

How to Use the LWRC Coaches' Launches

The most important thing to know about the coaches' launches is that the two white SKIFFS use UNmixed (gasoline-only) fuel. The unmixed fuel containers have a white stripe that says "UNMIXED" on them. The metal launches (Huey, Dewey, Moms' launch, a.k.a. Red Rover) and the Felix use mixed gas (100:1 gasoline to oil). Their fuel containers usually have a blue stripe that says "MIXED" on them, but there are other, less obviously-marked containers. Most of the outboard motors on the boats are marked to match the appropriate fuel containers.



Figure 1: White SKIFFS (Skiff I and Skiff II) use UNmixed gasoline.



Figure 2: Metal launches use mixed fuel.

In the Boathouse

Gather the supplies you will need from the shelves by the gas cabinet in the Southeast corner of the boathouse and put them into a shopping cart. Possible supplies include:

- set of keys for the launch you have chosen (includes a tiny wherry key for the gate at the top of the wherry dock ramp and possibly a launch padlock key and an ignition key)
- correct (unmixed or mixed) gas can for the launch you have chosen
- a bag of life jackets
- emergency bag
- paddle
- 12 V battery (Huey and Dewey only) for lights—same batteries as eights and fours
- seat cushion
- megaphone

Be careful of bikers whizzing around the Aurora bridge abutments as you push the cart to the wherry dock, especially those coming from behind you as you turn off the Burke-Gilman Trail to the dock.

On the dock

Use the tiny wherry key to open the padlock at the top of the wherry dock ramp. I recommend carrying your supplies by hand down to the launch, because a full shopping cart will easily tip over at the bottom of the ramp (Frank and I once fished a car battery

out of 9 ft of water because I flipped my cart). After you get the supplies into the launch, bring the shopping cart down to the dock so it won't be taken by a passer-by. Park it in an out-of-the-way place where it won't roll off into the water.

Skiffs

Unlock the padlock on the dock and take the white cable with you in the boat, using the key to lock the padlock back to the dock. Connect the hose that is already in the boat to the UNMIXED fuel container you brought with you. Squeeze the bulb on the fuel line three or four times to push a little bit of gasoline to the motor. Use the motor



Figure 3: Connect the hose already in the Skiff to the unmixed gasoline container you brought with you.

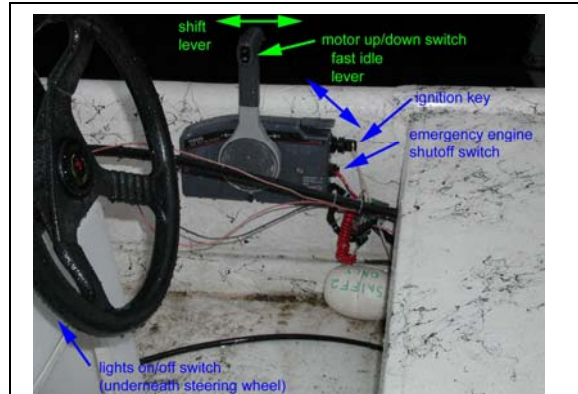


Figure 4: Skiff controls--remember to use the right key or the choke won't work properly.

up/down button on the shift lever to lower the motor all the way down into the water. Attach the tab on the red lanyard on your keychain to the emergency shutoff switch and put the key into the ignition. Be sure you are using the Skiff I key in the boat labeled I on the bow side of the steering wheel house or the Skiff II key in the boat labeled II. If not, the choke will not operate properly and the engine won't either.

Push the ignition key in and turn it to start the engine. Release it after the motor starts or, if it doesn't start, release it after one or two seconds. The choke is automatically closed when you push the ignition key in, providing the engine the fuel-rich (less air) mixture it needs to start. If it's a cold day or the motor hasn't been started for a while, pull the choke tab on the motor itself out and try to start the motor again.

