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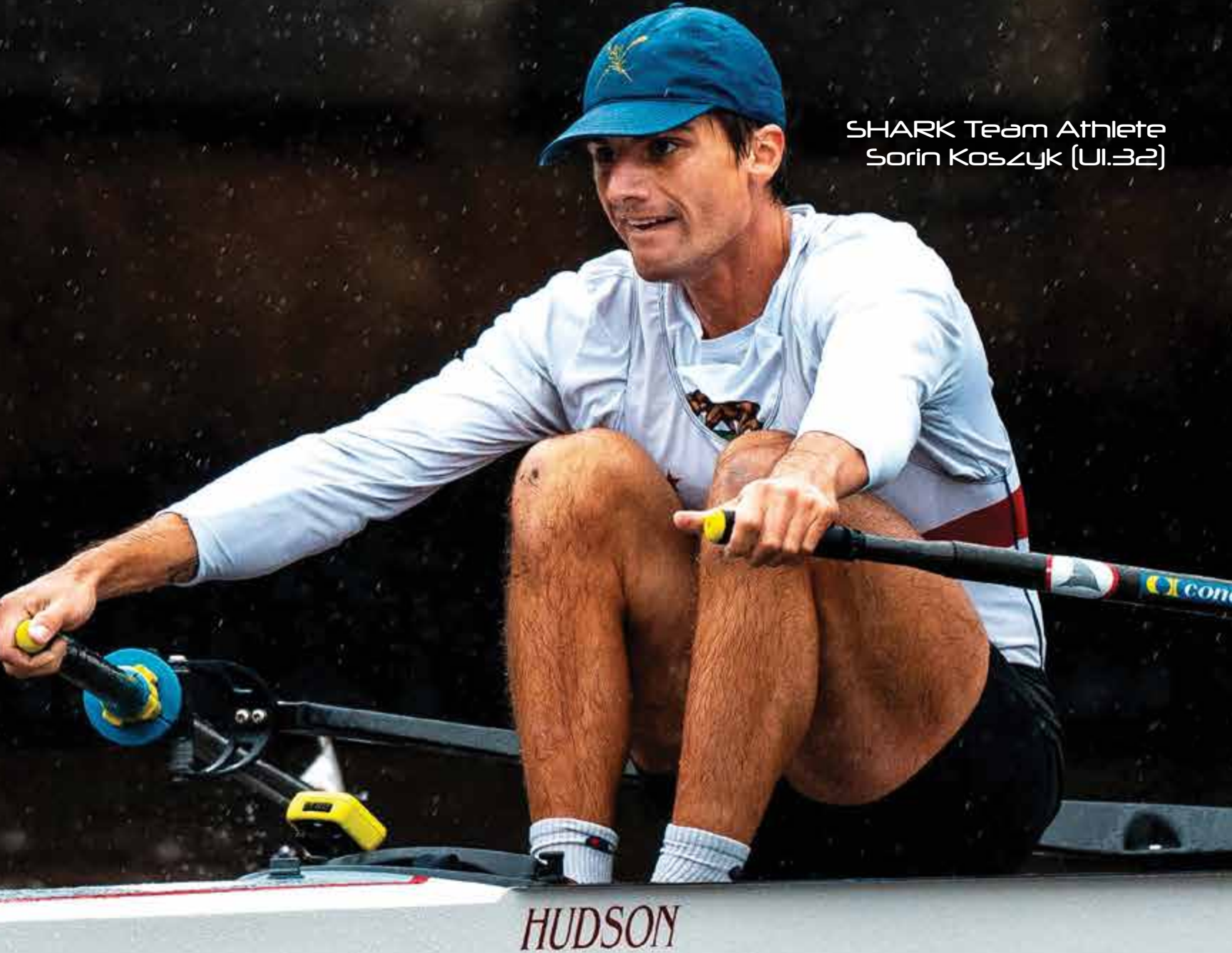


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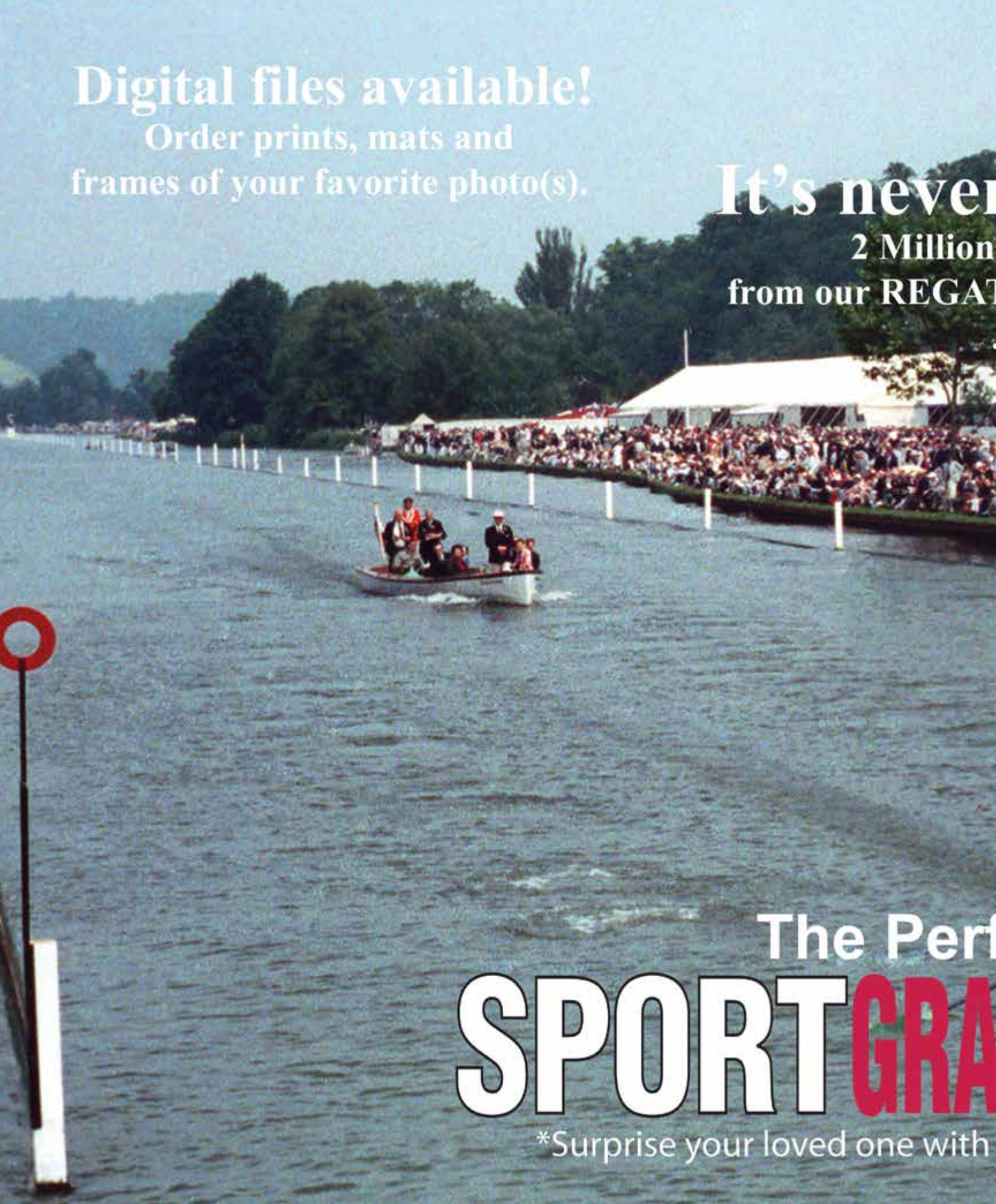
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FEATURES

Best of 2023

Our take on the athletes, events, and moments that mattered in the year in rowing.

BY CHIP DAVIS



Top 25 Overall Colleges

To determine college rowing's overall program ranking, we took the official results of the separate national championships for each school and used a weighted formula—with new adjustments—to arrive at this year's top 25.





The Serfs of Rowing

Assistant coaches work hard, put in long hours, and are essential to a team's success. Yet their pay is so meager that many can't buy a house, have children, and enjoy life fully beyond the boathouse.

BY MADELINE DAVIS TULLY

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CHIP DAVIS

A Winning Formula

Rowing is a racing sport—first one across the line wins, simple as that. Crews earn their final rankings by order of finish at the end-of-the-year championship regattas, almost as simply. The NCAA championship structure is an exception, since some of the automatic-qualifier invitees are not as fast as some programs not at the regatta.

All this matters for our annual Top 25 Overall College Rankings, which we explain beginning on page 42. This year's ranking includes adjustments of last year's formulas to accommodate the NCAA's ways, which can be baffling and illogical.

“NCAA selection is an endless source of confusion and mystery,” one Division I women's coach told me. Don't expect it to get any better with the coming college-sports conference realignments.

If dollars and the number of lives influenced positively are the metrics of nonprofits, then Fred Schoch, the outgoing executive director of the Head of the Charles, is the reigning champion.

For 33 years, Schoch has pioneered successful regatta management, growth, and promotion. For most of us in the Northeast, “Oh, like the Head of the Charles?” is the response when we mention our connection to rowing to a non-rower.

Through Schoch's hard work, diligent relationship-building, and personal charm, the regatta that began as a fun autumn distraction now defines our sport for millions. It's also one of the most successful phenomena in rowing financially.

According to figures given to me by Schoch and USRowing, the Vineyard Vines merchandise tent at the Charles outgrossed, in just three October days, the entire year's worth of sponsorship dollars brought in by the national governing body.

Schoch's long career in rowing, which has included teaching, coaching, and development work, is not over. Fortunately for us, he is not retiring fully. We look forward to what he does next to serve our sport. As Schoch says in Big News (page 23), the future is bright. ▣

For 33 years, Fred Schoch has pioneered successful regatta management, growth, and promotion.



PHOTO: LISA WORTHY

Our editorial team can be reached at editor@rowingnews.com



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Spot-on

I commend your outstanding article “Failure to Invest” [November issue]. It’s spot-on. Having been in our sport for over 60 years, having seen the national governing body [now USRowing] up close for 40 of them, and having served the National Rowing Foundation, it’s déjà vu. Well done. Keep up the great work.

Stewart MacDonald
Andover, Mass.

