ROWING HANDBOOK

Danish terms are in red, corresponding English terms are in blue.
Some of the translated commands are unofficial, and cannot be found at international rowing sites.

TERMINOLOGY

Stævnen - Bow
The front end of the boat.

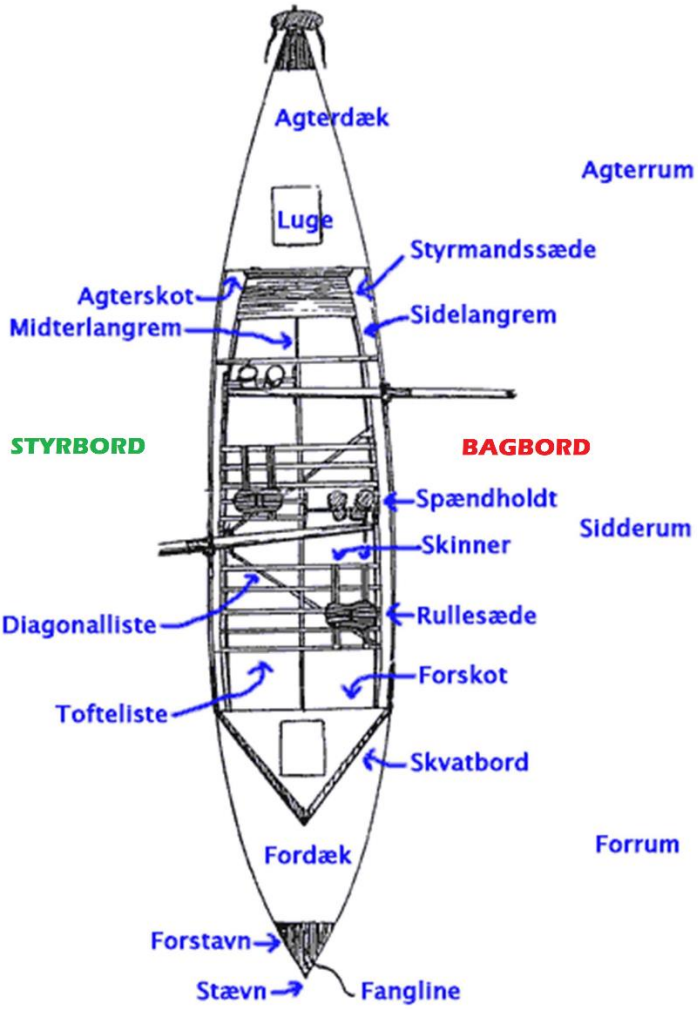
Agter - Stern
The rear end of the boat.

Styrbord - Starboard
The right side of the boat, as seen from the cox towards the bow. Starboard colour is GREEN and is often marked with a green band on the oar. O

Bagbord - Port
The left side of the boat, as seen from the cox towards the bow. Port colour is RED and is often marked with a red band on the oar. O

Styrmand – Cox (Coxswain)
The rower who sits in the seat in the back of the boat (styrmandssædet) holding the rudder lines and looking forward. The cox is the person who normally gives the commands during the row. The term, as it is used here, must not be confused with the person who is noted as cox in the rowlog, thus having the overall responsibility during the row, regardless of where he or she is seated in the boat ("helmsman" vs. "captain").

1, 2, 3, 4.
The rowers' seats are numbered from 1 and up. Number 1 is seated nearest the bow and farthest away from the cox. Hereafter follows number 2 and so on. The rower with the highest number (e.g., number 4 in a 4-oared inrigger) is always seated closest to the cox. In an inrigger, the rowers with odd numbers (1 and 3) will row to STYRBORD (STARBOARD) (the oar is pointing out to the starboard side, even though the seat is in the port side of the boat) while the rowers with even numbers (2 and 4) will row to BAGBORD (PORT) (the oar is pointing out to port side).



