

SAMPLE



ROWING

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About the card sort

- The cards describe competencies, behaviours and qualities of rowing.
- The sort should be completed in a conversation with a coach, parent or mentor.
- The cards should be used to identify competencies to grow into super strengths or areas to work on.
- On the back of the cards are ideas for actions to support development planning.
- Use the cards at the beginning and end of the season, and following key milestones.

Categories of generic competencies include:

- mental skills
- self
- athlete life
- health
- physical
- tactics
- technical skills

Turn over to see the full list of competencies.

Mental Skills	Self	Athlete Life	Health	Physical	Technical Skills	Tactics
Motivation and Passion	Team Values and Culture	Managing Time and Energy	Mental Health and Wellbeing	Endurance	Catch	Race Plan
Performance Focus	Leadership	Circle of Support	Health	Speed	Leg Drive	Race Decision-Making
Resilience	Team Person	Financial Skills, Facilities and equip.	Women's Health	Mobility	Stroke Finish	Analysing Race Conditions
Self-Belief and Confidence	Programme Ownership	Future, Change, and Career Planning	Robustness	Recovery	Posture	
Performance Preparation	Identity, Purpose and Self-Awareness	Sponsorship and Athlete Brand	Injury Recovery	Strength and Power	Stroke Length	
Performance Review	Competitiveness	Relationships	Sleep	Body Awareness	Connection	
Practicing Pressure	Work Ethic		Nutrition	Motor Control	Relaxation	
Mastery	Drive and Ambition				Blending into a Crew	
Deep Practice	Continuous Growth					
Composure	Communication					

2

How to use the cards

ATHLETE

1

SORT FOR STRENGTHS

Sort the cards into roughly three even piles with the following black cards forming the top of each set:

- high/strength
- middle/average
- low/work-on; and
- not applicable.

Sort based on your highest level of competition.

2

EXPLAIN/RECORD

Explain reasons for placement, focusing on strengths and areas to work on. Take a photo or fill in the worksheets to record placement to refer back to on review.

3

PRIORITISE

Once completed, pick up the cards sorted as areas to work on. You may also wish to select some strengths to include in your development plan that could become super strengths. Flip over the header cards and sort again for priorities for the next season or training block using the black cards (high, medium, low). Aim to narrow down to not more than two development priorities per category.

*Once you have identified your priorities, turn over the cards.
The back of the cards have development planning ideas.*

Please Turn Over

2

How to use the cards

COACH/ MENTOR

1

INTRODUCTION

Explain the purpose of the process.

Explain the process (see website for more detail) and discuss confidentiality.

Check for comfort and questions.

2

GUIDE

Guide the process.

Question, clarify and summarise to help the athlete identify the critical priorities.

Listen with an open mind, avoid making judgements.

3

PLAN

Record placement of cards with notes. Select priorities emerging from the second sort and identify development actions (see ideas on the back of cards) in collaboration with the athlete.

TIP: You can complete a separate card sort for comparative discussion.

STRENGTH



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS A STRENGTH AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL
OF COMPETITION, IN RELATION TO OTHER COMPETENCIES

HIGH PRIORITY



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS A HIGH PRIORITY FOR
THE NEXT COMPETITION AND TRAINING BLOCK

MIDDLE/AVERAGE



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS MIDDLE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL
OF COMPETITION, IN RELATION TO OTHER COMPETENCIES

MEDIUM PRIORITY



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS A MEDIUM PRIORITY FOR
THE NEXT COMPETITION AND TRAINING BLOCK

WORK-ON



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS AN AREA TO WORK-ON AT THE HIGHEST
LEVEL OF COMPETITION, IN RELATION TO OTHER COMPETENCIES

LOW PRIORITY



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS A LOW PRIORITY FOR
THE NEXT COMPETITION AND TRAINING BLOCK

NOT APPLICABLE



THESE ARE EITHER NOT APPLICABLE OR TO BE SORTED AT A LATER DATE



MENTAL SKILLS[©]

— SORT CARDS —



Performance Focus

- I am able to maintain my focus on doing what I need to do, regardless of the level of competition.
- In adversity, under pressure or following unexpected events, I will:
 - Acknowledge my thoughts and feelings in the moment.
 - Use strategies to actively manage my emotions and reactions (e.g., self-talk, imagery, affirmations).
 - Focus on the process, not the outcome.
 - Continue to communicate (through words and actions) positively and effectively.
 - Maintain my confidence.
 - Make rational decisions.