No real plan

Anyone who has ever written or read a real business or “strategic” plan knows what one looks like. The recently released USRowing (non) “strategic plan” is not a plan; it is a collection of value statements that will inspire no one, generate no funding, and lead nowhere.

We need a real actionable plan with concrete objectives and a transparent monitoring and reporting system to measure and report on performance. USRowing says it wants our feedback about this “plan” and asks us to please contact it with all questions, comments, concerns, and suggestions. The organization sent a survey about benefits for kids (which are many) and DEI. The survey has nothing to do with the “plan”.

Not having a real plan underlies why USRowing has failed to invest effectively in our sport. USRowing needs to lead, follow, or get out of the way.

William Pickard
Seattle, Wash.

Pickard is a former National Team member, USRowing board member, and co-founder of the Pocock Rowing Foundation

Stay on Your Toes

If you’ve read *Born to Run* by Christopher McDougall, then you know that the Tarahumara Indians, superathletes from the Copper Canyon in Sierra Madre, Mexico, are the fastest ultramarathon runners in the world and that they run on their toes.

Having just read “Time’s Up for Heels Down” in your November issue, I related to Volker Nolte’s assessment of the biomechanical importance of pushing with your toes when in a boat. In *Born to Run*, which is a great read, you’ll find extensive biomechanical and anatomical analyses that make the same point.

I am not a coach but a pretty old (88) masters sculler. Before reading Volker’s article, I had switched already to using my toes when on a run or in my boat. It may be worth trying a different style or custom when there’s evidence that it makes sense.

Ted Mason
Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y.



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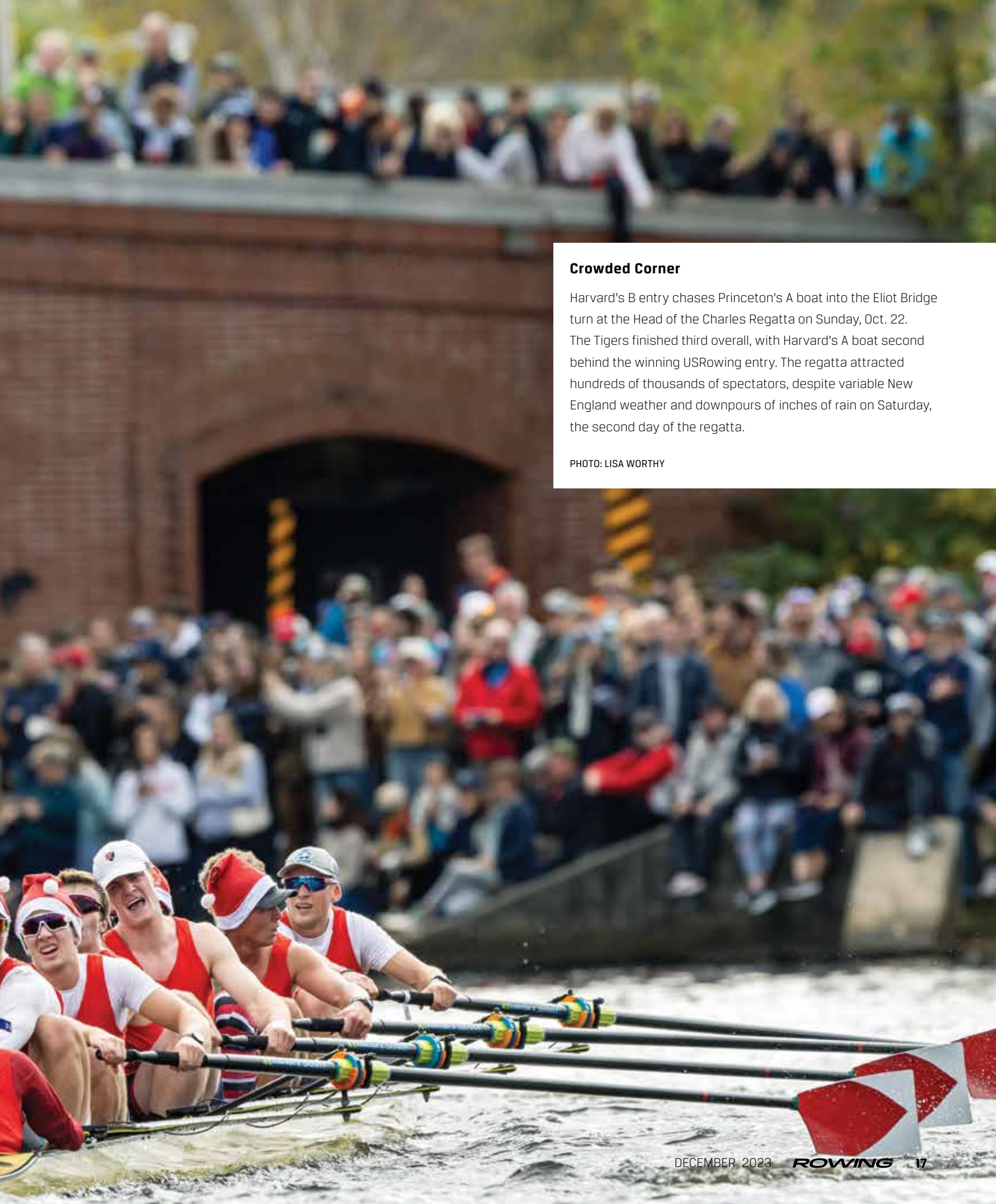
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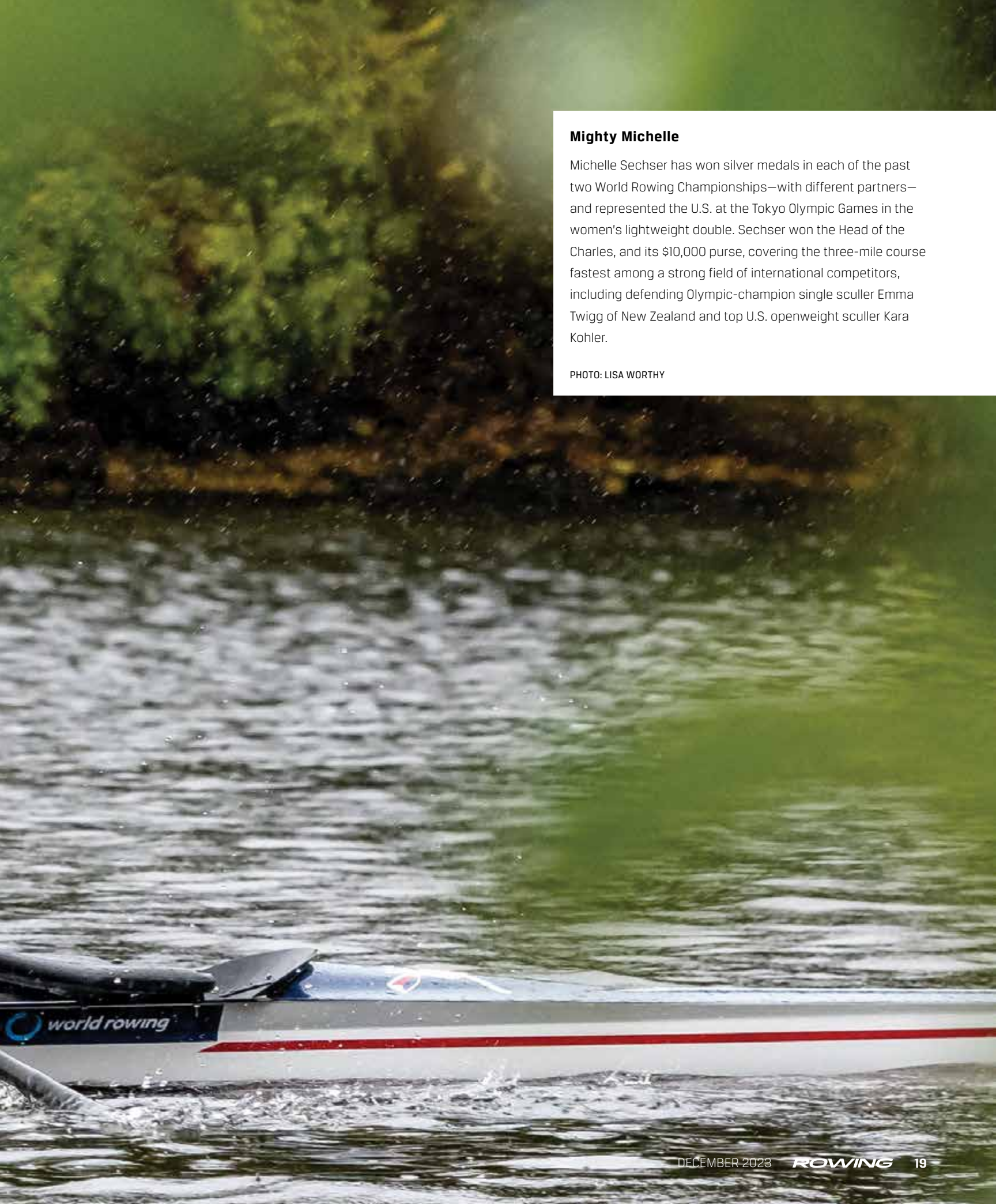


Crowded Corner

Harvard's B entry chases Princeton's A boat into the Eliot Bridge turn at the Head of the Charles Regatta on Sunday, Oct. 22. The Tigers finished third overall, with Harvard's A boat second behind the winning USRowing entry. The regatta attracted hundreds of thousands of spectators, despite variable New England weather and downpours of inches of rain on Saturday, the second day of the regatta.

PHOTO: LISA WORTHY





Mighty Michelle

Michelle Sechser has won silver medals in each of the past two World Rowing Championships—with different partners—and represented the U.S. at the Tokyo Olympic Games in the women's lightweight double. Sechser won the Head of the Charles, and its \$10,000 purse, covering the three-mile course fastest among a strong field of international competitors, including defending Olympic-champion single sculler Emma Twigg of New Zealand and top U.S. openweight sculler Kara Kohler.

PHOTO: LISA WORTHY





Midshipman Fleet

The United States Naval Academy entered six men's eights—two in the championship event, three in the club, and one frosh/novice—in the Head of the Schuylkill Regatta, winning and finishing sixth in the champ eight; finishing second, sixth, and ninth in the club, and third in the frosh/novice.

"I was proud of the effort of the whole team today," said Rob Friedrich, the Tom & Candy Knudson Director of Navy Rowing. "We didn't hit all of our goals, but every boat raced well.