If you still have trouble starting the engine or keeping it started, you can use the fast idle lever to give the engine more or less gas until it gets warmed up. The fast idle lever allows you to operate the throttle without shifting the motor out of neutral, so the boat won't move when you use it. If the engine

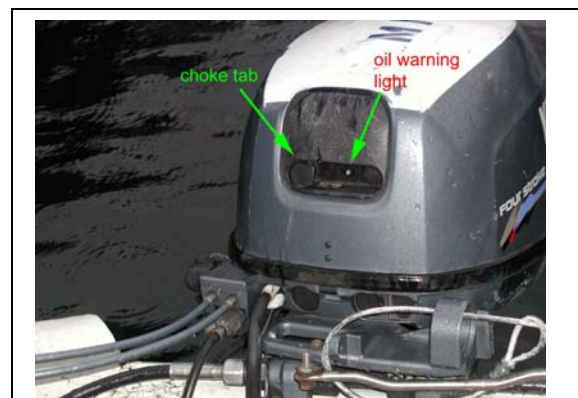


Figure 5: Pull out the choke tab when it's cold or the motor hasn't been started in a while.

doesn't turn over at all, check three things. First, make sure the shift lever is in neutral (middle position). The motors have start-in-gear protection, meaning they won't start if they're in forward or reverse. (That would be a nasty surprise, wouldn't it?) Second, turn on the lights using the switch underneath the steering wheel. If the lights are weak or don't come on at all, the battery is probably dead, and the starter won't work without it. Third, check to be sure the oil light is off. The oil light prevents the engine from starting when the oil pressure is too low (probably because there isn't enough oil in the engine). If you have any of these situations, you should write the problem up in the damage log and use a different launch until it is corrected.

If the skiff does start, congratulations!!!, you've gotten past the hardest part of using the coaches' launches. Push the choke knob in if you pulled it out to restore the gas/air mixture to its normal operating ratio (it will make your ride less smoky, too). Let the launch idle for three minutes to warm up. Untie the launch from the dock and slowly push the shift lever back to put the skiff in reverse and back out of our slip. Be aware that crews may be crossing your path on their way to or from the new dock as you back out of the slip. I sometimes find it easier to paddle my way out with the motor idling in neutral. Be careful not to snap the light tower on the stern off on the neighbor's dock, and remember to turn on your lights if it is dark!!

When you return to the dock, carefully glide or paddle in. Watch the light towers on the neighbor's sailboat, dock, and mooring lines. Use the key to turn off the skiff's motor, or shut it off by pulling out the emergency engine shutoff tab. Tie the bow and stern of your boat to the cleats on the dock and use the padlock key to lock your boat to the metal ring on the dock. Turn off your launch's lights and take your supplies and the shopping cart to the top of the ramp. Lock the gate at the top of the ramp before heading back to the boathouse to put the fuel container and the rest of your supplies away.

Metal Launches (Duroboats)



Figure 6: Metal launches: Huey (tiller steering), Dewey (steering wheel), Red Rover (Moms' launch), and honorary metal launch the Felix (because it also uses mixed fuel)

Try to stick to using the metal launches named Huey and Dewey. Dewey is the one with the steering wheel, and Huey is the one that is controlled directly with the tiller handle. The red Martha's Moms' launch, a.k.a. Red Rover, is primarily used by the Moms' coaches, and the Felix is restricted to use by experienced coaches, to protect it from damage.

Huey and Dewey are parked side-by-side, tied and locked together, with the one closest to the dock also tied and locked to the dock. Unlock the padlock between the two boats and use the outer one or, if one is already being used,

unlock the remaining metal launch from the dock. The padlock is probably either a large wherry lock or a small wherry dock gate lock. Padlock keys and other supplies are interchangeable between Huey, Dewey, and the Red Rover (the padlock keys will not

work with the Skiff padlocks). It is best to use the key set labeled with the name of the launch, however, because the number of kill switch tabs you need differs in the three boats (zero for Dewey, one for Huey, and two for the Red Rover). Lock the lock back to the cable and take it with you in the boat (that way if the other launch isn't there when you get back, you can still lock your launch to the dock).

Manually tilt the motor down into the water, if it is not already tilted down. There is a small, black tilt-lock lever with two arrows on it located on the left side of the motor. When the arrows point horizontally, it locks the motor in the up, or approximately



Figure 7: Mixed-fuel motor (Huey—tiller handle controls)

