Season Information Packet – Fall 2026

August 25, 2026 – November 20, 2026

Internally, you experience rowing as a graphic microcosm of life - solitude, learning, work, rest, nourishment, sharing and ultimately challenge. Allen Rosenberg, Pan American Games Gold Medalist; Head Coach US National Rowing Team.

Spring 2026 Recap

The WJ Crew Team had an epic Spring 2026 season!! To hit just a few highlights: The team started the season strong, at the Darrell Winslow Regatta on the Occoquan. For the Girls team, the 2V4 took first place, the 1V4 took second place, and the Junior 8 took second place! And the Boys Junior 8 took first place. The team had very strong racing at the WMIRA conference championships. On the Girls side, 4 boats medaled!! Girls 2V4 - Silver, Girls 3V4 - Gold, Girls Double - Bronze, and Girls Novice 4 - Gold. On the Boys side, the 1V4 took Bronze and the Junior 8 won the petite final in the 1V8 category!

We brought one of our largest contingents to the Stotesbury Cup, and the overwhelming majority of our team had the opportunity to participate. We had multiple boats advance, including semifinal and final appearances. For SRAA Nationals, we had two 4s and an 8 qualify. All the athletes performed well against very tough competition, and the boys junior 8 made it to finals - The first 8 to make finals at SRAA in team history! And we capped it off with our first international trip, to the CSSRA Regatta in Ontario. Four boats made it to the grand finals during our first time attending the Canadian Nationals. Athletes embraced the opportunity to compete against some of the best scholastic crews in North America and represented Walter Johnson, Maryland, and U.S. scholastic rowing with pride. Definitely there was a lot about the season to celebrate!

Fall 2026 Season Overview

We are looking forward to another great season in 2026-2027! For those newer to crew, the Fall season is a bit different from the Spring season - it is focused on Head Races. The races are longer (generally 5K) and are timed – the boats start one after another, not as a group. So, it is hard to tell who is winning - each boat is racing the clock and trying to get the best time to make the finals.

We'll open the Boat House on August 22, start voluntary practices August 25, have the first official practice Saturday August 29, and then the season will run through November 20. BUT, they are starting repairs on the Bladensburg Rowing Dock on August 17. How quickly they are able to complete the repairs may impact when we start practices - stay tuned. The general practice schedule will be the same as in the Spring, with Water Practices Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and Land Practice on Wednesday. Though there are some exceptions. See the Schedule section, and the new Calendar Section at the end of this document, for details!

The Board has partnered for the year with the Positive Coaching Alliance. PCA is a national organization that has partnered with more than 3,500 sports organizations to provide training and resources to foster positive, character-building sports experiences. We think this is a great opportunity to support our coaches, the Board, and the rest of the team and to enhance the WJ

Crew program. They will conduct an initial workshop with the coaches on August 20. And our program manager is available throughout the year for consultation and to provide materials that combine the latest in sports psychology, education, and practical advice from professional and college coaches to help improve athletic performance and the experience of all participants.

As with the Spring season, during registration, we will be asking you to sign a waiver authorizing WJ to disclose to the Board whether your athletes meet the academic eligibility standard. We will continue to follow the same academic eligibility standards that apply for MCPS-sponsored sports - students who have at least a 2.0 marking period average in the prior marking period with no more than one failing grade will be academically eligible to participate during the next marking period.

As a preview, Winter Conditioning will start on November 30. We are changing our set up for the gym for this Winter. We are working on contracting with SoldierFit not only to use their gym for workouts, but also to have a professional trainer from the gym lead group fitness activities 2 days per week with each squad. While this comes at a slightly higher cost, we think this will provide a good structure and approach for our athletes to build a strong foundation for the Spring season.

Schedule - See Also - Calendar view version at the end

Fall Season At a Glance:

- Thursday, August 20 - New Student Cookout - WJ Crew Recruiting event
- Saturday, August 22 - Open Boathouse
- Week of August 24 - Voluntary practices for all returning rowers, Tuesday to Friday - **NO** bus, but must be registered to participate, for insurance reasons.
- Saturday August 29 - First day of official practice for Varsity. This includes all rowers who were novices during the Spring 2026 season.
- Monday, August 31 - BUS service starts, NOTE: Water Practice M, Tu, Wed, Th, and Fr this week.
- Sunday, September 6 - Float Building and Decorating for Labor Day Parade
- Monday, September 7 - Kensington Labor Day Parade, NO practice
- Saturday, September 12 - Middle School Row Program Starts
- Week of September 14 - Free trial week for new Novices:
    - Water practices Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday
    - Friday - MCPS Early Release - Varsity only Land Practice
- Saturday, October 3 - NO Practice, Plant Sale!!
- Monday, September 21 - MCPS Closed - NO Practice. NOTE: Water Practice Wed of this week
- Week of Oct. 12 - Wed. - Water practice; Thu. - Captain's Practice; Fri - NO practice (MCPS Closed)
- Week of November 2 - NO Practice
- Saturday, November 7 - Close down Boathouse
- Weeks of November 9 & 16 - Erging at School - Girls Mon & Wed; Boys Tue & Thu
- Monday, November 30 - Start of Winter Season

