



# RowPro Online Regattas

GUIDE FOR ONLINE REGATTA ORGANISERS

Version 5.x **RowPro**  
www.digitalrowing.com

Thank you for running an Online Regatta.

- Please read these instructions carefully before you start.
- This guide is intended for organizers only.

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# Introduction

Online regattas are a new form of organised indoor rowing races made possible by technical advances created by Digital Rowing and Concept2.

Online regattas with RowPro are straightforward to organize and run, once you the organizer understand the new concepts and terminology involved.

It is essential that you take the time read and properly digest the information in this guide before launching yourself into the brave new world of online regattas.

*If there's one make-or break-ingredient in running online regattas, it's reading this guide.*

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# Getting Started

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An online regatta is an organized series of live head-to-head races that are rowed online using RowPro. The participants are usually not in the same location, instead they are at home, in schools, gyms or anywhere there's a suitable Concept2 RowErg, a computer running RowPro, and an Internet connection.

Regattas are organized events rather than just people training or racing online together. The organizer decides the regatta type, boat sizes and race formats, invites the participants, and controls and runs the race days.

## 1 Competitive model

While most regattas are focused on racing, they can also be used for group rowing or training. And since they are 100% online, they can involve anyone on the planet with an Internet connection and the equipment needed to participate. You can offer titles or prizes, and can make the regatta local, national or international.

## 2 Boat sizes

Online regattas can potentially involve 1x (single scull), 2x, 4x or 8x boats. **At present RowPro only supports 1x boats in regattas**, however in time the plan is to enable 2x, 4x and 8x boats. Each RowPro computer can 'host' one boat online, so for 2x, 4x and 8x boats, all the ergs in any given boat will need to be at a single location and all connected to a single copy of RowPro.

## 3 Race formats

Races can be either Time or Distance, and must be Continuous rows not Interval rows.

Each race can include up to 16 boats. Races with more than 16 boats can be split into heats. Heats can all be run at the same time, but it's best to separate the start times by 5 or 10 minutes.

Regattas can also be split into rounds, with each participant completing more than one race on the day. Often the rounds are different race formats, for example Round 1 might be 2k, Round 2 might be 1K and Round 3 might be 500m.

## 4 Race officials

For most online regattas, it's best to have one person dedicated to race control who greets participants online, marshals the less experienced ones to check in to their rounds and heats, and then hands them over to their race starter.

For most regattas it's best to have 2 starters, each with their own race computer, so each starter starts every second race. That enables starters to stay with the race until it's finished. The starter manages race starts and handles false starts, late arrivals, etc.

## Main steps

There are three main steps to organizing and running an online regatta:

- **Planning your regatta** - This includes the four items listed in the left column, plus the scoring model, comms plan, deciding who can participate, and whether there will be any regatta fees, titles or prizes.
- **Inviting participants** - Regattas are often for a specific community. It's your choice to make the entry restrictions that make sense to you. If your regatta won't be open to everyone, you should make the regatta name clearly say who it's for.
- **Running race day** - Race day needs to run like clockwork, and that means you need officials with the right equipment and checklists. It's also **extremely important** that race day is not the first time a race participant has rowed online - they need to have done some practice online rows **before** race day to ensure they have the right equipment, connection, firmware, setup and know-how.

## Checklists

To help make sure race day goes off like clockwork, there are checklists provided at the end of this guide for:

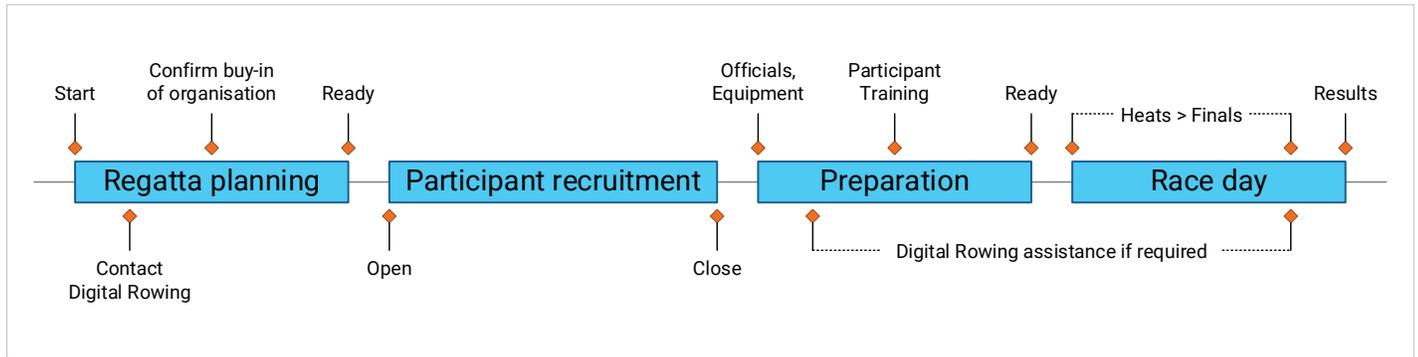
- Race control
- Starters.
- Participants.

There is also a quick-start guide for online rowing that you can give out to participants to help them prepare for race day.

# Planning your Regatta

A good online regatta starts with a good plan. The planning is not difficult, you just need to cover the bases. Follow the checklist in the sidebar on the right of this page to make sure you cover all the steps.

## Typical online regatta sequence



## 1 Regatta structure

The best way to plan your regatta is to work your way through the regatta plan checklist in the sidebar. Choose carefully, because the selections you make at the planning stage give your regatta its distinct character and literally define it in the eyes of participants.

## 2 Digital Rowing assistance

Digital Rowing has long experience in planning and running online regattas and can help you in several ways:

- **RowPro special deals** - We can offer bulk deals for RowPro to regatta organisers, officials and participants - just contact us.
- **Participant training** - We can help participants get RowPro installed, activated, connected and working. We can also help them try online rowing so they know what to do on race day.
- **Marshalling** - We can help bring participants online before races, marshalling the less experienced ones into their rounds and heats, and guiding them through check-in and start.
- **Starts** - We can help train your race starters to handle false starts, late arrivals, etc. to ensure races get away successfully.

Note that Digital Rowing does not charge for regatta assistance.

It's best to contact us early in your planning cycle. Our online rowing organizer Pam will be your point of contact, and you can contact Pam at [online@digitalrowing.com](mailto:online@digitalrowing.com).

## Regatta plan checklist

- Regatta name, purpose, description.**
- One-off or recurring** - when, how often?
- Competition model** - racing or training?
- Boat sizes** - must be 1x for now.
- Race formats** - time or distance?
- Race day sequence** - heats +/- rounds?
- Scoring model** - raw or adjusted for ... ?
- Titles +/- prizes** - will these be offered?
- Fees** - free or entry fees?
- Participation** - who will be invited?
- Officials** - race control and starters.
- Equipment** - race computers?
- Results** - where and when to be posted?

# Inviting Participants

How many people do you expect will participate in your regatta? Where are they? Are there any geographic, membership, fitness, gender, or other restrictions? Or can anyone anywhere in the world participate?

If you are the coach of a rowing squad, then you will already know your own participants, but if you decide to run an inter-club or inter-school regatta, then you will need to reach out to your fellow coaches locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.

This is a critical part of the regatta preparation process, because this will determine who turns up at the start line for each race on race day, and it will also determine how prepared they are for the brave new world of racing in an online regatta.

## 1 Prepare your invitation

You will typically need to invite participants to register for specific races in your regatta. You can do this by setting up a web page, by emailing, or via other channels like newsletters or phone calls.

What will your 'sales pitch' be that will attract rowers or other coaches to your regatta? And where will they see your pitch?

## 2 Invite participants

Whatever promotions you do around your regatta, you will need specified Open and Close dates for people to register, and of course your registration method has to be available for that time.

Remember you will need participants to register separately for each race / round. Note you won't yet know if there are enough people that you will need heats, and who will be in each heat.

## 3 Help participants prepare

Participants fall into two groups - those who have rowed online before and know what to do, and those who haven't.

It's the latter group that can cause major problems on race day, so **make sure** you actively help all newbies to prepare properly for race day by **rowing practice rows online multiple times before race day**.

