



A sunny day at novice practice on the water

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Novice Women's 8+ Boat

Row Hounds

By Josephine Sedgley

What if I told you that you could come to Loyola and walk onto a D1 team? You would probably think I was ridiculous, or that it was some sort of joke. Honestly, I still cannot believe it 100 percent. But let me tell you about Loyola's hidden gem, the rowing team. I came to Loyola feeling like I was missing something, like everyone had such great ways to stay busy, and I did not. Then I went to my first practice, and suddenly I had a new interest, and something to keep me occupied. If you feel like you are missing something, or you want a chance to start a new sport, I highly recommend walking onto Loyola's Rowing



team.

First things first, I want to make it clear that rowing is known as a late-entry sport. This means that a large percentage of collegiate teams are made up of rowers who started in college. In fact, half of the women in the boat who won the Olympics in 2016 started rowing in college. Even the head coach of Loyola's rowing team, Megan Patrick, joined the rowing team once she got to Princeton, not before. Even if you are not destined for the Olympics, you can still excel and have a great time in your four years at Loyola. I, personally, will not be rowing on a big level anytime soon, but I can already see improvement and I just love being on the water, since the views are gorgeous, and you cannot help but smile. In high school, I was an equestrian, lacrosse player, and figure skater, certainly not a rower. So, trust me, rowing is for everyone.

While I do believe most people are capable of joining the team, I do not want to give the impression that the rowing team is a relaxing sport with no physical component. Practices are five days a week, for around three hours each day. You can expect around 30 minutes to and from the boathouse, and then two hours to set up and get on the water. If the weather is bad, then we move to the FAC, where we “erg,” which is what rowers call using the rowing machine. There, you will learn about stroke rates and splits, which will make sense the more you participate. To continue with the Varsity team past the fall semester, you must meet a certain erg standard, which can be difficult, but you have



months to reach it, and most people do.

Even if you do not think you want to physically commit to the sport, you can still try for the role of the coxswain. This is the person who sits either in the bow or stern with a mic and a "cox-box" and is basically the second coach. They are responsible for steering the boat, instructing rowers on everything from picking the boat up to how fast they should row. If this sounds like a job for you, I encourage you to investigate it, as coxswains are vital to the team. If you are worried about having no experience and taking control of a boat, fear not, the coaches are with you every single step of the way. All you need to bring to the table is a loud commanding voice, an eye for detail, and the ability to motivate others. If you have that, you can easily learn the rest.

There is something so special about getting to spend your mornings and afternoons on the water. No other students get to see Baltimore from the perspective that you get from a small shell. The boat house itself is picturesque, located in a small park, and the water flows under a big bridge. Even when it is raining, I tend to find a smile on my face. I grew up away from the water, scared of big boats, and dark waters I could not see into. Now the best part of my day is



launching from the boathouse docks and rowing under the huge bridge. Some days we can see huge cruise ships coming in from the harbor, and other days, my favorite days, we have the area all to ourselves, with calm water. On other days, you can look over the edge and see jellyfish floating around. The team dynamic is also something I have really come to appreciate.

When you start as a novice rower, you only row with other novices. This allows you to learn at a reasonable pace with others who are learning as well. In the fall season you even race with these people, and against others who are new to the sport. I have gained many friends from just going to practices with the other novices. The rowing community itself is a friendly and welcoming one, with the varsity rowers reaching out and attempting to include everyone, which really makes you feel connected to the team. The coaches are all understanding, and really want you to succeed. They set you up for success and, believe me, you will learn fast.

While there is the learning curve, you could be racing a month into starting the sport. Regatta days have proven to be my favorite, despite the early morning



All smiles at the launching docks!



View from the boat house

departures. There are hundreds of colleges and clubs competing on the same river, tons of vendors, and an electric feeling in the air. As a novice, you will have the opportunity to race twice, once in Philadelphia, and then again in Virginia. There is something so nerve-wracking yet exciting about facing off against other boats. Crossing the finish line is incredibly rewarding, even if you do not end up on the podium. This is just a taste of what it will be like to race on a D1 team during the prime rowing season, which is in spring.

If either of these roles sound interesting, here is what you need to do to join. First, I would recommend going to Loyola's rowing team website, and clicking on "[Walk-On Info](#)." That's right, there is a whole page dedicated just to those who want to start from scratch. Personally, I connected to the team during summer orientation during the Activities Fair and put my email address down. I found this was the easiest way, since I was able to get started on the paper-



work over summer. Either way, once you reach out and put your name on the coach's radar, prepare for paperwork. All I will say is that while the paperwork takes forever, it is worth it. I promise. After that, you will need to get a physical on campus, and then pass a swim test. The whole process moves quite fast, and like I said, it is all worth it.

If you are at all intrigued by any part of what I just wrote, please reach out to the coaches of the teams. I firmly believe that you should at least try it out, especially if you think it sounds fun. If you are like me, you will fall in love instantly and have a new exciting passion. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact someone on the team about their experiences. I hope to see some new faces on the team next year. Remember, Row Hounds!

Team Contact Information

[Website](#)

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Race Day!

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