

# Coxswain's Guide

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## **Sulkava Grand Rowing Festival on Lake Saimaa**

### **Disclaimer**

This guide is an adapted and expanded training manual for international coxswains. It is based on Finnish coxswain training material and event-specific practices. Rules, safety requirements, route details, equipment standards, and procedures may change. Always verify current instructions from the official event organizer, rowing club, or governing body.

### **Introduction**

Welcome to the Sulkava Grand Rowing Festival on Lake Saimaa. This guide supports international coxswains by explaining the fundamentals of church boat rowing, crew coordination, rowing technique, commands, and safety.

### **1. Church Boat and the Role of the Coxswain**

A church boat is a long traditional rowing boat designed for large crews. The coxswain is responsible for steering, commands, rhythm, and safety.

### **2. Crew Positions and Stroke Pair**

Each rower has an assigned seat and oar. The stroke pair sets the rhythm for the entire crew.

### **3. Oars and Oar Handling**

Correct oar handling ensures efficiency and stability. The blade should enter and exit the water smoothly.

### **4. Phases of the Rowing Stroke**

Each stroke includes catch, drive, finish, and recovery, performed in unison.

### **5. Coxswain Commands**

Commands must be clear, consistent, and audible.

### **6. Steering and Boat Control**

Steering should be smooth and anticipatory, especially in wind and waves.

### **7. Starting Procedures**

Starts require calm preparation and balanced positioning.

### **8. Rowing in Different Conditions**

Weather and water conditions affect rowing and must be anticipated.



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## **9. Safety and Risk Management**

Safety is the coxswain's primary responsibility.

## **10. Landing and Docking**

Approach shorelines slowly and with clear instructions.

## **11. Emergency Situations**

In emergencies, act decisively and maintain calm leadership.

## **12. Conduct During the Event**

Participants must follow event rules and respect officials and other crews.

### **Authorship and Rights**

Based on "Kirkkovenepämiehen peruskurssi harrastajalle" by Vesa Tuomi. Expanded and adapted for the Sulkava Grand Rowing Festival.

Sulkavan Suursoudut / Sulkava Grand Rowing Festival on Lake Saimaa

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