"The first varsity had its best race of the fall season; the 3V raced to a close second place in the club eights race, while our plebe boat put up a good effort in the freshmen race. Most of our top freshmen were racing in the champ and club events, so it was our second plebe boat that won a bronze medal in the freshmen event." See story, page 30.

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Fred Schoch at Cambridge Boat Club on the Charles River.

BIG NEWS

Fred Schoch Leaving the Head of the Charles

The trailblazer in the commercial development of rowing turned the fall classic into the world's largest regatta and a model event that attracts top rowers from around the world.

Fred Schoch will step down next year after leading the Head of the Charles for more than three decades during which it became the world's largest regatta and a model rowing event. In October, the 58th edition of the three-day fall classic drew over 11,000 rowers and 2,599 crews from all over the world.

"Obviously, it takes a lot of people to run that, and I've just been lucky enough to be the face of it," said Schoch, who has led

the regatta for 33 years. "It's been quite a journey, but it's time to reset. I couldn't be prouder of the legacy that I've left."

Schoch is an accomplished pioneer in the sport who has demonstrated that professional management of a rowing event can attract public attention and sponsorship and lead to broad commercial success.

"Fred created an incredible destination regatta over the course of his tenure," said Tim Fulham, **CONTINUES ON PAGE 24 >>>**

Jon Beare 1974-2023

Canadian Olympian Jon Beare died from colorectal cancer in early October. Beare raced in three Olympic Games and won a bronze medal in the lightweight four at the 2008 Beijing Games. He also won the Head of the Charles in the championship single in 2003. After retiring from competition, Beare became a partner at Hudson Boat Works. He was a kind, positive, principled man who was well liked and respected in the North American rowing community. He is survived by his wife, Danielle, and two children, Mya and Rhys. **▣**

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QUICK CATCHES

chair of the Head of the Charles board of directors. "He built our success through his advocacy and connections with sponsors, competitors and coaches, staff and volunteers.

"He has been a true trailblazer in the commercial development of rowing, and we are fortunate for Fred's decades of dedication."

Since 1965, the Head of the Charles has become the world's largest rowing regatta. It is the third-largest outdoor event in Boston, alongside the Fourth of July and the Boston Marathon.

"When I started with the regatta, it was a \$300,000 event," said Schoch, "and now it's four-plus million."

Schoch was the first full-time employee of the Head of the Charles, but The Charles was not the first regatta he led.

"I don't know if you remember an event called the Challenge of the Hudson," said Schoch, a former college and National Team coach. "That's what I did after I left Georgetown."

Coached by Schoch, the U.S. won its first men's junior-eight world-championship gold in 1987, and in 1989, he coached the National Team women to a fifth-place finish on Lake Bled in Slovenia, which led to his resigning from Georgetown.

"My athletic director was playing hardball. He said, 'You're going to be late for the swim test in September.' So I said, 'Well, I'm just going to take a chance here.'"

Schoch was looking for work when Olympian and Boston University coach Bill Miller told him about a new regatta that was looking for help getting started. What would become a four-decade plus career (Schoch is not retiring, just shifting gears) was off and running.

"We created a venue in the park in Peekskill Bay. We put up the athletes at the Army base on top of the hill. That's when I learned how to write proposals and secure sponsorships. I got IBM to give me \$50,000 and Barclays, another 50. And that was the seed money for starting this regatta," Schoch recalled. "The purpose of it was to bring attention to the environment."

The next year, Schoch got a call from Steve Carr and John Smith, organizers of the Head of the Charles who had raced their double at Schoch's event.

"That's when the Head of the Charles was going through its growing pains,"

Schoch said.

America's largest regatta grew and evolved under Schoch's care and leadership and now spans three days and attracts some of the world's best athletes. The winners of the men's and women's top singles event, who earn the title "Head of the Charles" as the best on the river, received prizes this year of \$10,000.

Other regattas—including, this year, Henley Royal Regatta, Schoch said—come to The Charles now to see how it's done.

"It's a really nice compliment," said Schoch about the much older events (Henley, 1839) "looking under the hood" at The Charles.

Schoch's successor, to be named after an international search conducted by TurnkeyZRG and Head of the Charles board members, will have big boots to fill, and new challenges.

"As we think about our next executive director, we are seeking a leader who will join us in our commitment to running a world-class regatta and at the same time help us think proactively about the areas where we can continue to pioneer, grow, and improve," said Fulham.

Since the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013, the regatta's security and public safety costs have tripled, and "we haven't had a profitable regatta since before Covid," said Schoch. "But the regatta's in good shape in terms of mechanics because of our board of directors and race-ops crew. They're totally dialed in.

"We're sort of at capacity for now and we've got to figure out how to pay the bills going forward. We're in a really strong position. I've built up an endowment over 30 years that would be the envy of almost any nonprofit."

Schoch, 75, has five grandchildren with whom he'd like to spend more time. Owing to the loss of colleagues and loved ones recently, he is aware just how precious it is.

"I didn't know either one of my grandfathers. They both died in their 50's. My father died at 56," Schoch said. "We all think we're invincible because we're rowers, but we're really not."

"I've got a lot of ideas about what I want to do next," said Schoch. "I'm definitely not dropping the mic."

Schoch said it about the regatta, but it's also true for him: "I think that the future is bright." ■

CHIP DAVIS



Belen Jesuit's men's youth U19 quad.

REGATTA

Youth Quads Prove Popular at 'The Hooch'

The "last of the great fall regattas" attracted nearly 2,200 entries.

At Atlanta's St. Andrew Rowing Club's women's U19 eight finished eight seconds faster than the Cincinnati Juniors to win the 49-entry event at the 2023 Head of the Hooch in early November in Chattanooga. Chicago beat Milwaukee in the boy's event.

Florida's Belen Jesuit Crew barely beat the men's youth U19 coxed four from Washington state's Sammamish Rowing Association, with St. Louis's A boat finishing third. Cincinnati Juniors won the women's youth event.

Youth quads, with 50 entries each for the men's and women's divisions, proved almost as popular as the coxed fours and eights among youth crews, with Indianapolis RC winning the men's U19 event and the

all-girls Founders Rowing Club of Dallas winning the women's U19 quad.

One of the world's biggest weekend rowing events, the Hooch drew 2,198 entries (the largest, Head of the Charles, got 2,599 this year). For its first 15 years, the Atlanta Rowing Club held the Head of the Chattahoochee on its namesake river in Roswell, Ga., just north of Atlanta.

As the event grew, first to 200 crews, and then over 500, it needed more space and moved in 1997 to the newly constructed Olympic venue at Lake Lanier. By 2004, the regatta attracted more than 1,000 boats and moved again to the Tennessee River in Chattanooga and became known as the Head of the Hooch, the "Last of the Great Fall Regattas." ■

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Sorin Koszyk at the Charles.

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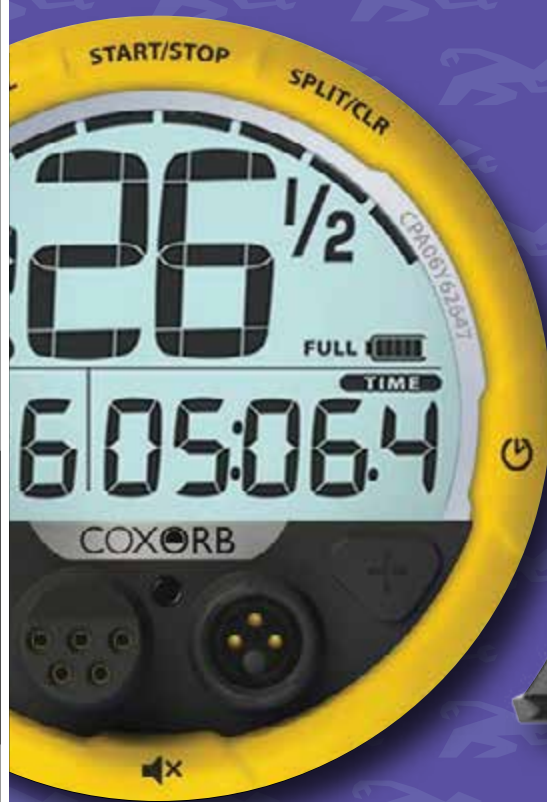
Sechser, Koszyk Crowned 'Head of the Charles'

The fearless lightweight scullers won the title—and \$10,000.

Michelle Sechser and Sorin Koszyk are each “Head of the Charles,” the traditional title for the sculler who covers a river course fastest in a time trial-style “head” race.

Both Sechser and Koszyk, who each were part of qualifying U.S. doubles for the Olympics at September’s World Rowing Championships, are lightweights (formerly, in Koszyk’s case), who beat formidable fields, including current Olympic champion Emma Twigg in the women’s field, at the world’s largest three-day rowing regatta.

USRowing National Team entries won both the men’s and women’s championship-eight events, ahead of top college crews Yale, Stanford, [CONTINUES ON PAGE 26 >>>](#)



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QUICK CATCHES

Michigan, Virginia, and Brown in the women's event. Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Northeastern, Brown, Washington, Dartmouth, and Penn all finished in the top 10 of the men's event.

There were fewer colleges in the women's top 10 because of how deep and fast the USRowing women are. Having qualified for every sweep event as well as the single and both doubles for the Olympics, the U.S. women raced what were essentially two rowers' eights and a scullers' eight, with the sweep rowers finishing one-two with less than a quarter-second between them, and the scullers coming in sixth.

With 90 entries, the women's youth-eights event at the Charles is the greatest collection of American junior rowing outside of June's USRowing Youth National Championships. As in Sarasota, southwestern Connecticut crews topped the results, with RowAmerica Rye taking first and third places, Greenwich Crew second, and Saugatuck third. On the boys' side, St. Paul's School of London beat second-place Saugatuck and third-place Greenwich by over 20 seconds.

Koszyk didn't just win; he shattered the course record (previously set by lightweight Andrew Campbell in 2014) by 14 seconds and picked up \$10,000 in prize money, a new feature of the regatta. The Charles continues to evolve from its roots as a fun training diversion brought to Cambridge and Boston by Englishman Ernie Arlett, who was Northeastern's first head coach and in 1964 established the Huskies' formidable varsity-rowing program.