Weekly schedule:

- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday - **All** Squads Water Practice 2:45-7:00
- Wednesday - Land Practice 2:45 to 4:30 or 4:30 to 6:15 for Varsity, Novices are encouraged to attend.

    - Girls will have early erging 9/9, 9/30, and 10/21.
    - Boys will have early erging 9/18 (Fri), 10/7, and 10/28
- Saturday - Water Practice 8:00-11:00, unless racing on Saturday or Sunday
- Round Trip transport is provided to Water Practice on weekdays. **No** bus transport Saturday
- Try to schedule tutoring and appointments for Wednesdays, to prioritize water practices.
- The main platform for practice schedule information is the iCrew app. Rowers are responsible for keeping iCrew updated with their practice availability.
- The main communication platform for sending messages relating to the Team will be Slack. Parents of registered rowers will receive an invitation to the Slack channel for the team.
- WJ Crew is a no-cut program. However, regular attendance and participation at practices and regattas is expected. Given the true team nature of rowing, a rower's attendance, or lack thereof, may impact their rowing development and placement in competitive boats. Most rowers will get the chance to compete during the season, but not all rowers will compete at every regatta.
- There are times that practice needs to be canceled due to weather. This decision is usually made by noon - please be checking your email or Slack for updates.

Regattas:

- September 27	Head of the Potomac, Washington, DC. Varsity only
- October 11	Occoquan Chase, Sandy Run Regional Park, VA. Varsity only
- October 15-18	Head of the Charles, Boston, MA - Select Varsity boats only
- October 25	Head of the Schuylkill, Philadelphia, PA - Varsity only, Day Trip Rowers need to arrange their own transportation.
- November 1	Head of the Occoquan, Sandy Run Regional Park, VA. Varsity and most novices

Pasta Dinners:

On the Friday before local regattas, the team gathers after practice for some fun and quality carb loading at the home of one of the crew families. This is a team social event and Novice rowers are encouraged to come, even if they are not rowing at the regatta! We are looking for families to host pasta dinners (which will satisfy your volunteer requirement for the Fall!!!) - please reach out to Kasha Hayes if you are willing to host - it is easy, other volunteers bring the food, beverages, paper goods, etc. and work on set-up and clean-up! Also, Kasha will be out of town on September 25 - We are looking for someone to pinch hit being the lead for managing the pasta dinner. This Fall, we are planning the following:

- September 25 (before Head of the Potomac)
- October 9 (before the Occoquan Chase)
- October 30 (before Head of the Occoquan)

Parent schedule:

- August 14	Registration Opens
- August 24	Varsity Registration Deadline - Register (including Medical forms); Payment
- September 2	Information Session for New Rowers - Virtual on Google Meet
- September 7	Kensington Parade - WJ Rowing will be in the parade again this year!

- September 9	Dining Out Fundraiser - No Regrets Pizza
- September 10	Varsity Parent Meeting - Virtual on Google Meet
- September 13	Novice Sign-Up deadline for Free Trial Week (9-14 to 9-19)
- September 16	Novice Parent Meeting In Person at WJ from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.
- September 20	Novice Registration Deadline - Register (including Medical forms); Payment For Fall Season
- Late September	Pumpkin, Pansey, & Mum Sale Orders due - Stay tuned for the firm date!
- October 3	Pumpkin, Pansey, & Mum Sale Pickup at WJ

Other school events:

August 25	First day of school (Monday 8/24 - Orientation for new students)
September 3	Back to School Night 7:00 pm
September 8	Senior Parent Information Night 7:00 pm
September 15	Freshman Parent Information Night 7:00 pm
September 19	Kensington 8K (WJ fundraiser)
September 22	Junior Parent Information Night 7:00 pm
September 29	Sophomore Parent Information Night 7:00 pm
October 12-16	Spirit Week
October 16	Homecoming game
October 17	Homecoming dance
October 30	End of 1st Quarter
November 2	MCPS Closed - Professional Day
November 3	MCPS Closed - Election Day

Volunteer positions

WJ Crew could not function successfully without our many parent volunteers. We have many wonderful crew parents in charge of various roles. There are a number of roles which are currently vacant - the areas in which we currently need volunteers the most are for the Food Tent and for our various fundraisers. For fundraising, any help would be appreciated, but we could particularly use assistance from anyone who has grant writing or marketing experience.

