

Rowing



Henley Royal Regatta 2009 - Scott Durant at stroke

Scott Durant (Oxford Brookes University) and his twin brother, Mason Durant (Newcastle University), gained their Junior GB international representation through LRGsBC and were the first LRGsBC boys to represent Great Britain in the Club's history. They have continued notching up impressive wins for their respective universities and the GB U23 squad. Mason won the Prince Albert Challenge Cup for student coxed fours at Henley Royal Regatta in 2008 and Scott won the same event a year later in 2009. Scott now features on the newly named 'British Rowing Association' web site, under the 'GB Rowing Team' biographies. This year he was selected for the GB U23 coxed four at the World Rowing Championships. Both he and Mason have competed for GB U23 this season at International Regattas.



Presentation of Prince Albert Challenge Cup to winning Oxford Brookes University crew - Scott Durant with the trophy (and an OL tie!)

The 2008/9 season started with a small J18 group leading the way and a larger J15 entering the racing scene for the first time. Chae Ho Hwang led the Monday circuit training sessions as the Captain of Boats and the J18 coxless pair and the J18 coxed four from the stroke seat. The J18 coxless pair has recently been a successful boat at LRGs and early indications showed that we had a reasonable pair in Chae Ho Hwang and Alex Bargh that could move well together and quite naturally. The pair came second at York Small Boats Head behind a pair from St Peter's and Durham Schools who had just returned from GB Trials. After that, they joined forces together with Thomas Chambers, Conor O'Halloran and cox, George Highley (J15) to form the J18 coxed four. All credit to Thomas as he only started rowing in the Sixth Form. This four proved themselves at Strathclyde multilane regatta beating coxed four senior crews and undergraduates from Castle Semple RC, Strathclyde University, Glasgow University, Heriot Watt University and Dundee University. They got through to the semi-finals where they met stronger opposition from the men of Clydesdale, Castle Semple and Aberdeen rowing clubs which proved too much. LRGs Sixth Formers these days face additional pressures to academic work and sport. They also get jobs and it showed when Alex Bargh turned up at 6.30am to catch a lift after a hard night's shift in the kitchens of a local hotel, to travel up to Strathclyde and face a day's racing. The crew then disbanded to concentrate on academic work and exams. Two of the crew gained places at Oxford and Cambridge and we expect to see them represent their colleges.

The young fresh faced J15 squad started with enthusiasm and some new sculling blades thanks to a successful bid to The Friends of LRGs. They found the standard of competition in the North of England high and getting higher. The North West region won this year's regional championships, proof that the region's schools and junior clubs are good and making it difficult to gain wins at local regattas and heads without a significant amount of training at junior level where once it might have been easier to. Sculling is traditionally taught to juniors before sweep oared rowing and is a skilful pursuit. The J15 squad of scullers raced at the local Heads, learning new rivers and experiencing external competition for the first time.

The Boat Club has entered a period of rebuilding. There has been a successful decade or more with National medals and International representation started by the previous Master i/c of Rowing, Tim Lucas, and continued by the present Master i/c. Our most successful recent rowers are still climbing the ladder internationally and continue to fly the flag for LRGsBC. At the end of 2007, Danny Bellion represented LRGsBC at Junior 18 international level for the England team (coxed four) at the Home Countries International in Cork and also won a rowing scholarship to Imperial College, London. He has featured in the Imperial eight at the Head of the River, and at Henley Royal Regatta and in their four at International regattas.

Chester, Northwich and York were all ventured to throughout the Michaelmas term and then Warrington in the Lent term. The feeling within the squad was good with plenty of talent. Robbie Oliver, Vishnu Kammath, Luke Hodgson, and Robert Whittlely shone through on the skill and athletic side initially with others such as Harry Baxter adding beef. Tom Gray, in his first year of rowing, developed quickly and scored highly on the ergo rankings to show good potential for the future. Others added to the mix: Oliver Uttley, character and flair. Kyle Wong and Alex Douglas-Atkinson showed steadfastness and reliability. A keen and vocal cox in George Highley is a great asset to have for any squad. George often out-performing others in the circuit training sessions. There was plenty of camaraderie. Some encouraging results followed in their first competitive season. By the time that the regatta season came around, the squad were building confidence and were race to race side by side at Strathclyde Regatta in April 2009.

