

Riverfront Recapture is a private, non-profit organization leading the effort to reconnect metropolitan Hartford with the Connecticut River by providing access to four Riverfront parks in Hartford and East Hartford. Each year, beginning in 1998, we host a head style regatta offering competition on the Connecticut River for high school, collegiate, and masters rowers.

The Head of the Riverfront will be a USRowing Registered regatta. Every USRowing-sanctioned event is led by a jury of USRowing-trained and certified officials, and registration with USRowing designates the regatta as a nationally recognized safe and fair event. Athletes representing US-based organizations must have at least a USRowing Basic membership and waiver on file, and all unaffiliated athletes must have at least a Champ membership and waiver on file.

Regatta Contact information
Regatta Director: Gretchen Gregg

Contact the Regatta Directors at
860.841.7952 or
regatta@riverfront.org

2026 Coach and Coxswain meeting will be virtual. The C&C will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, September 30, and link will be provided to regatta registrants in late September.

General Rules

Rules of Rowing 2026 Edition Edited by USRowing, the Referee Committee, and the Rules Committee, The United States Rowing Association <https://usrowing-craft-storage-production.nyc3.digitaloceanspaces.com/staging/2026ROR-Final-Web2.pdf>

are part of the Head of the Riverfront Regatta rules - ARTICLE VIII – HEAD RACES.

USRowing SafeSport <https://usrowing.org/safe-sport>

All competitors may participate in multiple events. All competitors must be eligible for the event-division in which they are competing.

WEIGH-IN: There is no weigh-in requirement for coxswains, and boats will not be weighed.

Safety

Coaches and participants are reminded that participation in the Regatta involves a moderate risk of injury and/or property damage. While Head of the Riverfront and Riverfront Recapture will take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of participants, officials and volunteers, participation in the Regatta is at one's own risk and responsibility for claims deriving from personal injury, damage, or loss.

Each boat shall have a firmly affixed bow ball. Each set of foot gear shall have heel tie-downs that do not permit the heel to rise more than three inches to enable a quick exit in the case of a boat capsizing. In fours with lie-down coxswain enclosures, the width of the enclosure shall be sufficient to allow easy exit by the coxswain.

Contestants should be aware that the Connecticut is a tidal river and that the current is extremely variable. Following heavy rains, the current can be very fast and may contain debris. The race will be against the current.

Seeding/Race Order

Marshals will be positioned in launches in the starting area for the purpose of organizing participating crews above the start into the proper starting order and time interval. Boats must be in the starting area in sequential start order at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled start time – late starts will not be permitted.

At the start, crews will be called to the start chute on approximately ten second intervals. Starting order shall be determined by random draw after the top ten finishers from the previous year's regatta have been seeded.

Crews shall be responsible for maintaining their proper starting position, for maintaining the proper interval between themselves and other crews and for aligning themselves in the starting chute.

For safety purposes and efficiency of starting boats, the committee asks coaches to please refrain from sending unsafe coxswains out on the water. If, in the judgment of the Dockmaster or Start Marshal, a coxswain is considered unsafe the boat will be not be allowed to race. All coxswains are strongly encouraged to attend the coach & coxswain meeting the morning of the event.

Hot-seating (of equipment and personnel) will be performed at the crew's risk of missing an event. Note that we cannot accommodate holding a boat or hot seating on the docks, and that two hours is the minimum we recommend between event times for an athlete or line up to not be late to the line and therefore unable to race. Crews are advised to launch approximately 60 minutes before their scheduled race time.

Competitors are responsible for allowing sufficient time to race in one event, land, re-queue, and launch in time for an additional event. We recommend two hours between event start times as a minimum for an athlete or line up to not be late to the line. Under no circumstances will the start of an event be held up waiting for a late boat. The Head of the Riverfront Regatta accepts no responsibility for missed start times.

Unless otherwise officially informed by the chief referee or regatta control, all boats should assume that the regatta is running on time and in accordance with the pre-published schedule of start times.

Accordingly, all boats, must launch in time to report to the marshals above the start line, and to be marshaled by them, no later than 10 minutes before the scheduled start time for their event. We recommend launching from the docks at Riverside Park no later than 60 minutes from start.

Course Description and Traffic Patterns

The start line is located approximately three miles downstream from the boat launching area. The approximately 3800 meter racecourse runs North UP RIVER in the center. The downstream side of the Charter Oak Bridge is approximately 1500 meters from the finish line. The finish line is just south of the Founders Bridge.