Sechser, who won back-to-back silver medals at the last two Worlds with different partners in the lightweight double, upset defending Head of the Charles Twigg as well as U.S. National Team openweight single sculler Kara Kohler. Sechser also won \$10,000.

"You have to just fearlessly go up against these people, even though on paper, you know they're taller, bigger, better, stronger, more experienced, and so it was a ton of fun," said Sechser after the race. "That's where the races are won, I think, is the fearlessness." □

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QUICK CATCHES



The Danish national team entry won the championship eights at the Head of the Schuylkill.

REGATTA

Entries Surge at Head of the Schuylkill

RowAmerica Rye snagged first, second, and fourth in the women's high-school eights, and on the boys' side, 168 eights vied on three high-school levels.

Summer-like heat welcomed 2,191 crews to Philadelphia for the 53rd Head of the Schuylkill Regatta in late October.

The United States Naval Academy covered the 2.5-mile course in 10:58.6, just half a second faster than the University of Pennsylvania, to win the men's-championship eights event on Saturday. The Danish national team covered the course more than 50 seconds faster than Temple University to win the women's championship eights.

Founded in 1970, the Head of the Schuylkill became the only fall competition on the river for post-collegiate athletes in Philadelphia, creating racing opportunities for both men and women. A dozen women

entered the first regatta; by 2013 female competitors outnumbered males, with over 2,300 competing. The regatta grew into the world's largest one-day rowing competition and had to expand to a two-day schedule in 2008 to accommodate its popularity.

RowAmerica Rye crews placed first, second, and fourth in the women's high-school eights event on Sunday. Saugatuck Rowing Club entries finished third and fifth in the 45-boat field. An additional 42 eights raced in the JV and lower boat event, with 25 more in the Michael O'Gorman Women's High School Eights (frosch/novice) event.

On the boys' side, there were even more entries—61, 60, and 47 eights on each of the three high-school levels. Saugatuck beat

RowAmerica Rye by less than three seconds, with St. Joe's Prep in third.

Malvern Prep's Cormac Rooney won the Jim Barker Men's High School Single event. Niagara Falls Rowing Club's Ashlin Fehr finished first in the women's event.

The University of Pennsylvania edged the United States Naval Academy by a single second to win the men's club-championship eights event in 11:33, with a second Penn crew five seconds back in third. Division II Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University bested Temple University on the Owls' home course by nine seconds to win the women's club-championship eights. Sacred Heart University finished third. **▣**

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OLI ZEIDLER

CREW OF THE YEAR

GREAT BRITAIN MEN'S EIGHT

HONORABLE MENTION

MARIN YOUTH WOMEN'S EIGHT

COACH OF THE YEAR

SCOTT FRANDBSEN

HONORABLE MENTION

MICHELLE DARVILL

EVENT OF THE YEAR 2023

WORLD ROWING BEACH SPRINT FINALS

HONORABLE MENTION

USROWING YOUTH NATIONALS

HONORABLE MENTION

ACRA CHAMPIONSHIPS

CLUB OF THE YEAR

ROWAMERICA RYE

MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

OLI ZEIDLER



Above: German sculler Oliver Zeidler won the B final at the Tokyo Olympics and enters 2024 as the favorite for the Paris Games as the two-time defending world champion.

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR: KAROLIEN FLORIJN

Undefeated in the single scull for the current Olympic quadrennium, The Netherlands' reigning world champion isn't just winning races; she's doing so usually by open water against fast competition, including one of the sport's best ever: four-time Olympian (it'll be five in Paris) and defending champion Emma Twigg.

The Dutch phenom is the daughter of Olympic rowers and has been sculling since age 14. Her brother, Finn, sculls in the Dutch men's quad, which won all its heats and finals at both Lucerne and Worlds this year. She won a silver medal at the Tokyo Olympics in the four before switching to the single and wrapped up this year's overall World Rowing Cup trophy after the second of three regattas.

Florijn doesn't rely on just her genes and long limbs, though. She sculls hard, emptying the tank early and often in big races. At this year's world-championship final, her technique began falling apart after she'd blasted out to take the lead from the start, but she still won in rough conditions against the reigning Olympic champion by over five seconds.

Florijn has been nominated for World Rowing's Women's Crew of the Year alongside Great Britain's lightweight double and Romania's eight—both worthy crews, but their events are nowhere near as deep as the field Florijn races regularly and beats handily.

MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR: OLI ZEIDLER

In 2019, we wrote: "Casual rowing fans can be forgiven for not knowing who Oliver Zeidler is." A full Olympic quadrennium later, there are no excuses. The giant German swimmer-turned-sculler notched another championship year in 2023, seizing the world championship from The Netherlands' Simon Van Dorp after winning Henley's Diamond Challenge Sculls in July "easily"—Henley's official term for margins over five lengths.

It wasn't a perfect year for Zeidler. At the European Rowing Championships in May, he finished third behind Dutch winner Lennart Van Lierop and the defending Olympic champion, Greece's Stefanos Ntouskos. Zeidler finished second in his first heat at Lucerne but then won his quarterfinal and semifinal races before completing his 2023 Rowing World Cup sweep—winning in Zagreb, Varese, and Lucerne.

At the world championships, defending champion Zeidler won his heat, quarterfinal, semifinal, and the final. Van Lierop raced in the Dutch quad that won and countryman Simon Van Dorp won the silver in the single. New Zealand's Thomas Mackintosh got his bowball across the line less than a quarter-second ahead of Ntouskos for the bronze.

Less than two and half seconds separated the top four at Worlds, and elite athletes don't get slower usually for the Olympics, so Zeidler will have plenty of competition again in Paris. But as the two-time defending world champ, he enters as the favorite.

CREW OF THE YEAR: GREAT BRITAIN MEN'S EIGHT

The fastest boat in the world defended its title successfully as world champions in Belgrade, adding to its European Championship and Grand Challenge Cup honors at the Henley Royal Regatta. It was "a tough season," according to crew member Sholto Carnegie (Yale '18), one in which the GB eight barely outsprinted—by 0.05 seconds—the impressive Romanian eight at the Euros and finished second in Lucerne to the Australian men's eight that trained in Europe all summer.

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ATHLETE OF THE YEAR KAROLIEN FLORIJN



Right: Karolien Florijn, shown here after winning the 2022 World Rowing Championships over Olympic champion Emma Twigg, also won the 2023 Worlds and is the *Rowing News* 2023 Athlete of the Year.





CREW OF THE YEAR, HONORABLE MENTION MARIN YOUTH WOMEN'S EIGHT

Above: Marin Rowing Association's women's youth eight began 2023 with a win at the San Diego Crew Classic and finished the year by winning the USRowing Youth National Championship.



But the British big boat put things right in Belgrade, winning both its heat and the final over the second-place Dutch (there were only 10 entries, so no quarter- or semifinals) at the Olympic-qualifying Worlds in 5:24.2, six seconds off of the world-best time of 5:19.2 set by the U.S. in 2018.

HONORABLE MENTION: MARIN YOUTH WOMEN'S EIGHT

The San Diego Crew Classic trademarked the motto “The Rowing Season Starts Here,” but this year, as in so many others, when it came to women’s youth rowing, Marin owned it. Marin won its Crew Classic Youth Cup heat by 17 seconds and the final by about a length at the start of the season and the USRowing Youth National Championship over Greenwich at the end of the season. Greenwich then went overseas to win the Henley Royal Regatta in a tight final over Deerfield Academy, the top U.S. school (not club) crew.

Coach Sandy Armstrong’s perennially fast youth crews won on multiple levels at Youth Nationals: under-19, under-16, and on the boys’ side as well. She’s been the girls head coach and executive director of the Marin Rowing Association for 37 years and credits her staff with adapting to the new age-based categories of Youth Nationals.

“The staff is pretty deep; everybody probably could coach each other’s team successfully,” Armstrong said. “We stuck with trying to keep like ages together and like grades together for a little bit, but each season is bringing new information we can apply to the next season.”

COACH OF THE YEAR: SCOTT FRANDESN

The Golden Bears repeated as IRA national champions, winning the program’s 19th title in an overwhelming display of speed and depth. Head coach Scott Frandsen’s crews won the heavyweight varsity four, third-varsity eight, second-varsity eight, varsity eight, and Ten Eyck points trophy.

“It’s been a full team effort from top to bottom, with the varsity eight leading the charge,” said Frandsen, emphasizing as usual buy-in by his whole squad and the broad support of others. “A lot of credit goes to my staff and everyone in our administration who has helped us all year. We had an outstanding group of student-athletes on the team, and the generation that came before them laid the foundation for this team culture to be possible.”

That support has been earned by Frandsen, a Cal oarsman himself, through relentless hard work and constant relationship-building that culminated in a \$10 million gift from the Rogers Family Foundation in partnership with the Friends of Cal Crew to endow the men’s rowing program.

Winning a national championship is a tremendous accomplishment, but playing a key role in securing your program’s long-term future is an even greater achievement. Frandsen did both this year, with modesty and grace.

HONORABLE MENTION: MICHELLE DARVILL

The coach of the Olympic-champion Canadian women’s eight moved on to coach the women of the national squad of The Netherlands after Rowing Canada failed to retain her, and the winning followed the modest and affable coach. The Netherlands topped the medals table at Worlds with nine, six of them gold. Dutch women won gold in the single, pair, and four, and a silver in the quad.

EVENT OF THE YEAR 2023 WORLD ROWING BEACH SPRINT FINALS





THIS YEAR'S
WORLD
ROWING BEACH
SPRINT FINALS
SHOWCASED
WHAT SMITH,
BATTEN, AND THE
IOC HAVE BEEN
IMAGINING FOR
OUR SPORT FOR
MORE THAN A
DECADE.

Left: Coastal mixed coxed quadruple sculls 2023 World Rowing Beach Sprint Final champions Coral Marie Kasden (cox), Kory Rogers, Alexa McAuliffe, Jeni Sorlie, and Christopher Bak (bow).

CLUB OF THE YEAR ROWAMERICA RYE



Above: RowAmerica Rye had 16 crews racing in the Sunday finals at Youth Nationals and ran away with the overall-points trophy at this year's USRowing Summer National Championships.



EVENT OF THE YEAR 2023 : WORLD ROWING BEACH SPRINT FINALS

This fall's announcement by the International Olympic Committee that Beach Sprint Rowing would be included in the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games seemed like it came out of nowhere for anyone involved in rowing less than full-time.