The Scottish Rowing Centre at Strathclyde Park provided the first experience of a large multi-lane course over 1000m for LRGsBC crews. Three hours up the road from Lancaster, it is a superb venue. The Club hired some competitive boats from the centre's fleet to supplement our own which meant that many more boys could compete in decent equipment in the same event and at the same time. The J15 squad were entered into single sculls and double sculls which kept them all busy. At lunch time, boys and parents visited the new and state-of-the-art indoor rowing tank where they were treated to a free go to tire them out further - the idea being that we would return to Strathclyde Park for a rowing camp the following Autumn where boys would be coached in sweep oar technique. The use of the tank is calculated to save hours of time on the water as individual techniques can be improved and video analysis done at close quarter.

The J15 squad is growing and represents a rejuvenated Boat Club of the future. At the start of the 2009/10 season the J15 became J16s and number of boys had increased to nineteen. Together with a few J18, the size of the group attending Senior Games on a Wednesday afternoon is now in the twenties. We could, in theory, put out two eights or several fours and pairs. The current School eight has been sent for repair in order to accommodate the large numbers and a new eight is being sought. The ageing fleet of boats means that some money will need to be spent on new boats. The Sports Hall Committee donated money for a new and additional safety launch which Mr Thompson enjoys. Many thanks need to go to Mr Davies and Mr Thompson who endeavoured to patch up boats on games afternoons, in between coaching the raw talent. New coaches are needed to help at a weekend and, at the time of writing, Mr Gray (parent) and Mr Smalley (trainee PE teacher) are being booked onto ARA Level 2 Rowing Coaching courses at Agecroft Rowing Club on Salford Quays.

ROWING RESULTS

Chester Long Distance Sculls 2008

J15 1x R Oliver 9th
L Hodgson 10th

Northwich Autumn Head 2008

J15 2x R Oliver and V Kammath 5th
R Whitley and L Hodgson 6th

York Small Boats Head 2008

J18 2x C Hwang and A Bargh 3rd to St Peter's School/Durham School
J15 4x+ (stroke: R Oliver, V Kammath, R Whitley, L Hodgson cox: G Highley) 3rd
J15 4x+ (stroke: O Uttley, T Gray, H Baxter, K Wong) 4th behind Durham ARC, St Peter's School and York City RC

Warrington Head 2009

J18 4+ C Hwang, A Bargh, T Chambers, C O'Halloran, G Highley (cox) 2nd to Merchant Taylor's School
J15 2x (stroke: R Oliver, V Kammath) 2nd to Liverpool Victoria RC, J15 2x (stroke: R Whitley, L Hodgson) 6th
J15 4x+ (stroke: O Uttley, T Gray, H Baxter, J Poon, cox: G Highley) 3rd behind Liverpool Victoria RC and Merchant Taylor's School

Strathclyde Regatta 2009

J15 2x R Oliver and V Kammath finalists, 4th behind Aberdeen Schools, Durham ARC and George Watson's College
J15 1x R Whitley finalist losing to George Watson's College

There is, however, a cloud on the horizon that needs to be resolved this year. The tenancy agreement with John O'Gaunt Rowing Club, for twenty-five years rent of part of their Boat House on Halton Road is due to expire. All options are being explored. The School Development Plans do not include a new boat house but one right now would be very timely and much appreciated! If any OL is interested in this or the upgrading of the rowing fleet, the Master i/c Rowing would very keen to hear from them.

PJ



The John O'Gaunt Rowing Club boat house