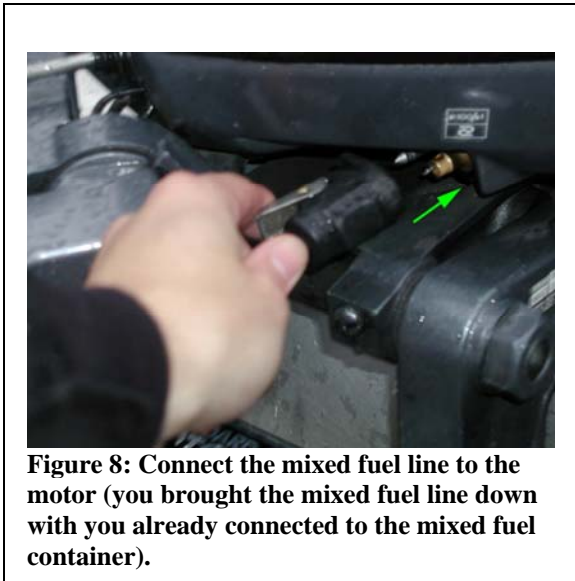


Figure 8: Connect the mixed fuel line to the motor (you brought the mixed fuel line down with you already connected to the mixed fuel container).

horizontal, position. When the arrows point vertically, the tilt-lock lever locks the motor in the down, or vertical, position. Push the tilt-lock lever away from you and down so the arrows end up in the vertical position. Grasp the handhold on the top, back of the motor and pull up slightly. You should now be able to tilt the motor down so the bottom part with the propeller is in the water.

Connect the fuel line that is already attached to the mixed fuel container you brought with you to the motor. (The mixed fuel containers are brought to and from the boat with the fuel lines attached, unlike the unmixed gas containers used with the Skiffs.) Give the fuel bulb three or four squeezes to make sure a little fuel gets to the motor.

If you are using Huey (pictured above, with the tiller handle control), make sure the shift lever is in neutral (middle position) and the throttle grip is turned clockwise all the way (past the smaller bars to the circular symbol). Insert the emergency kill switch tab that is attached to the red lanyard on your key set. Dewey does not have an emergency kill switch (although it does have a red motor shutoff button on the remote shifter box), but you should check to make sure the remote shifter is in neutral (middle position).

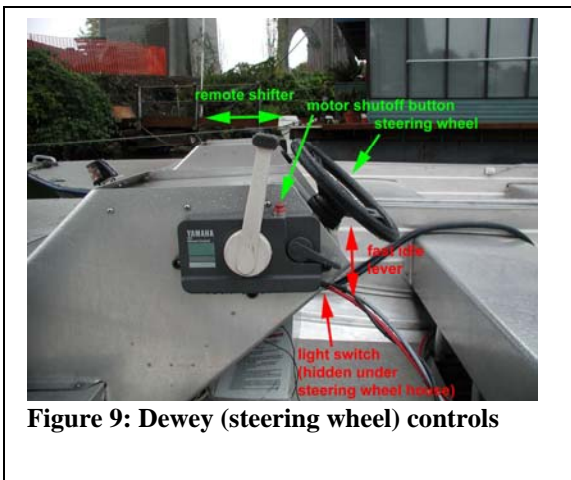


Figure 9: Dewey (steering wheel) controls

Both motors have start-in-gear protection and will not start if the motor is in forward or reverse instead of neutral.

Pull the pull-start handle quickly and deliberately to start the motor the same way you would a lawnmower engine. If the motor does not start after a few pulls, pull out the choke tab to give the engine a fuel-rich mixture (mixes less air with the fuel). You will probably need to do this if it is a cold day or if the motor has not been started in a day or so. Make sure you push the choke tab in after the engine warms up to restore it to its normal operating fuel/air mixture. Otherwise, you will have a smoky ride and an unhappy engine. If the engine starts but is difficult to keep running, you can use the fast idle lever on Dewey or the throttle grip on Huey while leaving the shifter in neutral to give the motor more fuel until it is warmed up. All of the metal launches have pull-start motors, so a dead battery may prevent you from turning on the lights, but it will not stop you from starting the engine.