Boats launching from Riverside will be directed to go north (towards the railroad bridge) and CROSS the river, then proceed south toward to the starting line. All crews are required to keep to the east side of the river while proceeding to the start. Note that the East side of the river also has a travel lane for crews launching from the Trinity College boathouse.

Head of the Riverfront



RIGHT-OF-WAY: When a passing crew (The Passer) closes to within one length of open water on the boat being overtaken, it is the responsibility of the slower crew to yield the line chosen by the Passer in a timely manner. The Yield should be completed by the time the overtaking boat has closed within 1/2 boat length. A crew failing to yield to a Passer when there is adequate room and time to yield will incur the following interference penalty; Non-Yield (NY).

Severe Collision (SC): A passing crew (The Passer) has the right to pass on the side of its choice if and when a safe pass can be accomplished. The Passer must allow sufficient room for both their boat and the boat overtaken to stay safely within the race course. If a pass is attempted, the Passer shall not press the right to overtake to the point of severe collision. The actual severe collision incident can be caused by either a Passer or a Patee. During a severe collision one or more of the following may occur:

(A) damage to a boat;

(B) personal injury;

(C) the boat being overtaken is forced either off the race course or into a bridge; or, (D) a rower is struck by the blades of another boat.

FINISH: Participants must pass between the finish line buoys at the Riverfront Plaza and proceed under the Founders Bridge toward the Bulkeley Bridge past the buoy. Return traffic to Great River or Trinity boathouse will turn and proceed to the east side of the River. Crews continuing north to the docks at Riverfront's Boathouse at Riverside Park will continue under the Bulkeley Bridge on the west side of the river. All boats will follow the directions of the course marshal stationed in the launch between the bridges and use the bridge arches the marshal directs them to, regardless of their destination.

Classifications

JUNIOR: A Junior is a competitor who in the current calendar year does not attain the age of 19, or who is and has been continuously enrolled in secondary school as a full time student seeking a diploma. A competitor thus ceases to be a Junior after December 31 of the year of his or her 18th birthday, or of the year in which he or she completes the 12th grade of secondary school, having been a full time student, whichever is later.

Note: HIGH SCHOOL/JUNIOR COACHES AND ROWERS— Due to NCAA legislation prohibiting collegiate and junior rowers from competing in the same event, junior rowers may not row up and may only race in events designated as Junior. The Regatta values the participation of both college and high school athletes, while not jeopardizing their ability to compete in future intercollegiate contests.

Coaches: Please review the rules and eligibility clarification below. Each year we're asked by coaches about the standard policy of requiring no "Second/JV" boats be entered without an accompanying First/varsity entry. While we try to review entries as they come in, the sometimes staggered entry process and occasional "moves" of entries from one category to another make it difficult to entirely regulate this eligibility criteria, and we rely on the diligence of the coaches to honor the standard.

The High School Races in Head of the Riverfront are divided into 1st Junior, 2nd Junior and Novice categories. The 1st Junior races are intended for high-school rowers and scullers whose coaches deem them to be of varsity standard. The 2nd Junior races are intended to provide an appropriate competitive opportunity for high school rowers whose coaches deem them not yet to be of true Varsity standard, but who are above Novice standard. Accordingly, no high school program may enter a boat in any of these 2nd Junior events unless it has also entered at least one boat – its presumed first and fastest boat – in the applicable 1st Junior event.

The Novice races are for rowers who are in their first calendar year of competitive rowing by type, i.e., sweeping or sculling, having begun rowing no earlier than June of the same year as the regatta.

Experience in sculling events does not count as experience in sweep events and vice versa.

OPEN: Open to all except Junior (see above) crews.

MASTERS AND VETERANS: Must be over the age of 21 as of December 31st, year of the event. Age as of December 31, year of the event, rounded down to the highest contained integer, governs, as applicable, both the age-group category and the time adjustment of a given boat in our Masters/Veterans events. A Masters or Veterans single sculler or crew may compete in a lower (younger) age category. No Masters single sculler or crew may compete in a higher (older) age category.

Master/Veteran: For singles, these events will be run in 10-year increments except for the first category: 27-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, and 70+. There is no handicapping within 10-year increments. Medals will be awarded in each 10-year category. For larger boats, a handicap will be calculated for each crew based on handicap tables, as adjusted for the distance.