As with prior seasons, we are requiring each family to commit, as part of registration, to performing one volunteer position during each season, or pay a supplemental fee to opt out of volunteering. Please consider stepping up to take on an ongoing volunteer role, to help make the 2026-2027 WJ Crew season happen! Also, several roles are being filled by parents of seniors (including five of the members of the Board) - we would like to work to identify people to take over those positions next year, to make for a smooth transition.

- Away Regatta Travel Coordinator – Cassie & Walter Carr
- Chuck Wagon Transporters – Bryant and Amy Trost
- Regatta Food Tent Coordinators - Team A - Bryant and Amy Trost; Team B - **Vacant**
- Regatta Food Tent Team - **Vacant**
- Fundraising Coordinator – Orianna Helms
- Get On Board! Coordinator – **Vacant**
- Get On Board! Planning and Organizing Team- **Vacant (looking for 2-3 people)**

- Erg-a-thon Coordinator - Alisha Keehn
- Erg-a-thon Planning and Organizing Team- Patti Poss (chili cookoff); Jocelyn Dyer (marketing), Marion Keehn (A&V announcer)
- Plant Sale Coordinator – Tim Peet
- Plant Sale Planning and Organizing Team- Anna Taylor, Julie Coons, Nicole Hamilton
- Dining Out Fundraising Coordinator - Lisa Townsend (**Need replacement for Spring)**
- Pasta Dinner Coordinator – Kasha Hayes (**Senior Parent)**
- Recruitment – Gwen Wade
- Motor Boat Pool/Equipment Maintenance – Marion Keehn; Willem Helms
- Safesport Committee - Larry Basagia, John Henderson, Chris Graves, Emma Fisher, and Cassie Carr, and Flavia Diamant
- Safesport training Coordinator - Kasha Hayes (**Senior Parent)**
- SSL Coordinator – Lisa Townsend (**Senior Parent)**
- Parent Volunteer Tracking - Megan & Greg Wagner
- Erg Rental Coordinator - Caryn Seligman
- Website Updating –Ritesh Sana, Norwin Herrera-Cornejo
- Uniform Coordinator – Rita Drinkard (**Senior Parent)**
- Regatta Photographers – **Vacant**
- Year End Party – **Vacant**
- Year End Photo Album – Luis Gonzalez and Glenn Contreras (**Senior Parents**)

In addition to the ongoing volunteer positions, we will need additional parent volunteers for specific events:

- Day of Food Tent Set Up, Operation, and Take Down
- Pasta Dinner Hosts
- Plant Sale Volunteers
- Chaperones and Drivers for away regattas

Registration

Fall fees are $2,000 for varsity and $1,900 for novices. The registration fees cover the costs associated with practice and races. Please note that there may be additional travel-related costs for regattas that require overnight trips, such as the Head of the Charles. Registration fees also do not cover the cost of uniforms or WJ Crew apparel.

If the registration fee or travel costs pose a difficulty for your family, please reach out to Board Chair Larry Basiaga as soon as possible to discuss financial assistance possibilities for the fall. For this year, we have made some changes to our financial assistance process. A family will be asked to submit an application for each season (fall, winter, and spring) for which the family seeks financial assistance. **Applications for financial assistance for the Fall Season are due August 24 for Varsity rowers and September 20 for Novice rowers.**

Applications will be reviewed by the Financial Assistance Committee (the Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer of the Board). The application and identity of applicants for financial assistance will only be disclosed to the Financial Assistance Committee Committee.

For Novices registering for the free trial week (September 14 to 19), please sign up by September 13th at the following link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfPc_8W-k_7fHAvQxynFWC6lbD2_vxl_M0Vxjl5TCWJBFjGQQ/viewform?usp=dialog

For Varsity and Novices to register for the WJ Crew Team for the full Fall season, use the SportsEngine site https://walterjohnsoncrew.sportngin.com/register/form/017427528

- Have your health insurance card and child school ID# handy!
- You may pay by credit card, or, to save the cost of the credit card processing fee charged by SportsEngine, by Zelle or check (contact Robin Hart for a code).
- If you pay by credit card, you may choose to pay in 3 installments, rather than in full.
- Submit Page 5 (Medical Eligibility page) of the MCPS Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation for Athletics through the SportsEngine site
- Rowers who have not completed their registration will not be able to participate in practice.

