



## **Peterborough Rowing Club**

### **Evaluation of PeterboroughROWS**

#### ***Progress Report on Year 1 Evaluation Findings***

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# 1. Introduction

## **Overview of PeterboroughROWS**

PeterboroughROWS is a three-year program conducted by the Peterborough Rowing Club (PRC) with financial support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. PeterboroughROWS is designed to benefit residents of the City and County of Peterborough, from 12 years old to 80+ who are new or returning to recreational rowing. Inclusivity is a priority and the program open to everyone.

PeterboroughROWS includes two main components: 1) outreach to new rowers; and, 2) a recreational rowing program for youth and adults in Peterborough that includes both training and on-the-water rowing experience. The program is designed to promote active lifestyles by delivering fun, inclusive and easy-to-access rowing activities.

As a late-entry sport, most people have not had the experience of rowing as a sport or recreational activity. PeterboroughROWS allows people to try rowing and makes rowing accessible to new and less experienced rowers from all different groups. By providing a high-quality experience, the PRC is working to ensure that new rowers will continue with rowing as a healthy and fun outdoor activity. The youth and student outreach component of the program is another initiative by the PRC to promote ongoing engagement in rowing and engage individuals in an activity in which they can participate throughout their life.

Spring and Summer programming for both youth and adults includes three main components:

- Learn to Row – Introductory programs
- Return to Row – More advanced programs
- Try it days – single day sessions for groups

Adult programming also includes an Adult Rowing League, which is open to anyone who has rowing experience and wants to row for fitness, health and fun.

Outreach activities of PeterboroughROWS targeted students as a priority group. The school component of the program provides high-quality instruction in a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment. The program, which features in-class instruction by qualified coaches using rowing machines, streams rowers into activities that are appropriate to their age and rowing experience.

School programming in fall 2021 and winter 2022 was a gym rowing program for students in grades 7 and 8 at eight intermediate schools. Most sessions were conducted with online

instruction because of continuing restriction related to Covid-19. The in-class sessions introduced new rowers to a fun and challenging physical activity.

Youth winter outreach also included supporting winter training to help retain participants from summer programs on the water.

### **Objectives of the evaluation**

The objective of the evaluation of PeterboroughROWS is to provide information about the program that will allow PRC to optimize outreach, coaching, and participant retention to increase the number of people who are participating in youth and adult recreational rowing activities. There also is an expectation that results of the evaluation and the lessons learned can be applied more widely to help increase the number of Ontarians actively involved in rowing.

The evaluation also is designed to assess the extent to which PeterboroughROWS is achieving four main program outcomes:

- Increased youth and adult participation in rowing programs.
- Participants' ongoing engagement in rowing (through exposure to a program with high-quality coaching in a safe, inclusive and supportive environment).
- Increase in participants' overall levels of physical activity.
- Development of positive attitudes about rowing for life-long recreation and sport.

## **2. Evaluation Methodology**

### **Data collection methodology**

The evaluation will rely on six data sources:

Quantitative data (primarily):

1. Administrative data (on program participation and participant characteristics)
2. Program participant survey (post-program online survey)
3. In-school gym rowing session participant survey (a short survey designed as an add-on to the OTF 2-page survey of all student participants in school sessions)

Qualitative data:

4. Program participant comments and feedback (in-program; short Q&A following sessions)
5. PRC staff and volunteer interviews (post season)
6. Youth program participant focus groups (in fall 2022)

Data collection instruments were designed the surveys (#2 and #3). Questions and interview guides were developed for the qualitative data collection methods.

**Performance indicators and other measures (by data source)**

The following tables present the types of data and performance measures that will be used in the evaluation of PeterboroughROWS. Most of these data are available from Year 1.

**From administrative data**

<b>Performance indicator</b>	<b>Breakdowns and details</b>
Number of participants – by year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult recreational: Learn to Row, League</li> <li>• Adult competitive</li> <li>• Youth recreational: Learn to Row, League</li> <li>• Youth competitive</li> <li>• Try it Day</li> <li>• Other: corporate, custom programs, special events</li> <li>• Breakdowns by gender and age</li> </ul>
Repeat registrations / Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number and percent of returning participants: adult and youth; by type of program</li> </ul>
School outreach – by year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of events, by type</li> <li>• Number of participants</li> </ul>

**From participants:**

<b>Performance indicator</b>	<b>Breakdowns and details</b>
Attitudes and opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sources of awareness (how participants heard about the program)</li> <li>• Increased awareness and appreciation of rowing as a recreational activity and sport</li> <li>• Increased enjoyment of rowing</li> <li>• Satisfaction with the program – overall and by program features</li> <li>• Likelihood of continuing with rowing after the program</li> <li>• Reasons for continuing /not continuing with rowing</li> <li>• Perceptions of improved level of fitness</li> </ul>
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ratings of what was learned (e.g., how much, how useful)</li> <li>• Ratings of the coaches’ knowledge and ability to communicate</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence of what was learned about rowing (from the program; from coaches) on the likelihood of continuing with rowing after the program</li> </ul>
Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous experience with rowing: overall; with PRC</li> <li>• Time spent rowing (e.g., hours per week) and in related physical activities during the rowing season.</li> <li>• Changes in overall level of physical activity: during the rowing season; during the off-season</li> <li>• Impact of program on changes in overall level and types of physical activity</li> </ul>
Areas where the program could be improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content</li> <li>• Delivery</li> <li>• Practical considerations: e.g., timing, length</li> <li>• Quality / availability of equipment</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>

**From PRC staff and volunteers:**

<b>Performance indicator</b>	<b>Breakdowns and details</b>
Strengths and weaknesses of the program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What works well; why?</li> <li>• What is not working well; why?</li> </ul>
Achievement of objectives and reasons; why or why not	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach, promotion and recruitment</li> <li>• Programming</li> <li>• Program delivery</li> <li>• Participant feedback</li> </ul>
Areas where the program could be improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content</li> <li>• Teaching/coaching and learning</li> <li>• Recruitment and training of coaches/instructors in subsequent years</li> <li>• Practical considerations (e.g., timing, length)</li> <li>• Equipment availability and quality</li> <li>• Outreach activities/marketing and promotion</li> <li>• Allocation of resources</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>

**Participant Survey sample characteristics**

In 2021, there were a total of 120 registrations for adult and junior recreational rowing programs. This represented a total of 84 people, as some individuals registered for more than one program. Furthermore, four adults registered for two junior participants, which leaves a total of 80 unique program registrants.