You should definitely give all participants a copy of the Participant Checklist and the Online Rowing Quick Start Guide that are at the end of this guide. Digital Rowing can assist with this, just ask.

## 4 Track participants

If you want to hold more regattas in the future, you will want to keep track of participants so you can invite them back next time.

## What participants need

To participate in a 1x race, participants need:

- A Concept2 RowErg** with a PM5, PM4 or PM3 monitor with the latest firmware, and a USB cable to connect the PM to their RowPro computer.
- A Windows 10 or Mac computer** with the required minimum spec to run RowPro.
- A copy of RowPro** and at least a Personal plan (Monthly, Annual or Permanent).
- An Internet connection** - almost any type of connection will do.

To participate in a 2x, 4x or 8x race, each boat / crew needs:

- 2, 4 or 8 Concept2 RowErgs**, each with a PM5, PM4 or PM3 monitor with the latest firmware, and a suitable arrangement of USB cables and hubs to connect all PMs to their RowPro computer.
- A Windows 10 or Mac computer** with the recommended spec to run RowPro Multi.
- A copy of RowPro Multi** and either a Quad (2x or 4x), Crew or Club plan (Monthly, Annual or Permanent).
- An Internet connection** - almost any type of connection will do.
- A Crew Captain** who will be the local crew organizer and will operate the RowPro computer on race day.

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# Running Race Day

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After all the planning and preparation, finally it's time to let the racing begin! The key ingredients for a successful race day are for everyone involved to follow their checklists, and for race control to maintain good communications with starters and participants as people come online and their races proceed. There are two important points to note:

1. RowPro online rowing uses **GMT** time because that never changes with the seasons and is the same for everyone worldwide. It does take a bit of getting your head around it, but people quickly get used to it.
2. You should run the races as **Quick Rows** not Scheduled Rows in the RowPro online rowing system. Experience has shown this is far simpler and more effective on race day.

There are three main roles on race day: Race Control, Race Starters and Participants. There is a section below about each of these roles, and a separate checklist for each role on the following pages of this guide.

## 1 Race control

The prime task of Race Control is to direct the race starters to set up each race, manage the overall progress of race day, and make any decisions needed if there are issues.

In between doing that, the race control person greets participants online in General Chat before their race, and marshals the less experienced ones to check in to their rounds and heats.

## 2 Race starters

The prime task of Race Starters is to set up each assigned race as a Quick Row in Oarbits when directed, and start those races. The races are best shared alternately between two race starters.

The race starter waits in Check-in and welcomes participants in Session Chat as they check in. The race starter stays in the race through the start, and handles any false starts, late arrivals, etc. to ensure the races under their control are run successfully.

## 3 Participants

The key things for participants on race day are that:

- They have practised online rowing before race day.
- They come online 10 minutes before their race starts.
- They have read and followed the info in the Quick Start Guide.
- They diligently follow the steps set out in their checklist.
- **They take great care not to false start.**

## 4 Results

Participants want timely results. In Oarbits and the myRowPro app they can see results of their races as soon as they finish rowing. They will also want to see adjusted results quickly if there is a normalizing scheme.

## Race day comms

RowPro has two built-in communications methods specifically for race day:

- **General Chat** - As soon as you go into RowPro | Set up a Row | Online, you appear in the General Chat window that automatically pops up, where you can see all other people including race control, starters and participants.

This is where Race Control hangs out and greets participants as they arrive. Each person has a 'presence icon' that shows if they are checked in or rowing.

- **Session Chat** - Once you check in to a race, you see Session Chat. This only includes people who are checked into that specific race.

This is where the Race Starter hangs out and greets race participants. Again each person has a presence icon.

**Note:** The Chat functions are text chat, not audio or video. This is done because audio uses much more bandwidth, and video uses even more bandwidth. During online rowing, it's critical not to hog the Internet bandwidth the race needs.

It's extremely useful for race control and the two race starters to all be physically together on race day so they can talk with each other directly and share tasks.

