



## **Learn To Row (LTR) overview**

### **The purpose.**

The Falcon BC Learn-to-Row (LTR) course aims to deliver a comprehensive set of practical and theoretical skills that participants are invited to become familiar with over an approximately 12+ session programme.

### **The structure.**

It is designed to reflect the club's ethos of inclusiveness and offers a flexible approach to those who may not be able to commit to an intensive period to learn rowing. Over twenty sessions are offered, with a maximum of 25 course members, who are each expected to attend 12 or more sessions. LTRs are required to indicate which they can attend via an online system (previously Squadlist, but expected to be Spond August 2025 onwards). The sessions are based at the weekends – late morning to early afternoons – with a midweek (usually Thursday) evening session in the summer months, when daylight allows.

### **The programme.**

After an initial talk, when the attendees have a chance to chat about the club and its culture, there is a tour of the facilities and an introduction to the equipment, how it is stored and how it is handled. Basic technique is explained and demonstrated on an erg before a session in a Tank (usually the OUBC Tank - a sweep-oared facility based locally). Attendees are gradually exposed to the terminology and jargon of the sport and given a chance to test their understanding and basic skills in that safe environment. After a couple of Tank sessions (minimally), crews are preselected and invited to learn how to handle a boat onto the water to have their first experience afloat.

All boats are coxed – usually by the main coaches or an experienced guest cox. Most of the water sessions are run in eights, with stable touring boats (coxed quads) used to introduce sculling (usually after Tank sessions at Radley, where they accommodate sculling). With an octuplet available, LTRs can test their competences in a fine shell, although rowing in fours and sixes is harder in an 8x+ than an 8o.

Sessions are organised around those who have declared themselves as available via an online system. Crews are preselected and advised to attend at given time slots.

Whenever possible, crews are selected to match each other's skill levels in order to allow for varying rates of development.

Completion of the course is usually based on achieved competence, rather than a fixed number of sessions, with people moving into club squads when their skills allow that to be done without any negative impact.

The package includes a three month club membership. This allows LTRs to complete their basic training and test other aspects of the club before considering whether to join, after a conversation with the Captain or Vice-captain.

## The content

The content and delivery of the course continue to develop with each iteration. Feedback from attendees together with the involvement of other coaches contribute to the constant evolution of this process.

The “syllabus” includes techniques and approaches which are particular to this course. Specific phrases and references have been developed which facilitate a fuller understanding of the principles behind rowing. It’s important that these be carried forward with the LTR graduates and should be used – or at least understood - throughout the club so that the LTRs continue to have good practice reinforced in a consistent manner. (FYI, many of these phrases have been introduced in other clubs with perceived benefit.)

Included in the resources is a set of customised videos made by JH for the purposes to supporting LTR attendees. These are freely available on the web. Some of these are being used by other clubs and colleges.

## The team

The course is managed and led by John Hill. John became an L2 BR coach in the late 90’s. (He has attended the L3 transition courses but not been assessed.) He has over 30yrs experience of teaching learn to row, starting in London, then at City of Oxford RC and, since 2011, at Falcon BC.

Supplementary coaching has been provided recently by qualified, aspiring and developing coaches such as Andy Monro, Mel Elwine and Seb Lange.

It is seen as an ideal opportunity for club members to work within the LTR structure to develop their own coaching skills before or during their qualification period.

Here's a structured summary:

### Practical Objectives

Participants should be able to:

- **Adjust equipment** for proper rowing posture (e.g. foot stretcher settings)
- **Perform safety checks** on boats before outings
- **Launch and return boats** safely, including handling storage and water entry
- **Hold blades correctly**, feather and square them
- **Follow basic coxing instructions** used at the club
- **Row with correct sequencing and posture**, including turning and returning to a spot
- **Move boats forward, backward, and spin 360°**
- **Execute emergency stops** and stop from brisk pace using specific techniques
- **Complete skill exercises** like circles, rigger dips, balancing drills

- **Recover from “catching a crab”**, including understanding causes and practicing recovery
- **Use erg machines safely and effectively**
- **Complete capsizes or man-overboard drills** where appropriate

## Theoretical Objectives

Participants will learn to:

- **Understand club safety rules**, facilities, and key personnel roles
- **Follow incident procedures**, including reporting and first aid access
- **Respond to capsizes**, including staying with the boat
- **Recognise the role of the cox** and their responsibilities
- **Dress appropriately** for various rowing conditions
- **Differentiate types of PFDs** (buoyancy aids, lifejackets) and their uses
- **Identify boat types** and understand sculling vs. rowing
- **Name boat and blade parts**, tailored to the type of boat used
- **Row safely in low light**, including local rules and precautions
- **Follow navigation rules**, including waterway sides and local signage
- **Adapt to weather conditions**, understanding risks and best practices
- **Store and maintain equipment** properly after outings
- **Understand current/tide effects** on boat movement
- **Name stroke components**, such as catch, drive, extraction, and recovery

*John Hill, Development Coach FBC*

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