The invitation to complete the online survey was sent to these 80 unique program registrants. As the registrants for junior participants typically were parents, these adults were asked to assist with survey completion.

The survey was conducted in November and early December following the 2021 rowing season.

A total of 42 program participants completed the survey, for an overall response rate of 52%.

Survey sample characteristics are as follows:

Gender:

- Female = 22 (52%)
- Male = 20 (48%)

Adult or Junior:

- Adult = 17 (40%)
- Junior = 25 (60%)

Rowing experience:

- Previous experience rowing on the water = 20 (48%)
- No previous experience = 22 (52%)

Of those with previous rowing experience, 90% had rowed at the PRC before: 75% in 2020 PRC rowing programs and 15% in a previous year.

Juniors (32%) were much less likely than adults (71%) to have previous rowing experience.

The Participant Survey, annotated with the overall statistics, is presented in Appendix A of this report.

### **Staff and volunteer interviews**

Six interviews were completed with PRC staff and volunteers. All interviews were completed by telephone or video link (e.g., Zoom).

### **School survey**

A total of 136 students completed the short survey following the in-school rowing sessions. Surveys were completed by pen and paper on-site.

Survey sample characteristics are as follows:

Gender (n=134):

- Female = 68 (51%)
- Male = 62 (46%)
- Other / prefer not to say = 4 (3%)

Age (n=126):

- 11 = 4 (3%)
- 12 = 64 (51%)
- 13 = 57 (45%)
- 14 = 1 (1%)



### 3. Evaluation Findings

#### 3.1 PeterboroughROWS Participant Profile

A total of 288 people participated in PeterboroughROWS a total of 324 recreational program sessions in 2021.

- 57% of registrations (184/324) were in events including Try It Days.
- 43% of registrations were in in adult and junior recreational programs including Learn to Row, Return to Row and Leagues.
- Excluding events, 43% of recreational program participants participated in two or more types of programs.

#### Recreational program participation: 2021

Program Type	Registration Numbers
Adult Learn to Row (LTR)	28
Adult Return to Row (RTR)	10
Adult Rowing League	15
Junior Learn to Row	31
Junior Return to Row	18
Junior Rowing League	18
Sub-total	120*
Events (12)	184
<b>Total Registrations</b>	<b>324**</b>

\*This represents 84 individuals, after controlling for registration in two or more programs.

\*\*288 individuals participating in a total of 324 recreational program sessions.

#### Participant characteristics (programs only, excluding events)

By gender, 49 recreational program participants were female (58%) and 35 were male (42%).

By age category, 41 were in adult programs (49%) and 43 were in junior programs (51%). The average age of participants was 30.1.

## 3.2 Participant experiences and opinions about the PeterboroughROWS program

### Very positive results overall

Participants provided very positive feedback about their experience with PeterboroughROWS programs in 2021

*Enjoyment* – 83% of participants agreed that participation in the program increased their enjoyment of rowing; 51% strongly agreed (a rating of 5 on the 5-point scale).

*Differences by gender* – Males (63%) were more likely than females (43%) to strongly agree (a rating of 5 on the 5-point scale) that the program increased their enjoyment or rowing.

*Differences by age* – Juniors (61%) were more likely than adults (36%) to strongly agree that the program increased their enjoyment or rowing.

- Increased enjoyment of rowing is even higher for juniors with previous rowing experience (83% strongly agree) than for first time rowers (53% strongly agree).
- It is important to note that all but one junior rower (22/23) agreed that the program increased their enjoyment of rowing (ratings of 4-5 on the 5-point scale).

*New appreciation for rowing* – 87% appreciates rowing as a recreational sport and activity more than they did before; 54% strongly agreed

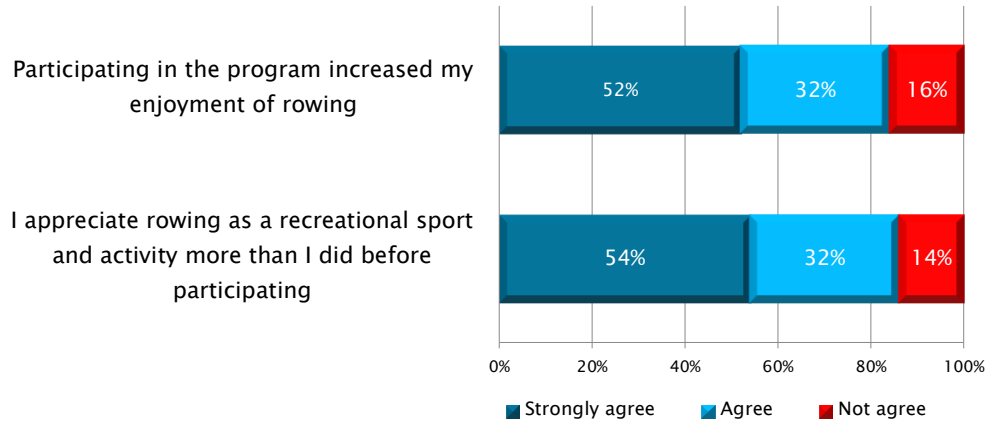
*Differences by gender* – Males (63%) were somewhat more likely than females (48%) to strongly agree that they appreciate rowing more than before participating in the program.

*Differences by age* – Juniors (61%) were more likely than adults (43%) to strongly agree that they appreciate rowing more than before participating in the program. All juniors (100%) agreed that they appreciate rowing more after participating compared to 78% of adults) based on ratings of 4-5 on the 5-point scale).

Many respondents to the participant survey also wrote positive comments about the program, the PRC and the people involved.

## Overall opinions about the PeterboroughROWS experience

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the program?



Source: 2021 Participant Survey; n=37

On the 5-point scales: Strongly agree=5; Agree=4; Not agree=1-3

### Reasons for a positive experience

The reasons given by participants for their enjoyment of Peterborough and their positive experiences are completely consistent with the PRC's design of the program. Almost all participants agreed that they were made to feel welcome and that they were provided with a high-quality rowing experience.

*Feeling welcome* – 92% agreed program leaders and coaches made me feel welcome; 62% strongly agreed.

*Differences by gender* – Males (88%) were more likely than females (43%) to strongly agree that leaders and coaches made them feel welcome.

