



# Cambridge University Combined Boat Clubs



# Introduction to Coxing

## in Cambridge

Dan Wilkins

CUCBC Honorary Secretary and Deputy Chief Umpire of the Bumps



# The Role of the Cox

1. Safety
2. Steering
3. Coaching

The cox has final authority over the boat and the crew in it



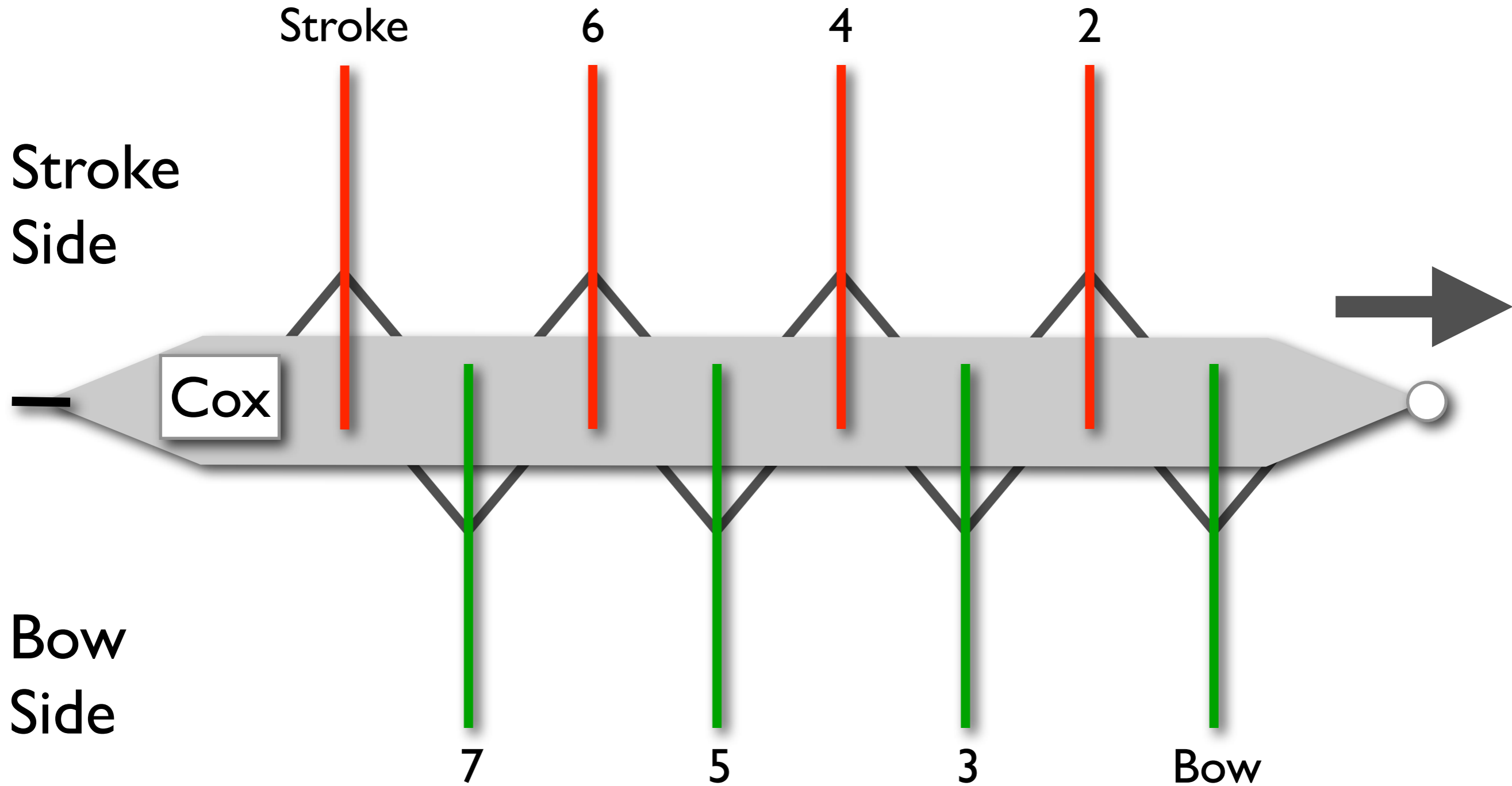
# Coxing is Rewarding!

