

Novice Parent Tips – Packing for a Regatta

Novice parents, in the next few days you'll be packing for your first regatta. You might be thinking, "What do I bring?" (I was, and I did not do a particularly good job of it our first season.) There are a few necessities and some "luxuries" that can make your day spectacular. Many regattas run from early morning to late afternoon, and you will want to plan ahead for comfort.

Necessities:

Layers of clothing (for you and your rower)-Yes, it sometimes gets glorious with 70-80 degree weather by midday, but sometimes it doesn't. (I don't have to tell you that, you live in MI!) What we sometimes forget, however, is that in the fall and spring, early mornings are pretty chilly-sometimes downright cold. Layers that you can add or remove are vital. Late fall and early spring events often merit scarves, gloves, hats, etc.

Footwear-Do not wear your "out on the town shoes" or socks as they will likely get dirty, wet, or muddy at some point. You may be doing some walking to and from parking, to find a great viewing spot, or moving between the team "camp", t-shirt stands, strolling the venue, and your own seating area. Comfortable walking shoes, boots, trainers, etc. are your best bet. I often bring along my rain boots for the "mushier" venues.

Sun protection (for you and your rower)-Warm weather or cold, you'll still be outside much of the day, sometimes in the open without shade. Sunscreen, hats, sunglasses-bring what you need to be safe.

A chair-Fold up camp chairs are ideal. Many people bring blankets too, which can serve as a stretch out area for kids, or do double duty for warmth on a cold day.

A note about food and beverages-Did I mention regattas sometimes last most of the day? The food team prepares food for the rowers and coaches first and then families are welcome to join in. You may want to either pack along snacks and/or extra beverages if you have a large group.

Do bring water bottles, and start with them full (the water at the food tent is for rowers, coaches, and cooking needs first with any left going to our families.) If you drink coffee, bring a travel mug. There is always some coffee at the food tent available for parents.

Flexibility-Regattas do not usually run exactly as posted. Your rower's event may be much later than scheduled, or sometimes much sooner if an event cancels (scratches.) Plan to be there well before your rower's event time and to stay through finals (if that is part of the regatta) in case your rower qualifies. (ALL regatta event sheets say the words: Subject to change!) These regattas are run by volunteers doing the best they can, but some things are out of their control.

Note: There are porta-johns at all regattas, and these are usually the only facilities available. Plan accordingly.

"Luxuries":

Camera-Plan for up close photos at the tent, far away pictures on the water.

A pair of binoculars-Your rower's time on the water may happen on the other side of the river, so binoculars are a great tool.

Entertainment-Books, homework, cards, bring whatever you and your family need to while away the down time.

Loud things-when our boats go by, we'll be making as much noise as possible. Bring your cowbells, noisemakers, loud voices and enthusiasm.