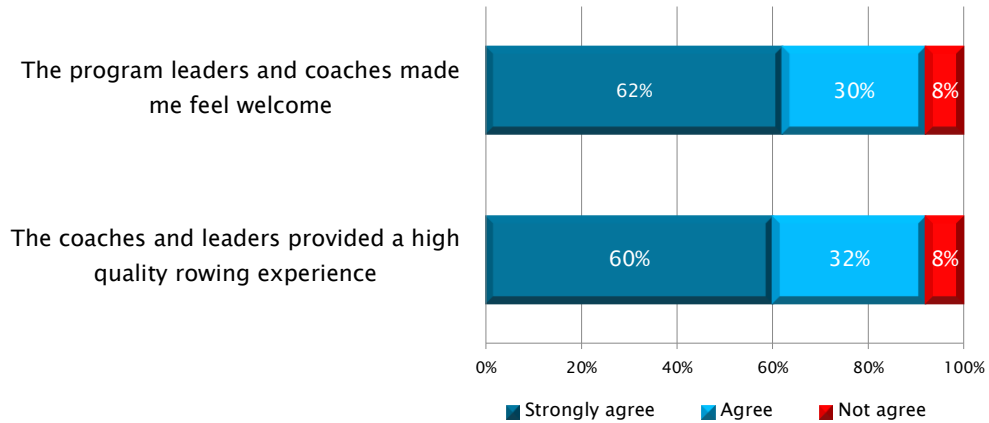
*Differences by age* – Juniors (70%) were more likely than adults (50%) to strongly agree that leaders and coaches made them feel welcome.

*High quality rowing experience* – 92% agreed that coaches and leaders provided a high-quality rowing experience; 60% strongly agreed.

*Differences by gender* – Males (75%) were more likely than females (48%) to strongly agree that coaches and leaders provided a high-quality rowing learning experience.

## Reasons for having a positive experience with PeterboroughROWS

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the program?



Source: 2021 Participant Survey; n=37

On the 5-point scales: Strongly agree=5; Agree=4; Not agree=1-3

### Equipment and safety

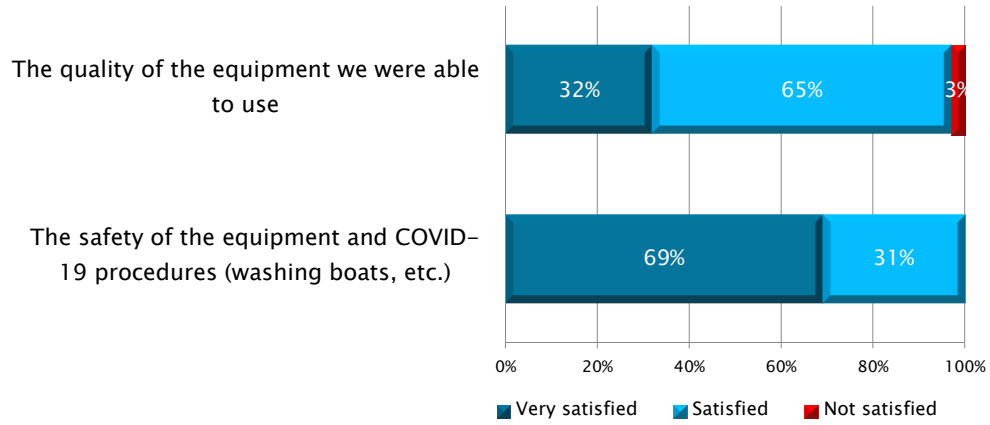
Participants were satisfied with the equipment used, including the quality of the equipment and especially with equipment safety and COVID-19 procedures.

*Safety of the equipment* – 100% were satisfied with the safety of the equipment, including COVID-19 procedures; 69% were very satisfied.

*Quality of the equipment* – 97% were satisfied with the quality of the equipment used; 32% were very satisfied. Although still positive, 32% is a significantly lower percentage of “very satisfied” participants than for the safety of the equipment.

## Participant satisfaction with equipment quality and safety

Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following aspects of the program?



Source: 2021 Participant Survey; n=37

On the 5-point scales: Very satisfied=5; Satisfied=4; Not satisfied=1-3

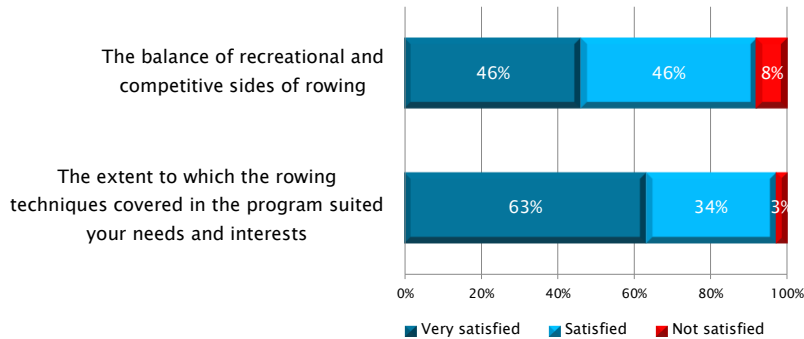
### Program structure and delivery

*Rowing techniques learned suited their needs and interests* – A majority of participants (63%) were very satisfied with the extent to which the rowing techniques covered in the program suited their needs and interests. Almost all of the rest (34%) were satisfied; just 3% were not satisfied.

*The balance of the recreational and competitive sides of rowing* – 92% also were satisfied with the balance of the recreational and competitive sides of rowing in their program sessions: 46% were very satisfied and another 46% were satisfied.

### Learning rowing techniques and the balance of the recreational and competitive sides of rowing

Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following aspects of the program?



Source: 2021 Participant Survey; n=35

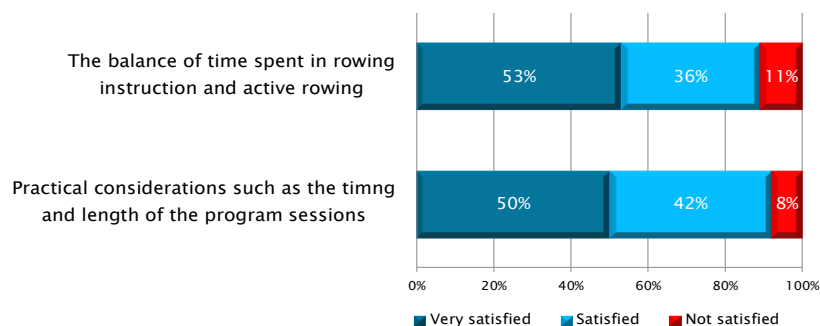
On the 5-point scales: Very satisfied=5; Satisfied=4; Not satisfied=1-3

*Balance of time spent in rowing instruction and active rowing* – Similar to the balance or recreational and competitive sides of rowing, most participants (89%) were satisfied with the balance of time spent in rowing instruction and in active rowing: 53% were very satisfied and another 36% were satisfied.

