

Magic Words

Words create a mental image. Both visual and aural cues work to teach the rowers how to get them to make positive changes. For instance, words like “slice” and “crisp” are effective in relation to catches because that paints the image of a good catch. Equally, try to avoid certain calls – “Kill it!” and “hunt them down!” can both be effective, but I heard “make them cry” from a (non-wolfson!) crew on the river at Clare’s novices, and that just crosses a line... The calls below are taken from the internet and from senior coxes I’ve spoken to – I hope they’re helpful.

a. Catches

“Quick catch!”

“Make that blade disappear!”

“Quick/aggressive at the catch!”

“Slice those blades in!”

“Kick!”

“Sit-Up!”

“Legs!”

“Clean Catches!”

"CHAAA" - This magically helps them with:

a) rhythm

b) timing

c) aggressive pressure

d) if you draw out your "CHAAA" sound then it helps them hold on to it at the finish. I don't know if it is just my crews that respond so well to this, but give it a try and let me know... It never failed for me... (When sitting cox - cox in a race situation, you simply call with a very confident demanding tone "all right Gents! On the next we are committing 5% pressure on the finish! Are you ready?

NOW" now here is the key... When the rowers add the extra 5% you shout with their pressure "CHAAA".)

I count all the catches and then say “aaand” in between- so it’s one - aaaand - two - aaaand - three and so on. My crew says it’s really helpful to them! And sometimes I incorporate my motivations into my counting, so I’ll say long - aaaand - strong.

b. Finishes

“Clean release!”

“Clean finishes!”

“Keep your blade buried!”

“Finish high!”

“Lengthen the puddles”

c. Set

“Set it up!”

“It’s (up/down) on (b/s) side, set it up!” – Side would be either port or starboard, whatever side it is leaning towards

“Watch your hand levels, straight in, straight out!”

“Keep it up off side!” – Side is either port or starboard, whichever it is resting on

“(Side it’s not resting on), lower hands at the part of stroke the boat is flopping on.” – If the boat is diving towards one side at a point in the stroke, remind the rowers that their hands should be at the right level.

“(Side or people) don’t let your hands dive at the catch!”

“Keep it level!”

“Keep your hand levels consistent!”

“Work together to set the boat!”

“Don’t sky your blades!”

“Square up at the same time”

“Catch as one!”

d. Swing

“Move together!”

“Find that swing!”

“Row as one!”

“Seat you’re early/late.”

“Focus straight ahead.”

“Follow the person in front of you!”

“Synchronize with your stroke!”

“Think of the drive as acceleration!”

“No pauses at the catch, connected stroke!”

“In together, out together!”

“One catch, one release”

e. Ratio

“Long and strong!”

“Rhythm!”

“SHARP! SEND! Controool... SHARP! SEND! Controool”

“Length-en, length-en” to draw out the slide

“I need ratio NOW!” - note, this is best used as an "emergency" call, don't overuse it!

“Feel the boat the run!”

Count the catches and the finishes in the rhythm of an appropriate stroke, such as “Catch-2-3-4!”

“Chins up”

“Sit tall”

“Calm/easy on the slide”

f. Lowering the stroke rate

(use a very calm, long cadence in your voice)

“Down from *a rate* to *a rate* in two, down one, down two!”

“Take it down X pips next stroke”

“We’re at rating X, let’s bring it to Y”

“Wind it down in three... two... one”

“Lengthen it out!”

“Inch up the track.”

“Keep it long!”

“Lengthen it out together!”

g. Raising the stroke rate

“Bring it up from (rate) to (rate) in two, up one, up two!” – The rates are the rate you are at and the rate you need to be at.

“Bring it up x pips next stroke”

“We’re at rating X, let’s bring it to Y”

“Hands are flying, in and away!”

“Quick hands out of the bow!”

“Hands away, shoulders follow!”

“Quick drive!”

“In and away!”

“Quick hands!”

h. Motivate

“Stomp on those footplates!”

“Squeeze!”

“Quick hands!”

“Make those hands fly!”

“Keep the fire!”

“Make it intense!”

“Put the power on it!”

“Empty the tank!”

“Send that boat!”

“Swing it and bring it!”

“Pick the boat out of the water and make it fly!”

“You’re invincible!”

“Nothing to phase us!” (good after a crab etc)

“Hold ‘em off!”

“Reel them in!”

“We’re walking like crazy!”

“Move right through them!”

“I’ve got seat/location, give me seat/location in number of strokes!”

“Power it up!”

“Strong in the legs!”

“Quick through the water!”

“Strong through the water!”

“Power on the drive!”

“Make every stroke better than the last one!”

“Build it for the finish line!”

“Clean tapdowns!”

“Looking good guys/girls!”

“Make it look easy!”

“Breathe”

“Do it for person/college/coach etc.”

“Take seat!” – Use the seat you need to get to, for example, stroke seat on the boat ahead of you when you’re catching up in race.

“Get me to seat!” – as above.

“Keep it up! Looking good! Nice!”

“Send it!”

“Show me you want it!”

“Own it!”

“Take it!”

“Make every stroke COUNT!”

“This is our race!”

“RELEASE THE KRAKEN”

“Push the bridge away!/Push the other crew away!” (once you’re ahead of them of course)
“Eyes on the price and the man in front of you!”

All, just remember that everything you say doesn't need to have a "!" when it comes out of your mouth. How you say what you say (tone of voice, timing of delivery, fit into the rhythm of the stroke) is just as important if not more so than the actual words. Perfect delivery is what makes a coxswain excellent vs. “just a coxswain”.

Best Coxing Websites

[Coaching as a Cox](#)

[Identifying Errors and Drills to Correct them](#)

<http://www.cantabsrowing.org.uk/members-handbook/handbook-coxing/>

[Rowing Technique](#)

[A Guide to Advanced Coxing](#)

[Coxing Drills](#)

[Coxing Calls and When to Make them](#)

[Popular Rowing Drills](#)

[Learn to Row](#)

[Coxing/Coaching Basics](#)

[Fartlek Training \(Advanced\)](#)

Fairbairns Race

Racing Line (Upstream)

- Keep to towpath off the Start to First Post Corner
- Keep to towpath round First Post Corner
- Coming out of First Post Corner cross over to far side
- Stay on far side to take inside line round Grassy Corner
- Stay on far side down Plough Reach
- Cross over to towpath approaching Ditton Corner
- Keep to towpath round Ditton Corner
- Keep to towpath down Long Reach
- Move to far side approaching Railway Bridge
- Stay on far side to take inside line under Railway Bridge
- After Railway Bridge, take the straight line to the Finish
- Cutting close to towpath for Beer Tree
- Moving to far side opposite the pub/car park
- And back to towpath-side for the finish straight