A female Rower shall not compete in Events for men, and a male Rower shall not compete in Events for women. A Crew competing in a mixed Event must be 50% male and 50% female, not including the Coxswain.

COXSWAINS: There is no weigh-in requirement for coxswains.

GENDER IDENTITY: The Head of the Riverfront adheres to the USRowing policy regarding gender identity as stated in the USRowing Rules of Rowing. The USRowing Board of Directors has adopted a comprehensive Gender Identity policy, which is contained in the CEO Policy Manual.

Penalties

- 1) Where buoys mark the boundaries of the course, and in particular mark turns on the course, a crew shall be penalized 10 seconds for each buoy that the crew passes incorrectly. A crew passes a buoy incorrectly when any part of its hull passes on the wrong side of the buoy.
- 2) Late to the Line: A crew that misses its correct order at the start may be penalized 10 seconds.
- 3) Missed Race: A crew that misses their event window will be considered to have missed race, and time will not be entered towards the event results. They will be directed by race marshalls on when and how to safely proceed.
- 4) A crew that fails to yield to a crew being summoned to the starting area, or that otherwise interferes with the staging of the start, may be penalized 10 seconds by the Marshal or Starter.
- 5) A crew that fails to yield (NY) to a crew having proper right of way shall be penalized 30 seconds.
- 6) A crew that crosses the starting line without its required bow number *may* be penalized 30 seconds
- 7) If a crew causes a severe collision that crew may be assessed a 60 second (SC) Severe Collision time penalty
- 8) Disregarding travel or practice lane safety rules including crossing, distracting, or impeding a racing crew will result in a 45-second penalty, or disqualification at the jury's discretion.

Any crew or competitor who capsizes, swamps, or must be pulled from the water prior to or during their event MUST do as directed by regatta staff, whether that is to return to a safe dock area or be cleared to proceed to racing.

PROTESTS: Any protest must be submitted in writing at the registration desk as soon as the crew is back on land. There is a \$50 filing fee, and protest must be submitted one (1) hour from landing. You must notify the control commission at the dock of your intention to file. Conversations with, or protests or complaints to, other regatta staff, course marshals or race officials at the start or finish lines will not be considered official protests. Decisions regarding protests will be relayed by the Regatta Directors following consultation with the relevant officials and on-water marshals.

Awards

Awards will be distributed throughout the day, after the posting of the official results for an event, only at the registration tent at Riverside Park. Any awards not collected at the regatta will be sent afterwards to each boat's coach or team representative.

Our Venue: Tents, Grills, and Food Delivery TENTS & GRILLS

Notice: The City of Hartford is stringently enforcing regulations regarding the set up of tents, cooking grills, and the permitting and inspection process for such structures. As a result, to comply with the direction from the Fire Prevention Chief/Fire Marshal for the City of Hartford, only tents that are rented from and provided by the Riverfront Recapture and have been assured to meet the regulations may be used. Teams must register and submit payment for tents through the regatta tent registration process: no team-provided tents will be allowed to set up. Teams may bring their grills, warming tables, etc, but these must only be operated in the designated space adjacent to, but not underneath, their tents assigned to each organization. Riverfront Recapture will obtain the necessary permits for these uses. Assignment of spaces will be made on a first- come, first serve basis.

UTILITY TRAILERS, “Hospitality” trailers, and vans with crew tents etc:

All utility trailers are encouraged to park and unload at Riverside Park Saturday afternoon from noon until park closing (dusk). All utility trailers must expect to unload their contents and remove the trailer and the vehicle towing it, and then will be directed to the special parking area designated for them within the park. Crews should not assume they would have easy access to these vehicles nor plan to bring them back into the park until the completion of the regatta on Sunday afternoon. There is overnight security in the park.

All remaining utility trailers must be in the park before 7:00AM on Sunday. There will be a designated drop off area for utility trailers and other vehicles with hospitality supplies—this is only short term parking and will be monitored to ensure a rapid unloading and return to the parking. The park will open at 5:00AM.

Passenger vehicles, team vans or buses, or any vehicle other than boat trailers and tow vehicle WILL NOT be permitted into Riverside Park at any time on the day of the event. All vehicles will be directed to designated parking areas, which are accessible to the race venues by a walkway and paths. Directions to designated spectator and team parking areas will be published prior to the event.