*Practical considerations such as the timing and length of program sessions* – With respect to practical considerations such as the timing and length of program sessions, 92% of participants were satisfied, including 50% were very satisfied and another 42% were satisfied.

### The timing and organization of rowing sessions

Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following aspects of the program?



Source: 2021 Participant Survey; n=36

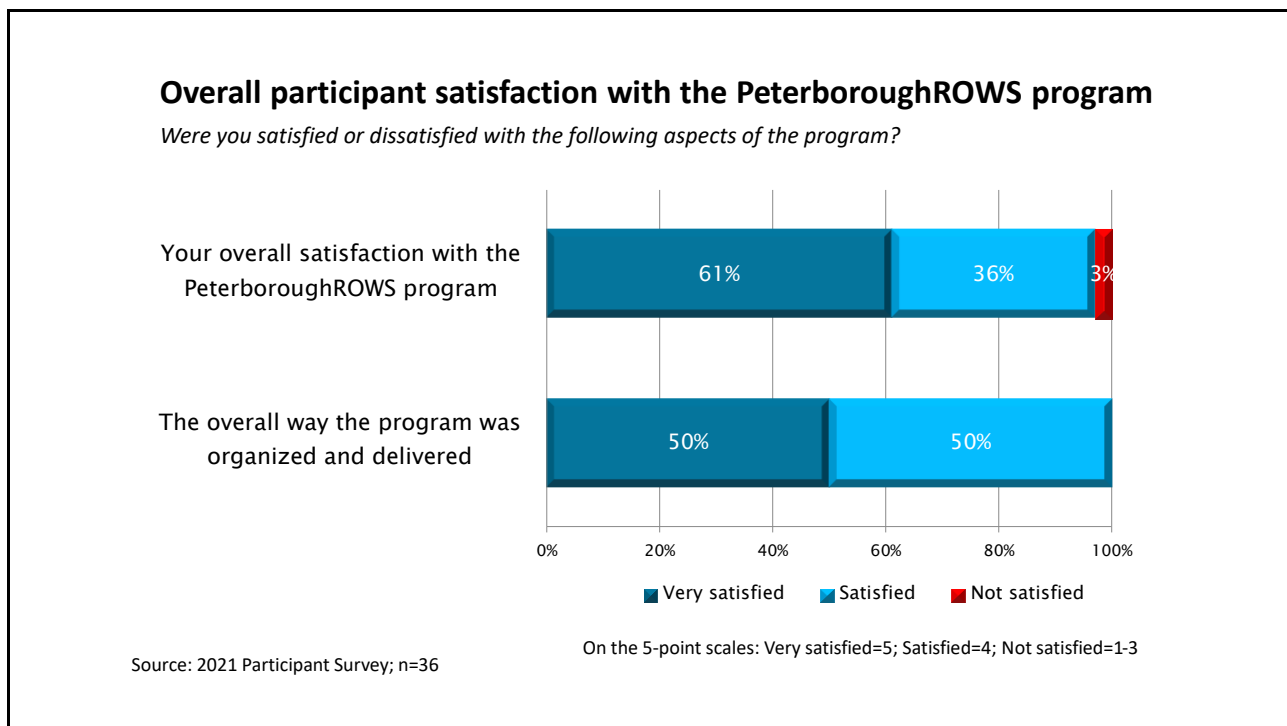
On the 5-point scales: Very satisfied=5; Satisfied=4; Not satisfied=1-3

## Overall satisfaction

*The overall way the program was organized and delivered* – All participants – 100% - were satisfied with the way that the program was organized and delivered overall; 50% were very satisfied and 50% were satisfied.

*Overall satisfaction with the PeterboroughROWS program* – Similarly, 97% – all but one respondent – was satisfied overall with PeterboroughROWS; 61% were very satisfied and 36% were satisfied.

*Differences by gender* – Males (75%) were more likely than females (50%) to be very satisfied overall with the program.



**Comparative levels of satisfaction with program features** – The following tables ranks the eight different program features presented in this section by the percentage of participants who were “very satisfied” (i.e., a rating of 5 on the 5-point scales).

By this ranking method, safety of the equipment is the most highly rated feature (69% very satisfied), and quality of the equipment (39% very satisfied) is the lowest.

It is important to restate that almost all participants were satisfied with the different features of the program, with 97% satisfied overall.

<b>Program feature (ranked by % very satisfied)</b>	<b>Level of satisfaction</b>		
	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Very satisfied</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Safety of the equipment and Covid-19 procedures	31%	69%	100%
Rowing techniques covered in the program suited my needs and interests	34%	63%	97%
Overall satisfaction with PeterboroughROWS	36%	61%	97%
Balance of time spent in rowing instruction and active rowing	36%	53%	89%
The overall way the program was delivered	50%	50%	100%
Practical considerations such as the time and length of program sessions	42%	50%	92%
Balance of recreational and competitive sides of rowing	46%	46%	92%
Quality of the equipment we were able to use	65%	32%	97%