COMMANDS

A (*) in front of a command, means that the command can be prefixed with STYRBORD, BAGBORD, "1 og 2" ("1 and 2") or "3 og 4" ("3 and 4"). In those cases, the command is valid for those rowers only. The other rowers in the boat continue with the maneuver they are doing at the moment. E.g., STYRBORD, DET ER VEL means that only the STYRBORD (starboard) rowers shall stop rowing; the BAGBORD (port) rowers must continue rowing. If a command is not prefixed with a side or numbers, the command is directed at ALL rowers simultaneously.

COMMANDS FOR ENTERING AND LEAVING THE BOAT

Entering the boat

Prepare: **(*) KLAR TIL AT GÅ OM BORD – (*) GET READY TO BOARD**
You carefully put the foot nearest to the boat on the floorboard between the seat and the foot stretcher ("spændholt"). (You must ensure that the floorboard is correctly positioned before stepping out upon it). Then you put one hand on each gunwale ("ræling"). The other foot remains on the dock.

Initiate: **(*) OM BORD – (*) BOARD**
You place the other foot beside the first, and calmly sit down on the seat and put your feet in the foot stretcher.

Leaving the boat, going ashore

Prepare: **(*) KLAR TIL AT GÅ FRA BORDE – (*) GET READY TO GO ASHORE**
The rowers roll forward in the seat and put their feet on the floorboard (which must be correctly placed), grab the gunwale in both sides, raise and put the nearest foot on the dock.

Initiate: **(*) FRA BORDE – (*) GO ASHORE**
The rowers put their bodyweight upon the foot on the dock, and go ashore.

COMMANDS FOR GETTING CLEAR OF THE DOCK AND TO BALANCE THE BOAT

Get clear of the dock, parallel to this

Command: **TRÆK AGTER (TRÆK LANGS) – PULL ALONG**
The cox and those rowers, who sit closest to the dock, grab the edge of the dock and pull the boat along the dock to get out on open water.

Get clear of the dock, perpendicular to this

Command: **SÆT FRA – SET FREE**
The rowers, for whom it is natural, push the boat clear of the dock using the oar shafts (not the blades!). The cox may assist using the boathook (bådshage). It may then be necessary to row with SHORTENED OARS (KVART ÅRE) at the side nearest to the dock until there is enough room for normal rowing.

Balance the boat

Command: **BALANCE - BALANCE**

The rowers sit in vel-roet (way-enough) position with the oar blades feathered (horizontal with hollow side facing up) and the oar shafts pushed down against the gunwale. The cox creates balance by moving sideways in the seat.

COMMANDS TO START AND STOP ROWING

Row (forward)

Prepare: **(*) TIL RONING KLAR – (*) READY TO ROW**

The rowers roll forward to the catch (indsats): stretched arms, body leaning forward, legs bent. Vertical (squared) oar blades just above the water.

Initaiate: **(*) RO VÆK – (*) ROW** or **(*) GO**

The oar is put into the water and the drive (rotaget) begins. Continue rowing until counterordered.

Back the boat (reverse rowing)

Prepare: **(*) TIL SKODNING KLAR – (*) READY TO BACK**

The oar shaft is pulled against the chest. The oar is squared reverse (hollow side of blade towards the bow) out of the water.

Initiate: **(*) SKOD VÆK – (*) BACK** or **(*) GO**

The blade is put into the water and the rower pushes the oar through the water by stretching the arms and rolling forward in the seat. Continue backing until couterordered.

Stop rowing (or any other maneuver)

Command: **(*) DET ER VEL** or **(*) VEL ROET / (*) VEL SKODDET – (*) WAY ENOUGH** or **(*) EASY OARS**

The rowing, or whatever else you are doing at the moment, is stopped and the rowers go into vel-roet (way-enough) position: arms and legs stretched, upright body and both hands on the oar shaft, the oar is out of the water, in a right angle to the boat. The blade is feathered (horizontal with hollow side up). The command must be given at the end of the drive.

COMMANDS FOR SPEED CHANGE, BRAKING OR TURNING

When commands for speed change or braking are used in one of the sides only, while normal rowing continues at the other side, the boat will turn more or less to the side where the speed is reduced.