- Vital member of the crew
- A good cox can win a race...
- Can develop quickly

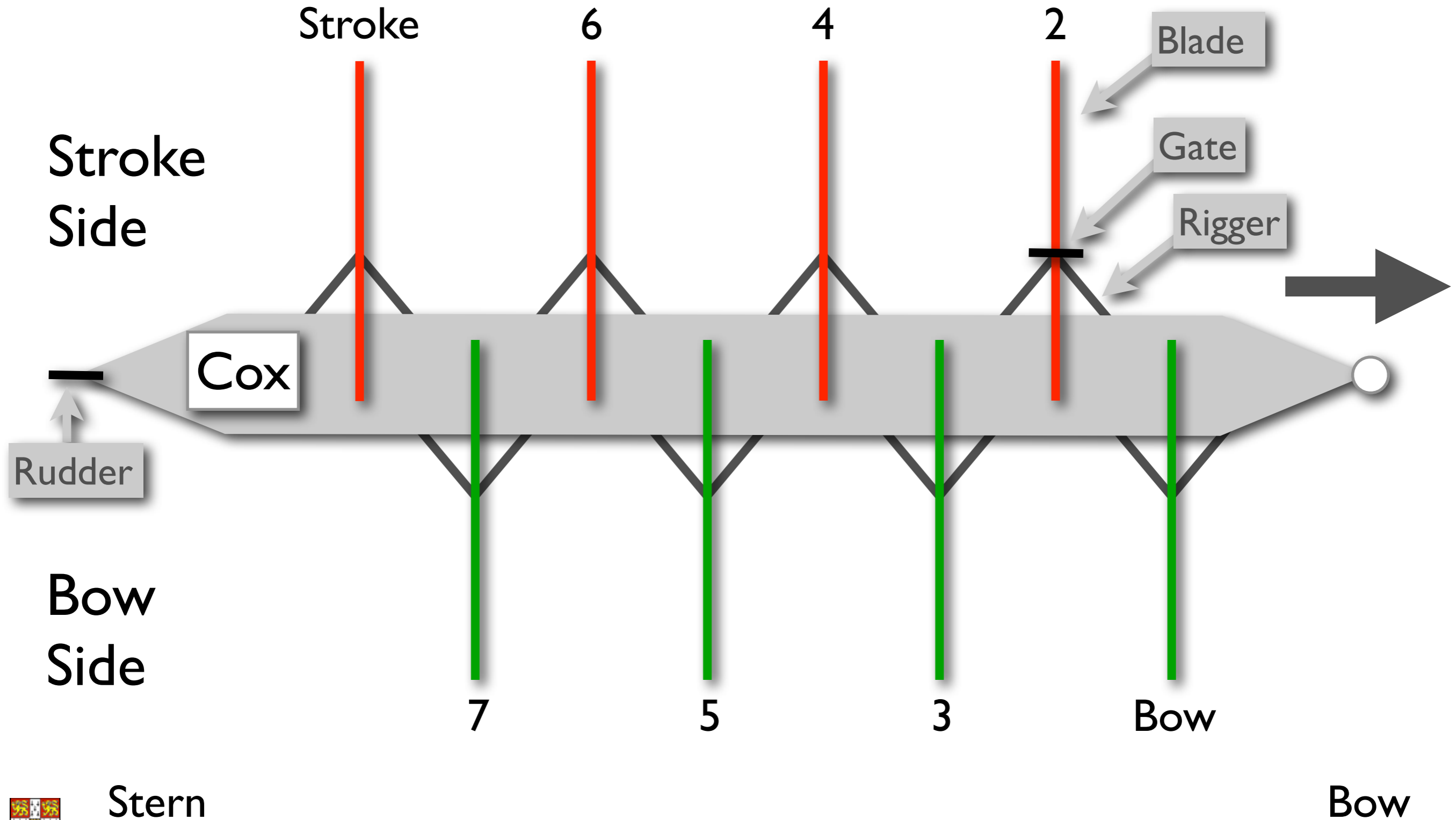




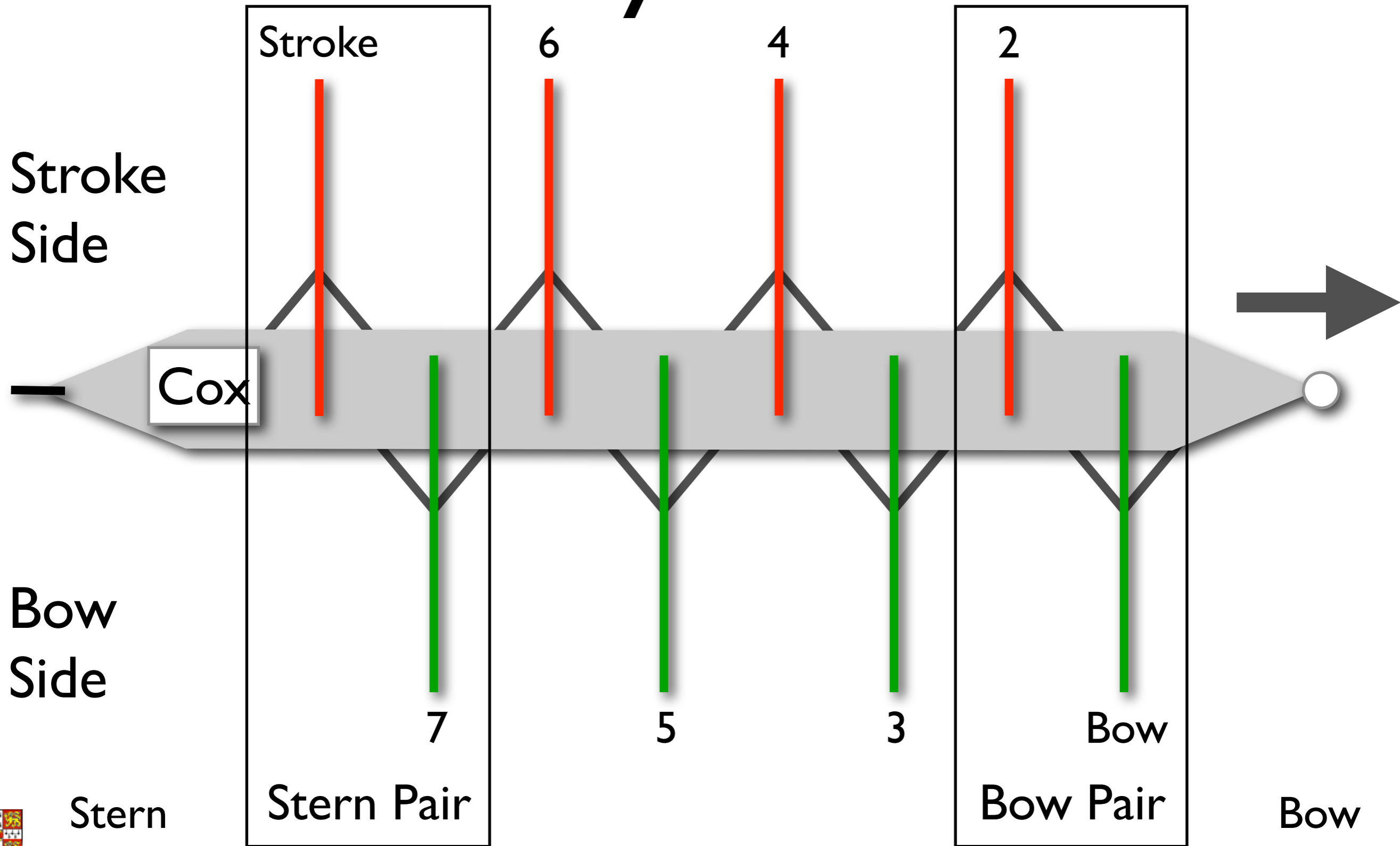
# Anatomy of a Boat



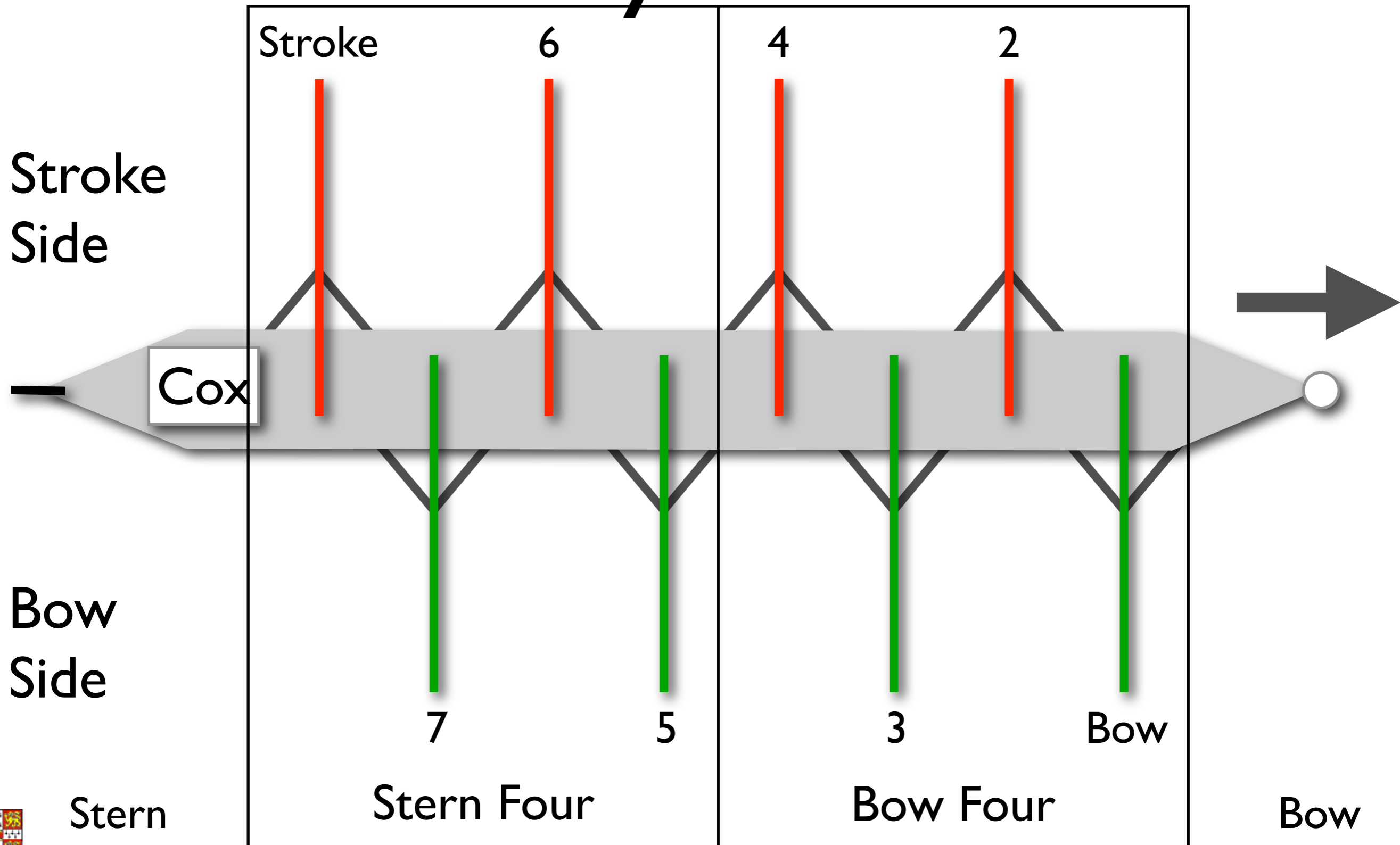
# Anatomy of a Boat



# Anatomy of a Boat

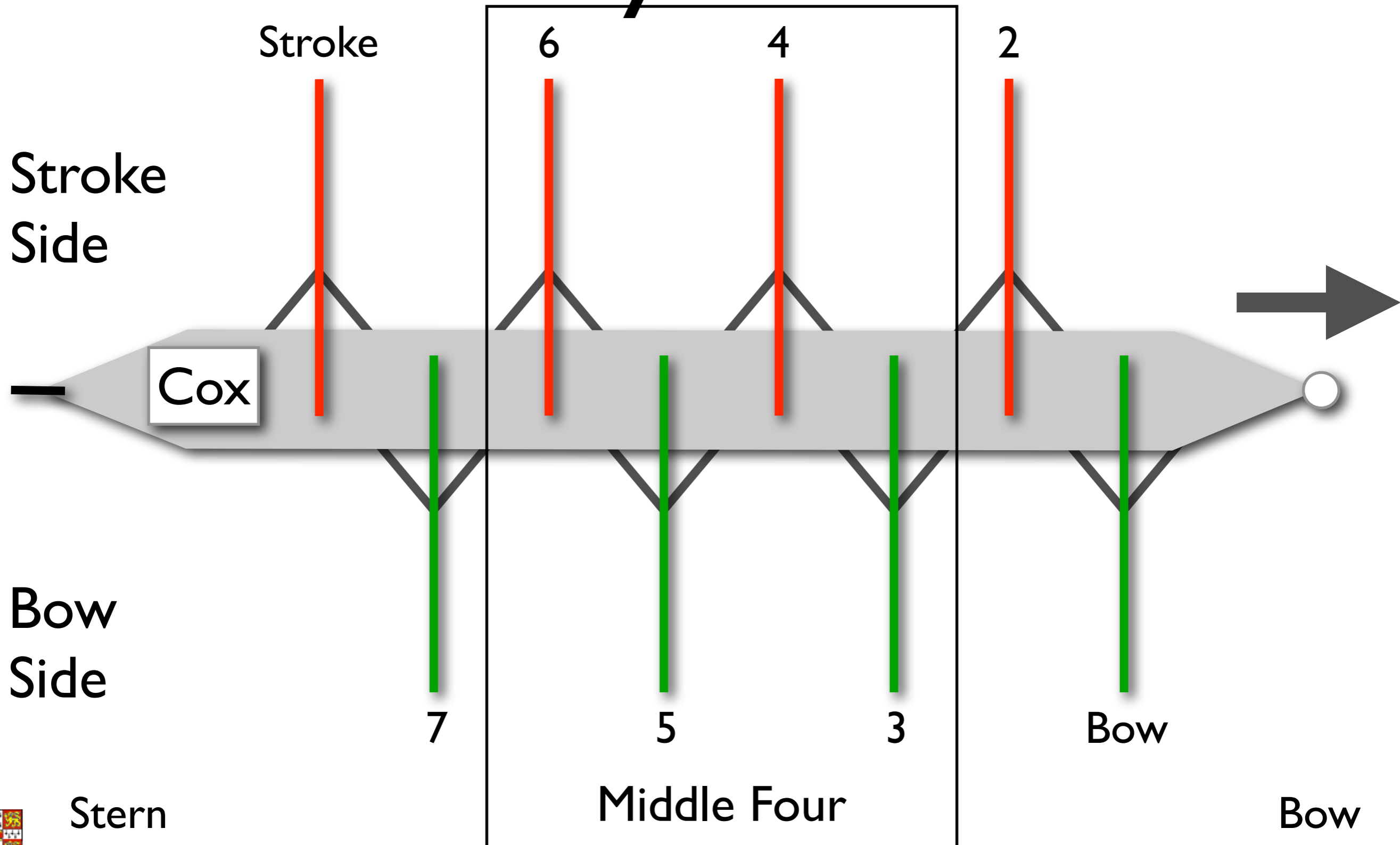


# Anatomy of a Boat

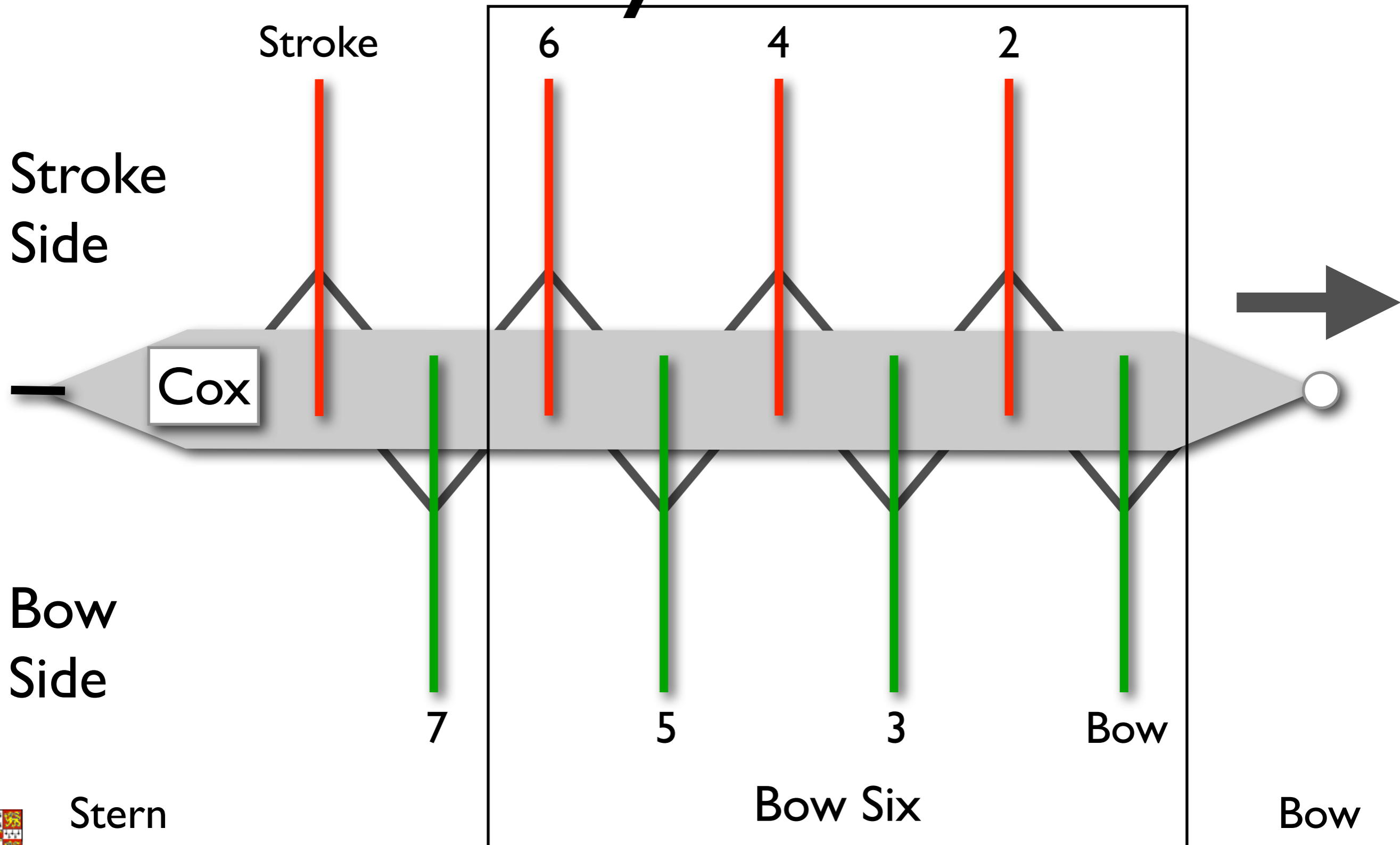




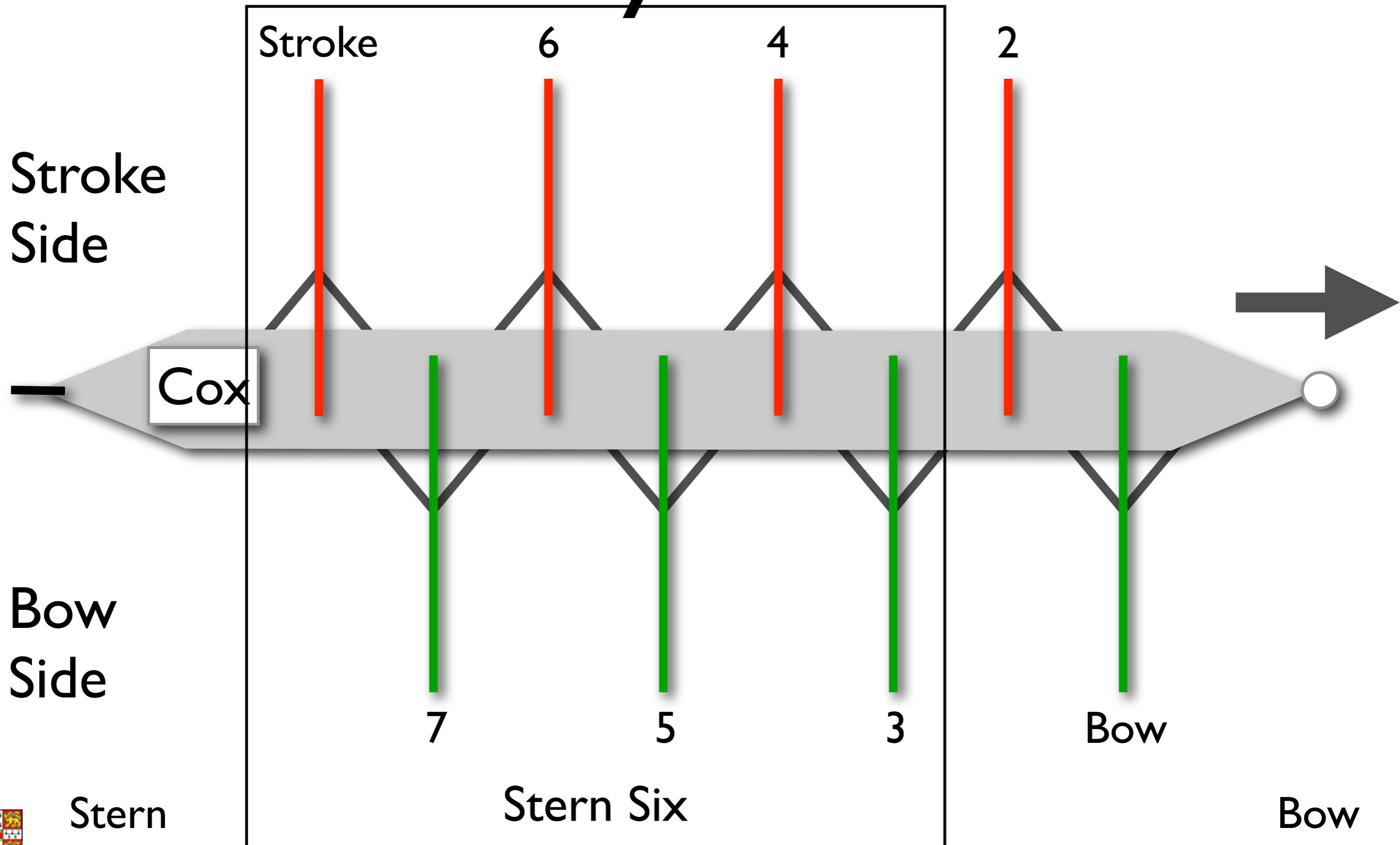
# Anatomy of a Boat



# Anatomy of a Boat



# Anatomy of a Boat





# Giving Commands

- Best to refer to crew members by number
  - e.g. “bow”, “three”, “stern four”
- Keep commands short and to the point
- Be authoritative and decisive
- “....., on the next stroke, go”
  - Timing – “go” when you want it to happen



# Look where you're going!

- (even while paying attention to your crew)
- Be proactive, not reactive
- What's happening ahead?
- Do I need to slow down/stop?



# Stopping



- “Easy there”
  - Finish the current stroke
  - Wait at arms away (then “drop”)
  - Boat will drift
- “Take the run off”
  - Blades at  $45^\circ$  on the water
  - Slow down, gradual stop



# Stopping



- “HOLD IT UP”
  - Whole crew, blades square in water
  - Immediate stop
- Make sure your crew know these commands!





# You must wear a lifejacket!

- British Rowing requirement
- For your safety
- You will not be able to swim so well if cold and wearing a lot of layers!
- It must be done up properly and on top of all other clothing!
- £50 fine if you don't have one!



# Before you boat...

- Check you have all your kit:
  - Lifejacket
  - Cox box
  - Sunglasses
  - Enough (warm) clothes



# Before you boat...

- Bow ball
- Must be attached properly to the front of the boat



# Before you boat...

- Lights
