

Philadelphia Welcomes Athletes to the Schuylkill River as Premier Spring Regattas Receive Approval to Race



Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Apr 1, 2021 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - The Schuylkill Navy of Philadelphia, the governing body for Boathouse Row and amateur sport on the region's Schuylkill River, joined the **Dad Vail Regatta Organizing Committee** (DVROC) and **Philadelphia Scholastic Rowing Association** (PSRA) in announcing that the City of Philadelphia has approved the organizations' applications and integrated COVID-19 Mitigation Plan for spring rowing regattas on the Schuylkill River.

With the approval, event organizers can now proceed with final preparations to welcome athletes to the

Schuylkill River's National Course for the PSRA's Philadelphia City Championships (for high school athletes on May 1-2), Jefferson Dad Vail Regatta (for collegiate athletes on May 7-8), and the Schuylkill Navy's Stotesbury Cup Regatta presented by Toyota (for high school athletes on May 14-15). On consecutive Sundays in April, the PSRA will also host three scholastic high school regattas as part of the Flick-Horvat Series.

Bonnie Mueller, Commodore of the Schuylkill Navy, shared that the three organizations have been working closely with one another for many months to strategize plans to offer racing on the iconic Schuylkill River venue. "Early on, we recognized that these spring events might be some of the first large, non-professional-sports gatherings in the City since March 2020. We, therefore, wanted to align our efforts and present a coordinated plan for consideration to our partners within the City's Office of Special Events, Parks & Recreation Department, Managing Director's Office, and – most especially -- the Philadelphia Department of Public Health."

The 2021 events will look and feel different. COVID 19 safety measures in place will include:

- Masks required on land at all times.
- No spectating tents or spectators.
- No food or drink vending on site.
- Additional safety measures will be in place.

"Gone will be the familiar sight and experience of parents and other fans who typically throng the water's edge," said Philadelphia Scholastic Rowing Association President Leslie Pfeil.

Stotesbury's Racing Director Erika McCormick agreed: "Ultimately, these events are about student-athletes and their opportunity to compete. While we acknowledge the disappointing change it will be for fans to stay away, the athletes and their coaches have been making adjustments and adapting to big changes on a regular basis for over a year...all in preparation for this moment." As the world's largest high school rowing event, the Stotesbury Cup Regatta may need to limit the volume of entries pending further clarification from the City and interest from schools that typically compete in the event.

"Eliminating spectator access is, unfortunately, a necessary step to make as much socially-distanced-space for as many athletes as possible."

Added Pfeil, "While these are outdoor events, we're aligned as regatta organizers to work with the City to take the safe route. We believe it's the right choice as we collectively balance the desire to return to normal (especially important for the physical, mental, and emotional health of young students) with the need to exercise caution as we navigate our way out of the pandemic."

The approval for the spring regattas is another early step – taken with extensive planning and attention to public health -- towards Philadelphia's safe re-opening. It's also a sign of the City's continued commitment to the Schuylkill River as an internationally recognized center for rowing and paddling. "For close to two centuries since the first regatta in 1835, Philadelphia has been a premiere destination for what is one of our city's oldest and most unique sports. With needed precautions in place and working together with these event organizers, we're delighted to welcome athletes once more to safely compete at the birthplace of American rowing," said Deputy Managing Director David Wilson.

DVROC President Jim Hanna concurs. "The Jefferson Dad Vail Regatta is the nation's largest collegiate regatta, and we know that university and college students around the country will be excited for the chance to compete once more in Philadelphia. On behalf of those students, our own Board, and all rowing fans across the nation, I extend our gratitude to Mayor Kenney and our partners in the many City

departments who helped position us to now move ahead with final preparations.”

The Schuylkill Navy will share additional information during the scheduled March 31 “State of the Schuylkill” Gathering at 7 pm via Zoom. Topics will include the spring and summer racing seasons (an additional nine rowing and paddling events are tentatively planned for June-November 2021), the ongoing Schuylkill River Dredging Project, and the continued efforts of the City of Philadelphia with its partners in the rowing and paddling communities to support increased access and inclusion on the Schuylkill River. Pre-registration for the Zoom Webinar is required and available via the Schuylkill Navy social media channels.

For additional information from the Schuylkill Navy, please contact Commodore Bonnie Mueller at bmueller81@me.com.

ABOUT THE SCHUYLKILL NAVY OF PHILADELPHIA: Founded in 1858, the Schuylkill Navy is the oldest amateur sporting association in the country and is chartered by its member clubs on Boathouse Row and upriver “to secure collective action and promote amateurism on the Schuylkill.” Through the Schuylkill Navy Series presented by Toyota, it has staged over 600 events, most dating back to the mid-19th century. The 94th Stotesbury Cup Regatta is scheduled for May 14-15 and is the world’s largest high school rowing regatta. For more information, visit www.boathouserow.org | Facebook: www.facebook.com/schuylkillnavyofphiladelphia | Twitter, and Instagram: @boathouse_row | Contact: Bonnie Mueller, bmueller81@me.com

ABOUT THE PHILADELPHIA SCHOLASTIC ROWING ASSOCIATION: The Philadelphia Scholastic Rowing Association (PSRA) is a non-profit organization of more than 70 high school crew programs from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and New York. The PSRA’s mission is to provide fair, safe, and competitive rowing experiences to high school teams and their members and to serve as an advocate for junior and scholastic rowing. For more information, visit <http://www.phillyflicks.com> | Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/PhiladelphiaScholasticRowingAssociation> | Twitter: @mannyflicks | Instagram: @philascholasticrowing | Contact: Leslie Pfeil Philasra@gmail.com

ABOUT DAD VAIL REGATTA ORGANIZING COMMITTEE: The Dad Vail Regatta is the largest collegiate rowing event in North America, an open regatta, customarily attracting thousands of rowers from over 100 colleges and universities from as far west as California, as far south as Florida, and as far north as Toronto, Canada. First staged in 1934, the Regatta has been held on the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, since 1953 with this year’s event constituting the 82nd, the number count difference in years due to suspension of the Regatta during the War years plus last year’s suspension due to Covid-19. The Dad Vail Regatta Organizing Committee expresses special appreciation to Jefferson Health for providing Title Sponsorship support culminating in naming the event as the Jefferson Dad Vail Regatta. For more information visit www.dadvail.org | Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/DadVailRegatta> | Twitter: @dadvailr | Instagram: @dadvailregatta | Contact: Ed Levin, levins51@verizon.net



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