# Race Control Checklist

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For most online regattas, it's best to have one person dedicated to race control. Race control greets participants online in General Chat before their race, marshals the less experienced ones to check in to their rounds and heats, and helps them check in, at which point the participants are handed over from race control to the starter of their race.

The race control checklist is below. You as the regatta organizer should print and ideally laminate a copy of this page for the race control person so it can be marked and reused. It's up to each race control person to diligently follow that checklist.

**Note:** Digital Rowing may be able to help the regatta organizer on race day by monitoring the races and helping to handle any unforeseen issues. Please contact Digital Rowing if you think you might want our help on race day.

## Before race day

- Ensure all participants have rowed online successfully at least once before race day.
- Finalize the race names and times and the participant lists for each race.
- Get the Race Control equipment ready.
- Provide race day checklists to the participants.

## On race day before the first race

- Set up the Race Control equipment so it's ready for racing.
- Restart all computers that will be used to run the races.
- Set up and row a simple test race to confirm the system is all go.
- Open a Word doc on each race computer ready to paste screenshots.
- Email any last-minute info to participants.
- Assist any participants with last-minute issues.
- Make sure you and the starters have a bio break before racing gets underway.

## While racing is underway

- @ t-8 minutes** Start the race countdown timer.
- Watch for and check off arriving participants in Chat.
- Chase any late arrivals until all are checked in.
- Chase away any participants who have come online early.
- Handle any issues that starters pass to Race Control.

## After the last race

- Check all results have been posted correctly in Oarbits.
- Resolve any race result issues.

## Race control equipment

- 1 computer, Concept2 PM and USB cable for Race Control.
- 2 computers, Concept2 PMs and USB cables for Starters.
- Power and Internet connections for all computers.
- Race countdown timer (e.g. smartphone timer app).

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# Starter Checklist

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For most regattas it's best to have 2 starters, each with their own race computer, so that each starter only starts every second race. That enables starters to stay with the race until it's finished and the participants have dispersed.

The starter manages race starts and handles any false starts, late arrivals, etc. by following the checklist below. You as the regatta organizer should print and ideally laminate a copy of this page for each starter so it can be marked and reused.

It's up to each starter to diligently follow the starter checklist for each race, checking off each item as they go. Races should be named in a way that clearly shows they are part of a regatta and also includes their race number.

## In the lead-up to each race

- @ t-6 minutes** Set up a Quick Row named **Regatta\_RACE\_n**
- Go into General Chat
- Ask participants of that race to check in

## In check-in

- Welcome participants in Session Chat
- Help participants get ready to race
- @ t-3 minutes** Advise Race Control of any no-shows
- @ t-1 minute** Warn participants: Prepare to Start in 30 sec.
- Warn participants: Don't pull handle until Row!
- Ask participants to strap in and pick up handle
- @ t-30 seconds** Click **Prepare to Start**.
- TAKE A SCREENSHOT** of the Check-in form and paste it into a Word document so you can take further screenshots.
- Make sure all participants come through OK.
- Tell participants to watch their Concept2 PM.
- @ t=0** Click **Start**.
- Make sure the race gets away OK.
- If there's a false start, chat to participants, and restart the race until it gets away OK. Note you may need to set up a replacement race.

## During the race

- TAKE A SCREENSHOT** 20-30m after the start showing the **ENTIRE FIELD RACING**.
- Watch the Pace Bar at right of the 3D display.
- Report any issues to Race Control.
- Stay in the race until it's finished.
- If there's a close finish **TAKE A SCREENSHOT**.

## After the race

- TAKE A SCREENSHOT** showing the Pace Bar with the **FINISHING TIMES**.
- Congratulate the participants in Session Chat.
- Ask participants to exit by clicking the Finish button.
- Click the Finish button
- Report any issues to Race Control.
- Return to General Chat.
- Prepare for the next race.

# Participant Checklist

Welcome to your online regatta! For you as a participant, the key to a successful racing experience is to prepare properly by following the steps below. Please print this checklist and check off each item when you've done it. Please note:

1. As there will be many people rowing online in a short time, we ask you to only go into Session Setup | Online ten minutes before your race is scheduled to start, and to go offline and close RowPro five minutes after your race is finished. This is to minimize congestion online. Thank you!
2. The Online Regatta races will be Quick Rows, not Scheduled Rows, so just go directly into Set up a Row | Online.