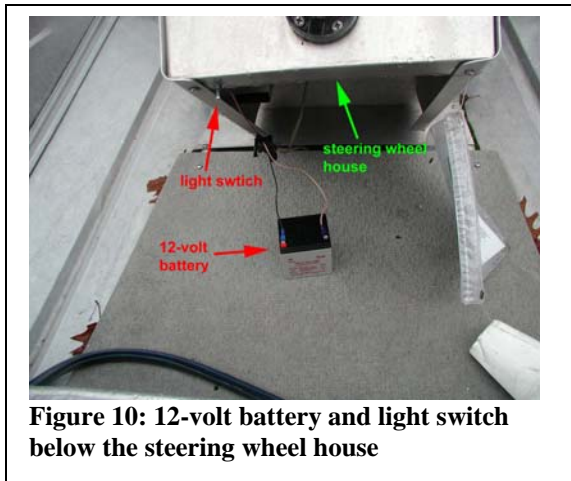


Figure 10: 12-volt battery and light switch below the steering wheel house

A 12-volt battery is used to power the lights in Huey and Dewey. (Red Rover's lights are powered by a car battery in the boat, as are the lights on the Felix.) The battery for Huey and Dewey is the same one used for the lights in the eights and the fours and can be found in the charging bank near the emergency back stairwell in the boathouse. Use the clips under the steering wheel house in either boat to connect the battery to the lights. It doesn't matter which way the clips are connected to the battery terminals. There is a switch underneath

the steering wheel house which may need to be flipped to turn on the lights.

Once you get the motor started (the hardest part) and let it idle for three minutes to warm up, untie the launch at the bow and the stern, taking the ropes with you in the boat. Remember to push the choke tab back in if you pulled it out. Shift the motor into reverse and carefully back out of our slip. Be aware that crews may be crossing your path on their way to or from the new dock as you back out of the slip. I sometimes find it easier to paddle my way out with the motor idling in neutral. Be careful not to snap the light tower on the stern off on the neighbor's sailboat, and remember to turn on your lights if it is dark!!

When you return to the dock, carefully glide or paddle in. Watch the light towers on the neighbor's sailboat, dock, and mooring lines. Shut off Huey's motor by pulling out the emergency engine shutoff tab, or shut off Dewey's motor by pushing the red motor shutoff button on the remote shifter. Tie the bow and stern of your boat and padlock your boat to the dock or to the other metal launch, if it is there. Turn off your launch's lights and take your supplies and the shopping cart to the top of the ramp. (Don't forget the 12-volt battery.) Lock the gate at the top of the ramp before heading back to the boathouse to put the fuel container and the rest of your supplies away.

Normal Operation

Be careful of crew shells, kayaks, and other boats when you are coaching or operating the launches, especially before dawn or after sunset. Kayaks, especially like to

come down the wrong (left) side of the canal. Be sure your lights are on and you have the proper equipment in the launch (a bag of life jackets for your crews, a safety bag, and a paddle.) In general, traffic flows the same way it does on a road in the canals and channels, so stay to the right. In the lake, it's more of a free-for-all, but it's a good idea to go around the edge of the lake in a counter-clockwise direction because that keeps the shore on your right. You are supposed to yield to vessels approaching between your twelve o'clock and four o'clock—vessels approaching from all other directions should yield to you. Other vessels may not know or follow the rules, so it's a good idea to be cautious and make your intentions obvious to them.

The speed limit between the locks and Webster Point (the "lighthouse" a.k.a. post with a sign and a light on top of it after which you can see north up Lake Washington to Kenmore) is 7 knots, which to you means minimize your wake. The skiffs, especially, kick up a large wake, because all their weight (you and the motor) is in the stern. You can help things a bit by putting the gas tank and other heavy items in the front of the boat. Be aware of how your wake affects other boats.

When the launches are going fast, they will rise up and sit flat on top of the water, on plane. In general you won't be going this fast, but your wake is often smaller when going fast because of this. The boat can flip if you take a turn too quickly, so if you are going fast, slow down before you turn.

When shifting into reverse, do it quickly and deliberately. You will find that the gears make a grinding noise if you shift too slowly. It's not a bad idea to slow down before you shift into reverse, either, so the engine isn't working hard to stop you AND make the boat go backwards.