Developing Performance Focus

Experiment with ways to stay calm, manage focus and eliminate distractions

Feeling stressed or anxious affects your focus. Set up situations in training where you could get distracted (e.g., under fatigue, situational pressure).

In these situations, practice different strategies to stay present, e.g., breathing control, imagery or visualisation, cue or focus words, and/or thought dumping/stopping.

'What if' planning

Brainstorm some 'what if' scenarios with a mentor or coach and plan what reaction(s) you will have to each scenario so that you have pre-planned your responses.

Identify your triggers

Consider what triggers you away from focusing on perfect technique in the present moment. Build a plan to maintain your focus (e.g., visualisation, cue words), practicing how quickly you can refocus when your mind wanders.

Key moment planning

Focus is having less in your mind. Use a journal to identify and plan your focus for the entire length of your race. Quiz the consistent performers in rowing on their strategies. Evaluate your focus at training as well.

Focus on what you can control

Draw a circle. Inside the circle write down everything about your performance that is within your control. Next, write down everything that is outside of your control outside of the circle. Observe and review how much time you spend thinking and worrying about things outside of your control.

Become actively aware

Keep a journal/daily training diary in which you rate yourself every time you train. Simple daily evaluations are critical to improving your focus because you are building a habit of being consciously aware.



Composure

- Cool under pressure.
- Does not become defensive or irritated when times are tough.
- Can be counted on to hold things together during tough times.
- Can handle stress.
- Is not knocked off balance by the unexpected.
- Doesn't show frustration when resisted or blocked.
- Continues to communicate positively and effectively under pressure.
- Maintains confidence.

Developing Composure

Reflect on the consequences

Discuss with someone (a mentor or coach) the outcomes and impacts of losing your composure. Discuss high profile examples.

Experiment with ways to stay calm, manage focus and eliminate distractions

Feeling stressed or anxious affects your focus. Ask other athletes what they do to manage their mood and focus and stay calm in high-pressure situations. Experiment with different strategies, e.g., breathing control, routines, music, mental imagery or visualisation, cue or focus words, perceptual positioning (NLP) and/or thought dumping/thought stopping.

'Key moment' planning

Performance preparation is key to maintaining composure (*see performance preparation card*).

Write down key moments that might arise and plan what you need to focus on at this time. Assess key moments where you have been super composed or times you have lacked composure, and reflect on what you were thinking. Discuss these moments and the outcomes with a training partner or coach.

'What if' planning

Brainstorm some 'what if' scenarios with a mentor or coach and plan what reaction(s) you will have to each scenario so that you have pre-planned your responses.

Focus on what you can control

Draw a circle. Inside the circle write down everything about your performance that is within your control/sphere of influence (e.g., your actions and attitudes). Next, write down everything that is outside of your control, outside of the circle. Observe and review how much time you spend thinking about and worrying about things on the outside. Practice focus activities.

Also, see performance focus card.



SELF

— SORT CARDS —



Team Person

- Approachable, relaxed, warm, friendly, easy to talk to and get to know. An open book.
- Relates well to all kinds of people.
- Can still lead or be a team player when on the bench or a substitute.
- Makes a pleasant first impression.
- Builds trust with team members (i.e., is credible, reliable, makes others feel safe, and cares about what is best for others/the team).
- Enjoys social interactions.
- Deals calmly with issues that arise within the team, positively supporting leaders.
- Puts the team first.
- Can accept and align to coaches' decisions or directives regardless of personal opinion.

Becoming a Team Person

Reflect on how you are seen

Ask your coach how you are viewed within the team and what behaviours are creating that impression. Reflect on how you want to be viewed and identify some actions that would reinforce that view.