Slow down, weakest turn

Command: **(*) SMÅT RONING – (*) LIGHT PRESSURE**

Keeping the pace and rhythm, the oars are pulled lightly through the water with less pressure during the drive. Speed needed for steering is maintained.

Run off the speed, weaker turn

Command: **(*) DET ER VEL** or **(*) VEL ROET – (*) WAY ENOUGH** or **(*) EASY OARS**

As above.

Light break, light turn, stabilize boat

Command: **(*) ÅREN PÅ VANDET – (*) BLADES DOWN** or **(*) DROP**

The rowers go into vel-roet (way-enough) position, but with the feathered blades resting/dragging on the surface. This command can also be used (simultaneously by all rowers) for stabilizing the boat during passage of high waves caused by a passing vessel etc.

Medium brake, medium turn

Command: **(*) SÆT I – (*) CHECK (IT DOWN)**

The rowers immediately lower the feathered oar blade down under the surface. The front rim of the blade can be turned slightly to catch the water. The rowers' position must be with stretched arms and legs, the back in an upright position and muscles tensed in order to resist the high pressure from the water. If possible, the cox should command VEL ROET in advance.

Hard brake, hard turn

Command: **(*) SÆT HÅRDT I – (*) HOLD WATER**

As SÆT I, but you square the blade with the hollow side towards the direction of movement. The rowers' position is even more important here, because the pressure on the oar is much stronger.

If the command is followed by **SKOD (BACK)**, for emergency braking, you push the oar, without lifting it out of the water, all the way to the forward position and you continue backing until couterordered.

Reestablish normal rowing after turning with oars upon/in the water

Command: **(*) ÅREN OP …. FALD IND – (*) OARS UP … JOIN IN**

Couterorder when normal rowing should be reestablished after one of the three previous commands, with oars upon or in the water, has been used in one side only for turning the boat or if one side has stopped rowing (VEL). At ÅREN OP (OARS UP) you lift the oar out of the water and goes into vel-roet position. The command FALD IND (JOIN IN) then follows at the end of the other rowers' drive, and you follow the forward roll and join in with rowing at the next drive.

Reestablish normal rowing after slowing down

Command: **FULDT TRÆK** or **NORMALT TRÆK** or **LIGE TRÆK – NORMAL PULL** or **EVEN PULL**

Counterorder when normal rowing shall be reestablished after SMÅT RONING (LIGHT PRESSURE). Rowing continues with full/normal pressure in the pull on all oars. LIGE TRÆK (EVEN PULL) is used when light pressure has been used in one side only.

Turning the boat around (in place)

Prepare: **TIL SKIFTEVIS SKODNING OG RONING KLAR, BAGBORD (STYRBORD) SKAL SKODDE, STYRBORD (BAGBORD) SKAL RO – READY FOR ALTERNATING BACKING AND ROWING, PORT (STARBOARD) SHALL BACK, STARBOARD (PORT) SHALL ROW**
Port (starboard) rowers go into til-skodning-klar (ready-to-back) position, starboard (port) rowers remain in vel-roet-position.

Initiate: **SKOD VÆK (… OG RO, … OG SKOD, ….) – BACK (… AND ROW, … AND BACK, …)**
Port (starboard) rowers back and when they pass the vel-roet-position, starboard (port) rowers follow the forward roll and take a drive when the backing is completed. Port (starboard) rowers then follow the backward roll in the drive, with the feathered oars out of the water, and get ready for another back-stroke when the drive is finished. Continue the alternating backing and rowing until counterordered. The cox may help keeping the alternating rhythm by commanding … OG RO, …OG SKOD (…AND ROW, …AND BACK) to avoid rowing and backing simultaneously and clashing the oars.

When port is backing, the boat will turn counter-clockwise (left) end when starbord is backing, the boat turns clockwise (right).