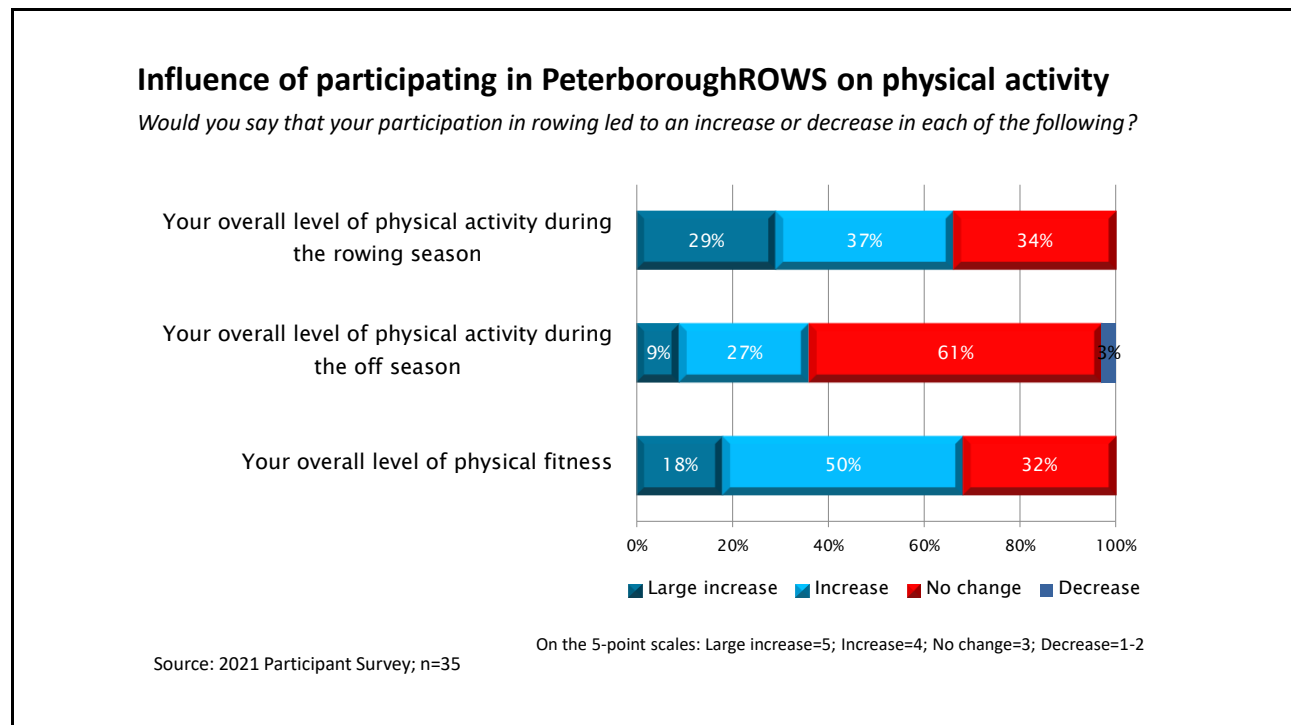
## Impacts on levels of physical activity

A majority of participants reported an increase in their overall level of physical activity during the rowing season. They also reported an increase in their and overall level of physical fitness.

- *Overall level of PA during the rowing season* – 66% reported that it increased; 29% reported a large increase.
- *Overall level of PA during the off-season* – 36% reported that it increased; 9% reported a large increase; most reported no change (61%).
- *Overall level of physical fitness* – 68% reported an increase; 18% reported a large increase.

During the rowing season:

- Participants spent an average of 5.6 hours per week on rowing and rowing-related activities (erging, weight training, etc.). The amounts ranged from 1 hour to 12 hours per week.
- Participants spent an average of 8.6 hours per week on other sports and physical activities. The amounts ranged from 1.5 hours to 40 hours per week.



*Differences by gender* – Males were more likely than females to report an increase in levels of physical activity and overall physical fitness.

- During the rowing season: Fairly similar numbers of males (71%) and females (61%) reported an increase in their level of physical activity during the rowing season. However, males (41%) were more likely than females (17%) to report a large increase.
  - During the off-season: 44% of males reported an increase compared to 29% of females.
  - Overall level of physical fitness: 76% of males reported an increase compared to 59% of females; 24% of males reported a large increase in overall physical fitness compared to 12% of females.

*Differences by age* – Juniors were more likely to report an increase in their level of physical activity:

- During the rowing season: 83% of juniors compared to 54% of adults.
- During the off-season: results for juniors and adults are similar.
- Overall level of physical fitness: 76% of juniors reported an increase compared to 54% of adults.

### **Intentions to continue with rowing**

Two-thirds of participants (68%) indicated they are likely to continue with rowing next year, either with the PRC or somewhere else: 29% indicated “likely” and 49% indicated “very likely”.

*Differences by gender* – 76% of males indicated they are likely to continue with rowing compared to 60% of females.

*Differences by age* – 73% of juniors indicated they are likely to continue with rowing compared to 60% of adults.

*Reasons for not continuing with rowing* (n=5) – The most common reasons were:

- They wanted to know what rowing is like and now they know (4 of 5)
- They don’t like it enough to continue (2)
- They don’t have enough time to fit it into their schedule (2)

### 3.3 Views of PRC coaches and leaders and participants about why the program is successful

#### **Program features that appeal to new rowers**

PRC leaders and staff, as well as participants completing the survey, identified several features of the PeterboroughROWS program that appealed to new rowers.

*Feeling welcome* – As shown previously, almost all participants agreed that they were made to feel welcome by the club. “The coaches did an excellent job of making people feel welcome.” Coaches also emphasized the importance of making new rowers feel welcome and reported that they made this a priority. Some coaches said this was especially important for junior-age participants, who tended to be a little more shy than adults.

*A sense of community* – Feeling a sense of community and that they are part of the club was important to program participants. Coaches reported that new people asked a lot of questions about the club and about how they could get more involved in both rowing and other club activities. There were fewer social activities in 2021 because of ongoing restrictions related to COVID-19. Participants understood these restrictions, but many still expressed an interest in getting involved. As one coach said: “people are always interested in learning more about the club”.

*A sense of accomplishment* – All coaches reported that it was important to help new rowers build confidence and feel comfortable in a boat. Most new rowers had some level of anxiety and uncertainty about how they would do in a boat and overcoming that uncertainty “figuring it out” – was very important to them. Coaches reported that participants would move from talking about rowing in a boat to being comfortable with it within a week. As one said: “They were excited that by the end of the week they could get out on the water and be comfortable.” A few coaches reported that junior rowers generally were more comfortable at the beginning and with doing drills in small boats.

*Coaching* – Time with coaches was an important feature for participants. Participants rated their coaches very highly. Coaches reported that “people enjoyed being coached” and that they enjoyed some drills.

*Different things for different people to match individual abilities and preferences* – Some people learn more quickly and have a higher aptitude for rowing. Coaches had the awareness and flexibility to separate people into different boats according to their ability and aptitudes. One coach noted that friends like to row together, and younger people are more likely to want to

get on a competitive track, and it is important to separate people into different boats according to their ability and aptitude. As another coach said: “Some people liked singles; some liked being in a crew; you had to ask. We did the first session and then assessed things for the second session.” Another coach reported that friends tended to like rowing in doubles, especially for their first sessions. Most sessions had two coaches so groups could be split up by interest (e.g., singles/bigger boats) and/or aptitudes and each group would have a coach.

*Learning skills and progressing through the stages* – The program gave participants opportunities to try different boats and different activities. Participants had opportunities to progress and get a taste of competitive rowing if they were interested. By the end of the Return to Row sessions, participants had the ability to get into bigger boats. Participants who want to move up to more competitive rowing tended to prefer singles.

*Getting exercise and being active outdoors* – People of all ages got involved and had fun being active. “People like the exercise component.” The great setting of the club helped to increase participants’ sense of enjoyment.

