WELCOME new Junior rowers and their parents

Sep 2026



WHO'S WHO?

OUR JUNIOR COACHING TEAM AND HELPERS



Learn to Row Lead Coach
Andy is a level 3 rowing coach and a coach Tutor. He has over twenty years' experience coaching juniors at the club and is committed to encouraging kids into sport.



Junior coordinator
Carina is the parent of two of our most promising Juniors who both started in Learn to Row themselves.



Welfare Officer
Rachel has a great deal of experience of safeguarding professionally and in sport. Contact her or another member of our safeguarding team on CWO@darttotnes.co.uk if you ever have any concerns, and visit darttotnes.co.uk/resources-and-documents/ for the Club's Safeguarding Policy and Codes of Practice.

Some of our experienced Juniors will also help deliver Learn to Row sessions, by sitting-in or coxing boats, and they are always happy to answer your questions. Some of the club's other coaches may run or support sessions occasionally; all our coaches are level 2 qualified at least and members of British Rowing. Other adults may also help occasionally, on the bank or as launch drivers. All our adult helpers will have been DBS checked.

Dart Totnes Amateur Rowing Club is run entirely by volunteers. All our volunteers are passionate about the success and development of our members and the sport of rowing, and give their time generously, while still studying or working and fitting-in their own participation.

FIRST STEPS

We ask all juniors and their parents to join us for a short (45') introductory meeting at **10:00 on Sunday 27 September**, at which you can meet the coaches and some existing juniors. We'll also show everyone around the club, answer anyone's questions, and provide any help your parent's may need with the admin. Please bring the kit you intend to use with you so we can advise you about any changes that might be needed.

The first Learn to Row session proper will follow, at **17:00 on Tuesday 29 September**; this will be an indoor session although you will also learn how to handle, check and set-up the boats. Subsequently, Learn to Row will normally run on **Tuesdays (5:00-6:30pm)** and **Sundays (10:00-11:30am)**. Sessions will run whatever the weather but will often be suspended over half-terms and some other school holidays; we will let you know in advance about any breaks.

READINESS ASSESSMENT

To take part in Learn to Row you need to be 11+ when the course starts, but you ***do not*** need to: be super fit, have rowed before, or know anything at all about boats or rowing. You only need to be confident around water and able to swim at least 50m (two lengths).

You will be learning in proper racing boats that are designed for the weight and stature of most Juniors. If, when you start, we find that you are currently a little too small to be able to use our boats effectively, we will talk with you about your options. These may include waiting for the next Learn to Row course or continuing with land-based rowing and potentially coxing until you grow into the boats. If you are too big for our Junior boats, we have adult boats we can use instead.

Please make sure our coaching team is made aware, as soon as possible, if you have any particular needs, challenges or medical conditions. We pride ourselves on the inclusivity of our club, believe rowing can be made accessible for most people, and will strive to accommodate everyone. However, we will need your honesty, patience and help as we work together to overcome any barriers. The club has only limited volunteering and other resources, so we may need to draw on the expertise and resources of British Rowing and others.

WHAT TO WEAR ON YOUR FEET



Trainers for indoor and land training.



Oversized wellies for getting on and off the water; never worn in the boat.



Sliders/Crocs can be worn instead, but have less tread, so take extra care.

WHAT TO WEAR ON YOUR LEGS



Leggings ¾ or full length



Joggers that aren't too baggy



Lycra shorts



Loose fitting shorts but not too baggy

WHAT TO WEAR ON TOP

Please wear bright colours to help you to be seen clearly on the river. Proper sports tops are best, as they wick sweat away from your body. You will need additional layers in colder months.


Vest top


T-shirt


Long sleeved top


Sweatshirt


Lightweight waterproof (cut toggles off)


Avoid baggy tops and open pockets
(zippy pockets are OK, otherwise sow them up)


ALWAYS bring a towel, a change of clothes and a water bottle

You will need a beanie hat in the winter and a peaked cap in the summer, when you should bring sunscreen too. You will need to securely tie up your hair if it is more than shoulder length.

COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION USING Spond

Most communication is carried out through an App called Spond, recommended by NSPCC and British Rowing for its safeguarding features. Your parents will be invited to join a Learn to Row Spond group before you start. They will need to download the free App onto their phone and create an account, unless they are already using Spond. Your Parents will then be asked for some essential safety information and permissions which only the coaches and Junior Coordinator can see. Your Parents can then use the group to message the coaching team about your attendance or to ask questions about the course. Coaches will use this group to keep parents informed of any changes to sessions and will use the information to contact parents or carers in case of an emergency. *You won't be allowed on the water until a parent has joined this group and provided the essential information and permissions for you.*

When you progress to one of the other squads, at the end of Learn to Row, your parent will be invited to join the relevant group and you will be able to join that group too. Spond keeps everyone safe by ensuring transparency and limiting people's permissions appropriately. In the new group, you can use Spond to message the coaches and each other, but parents will always be able to see the messages; juniors, parents and coaches cannot 'direct message' each other privately or see phone numbers or other information that they have no permission to see. Spond also enables transparent polls and the registering of interest in forthcoming events, enabling you to express your wishes, provide feedback and organise yourselves, while ensuring coaches and parents can coordinate with each other as appropriate as well.