  - 15 minutes after lighting down (sunrise) and 15 minutes after lighting up (sunset)
  - Need a white light on both bow and stern
- College crews may not boat after dark (lighting up/down times defined on website)



# Coaching

- No novice crew may go out without a coach on the bank
- First outing of a novice crew must be with experienced cox



# The River Cam

- The Cam is narrow and windy...  
...challenging to cox!
- The Cam is an overcrowded river!
- Obey navigation rules
- Be considerate to others
  - Rowers, narrowboats, others...





Chesterton

Fen Ditton

Cambridge

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Victoria Avenue

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Boathouses

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Fen Ditton

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Chesterton Corner

Pike & Eel Pub

Victoria Avenue

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Railway Bridge

Chesterton Corner

(Long) Reach

Fen Ditton

Victoria Avenue

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Grassy Corner

First Post Corner

The Gut

Ditton Corner

Railway Bridge

Chesterton Corner

(Long) Reach

Fen Ditton

Victoria Avenue

Pike & Eel Pub

Jesus Lock

Elizabeth Way

1571 m

Boathouses

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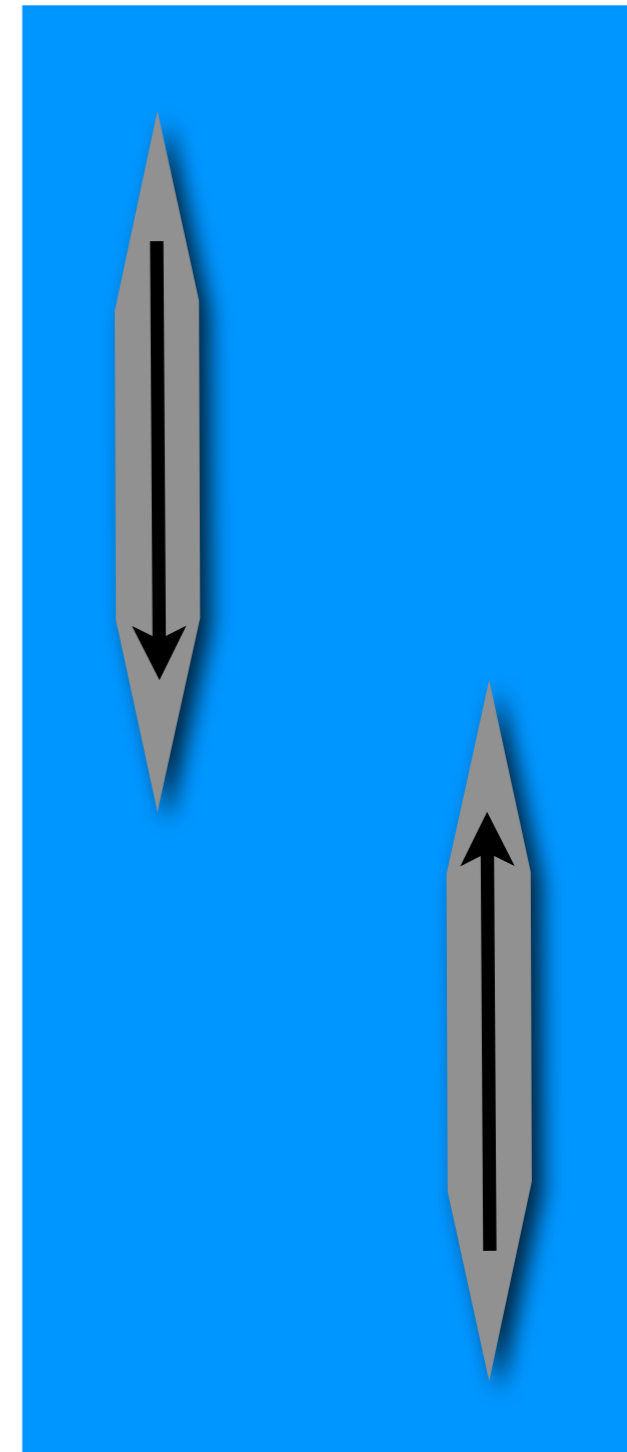


Upstream ← → Downstream



# Navigation

- Navigate on the right
- (if you are facing forwards)
- Except between the crossover points where you navigate on the left



# Crossover Points

- Between crossovers, navigate on the left
- Change sides
- Crews coming upstream have right of way
- If another crew is crossing – STOP

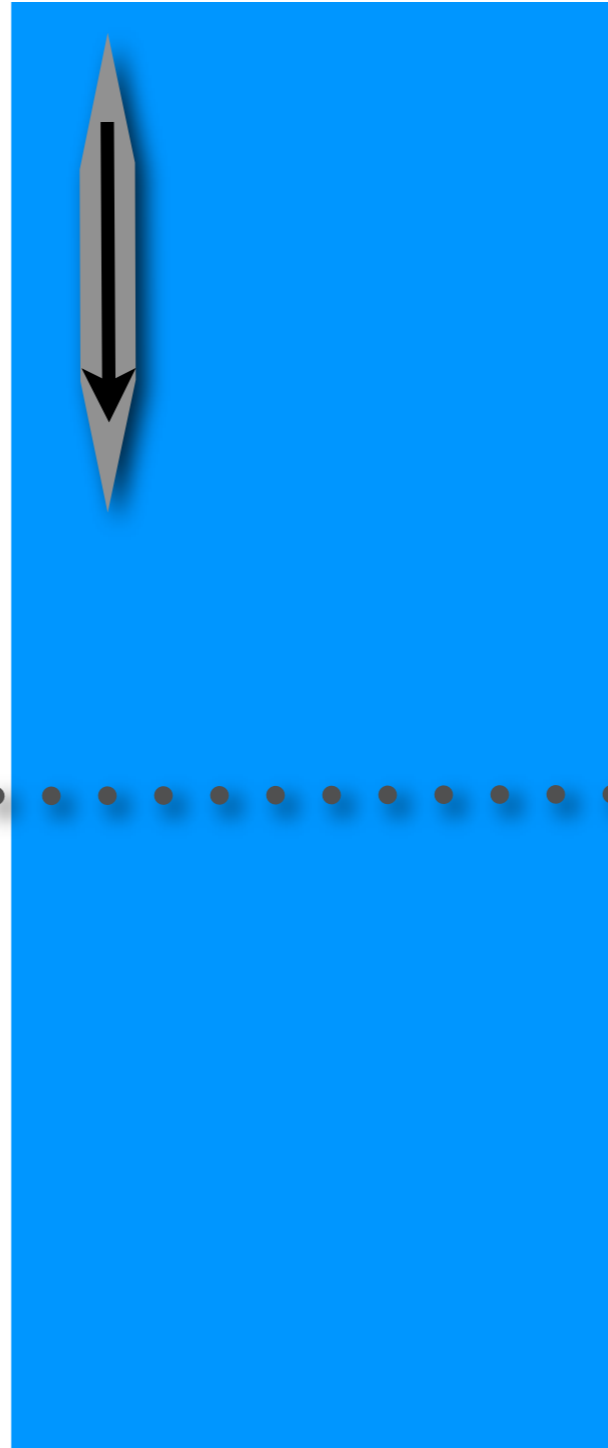


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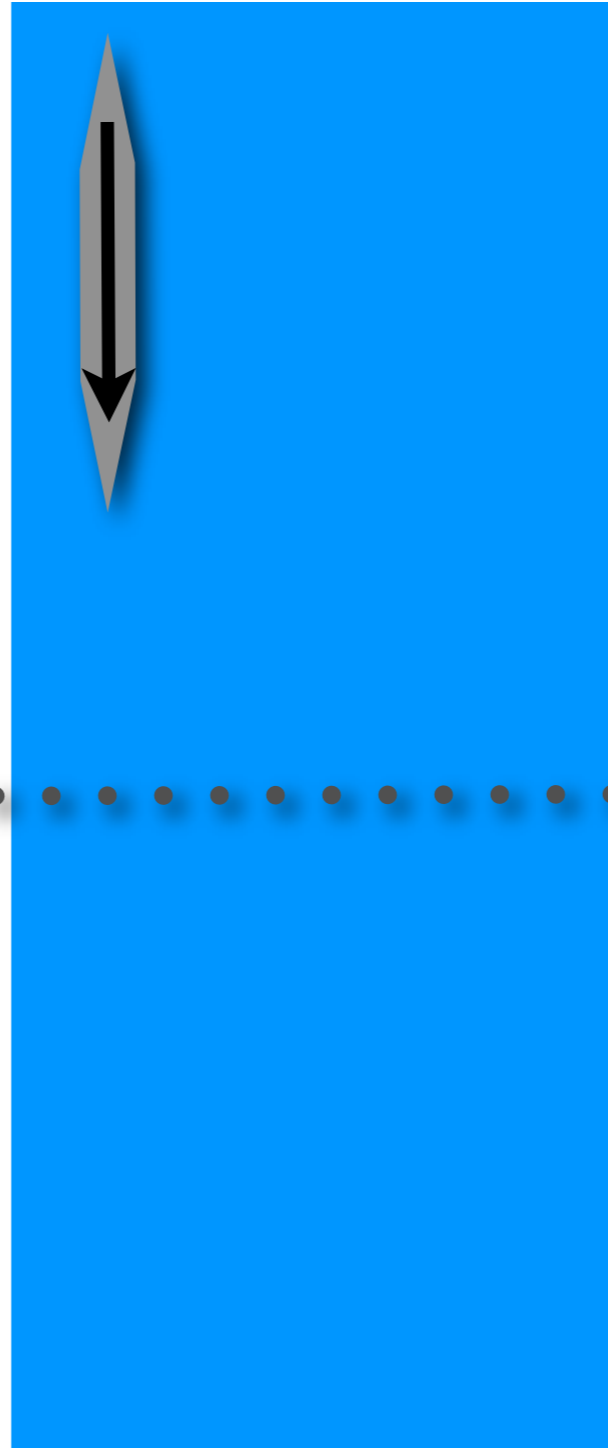