### **Program features contributing to success**

*Structure of the program* – The program was described by both participants and coaches as being “well laid out”. As noted previously, participants were very satisfied with the balance of program activities including the amounts of time spent on instruction and active rowing. A program leader said that a well-structured program is important “so people know what is happening and what is expected of them”.

*Good coaching* – Both adult and junior participants, as well as program leaders, agreed that the coaching was high quality. “The coaches were excellent” is a comment made frequently by participants. Coaches thought that the way the PRC managed staff was very good: “staff was organized and were deployed well”.

*Letting participants know they are wanted and needed for each session* – A program leader identified the relationship between small group size, coaching and participation: “If they know there is someone counting on them, they tend to show up more”.

*Equipment and safety* – Participants and coaches both rated the quality of equipment and safety procedures as being good. Some coaches noted that smaller boats generally were better for the Learn to Row programs, particularly for adults who tended to prefer rowing in singles.

*An easy way to try rowing* – A few participants viewed the rowing sessions as an easy and low-cost trial that didn’t work out. They were curious about rowing, wanted to try it, and found out

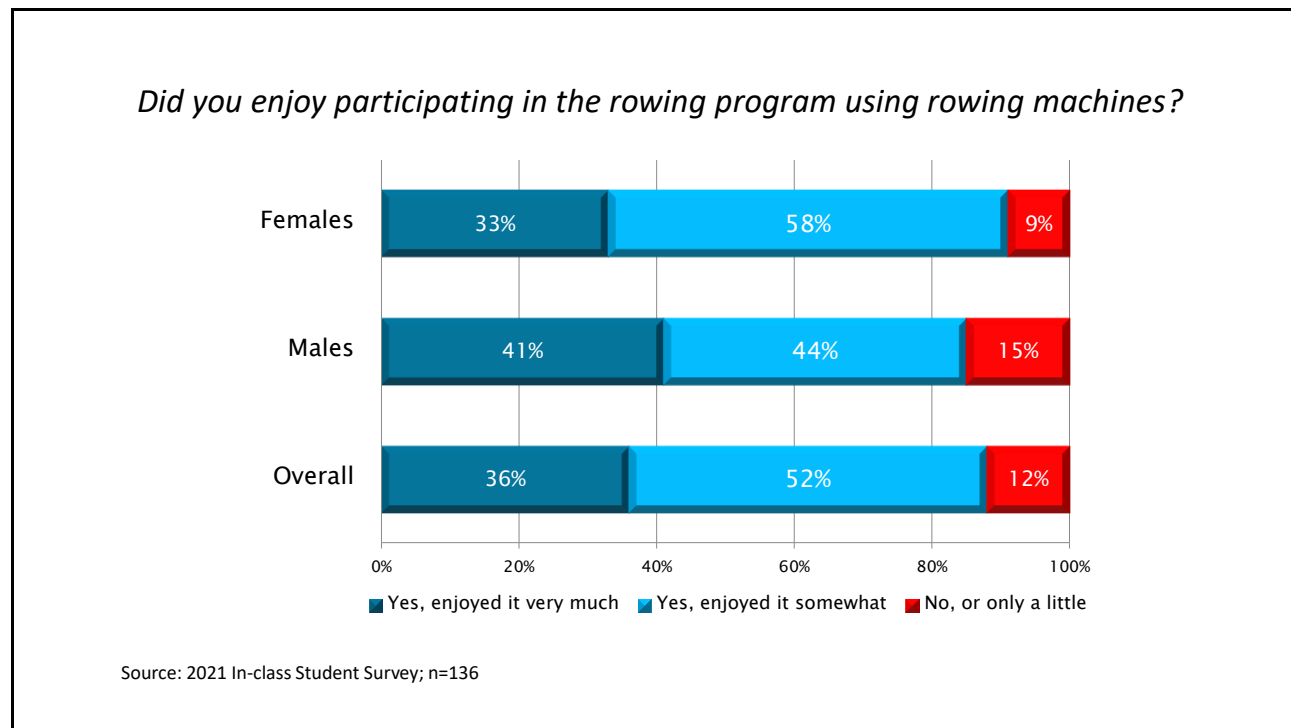
that it isn't for them. As one adult participant said: "I discovered I had no ability and didn't really enjoy rowing! But it was a low-risk experiment."

### 3.4 Outreach program student survey results

*Previous rowing experience and introduction to rowing* – For most students participating in the in-class rowing sessions, this was their first rowing experience. Two-thirds of the students (67%) had never used a rowing machine before. Fewer than half (44%) had ever rowed on the water. These figures are similar for males and females.

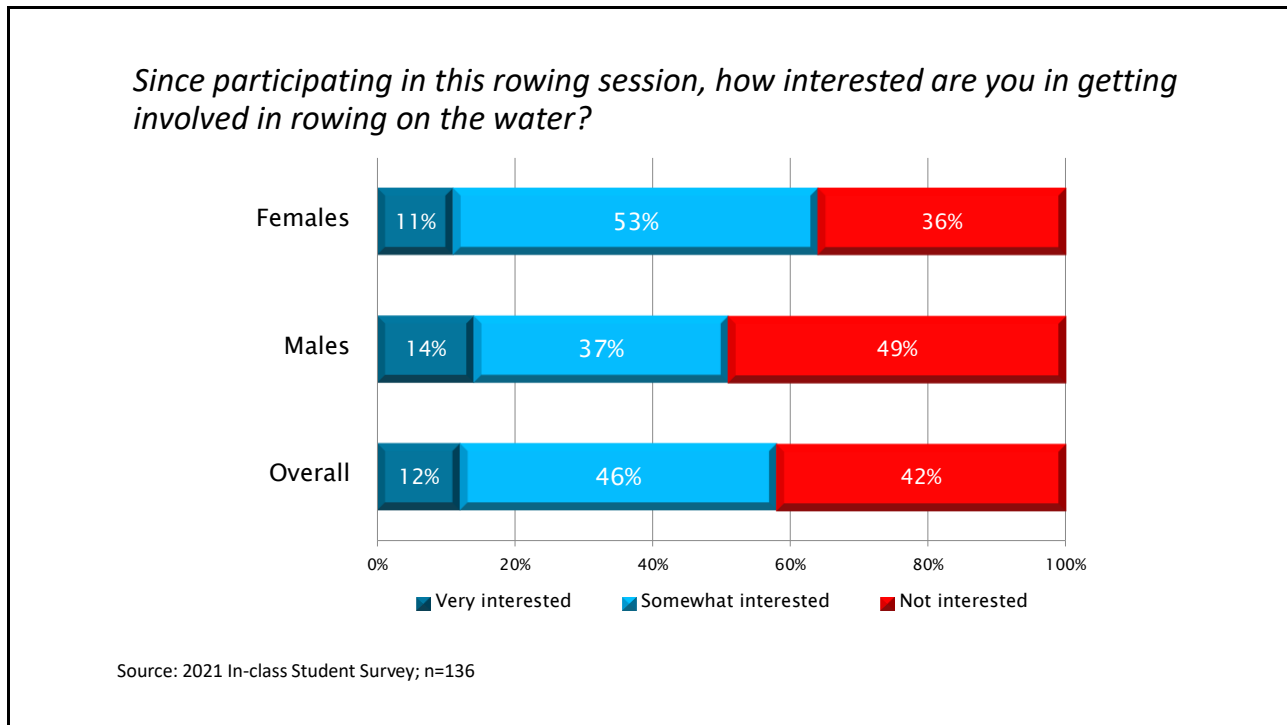
*Enjoyment of the rowing program* – Almost all students (88%) indicated that they enjoyed participating in the rowing program with rowing machines. This includes 36% who enjoyed it very much and 52% who enjoyed it somewhat.