Be generous with new people

Make a pleasant first impression. When you meet people, make a point to engage with them (i.e., look them in the eye, speak clearly, make a joke, ask a question). Be welcoming and generous towards new members of the group. Take time to get to know them and check in with them, think about how you can help them fit in. Make a point of asking new members their opinion and including them.

Be positive and give energy

Give energy to those around you through positivity and praise. If you are a senior player, the junior players want to know that you trust and believe in them. Have you gone out of your way to recognise something good someone else in the team has done recently? Do you have opportunities as a team to acknowledge team members?

Include everyone

Are you inclusive of everyone in the group or do you stick with the people you feel most comfortable with? Identify ways you could make people feel included, e.g., humour, team activities, asking everyone's opinion, giving everyone a job/role.

Find common ground

Everyone in the team will have a different background, culture, and upbringing; and everyone brings their own unique set of values and beliefs. Do you view differences as a strength or annoyance? Think about how you could learn more about others to grow your respect and empathy for them. Look for a common ground to connect.

Support leaders

Does your team have processes that allow you to proactively identify and support resolution of issues? When issues arise within the team, ask leaders what you can do to support them.



Team Values and Culture

- Aware of self and impact on others.
- Is a guardian (has kaitiaki) of team values (during both good times and bad times) and encourages others to do the same.
- Is widely trusted. Contributes to team feedback and is seen as a direct, truthful and humble individual.
- Respects and trusts the coaches/leaders, and shows confidence in others.
- Understands role in the team, is selfless, and willing to support the development of others.
- Doesn't misrepresent him/herself for personal gain.
- Can quickly sense what will help or hinder the team.
- Can see the bigger picture (i.e., not just where I am headed, but also where I come from).
- Has considered the whakapapa of the group (i.e., the story of the group, land, or water that we perform on).

Developing Team Values and Culture

Understanding our culture

- Has your team discussed how they are seen from the outside, and how they want to be seen?
- Has your team discussed what moments or events have created those perceptions and how you might go about changing them?
- Is everyone absolutely clear on what behaviours are expected within the 'desired' culture and which are not?
- Have you discussed scenarios and what you would be expected to do?
- Have you discussed consequences of falling short of expectations with the team?

- Does your team integrate team values into review and reflection of team performance? e.g., if courage is a team value, do the team use courage as a way to reflect on performances, or look for moments of courage on the field.

Supporting the leaders

What feedback loops have been set up? How does the coach best receive your feedback? Discuss your ideas and observations with your coach, and work together to build the culture you desire. If you are a junior member of the group speak to someone you trust, who has the influence to take action.

Reflecting on the past

Reflect on the times when you have known a behaviour was outside of what is expected. Reflect on what action you took and what your motivations were. Reflect on any barriers to taking action and how you would approach the situation in hindsight.

Knowing why it's important

Have you drawn a clear line of sight between the impacts/consequences of not respecting team agreements and the success of individuals within the group?

Using humble enquiry

If you see or hear something that doesn't sit right, try asking a humble question to check others' perceptions.



ATHLETE LIFE

SORT CARDS



Managing Time and Energy

- Concentrates on the most important priorities.
- Has structure within each day.
- Manages device/screen time.
- Uses a diary and/or calendar.
- Uses down time wisely to recharge my energy.
- Knows that priorities change at different times.
- Life is mostly stable and well balanced.
- Has friends and interests outside of sport that allow some variety, challenge and stimulation.
- Is OK with things outside of control.

Managing my Time and Energy

Noticing when things are out of balance

When things get out of balance, you may start to feel stressed or anxious. Do you know what behaviours others would see that reflect a healthy or unhealthy balance?

Reflect on your life balance weekly, and if you notice a series of low scores or downward trend over weeks, talk to someone trusted in your inner circle of support about what changes are needed.

Plan your down time

Look at your schedule, and plan when you have spare time that you could use. Think about how best you can use this time to refresh mentally and physically.

Set aside time to plan

Set aside time on a Sunday night to plan your week and then take 10 mins each morning to plan your priorities for the day.