# Crossover Points



# Crossover Points



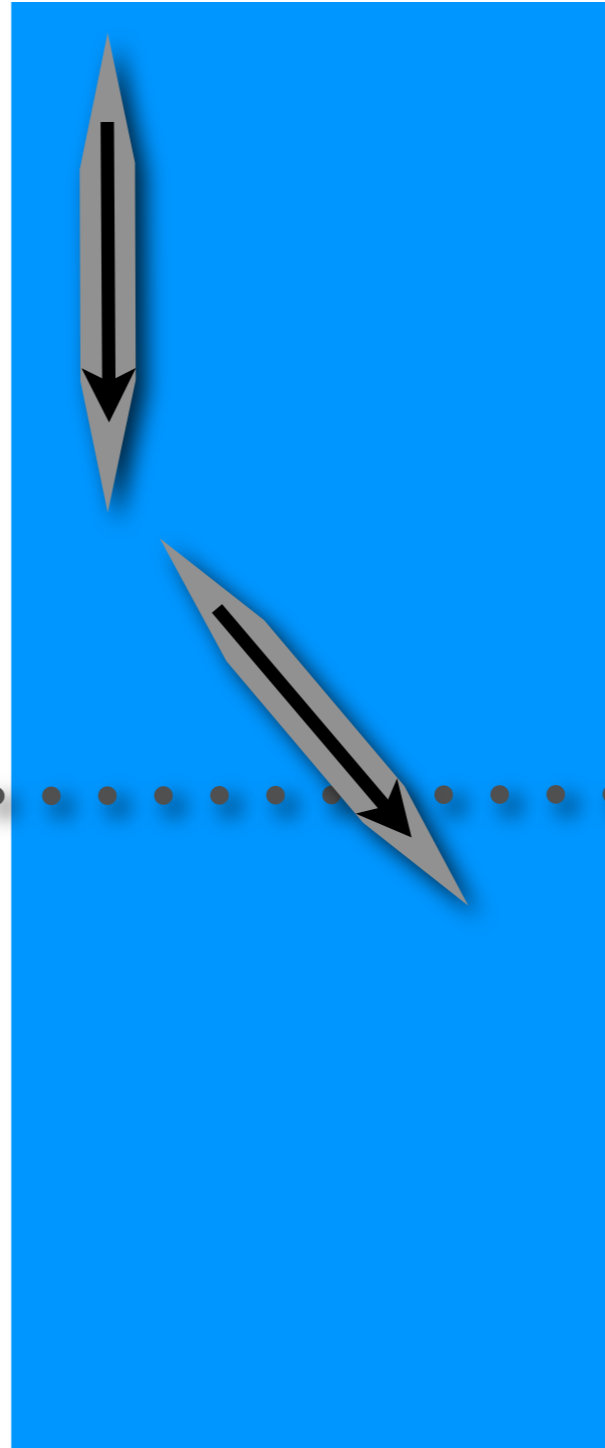
Downstream



Upstream



# Crossover Points



Downstream

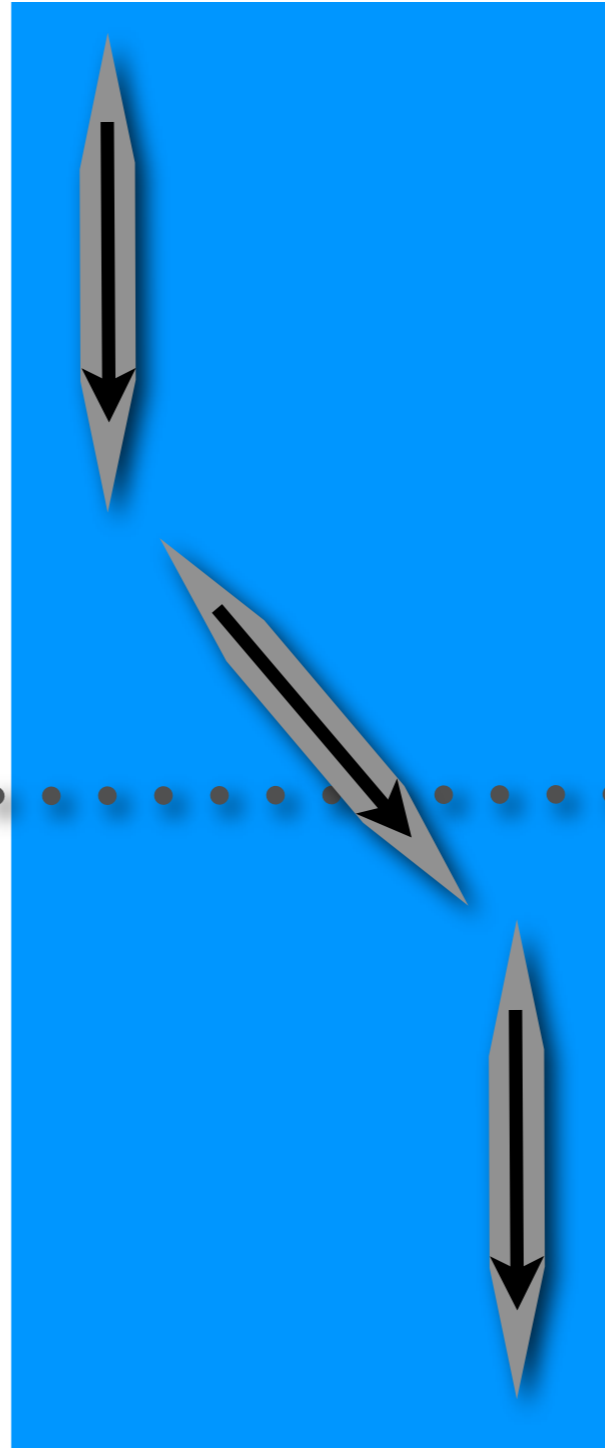


Upstream

- Cross straight over
- Do not stop on the crossing point



# Crossover Points



Downstream



Upstream

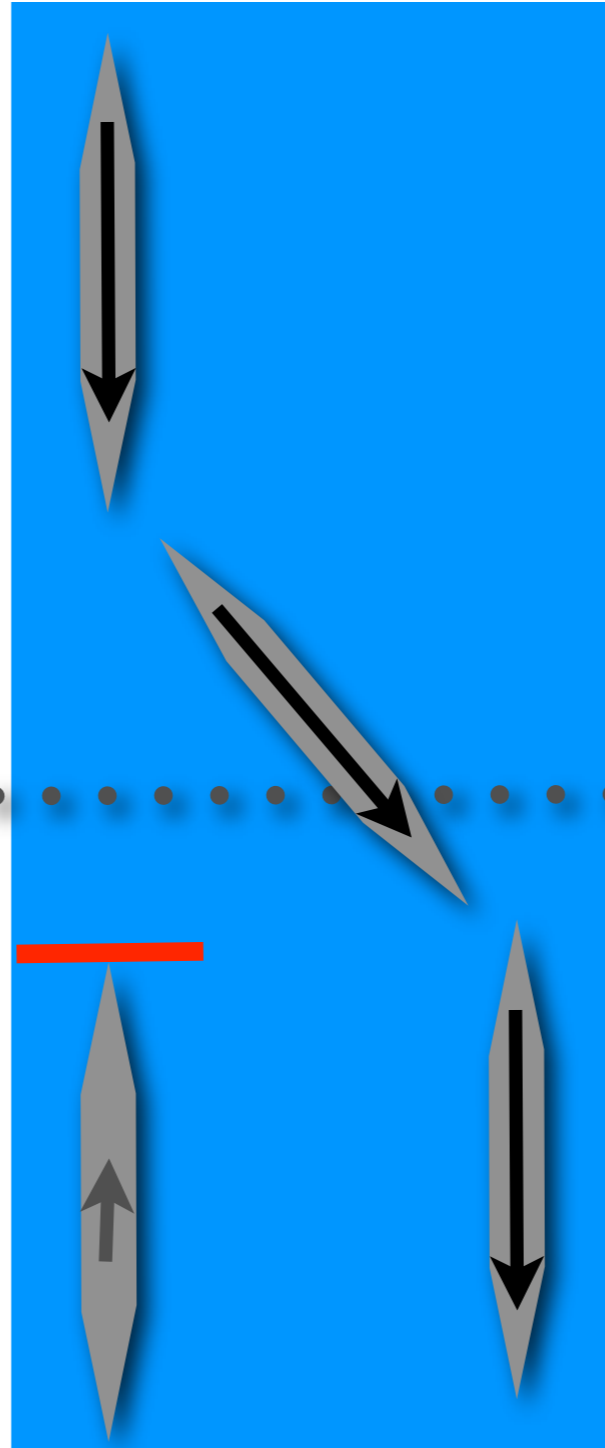
- Cross straight over
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# Crossover Points



Downstream crew waits for upstream crew



Downstream



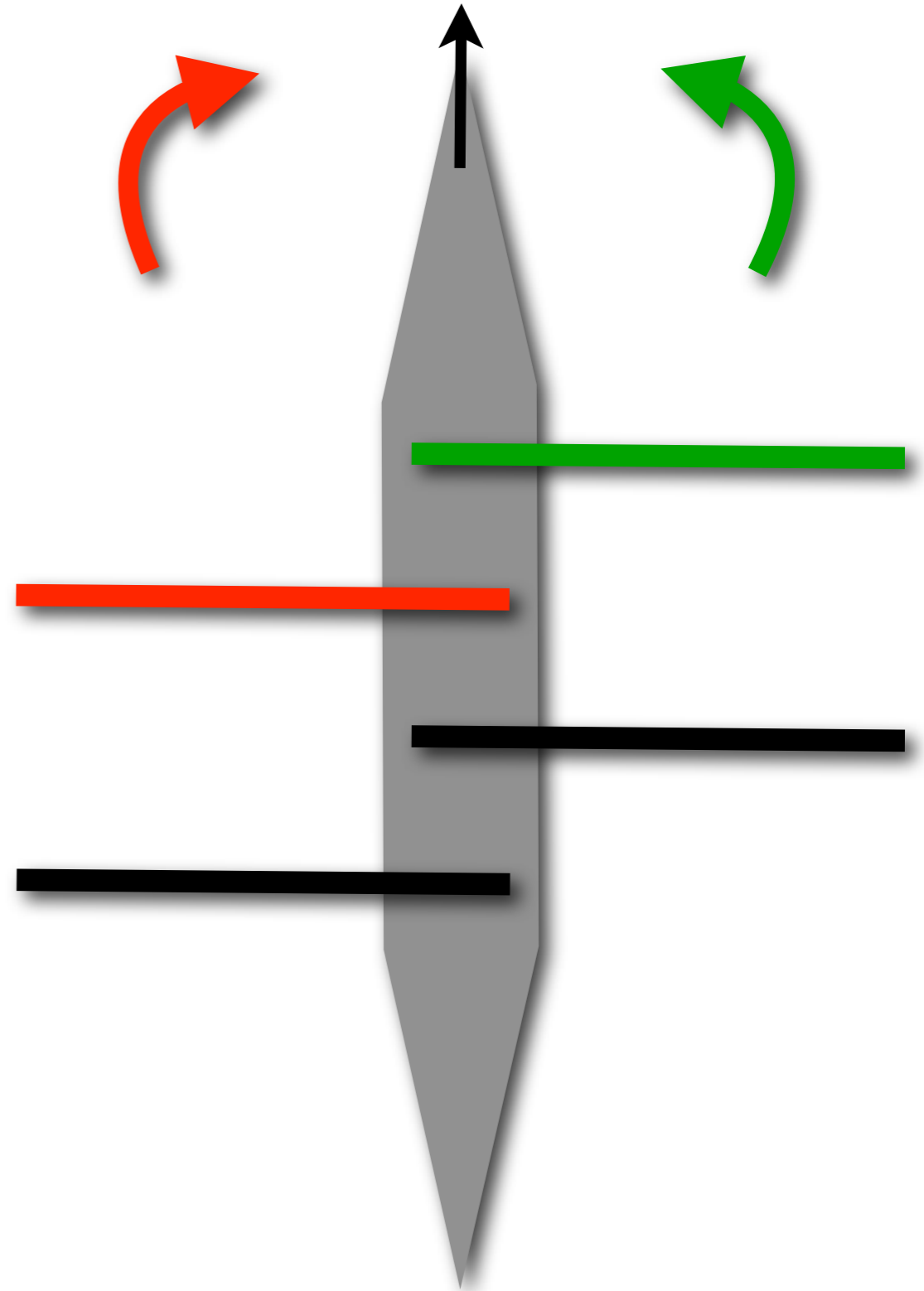
Upstream

- Cross straight over
- Do not stop on the crossing point



# Steering with Rowers

- Each rower pulls the boat forward on their side
- Torque – they are on outside of turn
- Use bow rowers



