

FRUSTRATIONS OF MASTERS ROWERS

Masters rowers (you can become one when you turn 27) is one of the fastest growing membership groups of our sport. And yet masters rowers are poorly served by many clubs.

So, what is good about masters?

1. They pay their membership dues.
2. They are happy to use club boats at non-priority times.
3. They help with fundraising.
4. They are sometimes parents of junior rowers.
5. They bring life experience, work contacts, tools and skills to the club.
6. Some can coach.

Common frustrations

There are always those whose priorities don't align with our own. In one club a coach told me the thing he hates most about the sport is masters!

Some clubs 'reward' masters with the worst, oldest boats and no coaching support. How long will it be before they vote with their feet and go elsewhere?

For many who share boats with the juniors, they are forced to train throughout the coldest, darkest months of the year.

When people join the Facebook group 'Masters Rowing International' they are asked: "What are your frustrations with rowing?" The answers consistently fall into the same themes:

- **A lack of people** to form age-group crews or crews of well-matched rowers. It can also be hard to find others who are truly competitive.
- There are **too few masters regattas**. Most other regattas offer only one or two races per day at masters level, or don't take masters races and the results seriously.
- **Finding a coxswain** can be difficult.
- Masters often are not **taught to rig a boat** and do simple repairs.
- Often they are **given boats that are too big** and heavy for the crew.
- They seldom get **consistent practice in racing boats**.
- It can be difficult to find **consistent training times** that work for everyone.
- It's hard to **get coaching**.
- Sometimes the powers-that-be in rowing forget masters exist so there is a general lack of support.



How can we address these problems?

The more masters the merrier!

Masters membership growth is rapid, and masters regattas are among the best-supported each year.

My challenge to everyone reading this is to go to your club committee and ask what the club can do for your masters group.

- Have you asked for a coach?
- Have you asked masters to help with fundraising?
- Have you given masters access to appropriate boats and oars?
- Can you upskill masters to self-coach most of their outings?

Read our list of solutions on our website
www.fastermastersrowing.com/frustrations-for-masters-rowers

Tell us what solutions you're finding that work for clubs and masters and share on our Facebook page
www.facebook.com/rowingfaster

Rebecca Caroe



Marlene Royle and Rebecca Caroe coach at Faster Masters Rowing Programmes, Video and Technique for masters.
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