



Selection criteria for race crews - October 2022

Preliminary

Thames Barbarians Pilot Gig Club is an inclusive rowing club, which aims to give opportunities to all members who wish to row competitively to gain appropriate experience and we intend to try and improve our performance year on year. This policy endeavours to set out a fair, objective selection process for those wishing to represent the Club in race crews.

The Club competes at regattas, locally and nationally. The regatta racing season starts with the Scillies World Championships on the first May Bank Holiday each year and ends with Swanage Supervets in October.

Racing crew selection policy

All members of Thames Barbarians Pilot Gig Club are invited to row socially and/or train for a place in one of our race crews.

Thames Barbarians PGC will support and develop at least two crews for both Ladies and Men as well as Vets (over 40) and Supervets (over 50). These will be referred to as A Crews and B Crews. The A Crews will have priority at Championship events: Scillies World Championships; Mixed Champs; Vet Champs; Newquay Ladies; Newquay Mens and Swanage Supervets.

Key dates for the annual racing programme

Date	Description	Notes
31st October	Expressions of interest for Scillies Crews	Availability for both champs weekend and race training programme
31 January	Scillies Race crews announced	24 crew places across the weekend - Supervets L & M; Open Championship L & M
First May Bank Holiday weekend	Scillies World Champs	Latest arrival Thursday before. Earliest departure Bank Holiday Monday
July	Mixed Champs	CPGA championship event
August	Vets Champs	Brixham Regatta weekend + CPGA championship event
September	Newquay Ladies Newquay Mens	First weekend Ladies crews; second Men's crews (CPGA championship event)
October	Swanage Supervets	Over 50s crew racing

The Club Committee will designate a certain number of regattas by 1 March each year where priority will be given to B Crews in order that all rowers who want to gain competitive racing experience can do so. Those rowers selected for B Crews will be invited to act as reserves for A crews as required.



If there are more rowers than seats available a selection process will be followed. **This is a competitive selection process the overriding principle of which is that there is no self-selection for places in any race gig. Decisions on which rower has priority will be made based on a series of evidence-based criteria.**

Criteria	Description	Evidence
Cardiovascular fitness	Ability to sustain power at race pace and subsequent recovery time (ie speed at which heart rate returns to normal)	Following the ergo race training programme and filing results as required. (These will be gathered centrally, weight-adjusted to produce a fair ranking and logged. NB note the erg favours heavier people, so weight adjustment is not about body image and all about fair comparisons between scores*)
Rowing technique	Ability with the blade in the boat including timing; feathering; finish; catch and drive	Assessed by coxwain/club coach on race training water sessions and recorded in the training diary
Availability	Availability to attend race training sessions and regattas	Log of attendance at race training sessions
Attitude	Willingness to learn; engagement with coxswains and coaches; helpfulness in setting up and packing away; working with others in the Club; positive, constructive approach	Log in the training diary by coxes/coaches
Compatibility	Setting up a balanced crew requires flexibility - including willingness to row in different positions in the gig	Those protecting injuries may need to row on a preferred side, but otherwise those rowers who show flexibility in where they row in the gig will have preference

* Explanation of Power to Weight calculation: <https://www.concept2.com/indoor-rowers/training/calculators/weight-adjustment-calculator> to adjust times of 2k erg tests.

1. Applications for the racing squad will be opened in October of each year for the coming race season. All rowers will be reminded to read the race selection policy which will be attached to the squad application email. Members who wish to seek selection should contact the Club Secretary by the end of October and include details of their availability for the Scillies World Championships. Based on this the club committee will decide how many race squads to train in the coming year. If there are more rowers than seats in the boat, unfortunately some rowers may be disappointed!

2. The crew selection panel will consist of **a minimum of three most experienced Coxes/Coaches** in the club as selected by the club committee. In December and January the selection panel will be continually assessing the performance of all rowers and try different combinations of rowers to achieve the best



results for the club. The Ladies and Men's captains will observe the selection process and make notes as well as offer information if requested but must take no part in it.

3. By the end of January all rowers must be prepared to move to a position in any gig without protest so that their abilities can be fairly assessed by a race Cox/Coach. A rower who has the versatility to row in a number of positions will improve their chances of being selected for a race crew.

4. Fitness tests will be organised to assist in crew selection where a decision needs to be made between rowers of otherwise equal ability. These will be based on a 20 min Concept 2 ergo test. The drag will be set to 135 to simulate rowing in a gig. Stroke rate 28-32.

5. Provisional race squads will be published on 1st December each year. Each squad will consist of 6 rowers. Substitutes required in any squads will be filled from a lower crew.

6. Crew selection will be subject to review until the 31st January when selections will be announced for the Scillies World Championship.

7. Once offered a position in a race gig, rowers will be expected to show commitment to their crew by attending training and events. A rower, who fails to show commitment to their crew and the club, will be advised in private by the crew selectors that this is an issue. If there is no improvement another rower will be selected to replace them.

8. Rowers in race squads must confirm their attendance at each regatta at least 21 days prior to the event so that if required a substitute can be picked and trained in their position.

9. The club committee will decide what events we attend based upon sufficient numbers of rowers for any regattas and the ability of the rowers available for selection. Subject to these criteria the club will try to offer as many rowers as possible the opportunity to compete.

10. The process is designed to ensure that the best crews are selected to represent the club at the appropriate level of competition. Should any member feel they have been overlooked or treated unfairly in the selection process they are asked to discuss this with the crew selectors. The race crew selectors will maintain a log of the selection process and will be happy to explain why the decision was made and offer advice to any rower on how to improve their chances of selection.