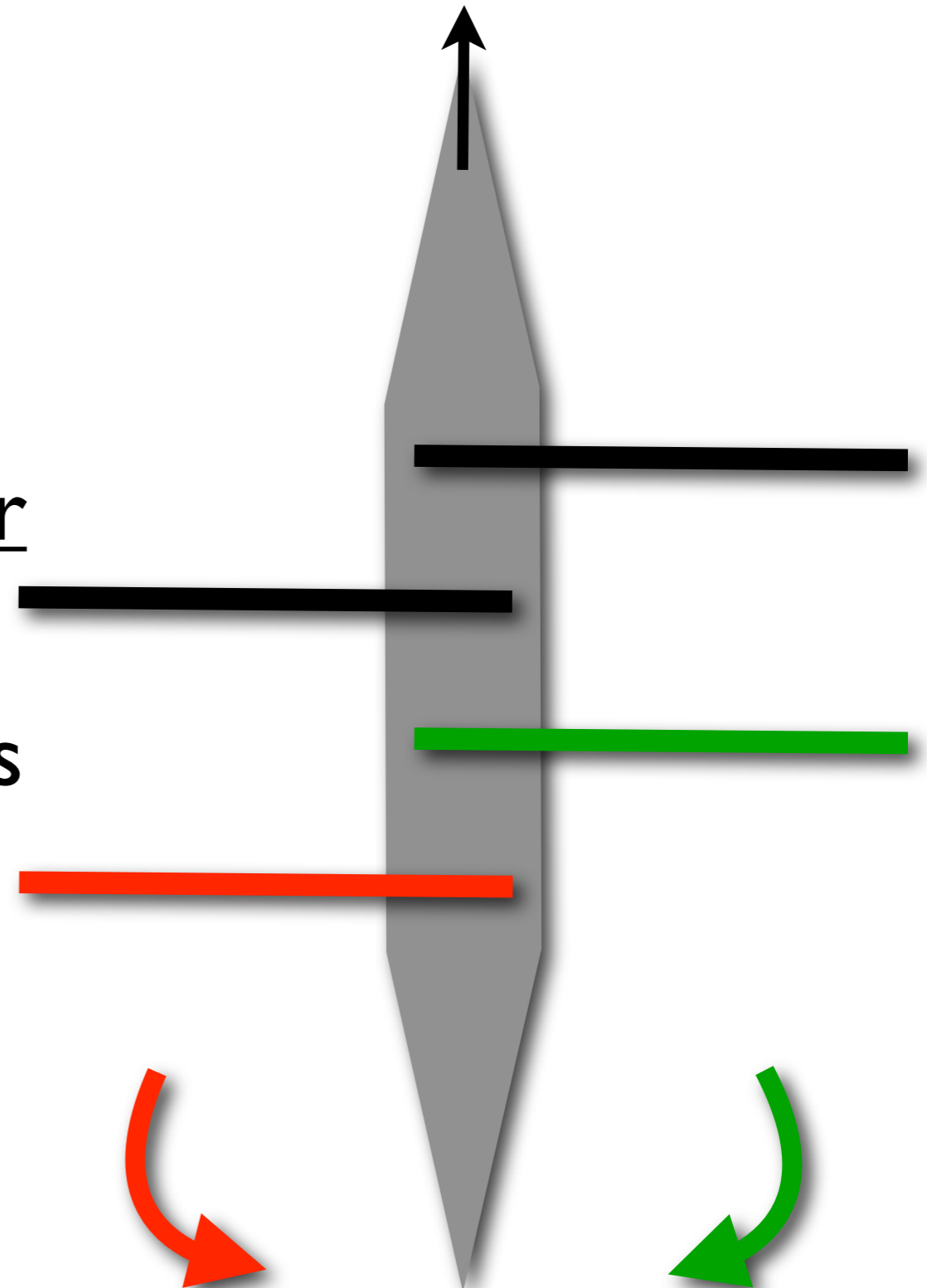
# Steering With Rowers

- Manoeuvre stationary boat
- Use individual (e.g. bow) or pair (e.g. 2 & 4)
- “Bow take a stroke”
- Steer round corner
- Get individuals to pull harder
- “Pressure from bow side”



# Backing Down

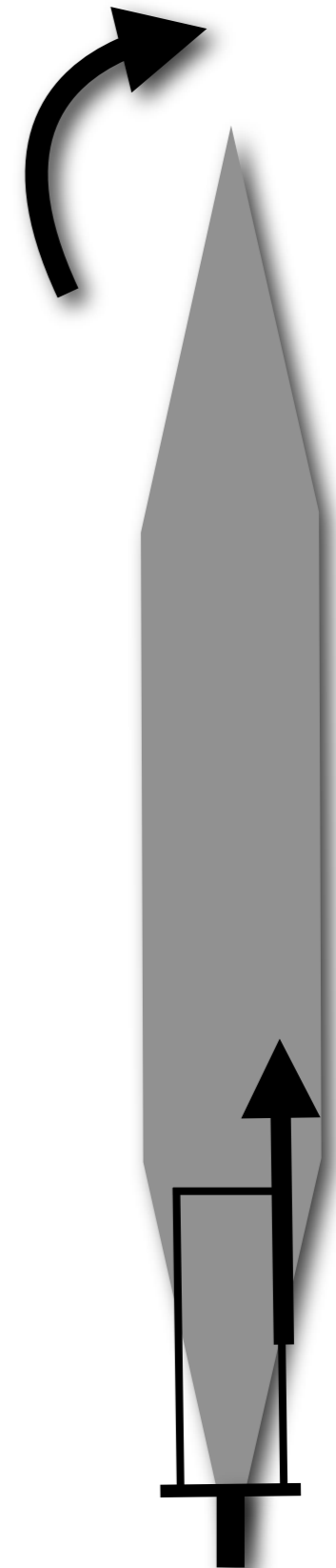
- Turn blade upside down
- Push away in the water
- Boat moves backwards
- Individual still on outside of turn
- Use stern rowers





# Steering with the Rudder

- To move right (bow side)...  
...push right side of rudder  
string away from you
- To move left (stroke side)...  
...push left side of rudder  
string away from you



# Steering

- An VIII turns about approx the 3 seat
- Remember both the bow and stern will swing round
- Bow pair push the bows
- Rudder pushes the stern



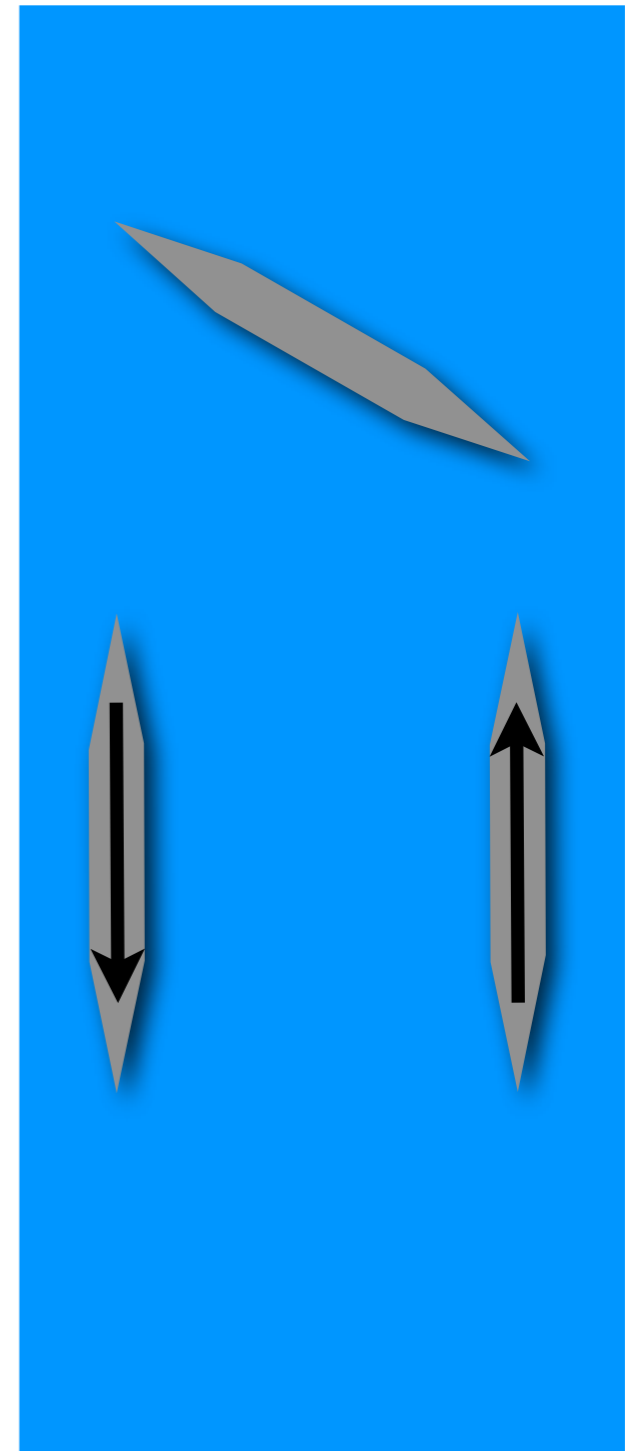
# Steering with the Rudder

- Takes time to take effect
- Less effective the slower the boat is moving
- Get rowers to help you out...



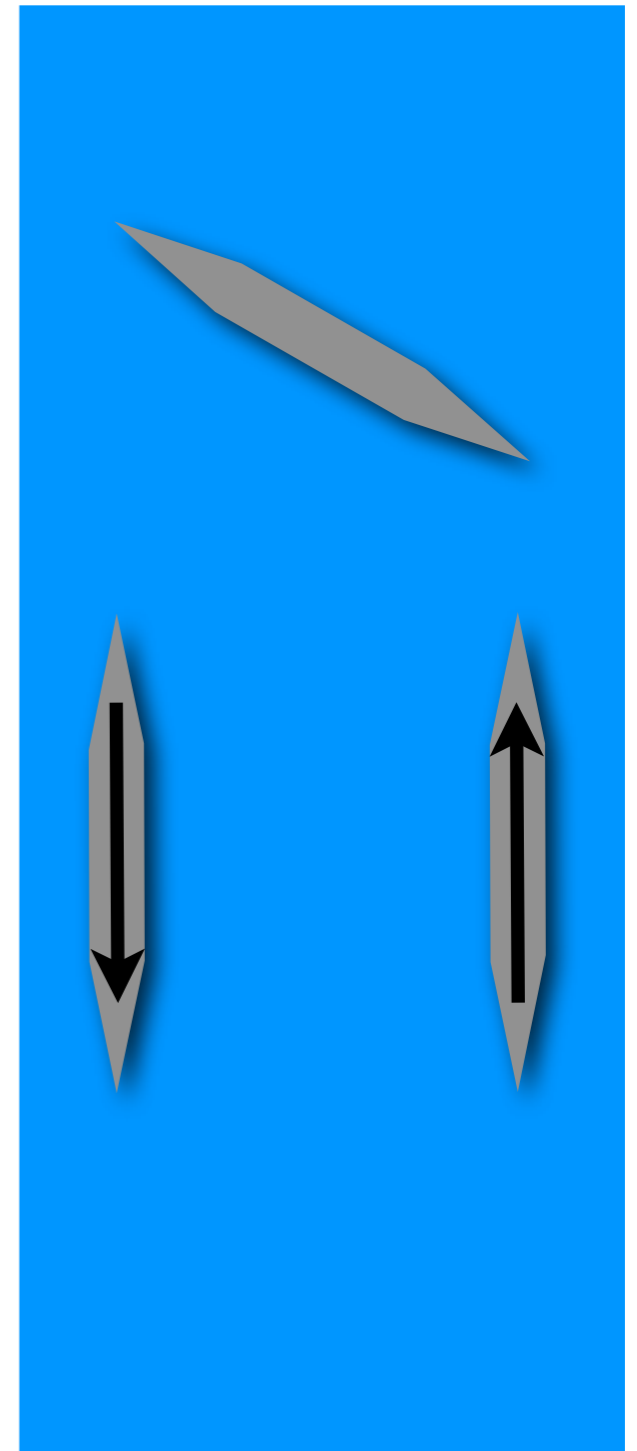
# Spinning

- Never spin in front of a crew (in front or behind)
- Do I have enough room?
  - The Cam gets narrow!
- Spin quickly
- Once round, get to your side of the river ASAP
- Don't sit blocking the river!



