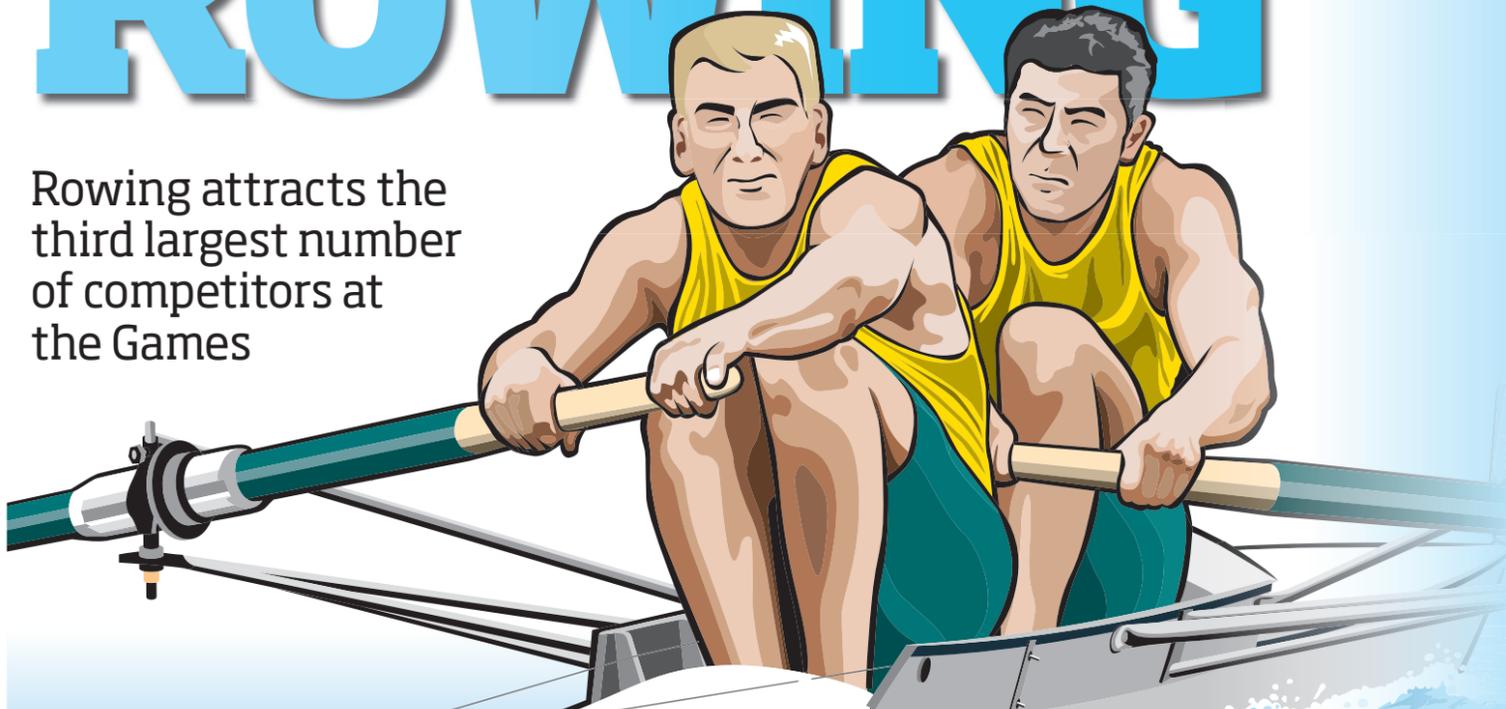


LONDON 2012 MERCURY | nie
Newspapers in Education

ROWING

Rowing attracts the third largest number of competitors at the Games



Hunting, transport, adventure and warfare. Why wouldn't a sport with such colourful origins make a fantastic Olympic spectacle?

Such is the case with rowing, a sport which attracts the third largest contingent of competitors at Olympic Games, after athletics and swimming.

Rowing as a sport can be traced back thousands of years, but modern racing probably began with watermen rowing ferries on London's River Thames in the early 18th century.

The weather was too rough for rowing to be held at the first modern Games in Athens, in 1896, but the sport made its debut in Paris in 1900. Women's rowing was not included until the 1976 Montreal Games.

AT THE GAMES

In London, 550 athletes — 353 men and 197 women — will compete in 14 medal events on the lake at Eton Dorney. The London 2012 course features eight lanes, six used for racing and the others for warm-up. Over the actual lake, two bridges have been installed. All races are 2000m. Depending on how many boats are competing, the format of the competition varies. All events include a repechage.

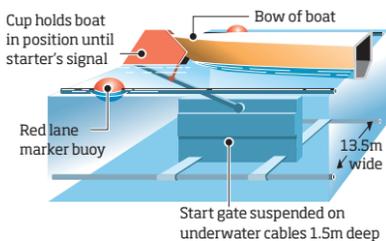
THE EVENTS

Sculling events are: Men's and women's single and double scull, lightweight double scull and quad scull.

Sweep events are: Men's and women's coxless pairs, men's coxless four, men's lightweight coxless four and the men's and women's eights.

STARTING GATES

Boats are held in place at the start by frames under the surface of the water. On the starter's signal, the frame drops, releasing the boat. The system eliminates false starts and helps to stabilise boats against wind.

