



2026

SELBORNE COLLEGE

TEACHER-IN-CHARGE: MR G MOUNTFORT

ROWING



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SELBORNE COLLEGE

ROWING MORE THAN A SPORT

Established in 1922, Selborne College is the oldest school rowing club in South Africa. As recorded in the book *The Black and White*, the club was originally started to build discipline and physical strength in the years following World War I.

This history is important because it gives every modern rower a sense of belonging. Every stroke taken today at the Nahoon Dam continues a hundred-year legacy of "Greyhound" grit and hard work.

At Selborne, rowing is much more than just a sport; it is a way to build character. In a world of instant results and digital distractions, rowing requires a long-term commitment. It builds mental strength and physical toughness, teaching a boy to control his own mind before he tries to control the boat on the water. This discipline creates specific habits and focuses on four key areas:

- **Character:** The club builds "grit" by training in tough conditions. It teaches boys to stay focused when they are tired, to stay committed when their friends are out having fun, and to balance their sport with their schoolwork.
- **Leadership:** Senior rowers learn that true leadership means serving the club and their teammates. During a race, this means putting the team first to keep the boat moving in a perfect, steady rhythm.
- **Excellence:** The club follows a "Metre by Metre" philosophy. This teaches boys that success does not happen overnight; it comes from making small, disciplined improvements every single day.
- **Responsibility:** Rowers are expected to take great care of their expensive equipment and to always look out for the safety of their teammates on the water.



THE SELBORNE APPROACH

To achieve the goal of developing future leaders, the Selborne rowing coaches use a structured and professional coaching method. This approach uses the physical and mental demands of rowing to teach core values like discipline, courage, integrity, and resilience.

The "METER" by Meter Structure

The METER framework represents the five pillars that coaches use to guide a boy's growth:

- **Mechanics:** Boys must understand the bio-mechanics of the rowing stroke. Coaches teach the correct body sequence to ensure the best power transfer and boat speed.
- **Equipment:** Boys learn the proper function, fit, and maintenance of their rowing gear. This teaches them to take responsibility for high-performance equipment.
- **Training:** A phased training year—including preparation and peaking—ensures athletes are physically ready to give their best performance at the highest level of competition.
- **Ethos:** This represents the "heart" of Selborne rowing. It is a commitment to the "Selbornian" spirit and the self-sacrifice needed for the boat to perform at its best.
- **Racing:** This is an intimate understanding of the competitive challenge. It teaches boys to manage things they cannot control (like wind or nerves) and focus on what they can control under pressure. It also includes learning the rules, key racing skills, and the season structure.



Vision and Mission

- **Vision:** To develop young gentlemen who make a positive impact on society through excellence and leadership.
- **Mission:** To provide a well-rounded education that prepares boys to become confident, effective, and caring adults.



THE PATHWAY

The rowing pathway at Selborne is structured to guide a boy from beginner to competent athlete and leader. In the Junior Phase, the focus is on learning to row through sculling, developing sound technical skills and building a strong athletic foundation.

In the Senior Phase, intensity increases through sweep rowing, more complex race strategies and high performance preparation for national competition. The coaching structure is a significant strength of the programme, with three coaches who have represented South Africa providing experienced mentorship.

Coaching is viewed as enablement rather than control, with crews trusted to execute plans independently while receiving clear guidance and support from outside the boat. A year round strength and conditioning programme develops power to weight ratios, overall fitness and core stability, while mental conditioning sessions challenge boys to remain composed and adaptable under pressure.

Selborne competes at the highest schoolboy level in South Africa and maintains a consistent presence at major local and national regattas, including the Schools Boatrace and the South African Schools Championships. Academics remain the core business of the College, and the discipline required for early morning training strengthens time management and focus, enabling the Selbornian to succeed both in the classroom and on the water.

EXCELLENCE IN ACTION

At Selborne, success in rowing is understood to be the product of culture, courage and sustained hard work. Our consistent participation in South Africa's leading regattas, including the Schools Boatrace and the South African Schools Championships, reflects a programme committed to competing at the highest level. The club has a proud tradition of producing athletes of provincial and national standard, with a number of Selbornians going on to represent South Africa internationally. This tradition of excellence continues through the presence of three coaches on staff who have themselves represented the country, ensuring that our rowers benefit from experienced and informed mentorship.

Beyond medals and selection, however, the true measure of success lies in the quality of the young men formed through the programme. Selborne rowers leave school with a proven capacity for disciplined effort, resilience and effective teamwork. They understand commitment, accountability and the demands of high performance environments. It is in this formation of character and work ethic that the lasting value of rowing at Selborne is most clearly seen.



BEYOND THE BOAT

The Selborne rowing experience offers much more than just learning how to use an oar. The club acts as a strong community that connects our school to the rest of the country.



- **Sustainability and Outreach:** Through our partnerships at The Cove at Nahoon Dam, along with our provincial body (ECRA) and national body (SASRU), rowing in East London has a dedicated home. This ensures that the sport serves a greater social purpose and remains available for future generations.

- **Tours and Engagement:** Every year, our boys travel to Port Alfred, Makhanda, and as far as Roodeplaat Dam in Pretoria. These tours expose them to different environments and high-level competition. More importantly, they build a sense of "brotherhood" and friendship that lasts a lifetime.
- **Guest Speakers:** A key to being a good athlete is remaining "coachable." We follow this same principle within our coaching structure at Selborne by always staying open to new ideas. We ensure our boys get the best advice possible from World and Olympic champions. Our coaches keep Selborne boys up to date with the latest trends and techniques to achieve the best possible results.
- **Leadership Opportunities:** Even before they reach their final year, students have many chances to lead within the club. These include:
 - **Club Captains:** Leading the club from a position of service, and taking responsibility for the clubs' performance. As every year adds to the clubs' legacy.
 - **Equipment:** Managing the care and maintenance of expensive racing shells and oars.
 - **Junior Mentors:** Experienced under-16 rowers helping to teach basics to the new under-14 "novice" intake.
 - **Regatta Logistics Assistants:** Helping to coordinate the loading of trailers and the setup of the club's area at away events.

Through this complete approach, Selborne College Rowing continues to lead with the "Selbornian" spirit-moving forward, metre by metre, toward a successful and sustainable future.





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THE SELBORNE MAN

At Selborne College, we are not merely preparing boys to pass examinations, win fixtures, or collect accolades. We are forming young men.

A Selborne man is:

- **Intellectually Disciplined**
He thinks carefully. He questions respectfully. He pursues understanding rather than surface familiarity. He is not afraid of rigour.
- **Morally Grounded**
He understands responsibility. He acts with integrity when no one is watching. He knows that character is revealed in pressure.
- **Courageous in Effort**
He does not withdraw from difficulty. Whether in the classroom, on the field, or on the stage, he learns to persist.
- **Articulate and Thoughtful**
He can express his ideas clearly. He listens as well as he speaks. He engages the world with curiosity rather than cynicism.
- **Committed to Brotherhood**
He understands that strength is built in community. He supports others. He leads by example.
- **Prepared for the Future**
He leaves Selborne adaptable, capable, and ready to contribute meaningfully to society. Every subject, every sport, every society exists to shape these qualities.

That is the Selborne standard.

