MIAMI ROWING & WATERSPORTS CENTER, Inc.

MIAMI ROWING CLUB

A Parent's Guide to Supporting Your Rower in College Recruiting (from a Miami Rowing Club parent who's been there!)

When my kids first dipped their oars into the waters at **Miami Rowing Club**, I never imagined how far the sport would take them. Like many families, we were curious about the "college rowing path" but unsure of how to get started. Now, having gone through the process, I want to share a few lessons that made the journey smoother—and more enjoyable—for both our rowers and our family.

Step 1: Focus on the Basics Early

Before junior year rolls around, encourage your rower to check in with their coach about how their rowing and academics stack up for college recruiting. Erg scores matter, but so do grades. The truth? Coaches love strong students as much as strong athletes.

Parent Pointer: Stay realistic but encouraging—remind your rower that effort in both school and rowing pays off in options later.

Step 2: Explore Schools Broadly

College rowing has **many paths**. While Division I gets the spotlight, it's not the end-all, be-all. There are fabulous schools with excellent Division II, Division III, and even competitive Club programs that allow rowers to keep their careers going at a high level.

These programs often provide a healthier balance between academics, rowing, and personal growth— and they broaden the list of schools where your child can thrive. The most important thing is finding a program where your rower will flourish as both a student and a person, both on and off the water. Campus visits (even informal ones) help them imagine life beyond the boathouse. And yes, summer rowing camps can be a great way to see schools up close.

It's also worth remembering that every coach has very few official recruit spots available, so being "recruited" isn't the only way to row in college. Many athletes join teams through admissions support, letters of soft support, or even by trying out
("walking on") once on campus. These opportunities can be just as meaningful and
open the door to an amazing college rowing experience.

Parent Pointer: Keep the message clear—there's no single "right" path. What matters is where your child will thrive in life, not just in rowing.

Step 3: Encourage Them to Take the Lead

College coaches want to hear from the athlete—not the parent. Remember your rower to send those first emails, fill out recruitment forms, and keep coaches updated on erg scores and race results.

Yes, it will push them out of their comfort zone—and that's okay. Growth happens outside of comfort zones. As parents, we can remind them that reaching out to coaches, even when it feels intimidating, is part of building confidence and independence. Our role is to encourage, proofread when asked, and keep nudging them forward with support.

Parent Pointer: Let them own the process—even if it feels awkward. Your job is to coach from the sidelines with encouragement and reassurance.

Step 4: Stay Organized Junior Year

Junior year is when things get real. Your rower should:

- Email coaches with updates.
- Keep grades up.
- Visit campuses when possible.
- Start narrowing down a list of "dream," "target," and "likely" schools.

As parents, we can help by keeping a simple spreadsheet of deadlines, contacts, and test scores. Trust me, it keeps the stress down.

Parent Pointer: Organization is key. Help track the details so your rower can focus on training, school, and outreach.

Step 5: Senior Year—Decision Time

By the fall of senior year, most rowers need to start making choices. Some schools will ask for an early decision. Coaches may offer more clarity about admissions support.

This is also the most nerve-wracking stage. Your rower will likely see teammates, friends, and even competitors announcing commitments on social media while they're still waiting for calls or offers. **Remind them: their time will come**. Every rower has their own path, and stressing over what others are doing only drains energy that's better spent on training and enjoying their Senior year!

It's also important to remember that being officially "recruited" is not the only measure of success or the only way to continue rowing at the collegiate level. Coaches have very few formal recruit spots to fill, and the competition for those is intense. But **letters of**

soft support is also a huge win. These letters can be submitted with college applications and often make a meaningful difference in admissions.

If your rower receives a letter of soft support, celebrate it! It means a coach believes in them enough to allow them to join the team, even if it's not through a formal recruit slot. Many collegiate rowers start this way, and it can be the opening that leads to an incredible college rowing career.

Whether it's D1, D2, D3, or a strong Club program, what matters most is that your student finds the right environment to succeed academically, socially, and athletically.

Parent Pointer: Be the calm voice—help them tune out the noise of other people's announcements and trust their own timeline. Celebrate every milestone, whether it's a recruitment offer, a letter of support, or simply the chance to keep rowing at the next level.

Step 6: Don't Forget NCAA & IRA Rules

Recruiting has rules (especially for Division I), and they can be tricky. The NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete is the best resource for understanding eligibility, timelines, and recruiting limits. The IRA (Intercollegiate Rowing Association) also governs some aspects of men's rowing, and being aware of their rules helps prevent surprises later on.

Your rower should always be the one contacting coaches, but as parents, we can step in when clarity or scheduling help is needed. Most importantly, make sure your family, your rower, and their coach all stay within NCAA and IRA guidelines.

Parent Pointer: Rules matter. Keep everyone on track so opportunities aren't lost to avoid mistakes.

Final Thoughts

Rowing may open doors in the college admissions process, but it should never be the only reason to pursue the sport. **Remember your rower to choose a school where they'd be happy, *even if rowing wasn't part of the picture.***

At the end of the day, rowing is about so much more than recruitment or college. It's about the journey that began the first day they pushed off the dock and into the Marine Stadium Basin. And wherever life takes them, they will carry the spirit of MRC with them, as it has shaped them into stronger, better people—both on and off the water.

College is just one stop along the way. The true destination lies within them. **Go MRC!!! MRC Parent**

Class of 2024 recruit

NOTE ADDDED FROM MRC ABOUT NCAA

NCAA Recruiting Guidelines for Rowers and Families

Much of what can and cannot be done during the recruiting process is governed by **NCAA rules**. The best authority is the **NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete**. The rules can be complex, so review them carefully with your parents to ensure that both you and the coaches remain in compliance.

In general, the limitations below apply primarily to **Division I**; Division II and III rules may vary slightly. You can obtain the guide from your school counselor or by visiting the **NCAA Eligibility Center** (formerly NCAA Clearinghouse).

NCAA Eligibility Center (formerly NCAA Clearinghouse)

Key NCAA Rules

- Division I coaches may send you letters, view books, and certain other printed materials **after September 1 of your junior year**.
- Coaches may not call you until **July 1, the summer before your senior year**.
- Beginning July 1 after your junior year, coaches may call you **once per week**. If a coach is interested, you may also receive letters and printed materials.
- If you do not hear from a school that you have contacted, it's appropriate to call the coach directly to ask why.

Do's for Parents and Rowers

- **Keep academics first.** Rowing can be a valuable tiebreaker, but it won't overcome a mediocre GPA or low test scores at selective schools. Since rowing has no professional path, academics are essential for future opportunities.
- **Encourage your rower to be the primary contact** with coaches and admissions. Coaches prefer hearing directly from the student-athlete. Parents may step in only when appropriate, always courteously and while fairly representing the rower's views.
- **Know the NCAA rules** and make sure everyone complies — your rower, their junior coach, college coaches, and alumni. Penalties can affect your rower, not just the school.

Don'ts for Parents and Rowers

- **Don't rely on second-hand information.** Always speak directly with the coach about their program, as situations and practices change year to year.
- **Don't exaggerate or misrepresent your rower's intentions.** Never tell a college coach your rower is committed or serious about attending a school if that isn't true. This can hurt their prospects elsewhere and damage your junior program's reputation. Coaches often share information.