

Oakland Athletic League — Rowing Pilot Program DRAFT

Proposal for Sanctioning as an Oakland Section Sport | 2026–27

Presented by East Bay Rowing Club & Oakland Strokes | March 2026

1. Objective & Vision

We are requesting that the Oakland Athletic League pilot a school-based rowing program as a formal step toward sanctioning rowing as an Oakland Section sport beginning in fall 2026–27. Our core goal is to expand equitable access to rowing for Oakland public and charter school students, restore PE credit for participants, and integrate CIF-style academic accountability into an existing, thriving program.

2. Background & Current Landscape

Oakland has a strong rowing history — Oakland area high school students have sent generations of Oakland athletes to collegiate programs around California and the country. There are almost 100 NCAA institutions that offer scholarships and stipends for female athletes and there are dozens of men’s colleges which offer scholarships. Jack London Aquatic Center (JLAC) has hosted public school rowing since the early 2000s which at one point included busing provided by the City of Oakland to and from Oakland Technical High School, Skyline, and Oakland High School. Oakland Strokes has existed on the Oakland Estuary for over 50 years and has seen students from a number of Oakland high schools participate in their programs over that time. Currently, there are 3 active rowing clubs that serve students;

- East Bay Rowing Club (EBRC/OUR) — based at JLAC, serving OUSD students
- Oakland Strokes — robust club serving the greater East Bay
- Lake Merritt RC — middle school feeder program

Recent loss of two clubs, Artemis Rowing and OARS, has reduced the regional ecosystem. The Oakland Section encompasses 9 OUSD high schools through the OAL and 21 charter schools through the Bay Area Charter School Athletic Conference — many of which do not yet offer a full sport program, creating a significant opportunity for rowing inclusion.

Current OUSD enrollment at EBRC & OS:

School	Current Rowers
Oakland Tech	21
Skyline	9
Oakland High	2
Charter	2
Homeschool	3
Total	37

The elimination of PE credit has directly reduced participation — EBRC lost approximately 10 students this spring because of this. Sanctioning resolves this gap and restores the school-based identity that drove pride and enrollment, particularly at Oakland Tech.

3. Pilot Program Proposal — Fall 2026 Season

- **Season:** 2 week setup & recruitment in schools plus 6-8 week rowing season, August through October. The program will consist of 3 sessions/week: 2 on-the-water rowing sessions + 1 land training session on-site at schools.
- **Championship:** Season will culminate in an OAL Championship Regatta
- **Initial schools:** Consider splitting between EBRC and Oakland Strokes (OS) down regional lines of West/East Oakland.
- **EBRC currently serves:** Oakland Tech, Oakland High, Skyline; potential expansion to McClymonds and charter schools.
East Oakland schools to Oakland Strokes: Castlemont, MetWest, Fremont, CCPA
- **Format:** Initial rowing instruction (2x/week) will likely include group boatings (combining students from different high schools to get them out on the water), with students breaking out into school representation for racing. On-the-water sessions at JLAC and Oakland Strokes will work toward scrimmage-style racing culminating in a final showcase regatta.
- **Equity focus:** Transit-accessible locations; co-ed participation; goal of separate girls and boys boats where numbers allow
- **East/West Oakland cohorts:** Structured to serve both sides of the city equitably

4. Roles & Responsibilities

Oakland Section / OAL	Committed Club Partners (EBRC, Oakland Strokes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sanction pilot as Oakland sport activity, granting PE credit Coaching stipends (head + assistant per team) Boathouse transportation Uniforms (racing tanks, shorts, shirt ~\$100/ea) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment: shells, oars, ergs. This includes coach-boats, fuel, equipment repairs and maintenance. No capital ask from OAL. Boathouse & facilities access, insurance expense and water safety instruction Coaching expertise and training plan coordination Regatta operations and on-the-water-safety

Both clubs, based on the estuary, are committed as founding partners to making this league successful, each providing equipment and expertise, while the district covers coaches, transportation, officials, and uniforms.

5. Budget & Fiscal Impact (Pilot Year Estimate)

Based on 40 athletes, 8 weeks (3 sessions/week). Capital and equipment: \$0 from OAL — fully covered by club partners. Officials' fees: \$0 — provided by clubs and regatta hosts.

Line Item	Amount	Paid By	Status
Coaching stipends- 4 Head Coaches @ \$5000- each 4 Assistant Coaches @ \$2500- each	\$20,000 \$10,000	OAL	Confirmed
Transportation (2 buses x 16 sessions x \$450-/day)	\$14,400	OAL*	To confirm
Uniforms (racing tank, shorts, 2 shirts x 40 athletes)	\$4,000	OAL	Confirmed
Water safety/pool rental (4 days x \$600/day)	\$2,400	Club + Grants	Grant target
TOTAL (40 athletes, 8 weeks)	\$50,800		

*Transportation is the largest variable. OAL's standard budget covers competition-day transport; confirmation that practice transport is included is required before finalizing this budget. If practice transport is not covered by OAL, clubs cannot absorb it from program revenue.

6. Student Impact & Benefits

- Access & equity:** New sport option for all OUSD students, including charter schools with limited athletic offerings
- Academic accountability:** PE credit restoration, CIF eligibility standards, attendance and grade incentives
- College pathway:** Identified pathway to NCAA D1 and D2 scholarship sport for qualified athletes. Established relationships with collegiate programs for men & women
- Wellness:** Promote physical activity, team building, cooperation, and a connection to Oakland's waterfront
- CIF Bylaw 600 compliance:** During the school season students compete under school affiliation; after season concludes they return to club competition — preserving year-round training and dual-pathway opportunities.
- Shared coaching across multiple schools is permissible in season** per existing precedent (e.g., wrestling).

7. Implementation Timeline

Date	Milestone
March 2026	Initial discussion at Policy Committee — informal first read and AD interest gauged by Frankie Navarro
April 1, 2026	Official first read of rowing sanctioning proposal at Policy Committee
May 20, 2026	Action vote: approve rowing as Oakland Section sport for Fall 2026, including pilot plan
Fall 2026	Launch pilot season (Aug–Oct); collect participation and cost data
Fall 2027 & beyond	Scale to additional OAL and charter schools; explore Bay Area-wide and CIF-state recognition

8. Considerations

- Water Safety:** Current club protocols for water safety will be extended to this program.
- Program Pathways after initial OAL Fall programming:** After participating in the fall season and the OAL Championship Regatta, athletes may inevitably decide that one program (EBRC/Oakland Strokes) is a better fit for them going forward. We will facilitate students' wants before the Program's "wants." There is a place for everyone.