But the hard work of taking this "exciting and compelling discipline, not just for the participants but also for spectators on the land"—the vision of Matt Smith, former executive director of FISA (now World Rowing)—has been going on since 2011, when British Olympic medalist Guin Batten tackled the challenge as chair of the "Rowing for All" commission.

The electric, joyous atmosphere of this year's World Rowing Beach Sprint Finals showcased what Smith, Batten, and the IOC have been imagining for our sport for more than a decade. With the success of the event—an exuberant form of Coastal Rowing that involves sprinting across the beach, hopping in a coastal rowing shell and sculling 250 meters through the breaking surf around a buoy and back to the beach, and sprinting and diving for the finish before your side-by-side challenger—World Rowing earned the IOC's blessing.

HONORABLE MENTION : USROWING YOUTH NATIONALS

The existence of a single unified and recognized youth national championship is the greatest non-Olympic accomplishment of USRowing in the last century. Before the 1990s, multiple regattas claimed, unconvincingly, to be the national championship. That all changed when the national governing body inaugurated the youth national championship in the mid-90's, an event that continues bigger and better than ever at Florida's Nathan Benderson Park, America's world-class rowing venue.

Covid disrupted the regatta, and a bungled attempt at a "stay-to-play" hotel-revenue scheme by USRowing ruffled feathers, but the introduction of age-based events instead of lightweight categories for minors has been a positive evolution and a credit to the United States Rowing Association (USRowing's proper name). The 2023 USRowing Youth National Championship Regatta, during which 4,000 athletes vied for more than 30 national titles, was the pinnacle of American youth rowing and sculling.

HONORABLE MENTION : ACRA CHAMPIONSHIPS

Collegiate club-rowing programs enjoy fewer resources and less support generally than collegiate varsity programs. But at their championship regatta, American Collegiate Rowing Association member clubs enjoyed a season-culminating experience on Melton Town Lake in Oak Ridge, Tenn., that was every bit as good as—and in some ways, including weather and officiating, better than—the IRA and NCAA championship regattas.

CLUB OF THE YEAR : ROWAMERICA RYE

RowAmerica Rye grew on the stretch of southern Connecticut waterfront that's been producing many of the nation's fastest youth, club, and masters crews for the past 20 years. At this year's USRowing Summer National Championships, RowAmerica built on its Youth Nationals success, where the club had 16 crews racing in the Sunday finals, including the men's youth eight (which it won), by entering 33 events and winning 22 medals. RowAmerica Rye ran away with the overall-points trophy and set a high mark for accomplishment by a single club in a single year. ▣

TOP 25

of 2023

To determine college rowing's overall program ranking, we took the official results of the separate national championships for each school and used a weighted formula—with new adjustments this year—to arrive at this year's top 25.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY Lisa WORTHY

Princenton University is the best overall rowing college again in 2023, based on racing results from all four varsity national championships—the NCAA National Championship for openweight women and the Intercollegiate Rowing Association National Championship for heavyweight men, lightweight men, and lightweight women as well as the American Collegiate Rowing Association Championship for collegiate club crews.

Each team was assigned relative weights for competitive speed, and a proprietary formula produced an overall score for each program, with the top 25 published here.

Right from the start, we know there will be howls of complaint about a university like Texas with a great NCAA women's program not making the top 10 of the 2023 *Rowing News* Top 25 Overall College Programs. We can't emphasize "overall" enough.

While the Longhorns finished a commendable fourth at the NCAAs—a result that would be the highlight of most rowing careers and included victory for the Texas varsity four—they didn't score a single point in our overall ranking in the varsity heavyweight men's, lightweight men's, or lightweight women's categories. Texas doesn't have varsity programs in those three categories, although they certainly have the resources for it. That's a choice.

Texas Crew, its club program, had some good results at the ACRA regatta, but those points weren't enough to bring the overall score up to the level of universities that support more complete and nationally competitive rowing programs for men and women. The same is true of SMU this year and will likely be true in the years to come



TOP 25 of 2023





of many other universities that support only openweight women's varsities.

The NCAA championships, which are for openweight women's varsities only, are decided on team scores, while the other national championships are based on the individual varsity eights alone. The NCAA's championship structure adds another complication to how we determine the ranking with its "automatic qualifiers" (the winners of 11 conference championships qualify automatically for the 22-school Division I field, and the remaining 11 spots are selected at large by a committee).

The result is that a program like Harvard/Radcliffe, fifth at this year's Ivy League Championships, gets left out of the championship—and our previous ranking system—while slower, automatically qualified schools are in.

In this year's system, we've added "fitting" to the process, awarding ranking points to NCAA Division I programs not invited to the championship, based on spring results against crews that were.

These rankings rely exclusively on demonstrated speed in 2,000-meter racing at season-culminating championships, with the exception of the aforementioned NCAA adjustments. They reflect the relative speed of the overall rowing programs at each college and not the quality of the experience for the student-athletes.

1. Princeton University

Princeton remains the top overall rowing college in 2023 after winning both the men's and women's lightweight national championships as well as finishing third in both the NCAA women's championship and IRA men's heavyweight championships.

The third-place finishes are even more impressive than the national championships because they came against deeper, faster fields, including universities whose athletic scholarships, program support, and coaches' salaries exceed the Olympic programs of most nations and verge on being professional.

Rowing out of Shea Rowing Center on the man-made Lake Carnegie, purpose-built for rowing, the Tigers hardly go wanting. Even though league rules forbid athletic scholarships, the financial aid at

Ivy League schools, and particularly at Princeton, is tremendous and often grant-only (no student loans) and better than athletic scholarships because it can't be taken away.

At the end of the season, Princeton, across all four categories, was just plain fast. The Tigers celebrated in style with a massive contingent making the trip to race at Henley Royal Regatta.

2. University of Washington

Even without lightweight programs for either men or women, Washington ranks second this year on the strength of second-place finishes at both the NCAA and IRA national championships. Both impressive performances came as surprises to outside observers, but not to women's coach Yaz Farooq or men's coach Michael Callahan. The Huskies staffs knew they had developing speed through the spring after taking their lumps in the early season—the men on a Canadian trip and the women at the San Diego Crew Classic. But when it mattered, they were faster than all but one and enter 2024 as favorites for both national championships.

3. Yale University

Yale's consistent excellence across the three categories of openweight women, heavyweight men, and lightweight men continued this year, with the heavies finishing fourth and the lightweight men sixth at the IRA. Combining the fifth-place NCAA finish by the women (tied for fourth on points) and grand-final speed across a nearly complete program (Yale lacks a women's lightweight varsity) makes the Elis the third-best overall rowing college in America.

4. Stanford University

The Stanford openweight women recovered from distinct losses to Texas at the San Diego Crew Classic to turn its season around and beat the two-time defending NCAA-champion Longhorns finally at the end of the season. That national championship, supported by the Cardinal lightweight women's silver medal

and heavyweight men's eighth-place finish at the IRA, leads to Stanford's overall fourth-best ranking.

5. University of California, Berkeley

Under the direction of Scott Frandsen, the 2023 *Rowing News* Coach of the Year, the Cal men had an IRA that was historically successful, winning the varsity, JV, and third-varsity heavyweight eights, plus the varsity four. The Golden Bears won the James Ten Eyck Memorial Trophy for points at the IRA, and the Cal women finished eighth in NCAA Division I points—three points out of sixth but also only 11 points ahead of 11th—for a combined overall ranking of fifth.

6. Brown University

Like Cal, Brown lacks lightweight varsities but earns its high ranking through equally consistent men's and women's openweight varsities, both seventh at the IRA and NCAA national championships, respectively.

7. University of Pennsylvania

The Quakers illustrate well how overall rankings work. Their women, coached by Ivy League Coach of the Year Wes Ng (who also received NCAA Coach of the Year votes), finished sixth at the NCAA, just one point ahead of Brown. The Penn heavyweight men finished 12th at the IRA, dropping their overall ranking relative to other top-10 schools, but the lightweight men's IRA bronze medal pulled them back up, two spots ahead of Harvard/Radcliffe, the only other program besides Princeton's to support four varsity crews.

8. Syracuse University

The Syracuse women may have felt some frustration with a laudable 13th-place team finish at the NCAAs following one of the Orange's best spring campaigns ever. Combined with the heavyweight men's strong fifth-place race at the IRA, Syracuse earns eighth place overall as a rowing institution and will surprise no one by finishing even better next year.

9. Harvard/Radcliffe University

A top-10 overall ranking for the Crimson results from a complete program consistently racing well, if not always winning, against the best colleges in the country in all four Division I varsity categories. Radcliffe, as the women's crews continue to be known, failed to secure an invite to the NCAA championship regatta after a fifth-place finish at the Ivy League Championship, which still awards its championship based on the varsity-eight final. (Rutgers was invited, despite losing to Radcliffe during the regular season.) The lightweight men's IRA silver medal and the lightweight women's fifth-place countered the heavyweight men's ninth-place finish at the IRA to keep Harvard/Radcliffe in the overall top 10.

10. Northeastern University

The Huskies' heavyweight men came through what is often the best racing in all of collegiate rowing, the IRA semifinals, to earn a grand-final appearance that led Northeastern into the top 10 overall. The women made it to the NCAA Championship as the winner of the Colonial Athletic Conference and finished 18th of 22.

11. University of Texas

12. Southern Methodist University

13. University of Virginia

14. University of Michigan

14. Dartmouth College

16. Cornell University

17. Boston University

18. The Ohio State University

19. United States Naval Academy

20. University of Wisconsin

21. Duke University

22. Rutgers University

23. Drexel University

24. University of Southern California

25. Indiana University



THE SERFS OF ROWING

ASSISTANT COACHES WORK HARD, PUT IN LONG HOURS, AND ARE ESSENTIAL TO A TEAM'S SUCCESS. YET THEIR PAY IS SO MEAGER THAT MANY CAN'T BUY A HOUSE, HAVE CHILDREN, AND ENJOY LIFE FULLY BEYOND THE BOATHOUSE.

STORY BY **Madeline DAVIS TULLY**

"To say they're crucial is an understatement. Not only are they there for the team to do whatever is needed but also they benefit my mental health. A good assistant allows me to sleep at night."

– PETER STEENSTRA

Liz Tuppen is in her 12th season as an assistant coach with the University of Michigan women and in 2022 was named associate head coach.