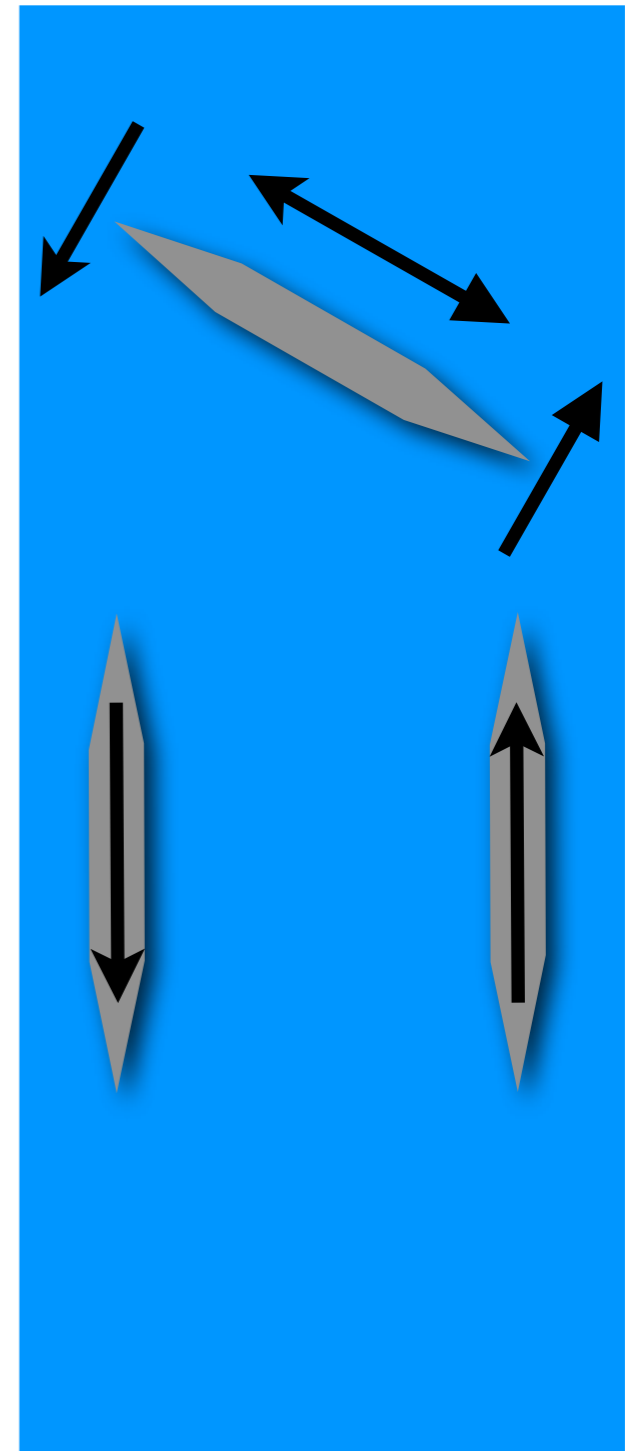
# Spinning

- Alternately:
  - Bow side take strokes
  - Stroke side back down
- Move up and down slide together
- Only one side has blades in at a time
- Side not rowing keep blades on water

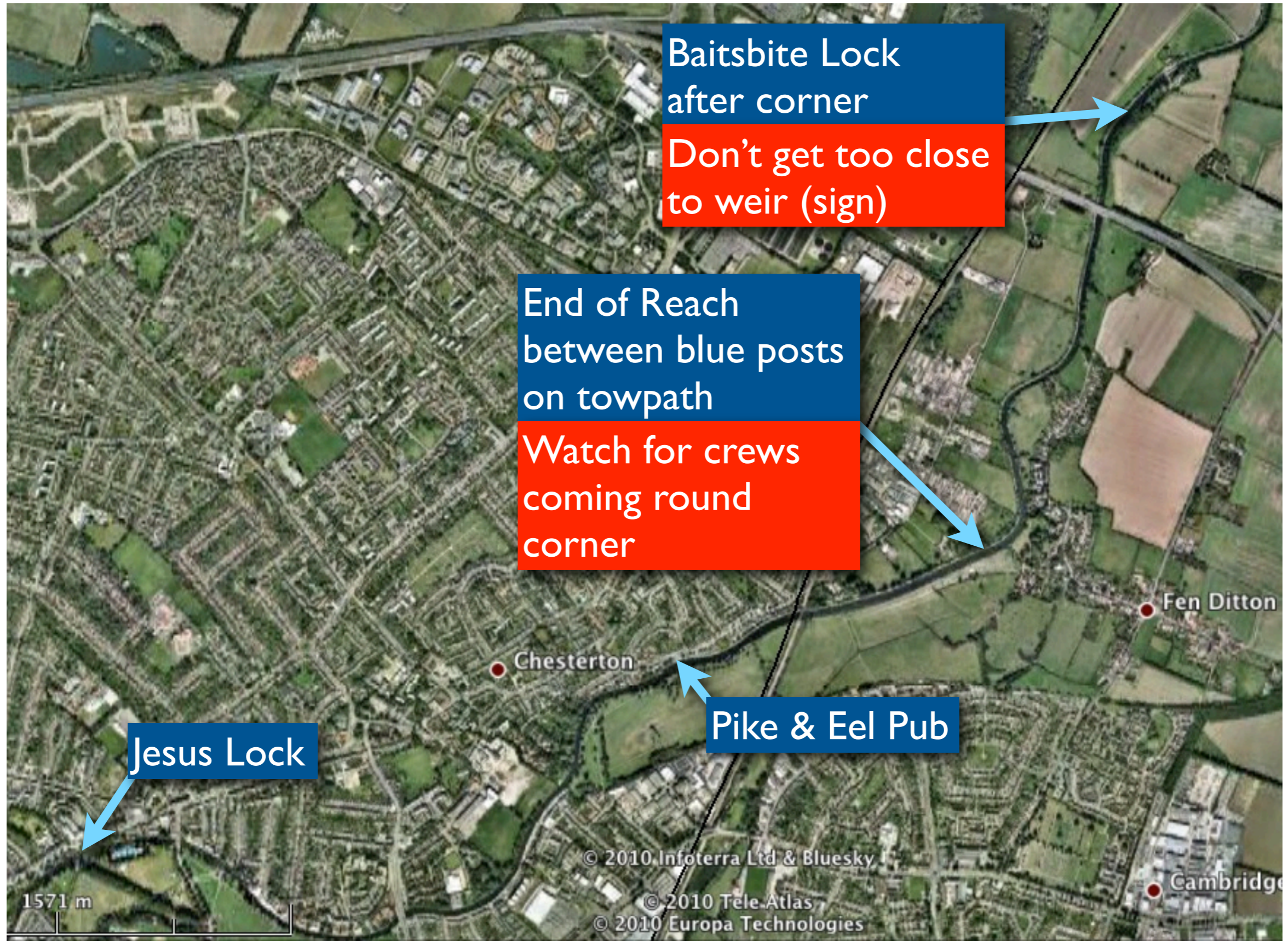


# Spinning

- You will move back/forward as well as round
- Keep eye on bow/stern
- One side may need to take stroke twice in a row
  - e.g. if bow about to hit, back down twice on stroke side
- Can also spin the other way...
  - (want to end up on right side)



# Spinning Points



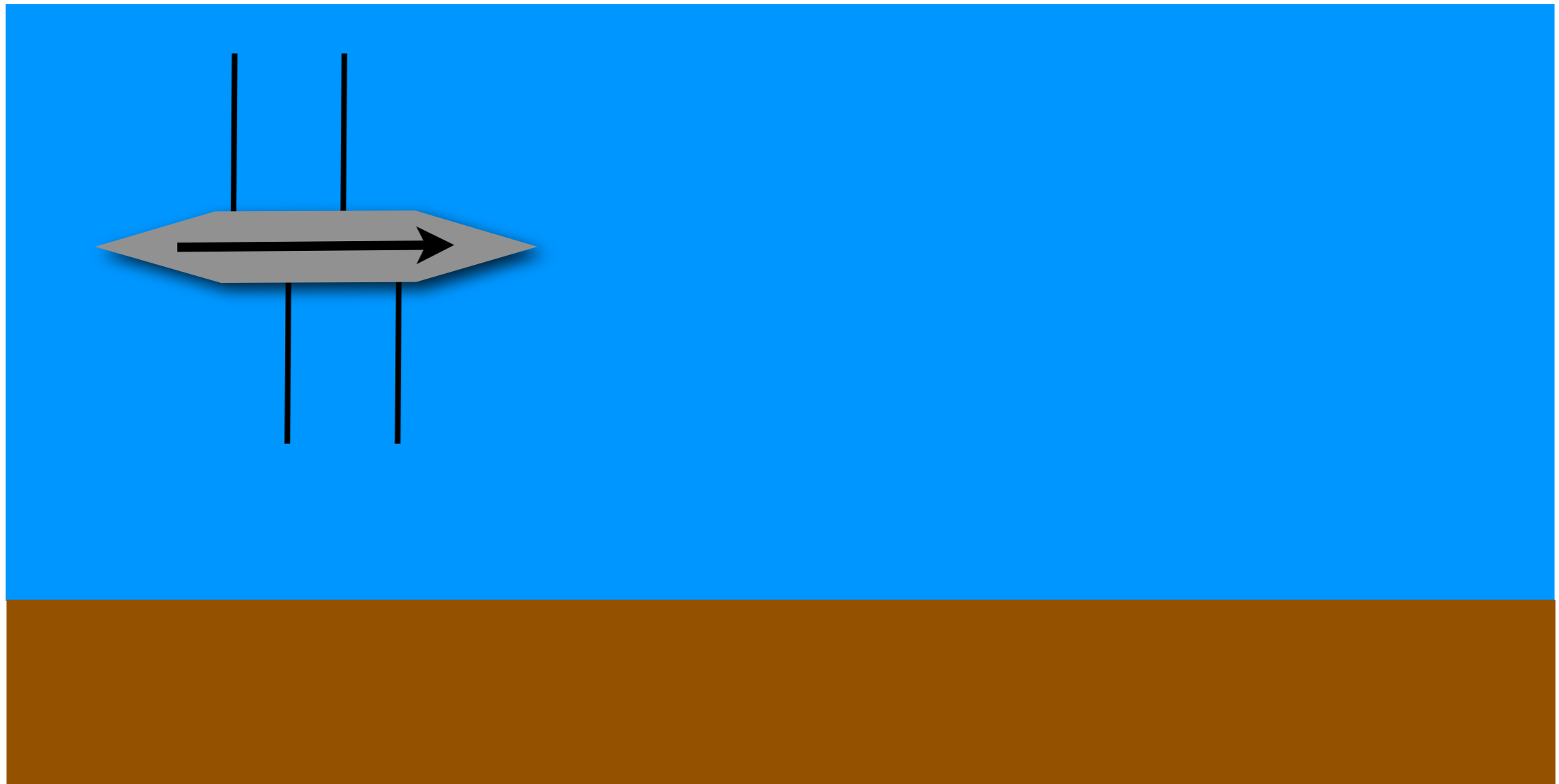
# Parking

- Takes practice to get it right
- Point bow to where you (cox) want to end up
- Take it slowly – bow four or pair
- Crew lean out from bank and bank side (usually bow side) rowers lift blades
- Gently take run off in stern on water side (usually stroke)