- Students who had used a rowing machine before were a little more likely to have enjoyed the program at least somewhat: 95% compared to 85% of those who had never used a rowing machine before.
- However, the numbers of those who enjoyed it very much were similar: 35% of students who had used a rowing machine before compared to 38% of those who had not.



*Interest in getting involved in rowing on the water* – Well over half of the students (58%) expressed an interest in getting involved in rowing on the water; 46% were somewhat interested and 12% were very interested.

- Interest getting involved with rowing on the water was higher among female students: 64% were at least somewhat interested compared to 51% of males.
- Interest was only somewhat higher for students who had rowed on the water before: 65% compared to 51% of those who had not previously rowed on the water.
- However, the number who indicated they are very interested in getting involved in rowing on the water is much higher for students with previous experience: 19% for those who had rowed on the water compared to just 6% of those who had not.



*Reasons for interest in rowing* – The reasons given most frequently for being interested in getting involved in rowing on the water are because it is a fun and enjoyable activity (72%) and it is a good physical activity and workout (64%). Liking the competition (30%) and rowing being a challenging sport (28%) also are reasons that many students are interested.

**Reasons for interest in rowing – “Why I am interested”**

<b>Reasons*</b>	<b>Females (n=51)</b>	<b>Males (n=39)</b>	<b>Overall (n=90)</b>
Fun, it is an enjoyable activity	77%	67%	72%
Physical activity, it’s a good workout	71%	69%	68%
It’s a challenging sport	24%	36%	28%
I like the competition	39%	21%	30%
Peterborough has good rowing opportunities	18%	10%	15%
Other reasons	4%	0%	3%

\*Respondents can indicate more than one reason.

*Reasons for lack of interest in rowing* – The two reasons given most frequently for not being interested in in getting involved in rowing on the water are participation in other sports (65%) and a lack of time/being too busy (44%). Costs (14%), distance to the club (9%) and the equipment (8%) are not reasons for a lack of interest for many students.

**Reasons for lack of interest in rowing – “Why I am not interested”**

<b>Reasons*</b>	<b>Females (n=52)</b>	<b>Males (n=50)</b>	<b>Overall (n=102)</b>
I participate in other sports	62%	68%	65%
Lack of time / too busy	40%	48%	44%
The cost of participation	8%	22%	14%
Don’t like the equipment	8%	8%	8%
Too far to the rowing club	6%	12%	9%
Other reasons	15%	12%	13%

\*Respondents can indicate more than one reason.

## 4.0 Summary of findings with implications for Years 2 and 3

There is a strong consensus among PRC leaders and staff and program participants that Year 1 of PeterboroughROWS went very well and was a success. Participants rated the program and their rowing experience very highly. Staff described the participants as enjoying the program and being “really enthusiastic”, with many people signing up for Return to a Return to Row program after their Learn to Row experience. Two-thirds of participants expressed an interest in rowing next year.

Most students participating in the in-school outreach program also had a very positive experience with the rowing classes. Even though most students had never rowed before, and though most instruction had to be offered online, 88% of students enjoyed participating in the rowing program using rowing machines.

The following findings are relevant to program design and planning for Years 2 and 3 of PeterboroughROWS.

### **High level of adult participation and adult programming preferences**

Half of the program participants (49%) were adults, and the percentage is much higher when considering the age of participants events. While their survey responses are not as enthusiastic overall as those of junior participants, adults expressed very positive opinions about the program and their rowing experience. Adults expressed a strong commitment to rowing, with 60% planning to continue with rowing next year. This includes some masters-age adults who are interested in competitive rowing.

The club expressed some surprise at the high level of interest among older adults. While rowing is a sport for all ages, it is not always seen this way. Older adults have been identified as an important target group for future program promotions.

### **Coaches and coaching**

The PRC identified a need for more coaches because the Year 1 program generated more interest and more participants than expected. High demand means we need more coaches. In the words of one coach: “Add coaches, you can never have enough coaches. We had enough – it didn't limit us - but more coaches would be even better.”

The Year 1 experience also showed that participants value time with coaches and that smaller group sizes are preferred (“some people get lost in a big boat”).



Forecasting the need for both paid and volunteer coaches in 2022 will be a challenge. Some other considerations for the number and types of coaches required include the following:

- A need for flexibility from part-time coaches.
- A need for day-time coaches.
- Three beginners per session is enough for one coach (i.e., two coaches for 6 beginners).
- Training volunteer coaches is a challenge that requires advance planning because of training and accreditation requirements.

### **Communications and outreach**

Communications and marketing for the first year of PeterboroughROWS was characterized by one coach as “really quite effective”. Others described it as a success – “our best year, with lots of people of all age groups interested in rowing”.

Most 2021 participants heard about the program from club members (42%) and family (31%). PRC members and 2021 PeterboroughROWS participants are priority groups for direct communications about 2022 programs.

Students in school outreach programs also could be a priority group for information about 2022 programs.

Key messages are that anyone can row, that rowing is for everyone, and that these programs are an easy way to try rowing. An adult rower offered the following advice: “I hope that they are able to post comments made by participants to encourage others to give rowing a try.”

PRC staff emphasized the importance of social media, particularly Instagram, for promoting programs. However, one participant advised that, to reach adults, the club also should use traditional marketing tactics like media alerts and press releases as well as social media.