Along with head coach Mark Rothstein, whom she reveres, she helped the Wolverines win the Big Ten Championship three times and finish in the top five at the NCAA national championship three times. She is one of the most accomplished assistant coaches in college rowing.

"I love working at Michigan. I love being part of this team," Tuppen said. "I very much believe in what we do as coaches and getting these young women to be the best versions of themselves."

But because assistant coaches earn salaries that often make supporting a family or buying a home impossible, Tuppen has made a decision all too familiar to those who've coached collegiately for a significant amount of time.

"We do not have children. We do not plan on having children. My career is a factor in that decision. If we were to decide to have kids, I would not be doing this anymore. I would be in another field trying to make more money."

Such are the harsh realities facing assistant coaches these days, even those at the top of their game.

Assistant coaches are the beating heart of collegiate rowing. They are on recruiting calls late into the evening, then waking up before dawn to select and train crews that will score crucial team points at

championship regattas. They are filling gas cans and negotiating prices with hotels and airlines. They are their athlete's first call when they are struggling and their first hug on the awards dock.

Assistant coaches are often closer to their athletes than head coaches. No rowing team, and certainly no program as large and complex as those in college, could survive, let alone thrive, without the all-encompassing commitment of qualified, passionate assistant coaches. And yet, within rowing, and across collegiate sports in general, assistant coaches face challenges daily that make this an increasingly difficult job.

Typically, rowing coaches begin as volunteers and then graduate to assistant at a mid-major or second or third assistant at a more highly ranked program, to first assistant, to associate head coach, and ultimately head coach.

Some teams, particularly at smaller DI schools or in Divisions II and III, have only one assistant coach, most of them part-timers in DIII. Others, owing to new NCAA DI legislation for women's teams, can have as many as six. They may be full- or part-time, graduate students or, in some cases, undergraduates, often former team members who've been disqualified medically.

"To say they're crucial is an understatement," said Peter Steenstra, head coach of men's and women's crew at Bates College. "Not only are they there for the team to do whatever is needed but also they benefit my mental health. A good assistant allows me to sleep at night."

"Having great assistant coaches allows there to be an extension of the overall team culture," said Wes Ng, head coach of women's rowing at the University of Pennsylvania, "and an extension of the morals and ethics of how to approach the sport that consistent programs can generate."

Lizzy Houston, recently tapped to lead Stanford's lightweight women after coaching as an assistant for three years, says assistants play a vital role in connecting and communicating with team members.

When what the head coach is saying fails to resonate with a particular athlete, "the assistant may say something in a totally different way, but for the exact same change, that makes sense [to the athlete]. Different people see different things, and that's really helpful."

To allow assistant coaches to thrive and perform at their best, wise head coaches create an environment that gives their coaches real responsibility, even autonomy.

"One thing I've learned about myself," said Molly Hamrick, associate head coach of the Stanford openweight women, who won the 2023 NCAA national championship, "is that when I feel like I'm actually having an impact on my crews and like I can have a relationship with the athletes independent of the head coach, I'm happiest and most confident, and therefore my best coaching self."

At DIII Bates, where Steenstra oversees both the men's and women's teams, each of his assistants is the primary coach of her own team while he oversees

the combined programs.

“When my assistant coaches leave here, they’re ready to be a head coach,” Steenstra said. “You’re coming here to be my assistant because you want to be a professional coach, and I’m going to start training you for that specifically.”

Ng’s approach to growing better coaches is three-pronged: developing their skills; giving them ample credit for team accomplishment; and paying them adequately.

In the collegiate rowing world, Molly Hamrick is a rapidly rising star. She is in her fifth season as an assistant coach with the Stanford University openweight women, and her third as the Alben Family Associate Head Coach. In her time there, the Cardinal have won the NCAA national championship and finished as runners-up twice. They also took home the Pac-12 trophy.

Her coaching journey began in junior rowing. While training with the U.S. National Team and the Riverside Boat Club elite team, Hamrick coached at Riverside, Brookline High School, and Community Rowing, Inc. in Boston.

She then moved on to coach at her alma mater, Princeton University, for two years, where she contributed to two top-10 finishes and consecutive Ivy League titles. She did so as a volunteer, which meant she coached every practice during the academic year with no compensation.

In 2019, Hamrick moved across the country to advance her coaching career and became a full-time assistant with the Stanford openweight women.

“Trust and ownership and having a relationship where the assistant coach isn’t just a yes person but is able to provide opinion and insight and feedback and have actual discussions with the head coach makes a good environment for assistant coaches,” Hamrick said. “I’m lucky where I’m in a role where I trust my head coach to no end.

“I love these kids so much, and I just don’t feel ready to leave yet. It’s very collaborative, not just among the rowing coaches but the entire athletic department. There are assistant-coach meetups where we have lunch and chat about recruiting, official visits, and other hot topics. We learn from each other. It’s such a welcoming, open environment.”

But she, too, is acutely aware of the

financial challenges facing assistants, especially in a place like Palo Alto with its notoriously high cost of living.

“Broadly speaking,” she understated, “it’s hard to live on an assistant coach’s salary.”

Compensation sufficient for a rowing coach to make a living is a pressing and perennial concern. First assistant coaches for DI women’s teams make \$53,000 on average. That plummets to \$38,500 and \$35,000 for DIII and DII first-assistant coaches, respectively. And that’s for full-time coaches.

“The pay is challenging,” said Sam Baum, associate head coach of the men’s crew at the University of California, Berkeley.

“Money isn’t the answer to everything,” Tuppen said, “but it’s incredibly helpful.”

In DII and DIII women’s rowing, the majority of first assistants are part-time and make less than \$10,000 annually, though they’re at practice every day and travel with the team to training camps and regattas. For some DIII programs, including at Bates, assistant coaches are hourly workers in a profession where the time demands are long and unpredictable.

“When I’m in season, sometimes I’m in the office for 12 to 14 hours a day,” Hamrick said.

Rowing coaches are paid far less than coaches of big revenue-producing sports, yet they’re expected to work with the same dedication and single-minded focus. The highest-paid head coaches of college rowing teams make a fraction of the salary of an assistant football or basketball coach.

Such inequality, some contend, should spur rowing coaches to demand, at the very least, more flexibility and autonomy in their daily and yearly schedules.

“We should not expect people to sacrifice their lives and life experiences, as athletes do, for their entire career,” Ng said. “That’s not a life well-lived.

“It’s on us to engineer a coaching rhythm that allows for those things [having a family and leading a rich and fulfilling life] to occur.”

That’s why Ng has designated the hours from 10 a.m. to noon each day as time his coaches have to themselves.

Baum commends Scott Frandsen, the head coach of men’s rowing at Cal, for prioritizing his assistants.

“Scott has done a fantastic job of securing the support and resources necessary to make it livable for me in a high cost-of-living area. He’s worked very hard to ingratiate himself with the administration, to ask for important things, and to think of his staff even in front of himself. He’ll say, ‘Bonuses need to go to the assistants.’ Or ‘You guys run the camp. You take all the money from that, and I’ll stay out of it.’”

Many college administrators seem content to pay assistants low wages and deal with the predictable consequence: frequent turnover.

“The general thought process around assistant coaches,” Tuppen said, “is that it should be a revolving door, and you move on to bigger coaching roles somewhere else.”

“Universities have tripled or quadrupled administration,” Steenstra pointed out. “Every school at every level is increasing its middle management, but not its coaching staffs. If they are increasing the coaching staff, it’s with very young, very inexpensive, very inexperienced people who can be turned around quickly. In some cases, you go without them, which just puts more pressure on coaches, pushing them to the edge.”

“Schools don’t allow for mistakes anymore,” said Greg Hughes, head coach of Princeton’s heavyweight men. “You’re supposed to be afraid for your job at all times. That way they can really control you. They have made the jobs so much less for your heart, your spirit. Working hard brought you into the sport. And now working hard means doing exactly what they say, and only what they say. Don’t improvise, don’t get creative. And be afraid of making a mistake.”

The issue of support from the athletic department is particularly evident when it comes to promoting assistants to associate head coach. It’s rare for athletic departments to confer the title on coaches in their first or early years at an institution, regardless of the recommendations of the head coaches who hired them.

When Hughes hired Matt Smith, an Olympian and captain in the U.S. Army who coached for six years at Cornell, it was like hiring a head coach because of his extensive experience.

“It took a really long time for this place to finally accept giving him the title of associate head coach,” a position he’s held since 2019.

“In my experience, our [athletic department] is fighting our fight with the bigger institution. Human Resources might have a set of standards they have to follow—years required, for example—before somebody can have that title. Internally, the [athletic] department has worked hard within the avenues they can use to recognize people who are making big contributions on the coaching side.”

In addition to all their other duties, head coaches are being forced to become promoters and lobbyists. At Princeton, roughly 180 of the 1,000 varsity athletes on campus are rowers.

“Nearly one fifth of all athletes are here at the boathouse. So we could say, ‘Why don’t we get one fifth of the support?’ Hughes asked.

“My response is, ‘Why aren’t we doing one fifth of the work to support and promote this place?’”

Stanford’s Houston suggests inviting administrators to the boathouse—a surprisingly uncommon occurrence on most campuses—to see the athletes and coaches in action.

“Athletic departments need to recognize that though it may not be a spectator sport, these athletes work just as hard as a football or basketball team. The more administrators see what coaches do day in and day out to keep things going, the [more likely they are to] recognize those efforts and everything that goes on behind the scenes.”

In the meantime, a common way to bolster the meager salaries of assistant coaches is the revenue from summer camps and in-season clinics.

“There are ways within our sport to help people earn more on the side,” Ng said, “whether it’s coaching clinics or camps or finding different streams of income in the athletic department so that at least they’re not falling behind.”

Stanford’s Hamrick believes coaches need to “move the conversation toward making it less taboo to advocate for yourself. Be grateful for what you have but push the envelope of what you’re asking for, financially and in terms of other resources.”

Coaching organizations, such as the Collegiate Rowing Coaches Association for the women’s teams and the Intercollegiate Rowing Coaches Association for the men’s, can play a helpful role.

“Within those organizations, you

can have real conversations with the doors closed and talk about these things as one, even though every Saturday in the spring you try to rip each other’s heads off,” said Hughes, a co-president of the IRCA.

Every four years, the CRCA conducts a comprehensive salary survey of all its member colleges and universities, producing data designed to inform and empower coaches as they negotiate salaries for themselves and their staff.