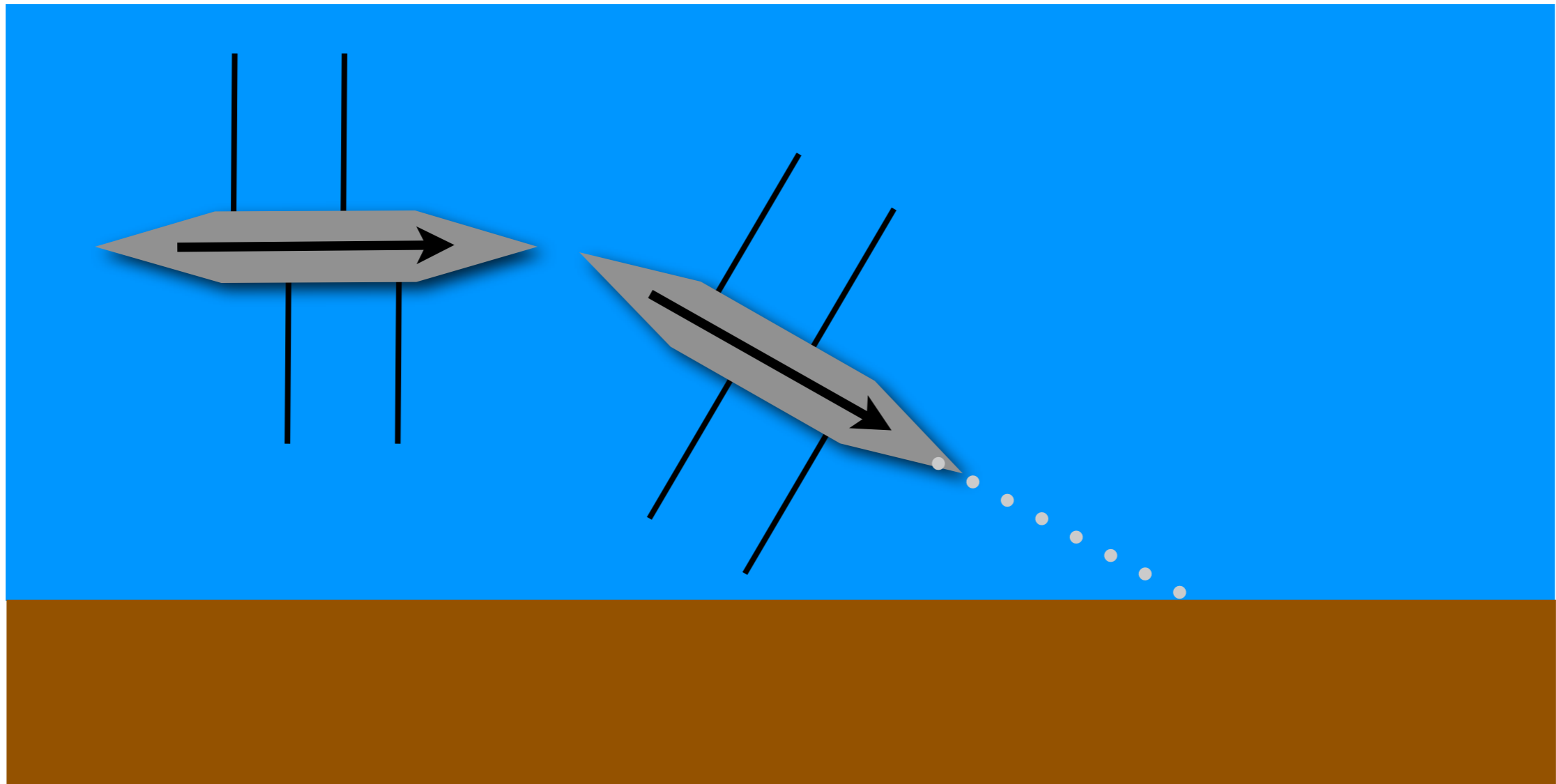




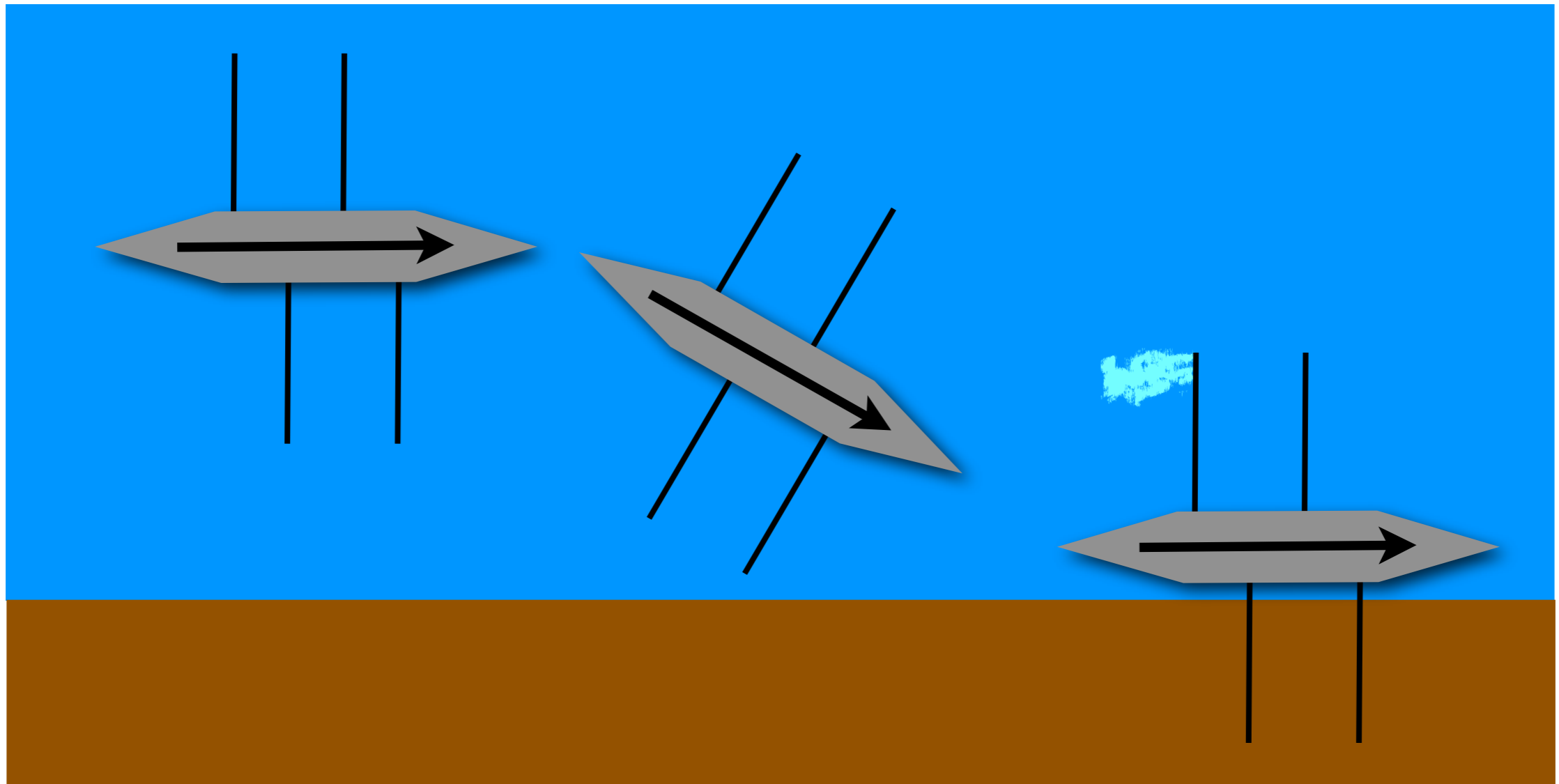
# Parking



# Parking



# Parking



# Courtesy

- Don't stop in front of other crews
  - Minimum of half crew at half slide
- If chatting with coach, pull right in to bank
- Be polite to all other river users



# Passing Other Crews

- Know your width
- Stop and pull blades in?
- Upstream crew has right of way



# Small Boats

- Single/double sculls, pairs
- Will not be looking where they are going
- Are easy to capsize
- If they haven't seen you, shout
  - “Sculler, take a look!”
- Keep a safe distance
- If they capsize in front, you need to be able to stop before hitting them



# Overtaking

- Slower crews should let faster crews overtake
- Overtake only if safe to do so
  - No crews coming other way
  - Not on corners (incl. under Railway Bridge) or at crossover points



# Overtaking

- Ask other crew
  - “XXX, may I come by please”
  - Wait for response: “Come by, YYY”
- Get past them and back to your side as quickly as possible





# Early Mornings

Before 07:30, upstream of the Railway Bridge

- No loud cox boxes
  - Minimum, essential commands
- No coaching from the back
- Novice crews may not boat before 07:30



# Early Mornings

- River is busy before 09:00 on weekdays
- Try to arrange later outings!
  
- Be considerate
- Don't keep stopping
- Minimum half crew, half slide



# Collisions

- Stay calm and in control of your crew!
- STOP! Hold it up!
  - Preferably before you hit! – pull blades in
- Steer yourself out using a pair
  - Use appropriate rower to move yourself out
  - Often better to back with stern pair...



# Moored Boats

If you collide with moored boat:

1. Blades in!
  2. Back down with stern pair if possible
  3. Push off fenders (or tyres)
  4. If no fenders, push off above water line
- Apologise!



# Safety/Incidents

- In case of hostile encounters
  - Do not get involved
  - Get your crew to safety
  - Take your mobile – phone 999
  - Try to get witness/boat registration numbers
  - Report incidents to your coach/boatman/  
CUCBC



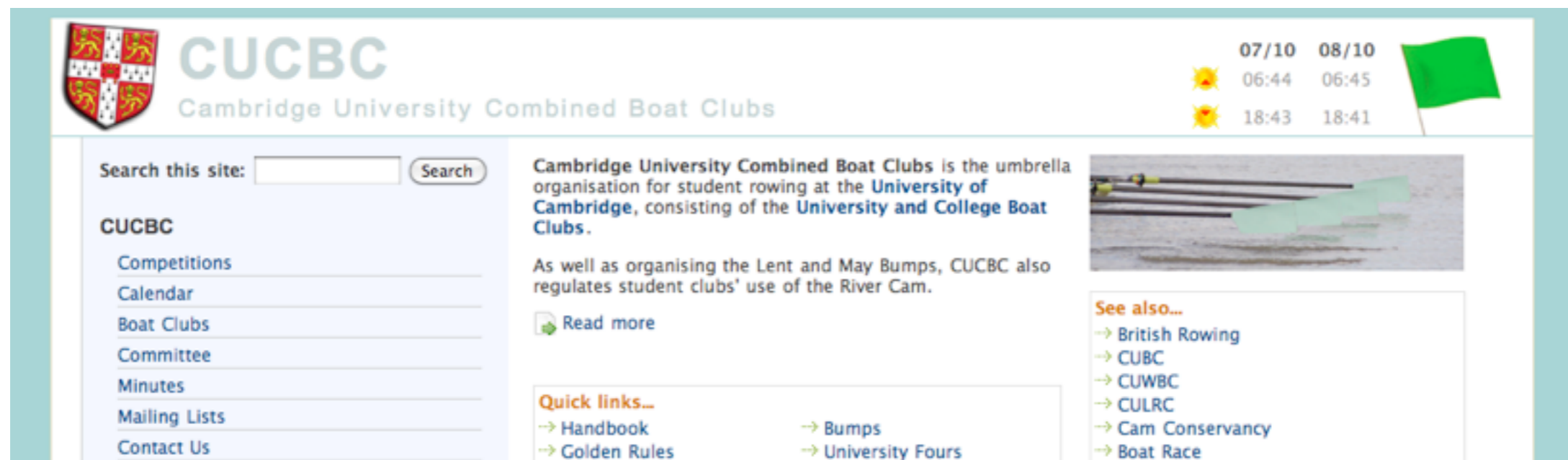
# Is it safe to boat?