Please contact Robin Hart if you have questions about registration.

SafeSport

Creating an environment in which our rowers can work and learn together free from emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and misconduct is a central mission for the WJ Crew Board, coaches, athletes, and parents. One of the major components to achieving that mission is our use of SafeSport policies, training, and resources. Kasha Hayes coordinates SafeSport training documentation.

The WJ Crew Board has established a SafeSport Committee to address any issues relating to misconduct: Larry Basiaga (Board Chair), John Henderson (Board Vice Chair), Chris Graves (Girls Head Coach), Emma Fisher (Boys Head Coach), Cassie Carr (parent volunteer), and Flavia Diamant (parent volunteer). If you have any concerns relating to potential abuse or misconduct, please contact any member of the SafeSport Committee.

USRowing Membership

Rowers must be registered with USRowing and complete the USRowing waiver to compete in many of the regattas the Team attends. Go to https://membership.usrowing.org/individual/join to register, and then search for Walter Johnson Crew Club. You will be asked to input a club code, which is **KQ6D6**. A basic membership is sufficient (there is a small administrative fee). Please be sure to register the rower as the member (not the parent), including using the rower's name and date of birth.

Fundraising

WJ Crew is a non-profit organization that is not permitted to receive funding from either Montgomery County Public Schools or the WJ Booster Club. We are sustained by membership dues and our fundraising efforts. Athletes and their families are expected to participate in fundraising efforts to help ensure we meet our operational expenses. Donations are tax deductible and have become an important staple in our success. Recently as economic times have changed, our donations have lowered and a new emphasis on participation will be important.

Raise Right
This is a new and exciting way everyone can raise money for the team without selling or buying anything extra. Details will be shared at the team meetings and in future emails.

Plant Sale - October 3
The plant sale will be on October 3 is expanding this year to include activities for rowers to participate and earn larger donations from the community. Possible activities include face painting, pumpkin painting and games. Volunteers will be needed to help promote the sale and distribute the goods. In addition, all rowers are expected to participate that day. Orders will be due in late September and we will have a firm deadline soon!

Get On Board!
We will be updating the timing and process for our Get On Board! campaign this year. The overall concept will be similar but ALL rowers will be expected to identify one business that will be acting as a sponsor. Based on the level of sponsorship these businesses will be recognized in a variety of ways (For example having the donor name on the Team T-Shirt or having the name and company link of the donor on the WJ Crew Website). Look for more information soon!

Erg-A-Thon
The Erg-A-Thon is scheduled for February. This will coincide with the Get On Board! timing similar to last year. More information to come.

Dining Out
We plan to have several dining out fundraisers during the Fall season, where a portion of the proceeds of sales at a restaurant will go to WJ Crew. The first dine out of the Fall will be at No Regrets Pizza on Wednesday, September 9 from 4:30 to 9:30. Look for an additional dine out event in October and one in November!

Coaches

Boys Head Coach; Varsity Boys Coach: Emma Fisher
Girls Head Coach, Varsity Girls Coach: Chris Graves

Assistant Coaches:

Dylan Dembo (alum)
Jeremiah Fan (alum)
Sydney Gibbons (alum)
Ryan Kavanaugh
Robert Karlen (alum)
Rebecca Paul
Rachel Rosenberg (alum & new this Year!)
Zoe Warren (alum)

Questions or concerns relating to coaching should be directed to our Parent / Coach Liaison, Lisa Townsend

A Look Ahead: Winter Workouts; Spring Season

We are just starting the Fall season, but here is a little preview of the rest of the year, particularly for those who are newer to WJ crew. The coaches expect that all members of the team will either participate in winter conditioning with the team, or be participating in another sport, between the Fall and Spring seasons. The conditioning program consists of a mix of gym workouts and erging.

As mentioned above, we are working on contracting with SoldierFit to use their gym for workouts, and also to have a professional trainer from the gym lead group fitness activities for the 2 days per week that each squad is at the gym. We anticipate this will start the week of November 30.

The Spring season practices are expected to begin the first week of March, weather dependent. MCPS has changed the Spring Break Schedule this year and it mostly falls **after** Easter. Spring Break starts on March 26, Good Friday and ends Sunday April 4. We anticipate the team will participate in a local regatta the Saturday of Easter Weekend (March 27), the first Saturday of Spring Break. The coaches like to take advantage of Spring Break and we anticipate holding two-a-day practices the week after Easter this year. The Spring season builds towards a culmination in May, with our conference (WMIRA) championships, the Stotesbury Cup, and SRAA Nationals.