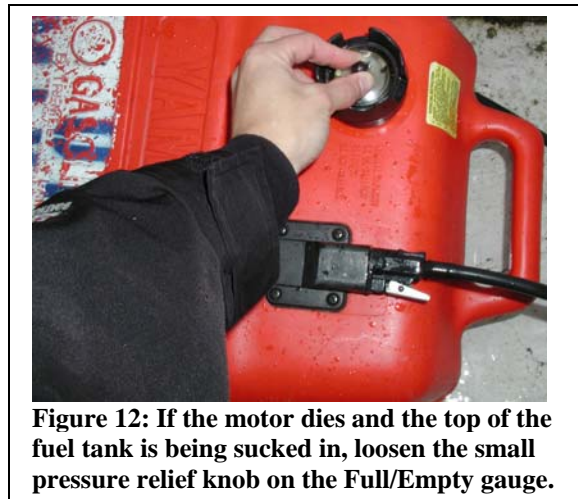
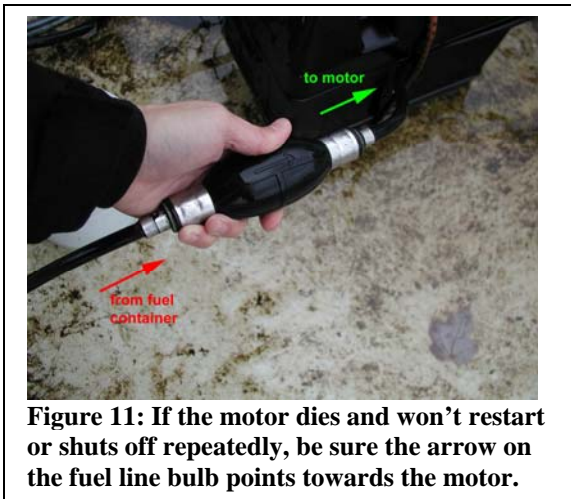
Don't get too close to the edge of the canal. There are plenty of shallow rocks there to hurt your propeller. Watch out for milfoil between the yacht club and the I-5/Rt. 520 on ramp and in Portage Bay between the Montlake Cut and the Webster Point "lighthouse."

If you do end up with a disabled shell or a rower in the water, approach carefully and very slowly, stopping the launch before you get too close to run into anything or anyone. Don't get into a position where wind or current may push you into them, compounding an already dangerous situation. Most of the launches are equipped with an emergency step that a rower in the water can use to get out and into the launch. In most cases the rope attached to this ladder goes around a white plastic square cleat attached to the side of the launch. The step is probably also tied around the seat or some other part of the boat to be out of the way when not used. It will need to be untied from this object to be used (in at least one of the skiffs, the step is actually left attached to the seat for use.)

Troubleshooting

- If the motor doesn't respond at all when you try to start it
 - Make sure the emergency engine shutoff switch tab (on the red lanyard) is in the emergency shutoff switch.
- If the motor doesn't turn over when you turn the key (white skiffs only),
 - Turn on the lights to see if they are dim.
 - See if the motor goes up and down when you push the up/down button.
 - If both of these tests fail, the battery is either dead or disconnected.
- If the motor is even more difficult than usual to start or to keep started,

- Pull out the choke tab. (Don't forget to push it back in after the motor has warmed up.)
- Squeeze the bulb on the fuel line a few more times.
- Try opening the throttle grip (on Huey) or the fast idle lever to give it more fuel.
- If the motor dies while you're out in a launch, first try to restart it again. If that doesn't work or the motor shuts off repeatedly, here are some things to check.
 - Verify that you are using UNMIXED gas in a Skiff or MIXED fuel in a metal launch.
 - Check that the fuel tank is lying relatively flat, and not standing upright.
 - Be sure the arrow on the bulb on the fuel line points towards the motor.
 - If the top of the fuel tank is being sucked in, loosen the small pressure relief knob on the Full/Empty gauge.
 - Make sure the emergency kill switch tab (on the red lanyard attached to your set of keys) has not fallen out.
- If you suddenly lose power,
 - Lift up or shake the fuel tank to make sure you haven't run out of gas. (I hope you brought a paddle.)
 - Turn off the motor and tilt it up out of the water to make sure a foreign object like milfoil hasn't been lodged in the propeller or covered up the water intake hole on the lower part of the housing near the propeller.
 - If it's not one of the above, it may be a bad spark plug or some other motor problem that won't be easy to fix on the water.
- Note problems in the damage log.



Summary

White SKIFFS use UNmixed gas. Metal launches (Huey, Dewey, and Moms' Red Rover) and the Felix use mixed fuel. Use the Skiff I key only with Skiff I and the Skiff II key only with Skiff II. Use the choke tab and the fast idle lever if you have trouble starting the motor or keeping it started. Be safe, be aware of your wake, don't speed or turn while going fast, and avoid shallow water with rocks and milfoil. Shift quickly and deliberately from forward into reverse. Note problems in the damage log.