Examine how you spend your time

Is your life one-dimensional? Do you spend all of your time on rowing and only hang out with people related to rowing? Having another way to engage the brain, e.g., study, a job or interest, can help you stay fresh, continue to enjoy rowing, work towards a career after you retire, and provide perspective.

Device time

Set limits for your device time and avoid screen time in the 30mins before sleep.

Planning in and using breaks effectively

Look at whether you can plan a complete break in your annual programme. Use this time wisely to refresh; e.g., try something new, do something outside your comfort zone, meet new people. TIP: keep your fitness up during your break through cross training.

Managing priorities

Write a list of everything you have to do in priority order. Look down your list and draw a line between the things you 'have to do' and the things that you can delete, defer, or delegate. Now set about 'managing' the things below the line to move them off your short term 'to-do' list.



Future, Change, and Career Planning

- Has a plan for at least the next year (i.e., income source, living arrangements, sporting competition plans, etc.).
- If at school or studying, is actively preparing for the transition into part-time or full-time work.
- Knows what careers are of interest and is developing skills, experience and/or networks in this area.
- Has a transition plan for any upcoming changes.
- Has a strong support network to navigate through changes and support settling into new routines (may take six to 18 months).

Tips for Future, Change and Career Planning

Not sure what career you would like to follow?

- Write down your strengths/talents and what you are passionate about.
- Write down the times in your life you have been in flow (when everything has clicked and you've been in your element). Identify industries or the type of work you are interested in.
- List jobs in which your skills, passions and interests were being used.
- Research; have conversations with people you know in careers you are interested in.
- Consider study options to work towards a career pathway.

Need a job that works in with rowing?

Make a list of the job parameters that would be ideal:

- How many hours per week?
- What days/times you would be available to work?
- How much flexibility you would need to attend competitions?

Identify jobs that may fit this profile. If you have no experience in this area, consider what work experience would support your application. Prepare your curriculum vitae and identify a list of people/businesses to approach. Search job advertisements.

Building a network of support

- Make a list of the areas of your life you might need some help/support with (e.g. somewhere to live, finding a part-time job).
- Identify people in your current circle of support and ask them to make introductions to people who may be able to help you in these areas.
- Talk to other athletes who have followed a similar path, and ask them for help identifying people who may be useful connections during your change journey.
- Ask your regional or national sporting organisation for any contacts or relationships they have that may help you through your change journey.



HEALTH

SORT CARDS



Health

- Is consistently able to turn up to training and competitions healthy and ready to go (no ongoing sickness or health challenges).
- Has self-care routines to maintain health.
- Will proactively see the GP with any health concerns.
- Has a positive body image and healthy eating habits.
- Is able to manage health during travel, including adjusting to time zones and new sleep routines.
- Is able to train and compete at altitude and in heat within normal adaption expectations.
- No addictions (i.e., drugs, alcohol, gambling).

Tips for Good Health

General health, body image, addictions or mental health

If you have concerns, talk to someone in your trusted circle to support you to seek help from a GP, counsellor, or clinical psychologist.

Sleep

If you are struggling with sleep, look at your sleep habits:

- Does your bedroom environment promote consistent, uninterrupted sleep?
- Do you have a stable sleep schedule?
- Is your bedroom comfortable and free of disruptions?
- Do you follow a relaxing pre-bed routine?
- Do you have healthy daily routines and habits that contribute to supporting your sleep?
- Do you know how much sleep you need?

Seek professional help if you are struggling with getting the right amount or quality of sleep.

Build your knowledge

Identify someone in your circle of support that will have access to research and specialist knowledge on athlete-specific approaches to subjects such as travel, altitude, and heat.

Also, see women's health, sleep and nutrition cards.



Women's Health

- Understands the importance of menstrual cycles and the role hormones play in recovery, bone, and overall health.
- Is knowledgeable about menstruation and what is normal.
- Knows when to ask for help in relation to pain, bleeding, or other menstruation symptoms. Feels confident to be able to manage symptoms well.
- Can identify the key markers for menstrual health and knows who to contact if she notices any problems.
- Understands that contraception is a choice and is well-informed about the full range of choices available. Knows where to seek help, and has the information and support to make contraception decisions.
- Is aware of common female health issues such as premenstrual syndrome, dysmenorrhea (very painful menstruation), menorrhagia (very frequent or heavy menstruation, amenorrhea (not starting periods until after age 16 or missing more than three periods in a row), endometriosis, and polycystic ovarian syndrome.
- Has positive support from coach/sport to talk about and manage women's health issues.