Some coaches, however, believe that low wages are a character-building part of a coach’s initiation into a demanding profession.

“It’s OK to tread water [financially] for a little while as long as you’re growing professionally,” Ng said.

“It’s a mistake to overpay assistant coaches at the early stages,” Steenstra said. “Look at how many people 20 years ago got into coaching for zero. Many, many, many people did. Nothing about this job comes easily. I want to see that the people who are making \$70K and up have gone through a few checkpoints to get to that spot, because they’re professional coaches.”

Sam Baum took a traditional path to collegiate coaching, with one uncommon detour. The year after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania, Baum became the head coach at Junipero Serra High School in San Mateo, Calif. Shortly thereafter, he moved on to an assistant-coach position with the Yale University heavyweight men under legendary coach Steve Gladstone.

“My directive when I got to Yale was clear: We don’t expect you to come in and know how to coach. What we need you to give us is the enthusiasm to recruit and to help build a program.” There, he helped the varsity eight win two consecutive IRA national championships.

After seven years in New Haven, Baum moved back to his hometown of Berkeley to be the assistant coach for the Cal men with first-time head coach Scott Frandsen. There, he learned to grow and adapt to become the assistant Scott and the team at Cal needed. The varsity eight went on to an undefeated season and the IRA national championship in 2022.

That summer, Baum began reconsidering his career. He had been coaching exclusively since graduating over a decade earlier and was curious about a more traditional profession. He and his

wife had decided to start a family, and the reality of doing that on an assistant coach’s salary was daunting.

So Baum left Cal to work at an executive-search firm.

“I actually liked the new job. I liked learning and I think I could have done that for the rest of my life. But I didn’t find it fulfilling—certainly not as fulfilling as being a coach and a mentor.”

This fall, with a new baby daughter, Baum returned to Cal as the associate head coach.

“I love working with Scott and Brandon. I’m very attached to the team. I love the Bay Area.”

Many coaches hesitate to step away from the profession, fearing they won’t be able to return later. Not Baum.

“I felt comfortable making the leap, thinking ‘You’ve never done anything else. Why don’t you try it?’ Coaching will always be here. You’re not going to forget how to do it. Steve retired seven times before he actually retired!”

Today’s assistant coaches are the head coaches of tomorrow—an obvious fact that would seem compelling enough to motivate the stewards of our sport to do everything possible to make coaching at every level attractive and feasible.

For all the obstacles and sacrifices, however, most college coaches are optimistic about the future and grateful for the privilege of coaching young people.

“It’s important that you enjoy every moment you’re coaching right now,” said Penn coach Ng. “Looking ahead to what comes next can take you far away from the enjoyment of coaching each season.”

“We have a limited number of seasons that we’re fortunate enough to be around our sport, so rushing through the first 10 imagining that you’ll get to enjoy it in the 11th through 20th is a mistake. Each year is different and special.”

“Despite all the conflicts, all the difficulties and challenges of these jobs, every single day I get to go out on the river,” said Bates coach Steenstra. “And as I’m watching my crews, I take a breath and say, ‘I have the best job in the world.’”

“But that’s one tenth of one percent now. That amount is shrinking all the time.” □

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SPORT SCIENCE

Back Where You Began

Welcome to the phenomenon of reversibility, when hard-earned fitness gains vanish once you quit training. That's why you should keep it up during the winter off-season.

You are working for months to improve your performance, and the last ergometer test was encouraging since you achieved a personal best.

You feel confident that with continuous effort more improvement will keep coming.

But then a bike accident, a move to a new home, or too much work forces you to put your training on hold. When you resume training, you realize that your performance is far from what it once was. In fact, you seem to be back where you began. Not only is your former training intensity out of reach but also your workouts are shorter so you can recuperate properly.

Welcome to the phenomenon of reversibility, when hard-earned fitness gains vanish once you quit training. Typically, the losses occur in less time than it took

to achieve the gains. Through targeted training, your body adapts to increasing loads, which become easier to manage so you can perform at a higher level. Through strength training, for example, you prepare your muscles to generate more force, while endurance training enables you to sustain a load longer and with more ease.

Such adaptations take time to develop, which is why you train carefully over a long period. When you discontinue training, however, the adaptations reverse themselves, along with your enhanced ability. That's why you should continue training after racing season, preferably targeted training with specific goals in mind.

Every serious rowing manual prescribes year-round-training and advises that you

use competition-free periods such as winter to prepare for your next races, even if they're months away. This is the time for more general training at a lower intensity and for a longer time. It's a chance to try other modes of physical exertion, such as running, bicycling, and cross-country skiing, and to tune up your body by lifting weights and performing balance and flexibility exercises. For mental and physical refreshment, you can play games such as pickleball, volleyball, and soccer, which are valuable especially for young athletes and masters rowers.

All this off-season activity will help you continue to perform better, avoid injury, and stay in the sport longer. **▣**

VOLKER NOLTE



COXING

The Art of Indoor Coxing

If you're serious about your role on the team, there are just as many opportunities to get better and faster in the winter as there are on the water.

After our first fall season, most of us stick with coxing because we realize that the feeling of slicing through the water in a really powerful boat is intoxicating, not because we want to walk around a musty erg room with clipboards for four months.

When you're indoors, it's hard to stay engaged. Your role is much less defined, making it easy to feel bored, aimless, and apathetic about coxing. If you're serious about your role on the team, though, you'll realize that there are just as many opportunities to get better and faster in the winter as there are on the water.

Work out with the team: This doesn't mean you have to get on the erg and do pieces with them but you can participate in running a stadium or doing body-weight and core circuits. While the team is doing steady-state pieces, you can get on the bike also and do pieces of comparable intensity, all while continuing to call switches in rate

and when pieces start and stop.

The goal isn't to match what the rowers are doing but to do as much as you're capable. The fact that your teammates see you doing something (and taking it seriously) will earn their trust, respect, and loyalty. It's also about learning the true definition of "more." If you're seeing stars at the end of a stadium, which is how your rowers feel when they're gassed at the end of a piece, they'll know that when you ask for "more" you've been there, too, and that you get what it means to go until you can't go anymore and give until there's nothing left to give.

Observe individuals on the erg: From a technical standpoint, winter training is an excellent time to follow each rower closely to see how he or she responds to training at increasing levels of exhaustion. By isolating their bodies and observing them individually instead of as part of a larger crew, you can determine how they

respond to the intensity or duration of a piece by noting changes in technique and rhythm, etc. Keep your notebook on hand so you can record what you're seeing and what the coach is saying so you can fashion customized calls later on.

Learn how to call drills effectively: This was a regular part of winter training for coxswains when I was in high school. Frequently, as part of the warm-up, we would do the same technical drills on the ergs that we'd do on the water, and we coxswains were responsible for their execution.

I remember being super-intimidated the first time I had to do it, but a varsity coxswain told me they were all bad at it at first and had no idea what to say. This exercise is what helped them get comfortable coxing everyone on the team (not just their usual rowers) and allowed them to test-run different calls, tones, and ways of executing drills with minimal

backlash when something went wrong.

I'll say the same to you guys, too—we were all lousy at this stuff when we began. None of us knew what to say, and what we did say made us cringe because it sounded stupid. Persisting through and past the urge to crawl inside yourself is a necessary experience, though. If you can do it on land, you can do it on water, which is where and when it counts most.

In addition to improving your call and tone while executing drills, it's beneficial to learn the purpose of the drills and what your coach is trying to accomplish. Getting on the erg and going through the drills yourself improves your ability to explain what it should feel like. "Hang your weight off the handle" might not make sense, but "you wanna feel the lats engage as the blade enters the water and the leg drive begins" adds helpful clarity and specificity. This is especially important if you're coxing novices or other less-experienced rowers. In the more senior boats, attention to detail can be a difference-maker throughout the season when it's less about how powerful you are and more about how well you move the boat.

Determine your objectives and set some goals: This is something every coxswain should do at the start of winter training. Begin by reflecting on the previous season, taking stock of where you excelled, where you improved, and where significant changes are needed, and then determine what steps you're going to take to address those areas over the winter.

Obviously, you can't work on skills like steering or boat feel but everything else (managing a practice, developing your technical eye, running through calls, communication, etc.) is fair game. Involve your coach in the goal-setting process. It's up to you to advocate for yourself when it comes to being coached. Informing your coach of your goals and seeking advice about how to achieve them is the first step.

Don't be afraid to take a step back in the winter, but don't become so disengaged that you go to the boathouse only to keep up appearances. If you're going to go (or have to be there), commit to leaving each day able to say you learned or did something that's going to make you better in the spring. ▣ **KAYLEIGH DURM**



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FUEL

The Virtues of Peanut Butter (And Other Nutritious Nuggets)

Did you know that you can tame your belly fat by eating less at night?

Staying on top of the latest sports-nutrition news can be a full-time job. Between conferences, webinars, and journal articles, I learn a lot of information that I like to translate into practical tips to share with athletes like you. Enjoy this news you can use.

- If you try to stay away from peanut butter, deeming it to be fattening, think again. Peanut butter—and peanuts in any form—contribute to no more weight gain than the same number of calories from carbohydrate-rich snacks. In a 10-week weight-gain study that included lifting weights three times a week, 28 athletic women and men (average age 25) consumed:

- an extra 500 calories of peanuts and peanut butter-based snacks, or
- an extra 500 calories of peanut-free carb-based snack foods (such as pretzels, fruit chews, bagels).

The carb-snackers gained about six pounds; the peanut eaters gained only about 3.5 pounds. How could this be?

One explanation is that the fiber and fat in peanut butter are satiating. That means it keeps you feeling fed for longer than fat-free foods such as pretzels. Peanut butter can curb your appetite, so you end up eating fewer calories overall for the day.

This study confirms why I vote peanut butter one of the best sports foods around (assuming you're not allergic to it). Peanut butter requires no refrigeration, is anti-inflammatory, nutrient-rich, inexpensive, and most important, yummy. How about enjoying more peanut butter on bananas for your morning and afternoon snacks?

- When athletes go on a low-carb/low-calorie diet, their bones go on a diet also. In a study of 327 runners (ages 18 to 35) who trained eight or more hours a week, those who restricted carbs and/or trained without having eaten first, experienced 1.5 times more bone injuries. More research is needed to learn how carbs and calories can influence bone health. In the meantime, enjoy carb-based grains, fruits and veggies at

every meal.