NOTE: the finish line viewing area is approximately a 15 minute walk from Riverside park, easily accessible by way of the Riverwalk paved pathways leading to the Mortensen Riverfront Plaza. Spectators wishing to park nearer to the finish line, rather than near the launch and return area, should review the directions at <http://riverfront.org/parks/mortensen-riverfront-plaza>. No hospitality/team tents may be set up at the finish line plaza—this area is only for viewing the racing.

Overnight Security: While the Regatta provides security for the Riverside Park (boathouse) launch site for the night of Saturday prior to the Sunday regatta, this in no way guarantees the safety of the competitor’s equipment.

FOOD DELIVERY SERVICES: We continue to see teams ordering more frequently from food delivery services. If you plan to do this, please be aware that due to congestion and boat traffic in our venue, the delivery services will be unable to progress any farther than the gravel parking lot mid-way into Riverside Park (where the utility trailers store). If you contract food delivery your team will need to arrange to convey the delivery the remaining distance to your trailer or tent. Please make this clear as you make arrangements. Some crews found it easier to meet the delivery on the other side of the land bridge by the spectator parking.

DIRECTIONS FOR BOAT TRAILERS/ CAR TOPPERS / HOSPITALITY (UTILITY) TRAILERS
ALSO : VEHICLES WITH HANDICAP PERMIT PARKING TAG DISPLAYED

More info: <http://riverfront.org/parks/riverside-park>

Riverside Park (20 Leibert Road, Hartford, CT) just north of Hartford Home of The Greater Hartford Jaycees Community Boathouse

From North of Hartford, take I-91 South to Exit 33, Jennings Rd. At the end of the ramp, turn left onto Jennings Rd and then take your first right onto Leibert Rd. The park entrance is on your left.

From South of Hartford, take I-91 North to Exit 33, Jennings Rd. At the end of the ramp, turn right onto Jennings Rd and then take your first right onto Leibert Rd. The park entrance is on your left.

From East of Hartford, take I-84 West to Exit 51, I-91 North and then take Exit 33, Jennings Rd. At the end of the ramp, turn right onto Jennings Rd and then take your first right onto Leibert Rd. The park entrance is on your left.

From West of Hartford, take I-84 East to Exit 51, I-91 North and then take Exit 33, Jennings Rd. At the end of the ramp, turn right onto Jennings Rd and then take your first right onto Leibert Rd. The park entrance is on your left.

Directions & Parking

BOAT TRAILERS: Trailers may be parked at the park overnight. Trailers are encouraged to arrive beginning on Saturday and are parked on a space-available basis. Some trailer parking is on a paved surface, some parking will be on a grassy field. Although not required, it is encouraged that the towing vehicle be unhitched and removed from the trailer parking area to maximize the space for trailers and crews for rigging of equipment. Riverside Park will close at dusk to trailer arrivals on Saturday evening (7:00PM). The gates will reopen at 5:00AM on Sunday morning of the event. Due to limited parking it is suggested that teams make every effort to share trailers with other clubs or teams participating at the regatta.

DIRECTIONS FOR SPECTATORS/TEAM BUSES/COMPETITORS

Plan on a 10 minute walk from this parking area to the boathouse. There are steps/ramp connecting the parking area to the park. If you are bringing in food/hospitality items for a team tent, follow the directions for the boat trailers, but be aware that there is a drop off/unload area and that your vehicle will not be able to park in Riverside Park.

PARKING LOT WITH PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO RIVERSIDE PARK (THE LAUNCH AND RETURN AREA, AND LOCATION FOR TEAM TENTS AND THE AWARDS) This location will place you at the launch site, where the boat trailers will be & the Riverfront boathouse: the finish line is an easy walk from this area, and will take less than 15 minutes. For GPS – input 410 Market Street, Hartford, CT (this will bring you to the CITGO station at the parking lot entrance). NOTE: There is a fee for parking in this lot.

PARKING ADJACENT TO THE RIVERFRONT PLAZA THAT IS THE FINISH LINE FOR THE REGATTA

For those spectators who would rather park near the finish line viewing area, we encourage you to use the Science Center Parking Garage in Downtown Hartford. These directions are for spectators who wish to park as close to the race course viewing area as possible while minimizing the walking distance from parking lot to viewing. For GPS input, this is the Connecticut Science Center Parking Garage at 250 Columbus Blvd, Hartford, CT 06103 NOTE: You will be charged an hourly rate for parking at the Connecticut Science Center parking garage.