- Wind
- Stream
  - Can you control the boat?
- Fog
  - Can you see where you're going? Lights?
- Ice
  - More than 10cm from bank?



# The Flag

- Set by CUCBC
- Defines which crews are allowed to boat given the conditions
- On the website – [www.cucbc.org](http://www.cucbc.org)



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Cambridge University Combined Boat Clubs (CUCBC). The header features the CUCBC logo and name, along with a weather forecast for 07/10 and 08/10. The main content area includes a search bar, a navigation menu, a description of the organization, and quick links to various resources.

**CUCBC**  
Cambridge University Combined Boat Clubs

07/10 08/10  
06:44 06:45  
18:43 18:41

Search this site:  Search

**CUCBC**

- Competitions
- Calendar
- Boat Clubs
- Committee
- Minutes
- Mailing Lists
- Contact Us

Cambridge University Combined Boat Clubs is the umbrella organisation for student rowing at the **University of Cambridge**, consisting of the **University and College Boat Clubs**.

As well as organising the Lent and May Bumps, CUCBC also regulates student clubs' use of the River Cam.

[Read more](#)

**Quick links...**

- Handbook
- Golden Rules
- Bumps
- University Fours

**See also...**

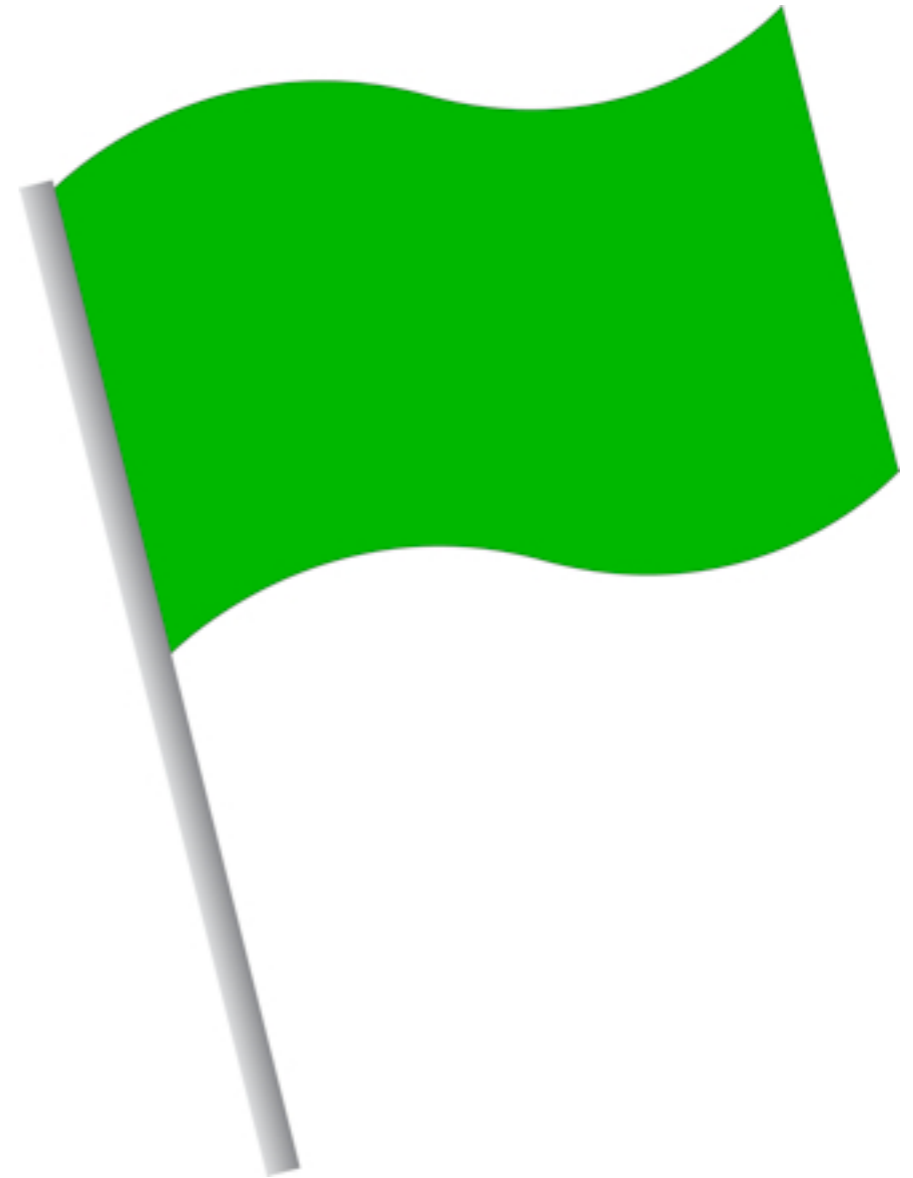
- British Rowing
- CUBC
- CUWBC
- CULRC
- Cam Conservancy
- Boat Race



# The Flag

## **Green**

- No restriction on which crews may boat

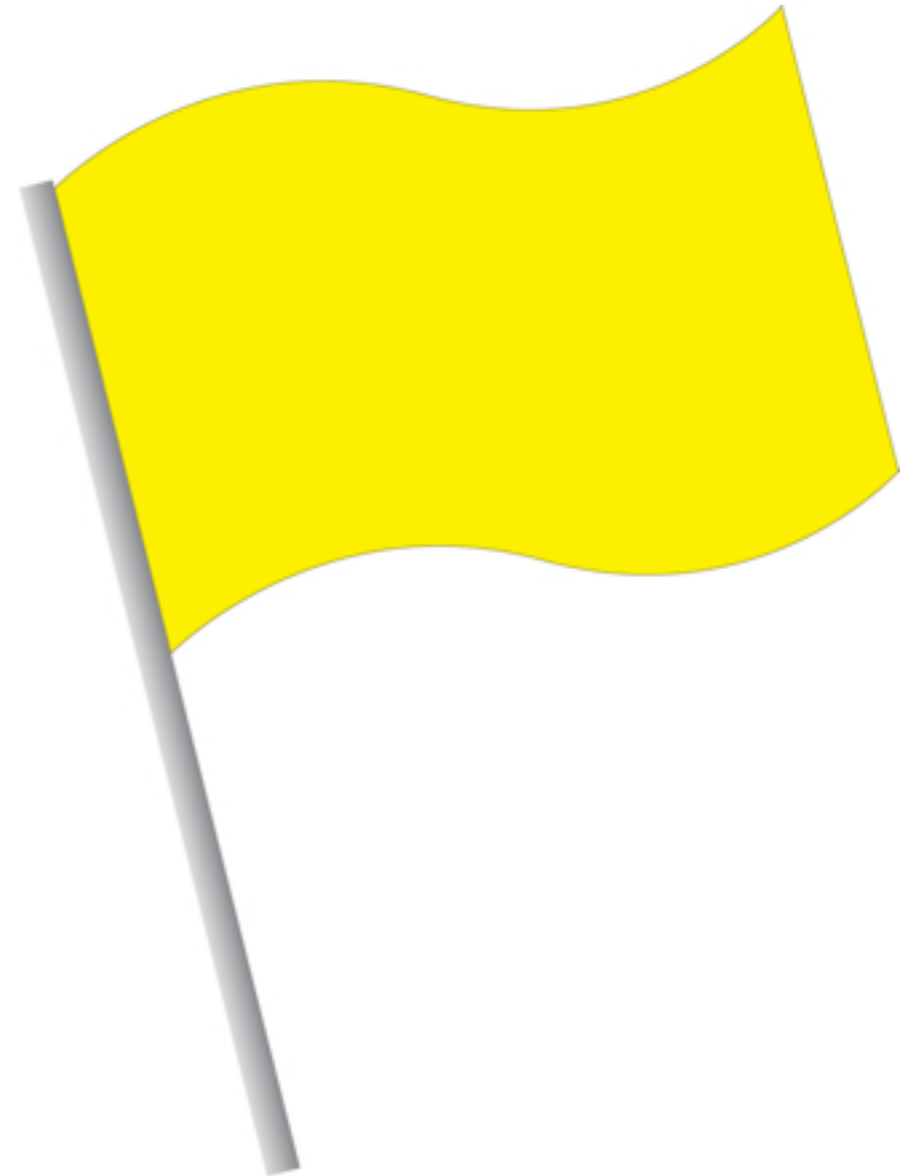




# The Flag

## Yellow

- 1st Boats
- Crews in top 2 (men) or 1 (women) divisions of May Bumps (no novices)
- Smaller boats made up of members of these crews



# The Flag

## **Red**

- No crew may board



# The Flag

## **Red/Yellow**

- University Crews
- Tub Pairs (above Chesterton)



# Is it safe to boat?

- Flag is a guideline
- At the end of the day, it is up to you (and your coach) whether to boat
  - Do you think it is safe?
  - Can you handle the conditions?



# Effective Calls

- What
  - What you want your crew to do
- When
  - Timing the call
- How
  - Rhythm, tone and pitch of voice



# What - Build-Up

- What you want to achieve
- Be positive (but truthful)
- Be precise



# What – Build-Up



# What – Build-Up

- “You’re weak”





# What – Build-Up

- “You’re weak”
- “We need more power”



# What – Build-Up

- “You’re weak”
- “We need more power”
- “We need to press harder with the legs”



# What – Build-Up

- “You’re weak”
- “We need more power”
- “We need to press harder with the legs”
- “We’re going to increase the cover by pressing the legs”



# What – Build-Up

- “You’re weak”
- “We need more power”
- “We need to press harder with the legs”
- “We’re going to increase the cover by pressing the legs”
- “Good cover off the finishes – let’s get another 6 inches by pressing with the legs”



# What – The Command



# What – The Command

- Short, sharp and to the point



# What – The Command

- Short, sharp and to the point
- Be precise



# What – The Command

- Short, sharp and to the point
- Be precise
  - “Row faster...GO”





# What – The Command

- Short, sharp and to the point
- Be precise
  - “Row faster...GO”
  - “Press harder with the legs...GO”



# What – The Command

- Short, sharp and to the point
- Be precise
  - “Row faster...GO”
  - “Press harder with the legs...GO”
  - “10% more on the quads...big drive...GO”



# What – Follow-Up

- Positive and truthful feedback
  - “Good change”
  - “Not quite together...drive the legs as one...GO”
- Break up a “ten”
  - “Press one...two...on the legs...three...power in the water..four..”



# When

- Timing the call is crucial
- “GO” should give maximum time for preparation
  - “Pressure on the legs”
  - “Ready” – catch
  - “GO” – finish



# How

- Rowers will respond to the tone and rhythm of your voice
- Follow the rhythm of the crew (though slower rhythm can help temper rushing)
- Short punch words/short punch actions
  - “PRESSURE on the LEGS” (short/sharp)
  - “Draaaaaaaaaw it through” (long)



# Motivation

- Keep crew motivated through the pain!
- Tell them what is going on
  - “We are gaining on the crew in front”
  - “Bowball is past their cox, give me another seat...on the legs...GO”
- Vary your calls
- Don't just cheerlead - relate to parts of the stroke
- You don't need to yell constantly during the race!



# Work with your coach

- Listen to coach and repeat to crew if necessary
- Don't talk over coach (unless for safety)
- Do not carry out exercise unless you're sure you can do it safely
- Understand exercises (and initiate them yourself)



# Racing





# Racing

- Head Races
  - Time trial over a set distance
  - Boats race one behind the other



# Racing

- Head Races
  - Time trial over a set distance
  - Boats race one behind the other
- Side-by-side/Regattas
  - Knock-out



# Racing

- Head Races
  - Time trial over a set distance
  - Boats race one behind the other
- Side-by-side/Regattas
  - Knock-out
- Bumps!





# Racing

- Know the race
- Read the marshalling instructions before you go
- Listen to all marshals and umpires
- Have a race plan with your crew!



# How to Improve

- Listen carefully to the coach
  - Do you understand the point of exercises?
- Watch the blades/crew – what's right?
- Learn from experience
- Have an opinion – participate in post-outing chat
- Be self-critical



# CUCBC Website

- Flag
- Lighting times
- Handbook
  - Rules of the River
- Competitions (+ event calendar)

[www.cucbc.org](http://www.cucbc.org)



# Mailing Lists

- CUCBC Coxes List
  - Subscribe to this
  - Announcements for coxes
- Contacts List
  - General information for those interested in Cambridge rowing
- To subscribe: [www.cucbc.org/lists](http://www.cucbc.org/lists)





# Thank you

Any questions?

