location there are no concession stands and restaurants are not nearby.



\*\*\*Remember you may have to walk a considerable way to the Regatta location from where you parked.\*\*\*

# ROWER PACKING LIST

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Please make sure your rower brings the following to every race

- any medications needed for the day
- extra changes of clothes
- change of shoes (they will get muddy)
- Team Gortex or Jacket
- Sweats (School specific or black (blue acceptable for Grassfield))
- Extra change of clothes
- A one-liter water non-disposable water bottle

## FALL RACES

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Races in the Fall are called Head races and are between 4-6K. The competing rowers do not start together at a starting line. Instead they are started one after another with the winner being determined after all boats have completed the race. The fastest time over the measured course wins.

Clothing/Uniform: All area Schools will be in the Mandatory Great Bridge Uniform.

## SPRING RACES

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Races in the Spring are typically scholastic races. These are the races in which rowers have to row with kids from their school, and composite boats are generally not entered. They vary from 1500 - 2000 meters long. All boats in the heat start at the same time and race to the finish line. These are the most exciting races.

Clothing/Uniform: Rowers compete their school's colors/uniform.