Board

Larry Basiaga (**Senior parent)**	Chair	Lisa Townsend (**Senior parent)**	Parent-Coach liaison
John Henderson (**Senior parent)**	Vice-Chair	Gwen Wade	Recruiting
Elias Walendowski	Treasurer	Orianna Helms	Fundraising
Stephanie Sawyer	Secretary	Jennie Kuperstein (**Senior parent)**	At large
Robin Hart (**Senior parent)**	Registrar		

Internet Resources

http://walterjohnsoncrew.org/ Team Web Site, with various info on the team and events. You can also check out our Twitter and Instagram feeds (both are @wjcrew)

http://www.row2k.com Results, pictures, Regatta links…it's all here.

http://www.regattacentral.com Results, entries, participants in each boat included

http://www.usrowing.org National organization information

WJ Crew - Fall 2026 Calendar

August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
16	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20** New Student Cookout - WJ Crew Recruiting event	**21**	**22** Open Boathouse
23	**24** Orientation new students Varsity Registration Deadline	**25** First day of School Voluntary water practice - no bus	**26** Voluntary water practice - no bus	**27** Voluntary water practice - no bus	**28** Voluntary water practice - no bus	**29** First Official Practice - Varsity
30	**31** Water Practice - Varsity. Bus service starts.					

September

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Water Practice - Varsity	**2** Water Practice - Varsity Virtual Info session - New Rowers	**3** Water Practice - Varsity	**4** Water Practice - Varsity	**5** Water Practice - Varsity
6 Float Decorating	**7** Labor Day Parade No Practice	**8** Water Practice - Varsity	**9** Land Practice - Varsity Girls early Dining out - No Regrets Pizza	**10** Water Practice - Varsity Virtual Varsity Parent Meeting	**11** Water Practice - Varsity	**12** Water Practice - Varsity Middle School Program starts
13 Sign-Up Deadline Novices - Free Trial Week	**14** Water Practice Trial week - New Novices	**15** Water Practice Trial week	**16** Water Practice Trial week Novice Parent Mtg - In Person	**17** Water Practice Trial week	**18** MCPS Early Release - Land Practice, Varsity only - Boys early	**19** Water Practice Trial week
20 Novice Registration Deadline - Fall Season	**21** MCPS Closed NO Practice	**22** Water Practice	**23** Water Practice	**24** Water Practice	**25** Water Practice Pasta Dinner	**26** NO Practice
27 Head of the Potomac Regatta - Varsity Only	**28** Water Practice	**29** Water Practice	**30** Varsity Land Practice - Novice welcome. Girls early			

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Water Practice	**2** Water Practice	**3** NO Practice Plant Sale!!!
4	**5** Water Practice	**6** Water Practice	**7** Varsity Land Practice - Novice welcome. Boys early	**8** Water Practice	**9** Water Practice Pasta Dinner	**10** NO Practice
11 Occoquan Chase Regatta - Varsity Only	**12** Water Practice	**13** Water Practice	**14** Water Practice - Load Boats for Charles	**15** Captain's Practice - Novice welcome Head of the Charles	**16** MCPS Closed - No Practice Head of the Charles	**17** Water Practice Head of the Charles
18	**19** Water Practice	**20** Water Practice	**21** Varsity Land Practice - Novice welcome. Girls early	**22** Water Practice	**23** Water Practice	**24** NO Practice
25 Head of the Schuylkill Regatta - Day Trip	**26** Water Practice	**27** Water Practice	**28** Varsity Land Practice - Novice welcome. Boys early	**29** Water Practice	**30** Water Practice Pasta Dinner	**31** NO Practice

November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Head of the Occoquan Regatta - Varsity and Novices	**2** NO Practice **all week** MCPS Closed	**3** MCPS Closed	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7** Close Boathouse
8	**9** Girls Erg	**10** Boys Erg	**11** Girls Erg	**12** Boys Erg	**13**	**14**
15	**16** Girls Erg	**17** Boys Erg	**18** Girls Erg	**19** Boys Erg	**20**	**21**
22 NO Practice **all week** - Happy Thanksgiving!	**23** MCPS Early Release	**24** MCPS Early Release	**25** MCPS Closed	**26** MCPS Closed	**27** MCPS Closed	**28**
29	**30** Start of Winter Season					