Tips for Women's Health

See your GP

Ask your GP or sports doctor for information on women's health issues related to sport. Did you know that endometriosis and polycystic ovarian syndrome affect around 10% of all women? Recent research has highlighted the prevalence of girl's and women's health concerns but also that they are under-recognised and under-reported. This means they are diagnosed late and the side effects and outcomes made worse. Don't put up with any negative symptoms which impact what you choose to do or how well you perform. Ask and seek support and help.

Support from your coach/sport

If you have concerns about managing women's health issues in relation to performance or training expectations, identify someone within rowing or circle of support that can help you to get understanding and alignment with your health needs.

Managing your whole health is key to menstrual health

Wellbeing is a balance of social, emotional, physical and mental health and together they are key to your performance as an athlete. Your menstrual cycle is sensitive to imbalances in your health. Keeping a 'balance' is critical to your cycle and hormones.

Improve your menstrual health knowledge

Did you know that menstrual cycle hormones can affect metabolism, bone density, hydration, immune response, pain tolerance, body temperature, weight, muscle recovery, injury risk, mental health and many other aspects of health and performance? Get informed, and regain choice and power over your body.

Check out:

- HPSNZ website, WHISPA.
- Sport NZ balanced female health handbook and infographic, sportnz.org.nz/balanced-female-health.
- Australian Institute of Sport, female performance initiative.



PHYSICAL SKILLS[©]

— SORT CARDS —



Endurance

- Enough aerobic fitness to maintain concentration and technique.
- Strong aerobic base (i.e., right volume of aerobic work completed to develop optimum level of aerobic capability for event).
- Ability to perform work at a given intensity over a time period.
- Can perform in a state of fatigue.

Developing Endurance

Types of aerobic workouts

When working on your aerobic base, there are different types of work-outs you can include in your training programme:

- **Fartlek workout** – A fartlek workout can range anywhere from 30 seconds to 5 minutes of harder rowing with a long recovery between each repeat. Aim for moderate effort.
- **A steady state workout.** Like the fartlek, the steady state session is designed to be a moderate effort – not hard. Start with 20 to 30 minutes and slowly build up to an hour as you get stronger.
- **A long workout.**

Each workout helps stimulate a different system. Fartlek rows help improve turnover, efficiency and neuromuscular function. Steady state rowing improves your aerobic threshold. Long rowing sessions help build mitochondria, capillaries and myoglobin content. The easy miles in-between help develop your aerobic endurance.

Adding mileage

To add mileage, increase the distance progressively. A gradual increase will help build in mileage that will help build endurance, injury resistance, and economy.

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Speed

- Quick off the start line.
- Has an effective change of speed.
- Maximum speed is good relative to age and stage of development.
- Understand that maximal speed is rowing as fast as you can.
- Understand that optimal speed is rowing controlled for the distance or event.

Developing Speed

Technique

The foundation for speed development is the execution of sound movement technique. Initially, row at slower speeds to establish proper mechanics, increasing speed as you progress toward proficiency.

Resistance

The objective is to provide resistance without arresting movement mechanics; primarily as a means of improving explosive strength. On the water resistance may be provided by attaching something to the boat that causes drag. In general, $\geq 10\%$ changes in movement resistance have detrimental effects on technique.

Other factors

Tertiary methods of speed training include mobility (range of motion of the hip, knee and ankle), strength, and speed endurance training. Inadequate mobility can therefore result in a reduction of leg power. The ability to achieve high movement velocities requires skillful force application across the full length of the stroke. Resistance training programs should aim to mimic rowing movement.

Also, see power and strength, and endurance cards.



TECHNICAL SKILLS[®]

— SORT CARDS —



Catch

- Has good timing of oar entry moving in time with the speed of the boat.
- Has clean placement of the oar into the water.
- Blade is in the water before legs/hips engage.
- Entry is direct and quick.
- Timing is synchronised with the rest of the crew.