Good communications with organizations for events such as Try It Days, including clear communications about how events are conducted and what is involved is important. Such direct communications with organizations were effective for securing their participation in 2021. A lesson from Year 1 is that more information should be provided to organizations participating in events so that they understand exactly what is involved and the sequence of the day’s activities. The PRC expects that contacts and relationships established in Year 1 will pay off in repeat registrations and higher participation in Year 2.

### **Equipment**

All comments about equipment made by participants and staff related to the number and types of boats. The following comments about the need for more boats were made by coaches.

- Singles – “Many people like single boats so there is always a demand for singles”.
- Larger boats – “More stable boats (tubs) for beginners”.
- Events – “More boats for events”; “a couple more boats for events might be beneficial”.

### **Training and skills development**

Junior participants offered the following suggestions for changes or improvements to the program:

- Opportunities to train and develop skills over the winter.
- More opportunities during the summer to compete as a junior.
- Rowing in bigger boats – quads/eights.
- More time on the water.
- Longer practices “to maximize time on water in the summer”.

Adults offered the following suggestions for changes or improvements to the program:

- Sessions once a week for 4-6 weeks instead of 3 sessions in a week.
- More time in the ergs, warm-up time with technique tips.
- Team aspect of training ... participation in a team setting.

### **Other suggestions for improvements**

Some other suggestions for program improvements made by coaches include the following.

Communications and information:

- Early outreach as much as possible; March-April; developing the calendar of events so that participating organizations can plan their dates.
- More information for participants about the goals of each level of rowing and what they can expect. The gap between LTR and Leagues is too large for some people.

Programming:

- Slightly longer sessions: 120 minutes rather than 90 minutes would give more time for rowing once setup and cleanup are taken into account.
- Have “fun rows”, such as races in different boats.
- More 1-day events like Try It Days.

# Appendix A: Participant Survey – annotated with overall statistics



## PeterboroughROWS Participant Survey 2021

### Introduction

We want to hear your opinions and comments about our programs for recreational and junior rowers – now called PeterboroughROWS – and how the programs could be improved. This survey includes mostly two types of questions: rating scales asking for your opinions about the program and open- ended questions that allow you make any comments you want about your experiences with the program. The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete. You can pause mid-survey and return at another time if you want.

**To begin, we would like to know a little about your previous rowing experience.**

1. Have you ever rowed on the water before participating in your 2021 PeterboroughROWS sessions(s)?

Yes .....47.6%  
No .....52.4%    n = 42

### Previous experience at the Peterborough Rowing Club

2. Have you ever rowed at the Peterborough Rowing Club before?

Yes, in last year's program ..... 75.0%  
Yes, I didn't row last year but I have rowed at PRC before ..... 15.0%  
No ..... 10.0%    n = 20

## Opinions about your experiences with PeterboroughROWS

3. How did you hear about the PeterboroughROWS program first offered in 2021? (Check all that apply.)

Club member .....	42.3%
Friend .....	15.4%
Family.....	30.8%
Social media .....	19.2%
At another sport club or activity .....	3.8%
At a community group meeting or activity .....	7.7%
Local announcement (e.g., a flyer) .....	3.8% n = 32

Other (please specify)

4. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the program?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	n
a. Participating in the program increased my enjoyment of rowing	2.7%	2.7%	10.8%	32.4%	51.4%	37
b. The program leaders and coaches made me feel welcome	2.7%	0.0%	5.4%	29.7%	62.2%	37
c. I appreciate rowing as a recreational sport and activity more than I did before participating	2.7%	0.0%	10.8%	32.4%	54.1%	37
d. The coaches and leaders provided a high-quality rowing experience	2.7%	0.0%	5.4%	32.4%	59.5%	37

5. Peterborough Rowing Club about running this type of program?

## Program content and delivery

Next, we have a few questions about more specific aspects of the program.

6. Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following aspects of the program?

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	n
a. Participating in the program increased my enjoyment of rowing	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	34.3%	62.9%	35
b. The extent to which the rowing techniques covered in the program suited your needs and interests	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	46.2%	46.2%	26
c. The balance of the recreational and competitive sides of rowing	0.0%	5.6%	5.6%	36.1%	52.8%	36
d. The overall way the program was organized and delivered	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	36
e. The quality of the equipment we were able to use	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	64.9%	32.4%	37
f. The safety of the equipment and COVID-19 procedures (washing boats, etc.)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	30.6%	69.4%	36
g. Practical considerations such as the timing and length of the program sessions	0.0%	5.6%	2.8%	41.7%	50.0%	36
h. Your overall satisfaction with the Peterborough ROWS program	0.0%	2.8%	0.0%	36.1%	61.1%	36

7. Please add any comments here

## Improvements to the PeterboroughROWS program

8. Let us know about any ways in which you think the program could be improved. Please consider the elements covered in the previous questions as well as anything else you think could be improved
9. Every year the PRC selects rowers for club awards. Among recreational programs, they are looking for rowers who demonstrate the love of rowing for rowing's sake, enthusiasm, coachability and a willingness to try new things.  
For your program, who do you think should get the club award, and why?

## Rowing and other sports and physical activities

10. During the 2021 rowing season, approximately how many hours per week did you spend on average in...

Rowing and rowing-related training (erging, weight training, etc.)

Min 1.0    Max 12.0    x = 5.6    n = 24

Other sports and physical activities

Min 1.5    Max 40.0    x = 8.6    n = 28

11. Would you say that your participation in rowing led to an increase or decrease in each of the following?

	Large Decrease	Decrease	No Change	Increase	Large Increase	n
a. Your overall level of physical activity during the rowing season	0.0%	0.0%	34.3%	37.1%	28.6%	35
b. Your overall level of physical activity during the off-season	0.0%	3.0%	60.6%	27.3%	9.1%	33
c. Your overall level of physical fitness	0.0%	0.0%	32.4%	50.0%	17.6%	34

12. Please add any comments here.

13. Considering your experience and what you learned about rowing, how likely is it that you will continue with rowing in 2022, either with the PRC or somewhere else?

Not at all likely	Not likely	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely	n
2.7%	5.4%	24.3%	18.9%	48.6%	37

14. If you are not likely to continue with rowing, please indicate why. (Check all that apply.)

No time, could not fit it into my schedule.....	40.0%	
Too far to travel .....	0.0%	
Too expensive.....	0.0%	
I don't like it enough to continue .....	40.0%	
I wanted to know what rowing is like and now I know .....	80.0%	n = 8

Other (please specify)

### Conclusion

15. To conclude, do you have any other comments about the PeterboroughROWS program or advice for the Peterborough Rowing Club about running this type of program?