COMMANDS AT NARROW PASSINGS AND AT HIGH LANDINGS SALUTING WITH THE OARS

Rowing where there is very little room for the oars

Command:**(*) SE TIL ÅREN – (*) WATCH YOUR BLADES** or **(*) HEADS UP**
Rowing continues normally, but the rowers watch their own blade to avoid clashing into something during rowing. If an obstacle is too close, the rower pulls the oar inwards but continues rowing or if necessary, let the oar go along (see below). Rowers at the opposite side should reduce pressure when oars are shortened to avoid turning the boat further towards the obstacle or stop rowing if an oar goes along.

Rowing where there is not enough room for fully extended oars

Command: **(*) KVART ÅREN – (*) SHORTEN YOUR OAR or (*) QUARTER YOUR OAR**
Without stopping to row or changing the rhythm, the oar is pulled inwards until the rower has one hand on each side of the plastic-covering (loom). Rowing continues at a slower pace.

Let the boat slide through a narrow passage

Command: **ÅREN TVÆRS – OARS IN** or **OARS ACROSS**
The oar is pulled across the boat, so it extends equally to both sides. Used where the boat has enough speed to slide through the passage and where fast response is needed after the passage e.g., at Stormbroen. The cox must be sure that there is enough room for the oars through the passage, otherwise he/she must command ÅREN LANG (OARS ALONG).

Passing close to an obstacle or before changing seats in the boat

Command: **(*) ÅREN LANGS – (*) OARS ALONG**
Release the oar with the outermost hand, lean fully back and lead the oar over the head with the innermost hand until it lays alongside the boat. Raise your body afterwards.

In case a rower ”fanger en ugle” (“cathes a crab”), i.e. the oar gets stuck in the water, no command is necessary, but the rower puts his or her oar along immediately. The cox then commands VEL ROET.

Oars back to normal extension

Command: **ÅREN UD - OARS OUT**

Counterorder to the three previous commands which changed the extension/position of the oar. The oar is put back into normal position. If you have rowing with KVART ÅRE, continue with normal rowing.

Mooring at high landings - Saluting

Prepare: **(*) KLAR TIL AT REJSE ÅREN – (*) READY TO LIFT THE OARS**

Rowers loosen the screw on the oarlock so it can be opened and the oar can be removed. You can, if needed, then continue rowing carefully towards the landing place.

Initiate: **(*) REJS ÅREN – (*) LIFT THE OARS**

With the innermost hand, the rowers grab the oar shaft from underneath close to the swivel. The outermost hand remains on top of the oar shaft. The oar is pulled inwards so the loom get clear of the swivel and the oar is lifted out of the swivel and raised to vertical. The end of the oar shaft is placed at the floorboard in front of the seat as close to the keel as possible. The blade shall point transversely to the keel with the hollow side towards the cox.

Counterorder: **(*) LAD FALDE – (*) LOWER THE OARS**

The oar is lowered to horizontal and put back into the swivel. The oarlock is closed and the screw is tightened.

The command is normally used when mooring where the landing is higher above the water than the swivel of the boat. Used in open water, however, it is the formal way to salute/greet other people or vessels.

CHANGE PLACES IN THE BOAT

Change places in the boat

Command: **VI SKIFTER – CHANGE PLACES**

Prior to this command, the cox must command VEL ROET, ÅREN LANGS (WAY ENOGH, OARS ALONG). The cox then places his rudder lines so they don't slide out of the boat during the change. The number 1 rower walks down through the boat, stepping only on the floorboards and the "midterlangrem" (the midstrip above the keel). You may lean on the other rowers or the gunwale – never on the oars!

When #1 has passed one of the other rowers, he/she can move forward in the boat to the free seat.

When #1 reaches the cox, they pass each other to the right and the cox takes the now free seat in front of him/her, and #1 sits down in the cox' seat, thus becoming the new cox.

When rowers have been seated in their new seat, they take the oar out and put their feet in the foot stretcher, being ready for an eventual maneuver, before doing personal tending such as taking clothes on or off, drinking water etc.

During the whole maneuver, everyone must help keeping the boat balanced at all times.