Help & Advice on Selections & General Rowing

This is a good start-point if you haven't been rowing long or a good reminder if you have – it's not the last word on gig rowing. It's up to you to choose what suits you and makes the experience enjoyable. It inevitably has a competitive slant to it as that is the nature of the sport and the origins of commercial gig rowing, but you can make use of this whether you are out to beat last years World Champs record or simply getting involved in a more laid back way for fitness and fun on the water.

ABILITY

Technique

Can you execute an effective stroke consistently over the average race distance?

- Ask your cox for the Fixed Seat Rowing Technique hand-out produced by British Rowing, CPGA & CRA that has diagrams and advice on posture, grip, stretchers, phases of the stroke, etc.
- Learn how to feather in the off-season – you will be glad of it in windy conditions
- Mix with experienced crews. Experienced rowers can learn from mixing it with newer people too. Don't get stuck in one position in a crew in the off-season
- Ask your cox and crew for feedback – ask them to help with your bad habits (we all have them!). Different coxes will have different drills, so work with whoever is coxing at the time.
- Slow rowing is very effective in training. When the cox takes the stroke rate up, a crew should aim to do so without dropping their shape, style, explosive catch, powerful drive or weakening their posture.
- Fast rate rowing can help you row with more composure at an easier rate and make you realise that it is possible.
- Practice controlled aggression as a crew without losing focus.

Power & Stamina

Strength & conditioning is proven to work in every sport. It will make it much easier for you to execute the technical points above and can be improved by:

- **Weight training** (building explosive power with deadlifts, kettle bells, resistance training, cycling, rowing machine – seek advice from your cox or gym coach).
- **Core strength can be improved.** Look for abdominal workout programs – plank, Pilates, etc. Work on your gluteus
- Conditioning through specific **stretching** exercises, swimming, spin classes
- **Ergs (rowing machines)** Find out how fast you can do a **2km on a rowing machine** and chart progress (a good general target starting somewhere sub 9' (women) or 8.30' (men) and aiming for sub 8.30/8 mins). This is one of the best all-round exercises you can do to improve your gig rowing.
- **Circuit Training** – these are usually great all-round strength & conditioning classes.
- **Running & Cycling** – Hill training and sprints – anything that involves explosive or “fast-twitch” muscle work.
- **Balanced diet** – Try to eat healthily (and it does help to not over-indulge on the alcoholic refreshments!).
- **Recovery** – Make sure you give your body (and mind) time to recover from training/racing.



NB – Seek competent advice on exercises, diet and equipment and always try to do a proper warm up before and after training, in or out of the boat.

Potential

Everyone can and should try to improve on where they are now. Set markers for yourself. If you start working early you will improve your chances of selection.

Grit

Mental and physical fortitude. 'Sports do not build character, they reveal it'. You will need to push yourself to find out if you've got grit. No one can teach you this.

Discipline

Everything counts. The best crews on the circuit pay attention to every detail right up until they have put the boats to bed. This includes:

- Being on time.
- Manoeuvring and stowing the boats and equipment in training or at races.
- Ability & eagerness to learn and a hunger to improve on and off the water are really important.
- Discipline in the warm-up & warm-down. Work with cox and crew to get the job done. Then enjoy the rewards afterward.

Medical conditions

If you need it, seek medical advice early on so you can train with confidence. Be honest with your cox and crew. They need to know where you/they stand.

COMMITMENT

Consistency is vital, can you commit? It is a definite advantage to train as a crew out of the boat as well as in it if possible. Be honest about what you can do, then be consistent.

Attendance at races

Without a shadow of a doubt the best preparation for racing is to race. The more the merrier! Get your name down for as many as you can, whether it's local 'fun' races or trips to organised gig regattas.

Effort in and out of the boat

It's up to each individual to pull his or her weight. Crews will vary but a good minimum would be rowing three times a week prior to Scilly and for the more competitive crews this should involve an additional 3-6 hours of land training per week. It's down to each crew to decide. Can you sign up to an agreed minimum and stick to it?

CREW MATERIAL

Good spirit in the boat

An essential part of what makes a successful crew. Try not to be too serious. Have fun with it and make sure you give each other a break. Be friendly and respectful of other crews and water-users.

Adaptability & willingness to learn

Discuss how things are going with your cox and crew if required after a session. Listen to experience.



Be prepared to train under different coxes.

Boat handling

Your primary responsibility is the safety of your crew and vessel when afloat.

- Be safe
- Listen to your cox and be ready to act.
- Be respectful of all boats and club equipment when using or stowing them.
- Be methodical on and off the water – slow and steady gets the job done quicker.
- Boats have to be tied-up or “moored” to piers, pontoons, to other boats in all kinds of conditions – learn the ropes and ask how to tie the correct knots. Learn the maritime “Rules of the Road” and know who has right-of-way on the water.
- Stick around if there’s work to be done.

CLUB CONTRIBUTION

Being part of the gig club means having the opportunity to share the workload in all aspects of club life.

- Support the committee & co-ordinators who put in the extra work to keep the club running for you.
- Help the Boatswain (Bos'un) – it’s a never-ending job and much easier when everyone chips-in.
- Thank your coxswains & towing volunteers – they are giving up their own personal time to help you so let them know you appreciate it. Pay your regatta dues on time.
- Help other people to learn gig rowing
- Support your Thames Barbarians crews! It’s always great to hear Thames Barbarians crews supporting each other.

If you have any questions on the points covered here ask your coxes, selectors or more experienced rowers and they will point you in the right direction. It takes lots of boat-time to gain the skills for competitive racing but there are many other brilliant events to go to besides – just ask one of the club committee.

Good luck and enjoy the upcoming rowing season.