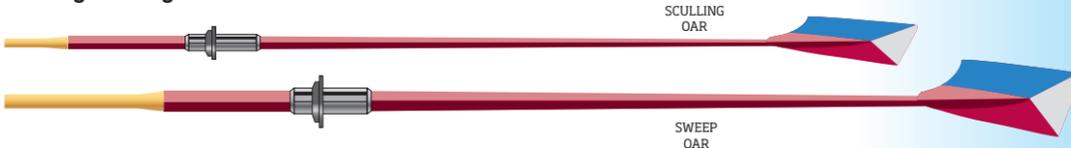


OARS

Rowing oars are made of carbon fibre and are hollow to reduce weight.

Sweep oar length: 3.65m-3.96m

Sculling oar length: 2.89m-3m

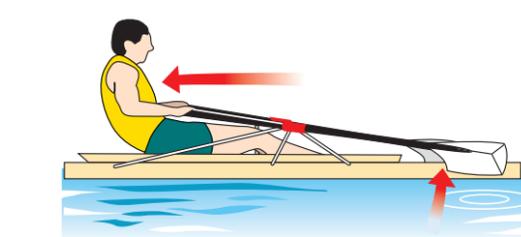


ANATOMY OF THE STROKE



1. CATCH

Each stroke begins with rower coiled forward on the sliding seat, with knees bent and arms outstretched. Oar blade is dropped vertically into the water.



3. FINISH

Oar handles are moved down, drawing the blades out of the water. At the same time, the rower "feathers" the oar, which means he/she turns the oar handle, so the oar blade changes from a vertical position to a horizontal one.

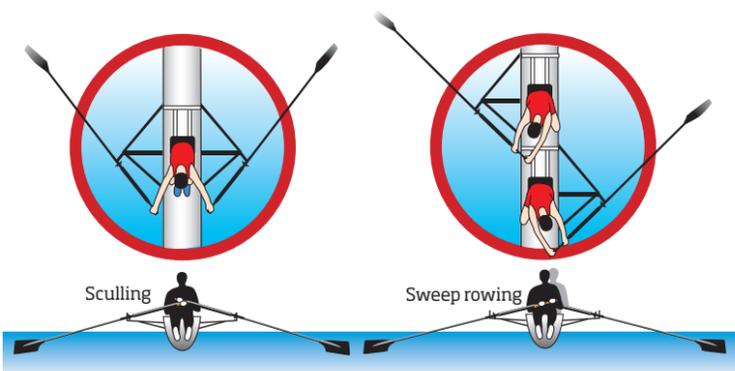
2. DRIVE

Upper body begins to uncoil, arms draw oar blades through water. Rowers move hands quickly into the body which, by this time, is in a slight "layback" position, requiring strong abdominal muscles.



4. RECOVERY

Oar remains out of the water as the rower begins recovery, moving the hands away from the body and past the knees. The body follows the hands and the sliding seat moves forward until, knees bent, the rower is ready for the next catch.



SWEEP v SCULLER

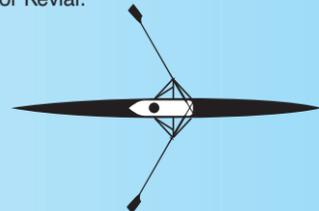
Two rowing styles are used in this sport.

Sculling: Two oars are used, one in each hand.

Rowing: In sweep rowing, oarsmen use one oar with both hands. Generally, rowers sit in configurations that have the oars on alternating, port and starboard, sides along the boat.

THE BOATS

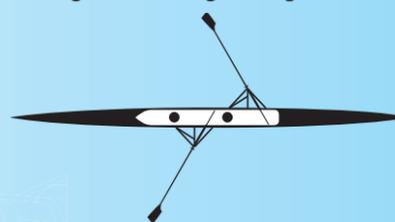
Originally made of wood, rowing shells are now made of carbon fibre or Kevlar.



SINGLE SCULL

Men & Women

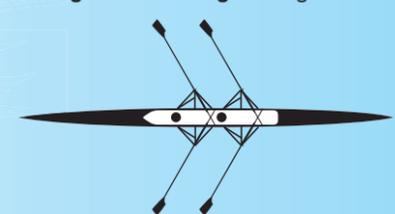
Length: 8.2m **Weight:** 14kg



COXLESS PAIR

Men & Women

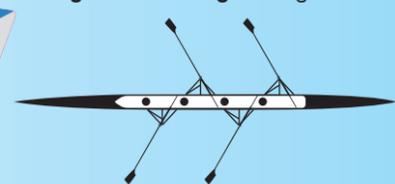
Length: 10.4m **Weight:** 27kg



DOUBLE SCULL

Men & Women

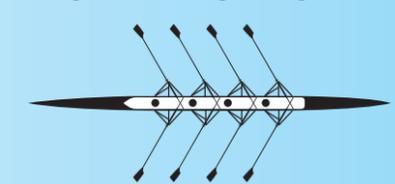
Length: 10.4m **Weight:** 27kg



COXLESS FOUR

Men

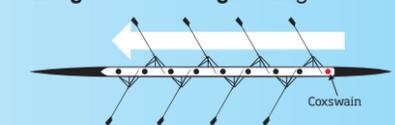
Length: 13.4m **Weight:** 50kg



QUADRUPLE SCULL

Men & Women

Length: 13.4m **Weight:** 52kg



EIGHTS

Men & Women

Length: 19.9m **Weight:** 96kg

Coxswain

At the Olympics, the eights are the only boats to carry a coxswain, who sits in the stern and acts as an on-board coach and navigator. He/she wears a headset and microphone to communicate with the crew via speakers placed along the inside of the boat. The cox must be the same sex as the crew.



FACT FILE

James Tomkins is Australia's top rower of all time. He competed at a record six Games — in 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004 and 2008 — winning three gold and a bronze.