## 1 Before race day

- Prepare your Concept2 PM per the online rowing Quick Start Guide.
- Row online several times before race day to get used to it.
- Email [assist@digitalrowing.com](mailto:assist@digitalrowing.com) if you have any problems.
- Ensure you have everything you'll need ready for race day.
- Regularly check the regatta info at your regatta's home page.

## 2 On race day before going online

- Make sure your Internet and Concept2 PM connections are good.
- Start RowPro and warm up offline to confirm it's all working.
- Follow the race day progress on your regatta's home page.
- Before you go online, **close all apps and restart your computer.**
- Only go online in RowPro 10 minutes before your race time.**

## 3 Once you're online in RowPro

- Go directly into **Set up a Row | Online | Chat.**
- Watch for your race to appear in **Set up a Row | Online.**
- Follow any instructions given in Chat by Race Control.
- Don't chat now unless asked or you have a question.
- When your race is listed, select it and click **Check in.**

## 4 Once you're in Check-in

- Click **Ready** to tell the Starter you're ready.
- Listen and watch for **Prepare to Start.**
- Confirm the race is now set up **on your Concept2 PM.**
- Strap in, pick up the handle, and wait to start.
- During Sit Ready-Attention-Row **watch your Concept2 PM.**
- TAKE CARE not to false start by pulling the handle early.**
- When you hear and see **ROW!** start racing.

## In case of problems

1. If anything goes wrong up to the start of your race that stops you racing, close RowPro and email your regatta organizer to get put in a make-up race.
2. If you lose your Internet connection while racing, **keep racing until you finish.** Then find your race result in your RowPro online logbook, export it as a Rowfile, and email the Rowfile asap to your regatta organizer.
3. If you lose your Concept2 PM USB connection while racing, **keep racing until you finish.** Then recall your race result on the screen of your Concept2 PM, take a photo of that, and email the photo asap to your regatta organizer.

## Once your race is done

- Feel free to chat in the Finish Chat with other participants and the Starter.
- Please close the finish form **within five minutes** after the race finishes.
- To save congestion, please go offline from the race system asap by closing RowPro.**
- You can check results in the myRowPro app for iOS and Android.
- You can follow the racing and the regatta generally on your regatta's home page.

# Quick Start Guide for Online Rowing

## Important! Before you start RowPro, prepare your Concept2 PM:

1. **Make sure your Concept2 PM firmware is current** - <https://www.concept2.com/service/software/concept2-utility>.
2. **Disconnect other devices** - make sure your Concept2 PM does not have a USB drive or LogCard inserted.
3. **Disconnect other apps** - make sure your Concept2 PM is not connected to any other apps via Bluetooth.
4. **Connect your Concept2 PM to your computer via USB** - <https://www.digitalrowing.com/Rowing/connect.html>.
5. **Set up your heartrate monitor** - it's important not to push the Menu button on the Concept2 PM after starting RowPro.
6. **Start RowPro** - check that your Concept2 PM is connected, i.e. light is green at the bottom left of the RowPro PM twin.

## STEP 1: Connect

Connect your computer to the Internet, then on the RowPro main menu, click Set up a Row | Online. RowPro will then connect to Oarbits and to the Online Rowing server. Right away you'll see the list of upcoming online rows. Have a look at them to familiarize yourself with the layout and info provided.

## STEP 2: Set up a Quick Row

Now click the Create Quick Row button at the bottom of Set up a Row. Make up a name, for example 'Pam's first online row', choose a suitable short distance, say 500 meters, and click the big green Check in button to go through to the Check-in form.

## STEP 3: Prepare to row

In Check-in you'll see your name and an icon flashing red. Click the Ready button and the icon will stop flashing to show you're ready and will show a green S icon to indicate you're the starter. If others were joining you in this session, you could now Chat with them. If you want to warm up, now's the time to do that.

## STEP 4: Start the row

When you're ready to start, click the big orange Prepare to Start button. If your computer sound is on, you'll hear a voice say 'Prepare to Start'. **Wait 10 seconds** to give it time to set up the row on your Concept2 PM.