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Developing Catch

Technique analysis

To analyse your catch technique:

- Seek feedback from your coach(es).
- Capture video of yourself.
- Watch videos of the best in the world.

Seek feedback

In addition to the technique analysis strategies above, seek feedback on your timing from other crew members or the coxswain.

Training self-analysis

During training, watch your blade going in to the water, and aim to achieve a V splash.

Force analysis

Some programmes will have access to force-gate analysis to ensure the timing of your catch is minimising slip.

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Leg Drive

- The stroke power is generated from the legs/hips.
- Leg drive hangs off the catch.
- Leg drive is consistently powerful, connected and fast throughout the race.
- Strong drive sequencing (i.e., legs, hips, back, arms).
- Timing is synchronised with the rest of the crew.

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Developing Leg Drive

Developing leg power

Complex sequenced movements (such as power cleans) develop both power and sequencing of muscles.

Also, see strength card.

Technique analysis

To analyse your catch technique and body position:

- Seek feedback from your coach(es).
- Capture video of yourself.
- Watch videos of the best in the world.

Timing and muscle sequencing analysis

In addition to the technique analysis strategies, seek feedback on your timing from other crew members or the coxswain.

Force analysis

Some programmes will have access to force-gate analysis to ensure the timing of your catch is minimising slip.

Indoor ergometer

Watch the power curve on an indoor ergometer machine to check sequencing of muscles to generate power.

Watching your reflection

Use a mirror beside the indoor ergometer to check your muscle sequencing.



TACTICS

©

SORT CARDS



Race Plan

- Has a basic approach to racing.
- Works with coach to adapt the race plan based on previous learnings and current strengths and weaknesses.
- Understands competition, and knows what to expect.
- Has contingencies for scenarios (e.g., what happens if you catch a crab, go off course, someone comes into your lane).
- Is comfortable with starting procedure.
- Knows the rules of racing.

Developing your Race Plan

Understanding your strengths

Talk through different tactical options with your coaches based on your strengths and form.

Studying race tactics

Use video to study tactical strategies of the best in the world.

Preparing race tactics

Watch other races live, or use video to scout opposition strengths and likely strategies.

Practicing and visualising your race plan

Prepare a race plan and practice it in training. Spend time visualising your race plan.

Study racing rules

Before every regatta, read and practice the starting procedure. Also, read the race rules and discuss these with your coach to check your understanding.

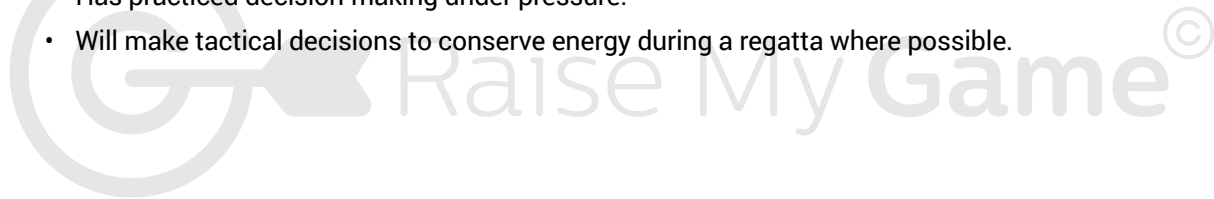


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Race Decision-Making

- Is willing and confident enough to adapt the plan if required, in line with pre-race scenario planning.
- Timing of decisions is good.
- Has practiced decision-making under pressure.
- Will make tactical decisions to conserve energy during a regatta where possible.



Developing Race Decision-Making

Review of race tactics

Use video to analyse your execution of the race plan in terms of the start, blade turnover, decision-making and pace. Keep notes on what you learnt, to refer back to.

Training scenarios

Practice using race scenarios to develop decision-making. Debrief training races with your crew and coach.

Become a student of rowing history

Watch historic videos of races, analyse the tactics and timing of decisions made. Read books and talk to former rowers to pick their brains on their decision-making and race strategies.