Dart Totnes is a very active club and many of our juniors have formed lasting friendships with people they would otherwise not have met. Check out www.facebook.com/DartTotnesARC and @darttotnesarc (Instagram) and darttotnes.co.uk to get an idea of what goes on.

LEARN TO ROW

The objective of Learn to Row is to enable you to learn how to safely, correctly and enjoyably:

- Row a single sculling boat (including checking, preparing and carrying it, launching and landing it, being in the right place on the river, and what to do in an emergency)
- Row as a crew, in sculling boats for two and four Juniors
- Row on a rowing machine and take part in land training
- Experience coxing a boat
- Progress to joining a Junior squad and taking part in competition

TRAINING

Sessions will be on the water when conditions permit. Otherwise, and for winter evenings, sessions will be in the clubhouse and include a mix of rowing machine, circuit and core training with some tuition (on such things as rowing skills and knowledge, training principles, water safety...). We are blessed to row on a sheltered stretch of one of the most beautiful rivers in the country for rowing. However, you may be surprised when we can and cannot get on the water, so you should ***always*** come prepared for both water and land training just in case.

There are normally two Learn to Row sessions each week. It really helps learning if you attend as consistently as possible. Don't worry if do you miss the odd session; we will help you catch up on anything you missed. Try to arrive 5' early, so you are ready to begin at the start of the session.

CAPSIZE DRILL

We organise a Capsize Drill a few weeks after starting the Learn to Row course, and it is important that all new Juniors take part in this. *All junior rowers must wear a buoyancy aid until they have completed the Capsize Drill.* We ensure the drill covers everything required by British Rowing and more, so it's completion would be recognised by other clubs throughout the country. Parents can sit at the side of the pool throughout the drill, which is a fun and noisy session. If you would like to know more about the capsize itself, see: www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcPE8-gENLo

MOVING ON FROM LEARN TO ROW

Once you have graduated from Learn to Row, you will be invited to move up to a training group appropriate for your age, sex, ability, commitment and ambition in which you will be working together with one of our other highly experienced and qualified coaches. This will mean that the days and times you row will change when you move on from Learn to Row. Session times vary from time-to-time and with the season, but as an example the most relevant one's are currently:

Coaches name	Age category	Session Times
Andy	**Learn to Row**	**Tuesday 5:00pm** *(or as close as traffic allows)* **- 6:30pm** **Sunday 10:00am - 11:30am** *(plus 15' putting boats away)*
Katheryn	J13 and J14 Girls	Wednesday 5:00 - 6:30pm Saturday 10:00 - 12:00
Dave	J14 and J15 Boys	Wednesday 5:00 - 6:30pm Saturday 10:00 - 11:30
To progress further, there is an expectation that Juniors will attend regularly, typically three times a week, or more if you want to compete at a higher level. If you choose to row just for leisure, you will need to discuss your options with the coaches.		



RACING

Once you have learnt to row, we hope you will want to compete. Summer regattas and winter ‘head races’, most commonly on Saturdays, can be challenging and great fun. There are 10 clubs in the ‘West of England’ that organise races across the South West, and we also organise some club fun events and time trials. In addition, many of our Juniors progress to competing at regattas further afield, including regional and national events. There is friendly rivalry between rowers to collect points at regattas and win various ‘championships’ as an individual, crew, or club.

Parents remain responsible for their children when they are at regattas, so we ask as many parents as possible to come and support their children at events. Parents often liaise with each other to offer lifts and on occasion the club will organise a minibus. Race ‘seat’ fees (£5 typically) need to be paid directly in advance to the club which will then put in the entry for the crew.

As the oldest club in the region (1868), the club’s racing colour is black, and this must be worn during races, but you do not need to invest in any new kit until you start racing. When you do need it, we have an arrangement with local company, Ravenspring on the Industrial Estate, who provide good value kit, in club colours and a DTARC logo, with junior tops costing c.£15. You can also order specialist kit from godfrey.co.uk but this is more expensive.

BECOMING A MEMBER

We ask for a £70 payment at the introductory session to cover the first eight weeks of Learn to Row and the hire of Totnes swimming pool for the capsize drill. We use a secure online system called webcollect to collect payments. After the first eight weeks you will need to decide if you want to continue rowing and pay the appropriate Junior membership fee for the remainder of the year. Annual Junior membership currently costs £336 (2026/27), running from April each year, so it will cost £84 on 1 January to cover you until April 27, or £28 monthly. Family rates are also available.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

The club is run entirely by volunteers, so help is always welcome and there are many ways to get involved. If a parent has rowed or coached before, or would simply like to help during training sessions, please talk to Andy, who will discuss the options and organise any training or checks that are needed. Parents can always help at events (by baking cakes, helping in the kitchen or on the riverbank) and this is a great opportunity to get to know the other parents. If a parent can think of other ways they could help, or has special expertise or experience to offer, please talk to Carina.