You'll notice the 500m row will be set up on your Concept2 PM, and the Prepare to Start button will become a green Start button. Strap in, pick up the handle, click Start and **watch your Concept2 PM. Wait until you see Row** on your Concept2 PM display, then start rowing. Note if you start rowing before that, you will cause a False Start and the whole row will reset.

You'll notice the row itself proceeds just like any other RowPro row, except that the bottom half of your Concept2 PM display shows your position information relative to others. Since there are no others in this row, it will only show you.

## STEP 5: Finish the row

When you've completed the 500m row, the Finish form will appear, showing you in first place (of course!) and you're done.

**Note:** If others had been in this row with you, you could now Chat with the other people that had finished their 500m.

Click the Finish button to wrap up the row. You'll see that RowPro closes the Finish form and automatically opens the Set up a Row and Chat forms. You can now chat to other people who are online, or set up or join another row, or close and finish.

# Glossary

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**Boat** - Each race can have up to 16 boats, and the boats can be 1x (single sculls), 2x (double sculls), 4x (quadruple sculls) or 8x (octuple sculls). In any given race, all boats must be the same format, for example in a 4x race, all boats must be 4x. Each RowPro computer can host ONE boat in a race. Where more than one boat is needed at a physical location, a separate RowPro computer is required for each boat. For 2x, 4x and 8x boats:

- Boats show in the RowPro 3D display as they do in real life, i.e. a 4x (quad) boat has 4 rowers in it who all stroke together.
- The stroke timing in crew boats is taken from one of the crew (referred to as the 'stroke seat'). All crew in that boat are shown as stroking in perfect sync with the stroke seat, whether or not they are actually doing that on each erg.
- The distance travelled by a boat is the average of the distance travelled by each crew member. So for example in a 2x boat, if one person has rowed 40 meters and the other has rowed 50 meters, then the boat has travelled 45 meters.
- RowPro manipulates the meters displayed on the Concept2 PM of each crew member so it shows the distance travelled by the boat, not the distance the crew member has personally rowed.

**Captain** - Each 2x, 4x or 8x boat requires one person to operate the RowPro computer hosting that boat. That person is referred to as the captain of that boat and is effectively the local organizer of that boat and its crew.

**Crew** - Participants are referred to as crew when they are part of a 2x, 4x or 8x boat.

**Heats** - The maximum number of boats in a race is 16. Where there are more than 16 boats entered in a race, multiple heats are required. Because online regattas are intended for 50 or fewer boats, usually 3 heats of 16 boats will be enough.

**Online Regatta** - An online regatta is one or more race days set up and run by an organizer for the benefit of their members. Members will need to use RowPro to participate in the online regatta.

**Organizer** - This is the person who instigates and controls the online regatta, schedules the race days, decides the race formats and boat sizes, and invites their members to participate in the regatta.

**Participant** - A participant is a person who races in an online regatta.

**Race** - A race is a real-time head-to-head competition where up to 16 boats race each other in RowPro. Each race can be a set time or a set distance. The strong preference is for time sessions, because that way all boats finish at the same time.

**Race Control** - This is the person who controls the timing of races, welcomes and marshals participants into check-in for their race, directs the Race Starters, and generally controls proceedings on race day.

**Race Day** - A race day is a collection of races set up and run by an organizer as part of an online regatta.

**Race Starter** - This is the person who sets up each race as a Quick Row, and clicks the Start button to start a race. Typically, this is a person appointed by the organizer specifically to start races. It is strongly recommended to have at least two starters in each regatta who start alternate races.

**Round** - Where regatta participants are required to row more than one race on race day, the term round is used to describe each sequential race. For example, your regatta may consist of multiple rounds - for example rounds 1, 2 and 3 where Round 1 is a 1:00 minute race, Round 2 is a 3:00 minute race, and Round 3 is another 1:00 minute race.

**Series** - Where an online regatta consists of more than one race day, the name of the regatta should include easily identifiable information for the rowers, such as the organizing party, the name of the regatta and the date/day.