- With global warming, athletes who exercise in the heat should take steps to prevent problems related to elevated body temperature. One tip is to pre-cool your body before exercise. Try drinking ice water or slushies or sucking on ice chips. Doing so might give you greater endurance.

- A study of female professional soccer players revealed that they burned about 2,900 calories per day. Of that, about 1,400 calories supported their resting metabolic rate (calories needed to be alive) and about 1,200 calories were burned during exercise; the rest supported general daily activities. This equates to about three 700- to 800-calorie meals per day, plus two 200- to 300-calorie snacks. That's a lot of food. For athletes who may wonder, "Why do I feel hungry all the time?," the answer might be because your body *is* hungry!

- When female athletes under-eat, they commonly stop having regular menstrual periods. When male athletes under-eat, they experience hormonal changes that can lead to loss of sex drive. In a study involving 10 healthy active males (circa age 25) who dieted strictly for five days—they ate less food and exercised more—the calorie deficit caused significant physiological changes. The men lost about six pounds (more muscle than fat, as happens with quick weight loss). Their thyroid hormones dropped, as did their testosterone levels.

Restrictive dieting reduces the intake not only of calories but also protein, calcium, iron, zinc, and many other valuable nutrients needed to maintain optimal health and performance. Don't restrict your eating because you think you should. Listen to your body. Stop eating because you feel satiated, not just because the food is gone.

- Athletes in endurance sports (such as rowers, runners, and triathletes) and jumping sports (such as basketball and volleyball players) prefer to be light to enhance their performance. The problem is that long-term restrictive eating can contribute to health

issues. In a study comparing weight-conscious male athletes (age 24) to a group of fitness exercisers, the athletes were leaner but also had lower levels of thyroid hormone (a sign they were conserving energy). They also had weaker bones. If you skimp on food to be lean, your best bet is to seek guidance from a registered dietitian who specializes in sports dietetics. This professional can help you achieve your weight goals healthfully. Use the referral network at eatright.org to find your local sports dietitian.

- Personal trainers commonly believe they should have a "perfect" physique to achieve success in their careers. This can put them at high risk of developing eating disorders. Among personal trainers who responded to recruitment messages on Twitter and Instagram, 15 percent reported high levels of disordered-eating behavior (binge-eating, restrictive dieting, over-exercising). Trainers like this should not be role models. We need authentic fitness leaders who represent a variety of sizes and shapes that the average exerciser can attain and maintain. Don't be fooled; a "perfect body" generally comes at a high cost.

- Some women gain belly fat during menopause. This might be related to midlife lifestyle changes and aging as well as hormonal shifts. Peri-menopausal women who had big dinners and snacked frequently at the end of the day tended to have more belly fat than those who front-loaded their calories. One suggested weight-management solution (for both women and men) is to eat less at night. A satiating high-protein breakfast can help reduce the urge to overeat at the end of the day. Peanut butter on a bagel with a side of Greek yogurt, anyone? ▣

Sports nutritionist **NANCY CLARK, M.S., R.D.**, counsels both casual and competitive athletes in the Boston area (Newton; 617-795-1875). Her best-selling *Nancy Clark's Sports Nutrition Guidebook* can help you eat to win. For more information, visit NancyClarkRD.com.



BEST PRACTICES

Outside Perspective

Whether with your program, your crew, or a single athlete, identify the limiting factors to successful performance.

Our athletes want to race and compete. Though motivated, they lack knowledge and experience. Coaches improve their rowers and crews by providing this knowledge and experience. We bring perspective from outside the boat and should look at the bigger picture always. We help our athletes best by identifying repeatedly the factors limiting performance and addressing them above all other concerns.

Athletes aside, most programs have substantial limitations. One or more of these may be addressable and, if remedied, result in a profound increase in speed. Survey the scene, compare your situation to those of your peer competitors (or those you want as your competitors), and see what can be done. Team culture? Recruiting? More coaches? Water time? Equipment? Admittedly, money plays a big role in the success of any program, but some limiting factors can be tackled without it.

When thinking of limiting factors, we think more commonly of what's happening in the boat. Here, it's valuable to ascertain

whether it's limitations in skill, fitness and power, or psychology that are holding the crew back the most. If it's skill, then differentiate between style and substance. Substance involves the laws of physics. Style is your way of doing things. Don't fall into the trap of trying to dictate style at the expense of teaching substance. It's shocking how much time and energy are spent on the minutiae of rowing at the expense of performing the basics better.

If you're not sure where to start, begin by making sure the boat is rigged appropriately for your athletes. Comfort in the boat is a precursor to performance. The next level of comfort involves stability of the shell when it's moving. Stability provides a level platform for your rowers all through the stroke cycle. If that's adequate, then everyone—and I mean *everyone*—can pull harder.

Yes, power is generally the ultimate limiting factor. If you're pleased with the power output, help your rowers do a better job getting connected earlier in the drive. The front end is the ultimate technical limiting factor, and it can be coached. If still in doubt,

enlist a more experienced coach to view your crew and offer his or her opinion on what's limiting their racing. A fresh set of eyes can unlock amazing opportunities for increased speed.

Sometimes the limiting factor may be just one athlete. Here your options are either to replace the athlete or coach up and improve the athlete. Replacing is easiest but not always available. Coaching up is harder, but by identifying the single greatest limitation of your athletes, you can speed their development. Better to focus narrowly on their limiting factors than overwhelm them by addressing every issue.

Whether with your overall program, your crew, or a single athlete, exercise your coaching perspective by identifying the biggest limiting factor to successful performance. Once identified, address it continuously until progress is achieved and a new, but less detrimental, limiting factor emerges.

Then repeat the process. ▣

BILL MANNING



COACH DEVELOPMENT

Off the Clock

The realities of the competitive seasons mean that coaches are hard-pressed to take time away from their responsibilities. That's why it's imperative to take advantage of the winter break.

Coaches urge their athletes often to prioritize rest, whether focusing on recovery on a Sunday in season or on getting a real break from training for a week or two after the championship. We know this is a crucial part of not only performance but also longevity in the sport. Athletes cannot train at an ever-increasing volume or intensity; there must be time for adaptation. What's often overlooked is that this is true for coaches, too. It's in our nature to forge ahead all year long, always searching for that slight competitive edge, one more call with a recruit, one more note to a donor.

As Lizzy Houston, associate head coach of the Stanford lightweight women, puts it, "There is no office. I'll make a lineup at 7 p.m. or check out the training plan I made

for the next two weeks and see if I can make an adjustment."

Wes Ng, head coach of women's rowing at the University of Pennsylvania, sees parallels with training.

"There is certainly the analogy between the type of exercise you're doing and the type of recovery you're doing—stimulus and adaptation. Are we doing that on the coaching side? We're probably skewed toward nothing but stimulus and very little recovery."

Coaches, like their athletes, cannot work at an ever-increasing volume if the profession is going to be sustainable. To be good leaders and mentors, coaches need to walk the talk and seize the opportunity to rest themselves. Just as an overtrained, under-recovered athlete is ripe for injury or

underperformance, coaches who don't take time for themselves are going to lack the patience, clarity, and even motivation to bring their best to the job each day.

The realities of the competitive seasons mean that coaches are hard-pressed to take any meaningful time away from their responsibilities. That's why it's so imperative that we take advantage of the winter break. Our athletes have gone home for a week or a month. There's likely nothing more that can be done to ensure they are training. Now we just have to wait. Rather than fret, something I was certainly prone to, now is the time to relish the space and quiet. Athletes are likely not texting or calling as regularly. Staff meetings are at a minimum. It's one of the few times of year you can really turn off your work phone and email.

Another reason to take time off and be diligent about restricting your availability during this time is to teach your athletes how to treat you. If you answer every text immediately, even at night or on a day off, athletes will grow to expect that of you, understandably. Conversely, if you tell your athletes that you are available to them only within certain time frames (excluding emergencies, of course), you teach them to have realistic expectations and to solve problems on their own. If you say you're taking time to focus on yourself, your family, and your friends over the holidays, you will undermine that message totally by being responsive immediately to every text and email.

This doesn't mean you should abandon these team members about whom you care, no doubt, very deeply. Use your "Out of Office" email response. Set expectations with your team before parting ways for winter break. Give them the time and attention they deserve when you have the time and attention to devote to them. This is the best way to teach your team how you do, and do not, want to communicate during the regular season.

So take this rare time to do whatever makes you feel fresh and ready to take on the bulk of winter training and then the spring. Figure out what that is and don't let anything get in the way of taking care of yourself.

Happy Holidays! 📧

MADELINE DAVIS TULLY



TRAINING

Becoming Unhinged

Your hip hinge is crucial for swing and drive suspension, and indoor-rowing season is when to optimize it.

Your hip hinge is a key element of rowing technique for establishing swing and drive suspension, and the indoor-rowing season is the perfect time for determining whether you're executing this element of the stroke correctly.

Perfecting this functional movement requires flexibility and muscular strength. It's a prerequisite for exercises such as the deadlift, squat, or kettlebell swing as well as setting body angle on the recovery phase of the stroke so you can achieve a strong drive.

It's best to learn the hinge while standing, ideally under the eyes of a coach.

Begin by standing with a dowel gripped at shoulder width, your feet a hip-width apart, and your knees over your ankles.

Screw your feet into the floor and drive your knees out; this will engage your glutes from start to finish. With your shoulder blades packed and your head and thoracic spine in a neutral position, engage your core muscles and bend from the hip joint to push your glutes back, while keeping your shins vertical.

Keep your hips high and avoid squatting or curving your spine. If you're struggling to maintain a neutral spine, hold a dowel rod behind your neck with one hand and below your glutes with the other. You should hold the rod against your spine and maintain contact with the back of your head and your tailbone throughout the range of motion.

A rowing-specific version on an indoor

rower is to sit at the finish position with your hands clasped behind your neck and focus on pushing back your hips gently as your body pivots forward.

Your hip hinge can be impaired by poor posture, muscle imbalances, and tight hip flexors, glutes, or hamstrings. A functional-mobility assessment can detect limitations that are preventing you from achieving sufficient range of motion to advance to strength and power work. **▣**




MARLENE ROYLE is the author of *Tip of the Blade: Notes on Rowing*. She specializes in training for masters rowers. Her coaching service, Roylerow Performance Training Programs, provides the program and support you need to improve your competitive edge. For information, email Marlene at roylerow@aol.com or visit www.roylerow.com.

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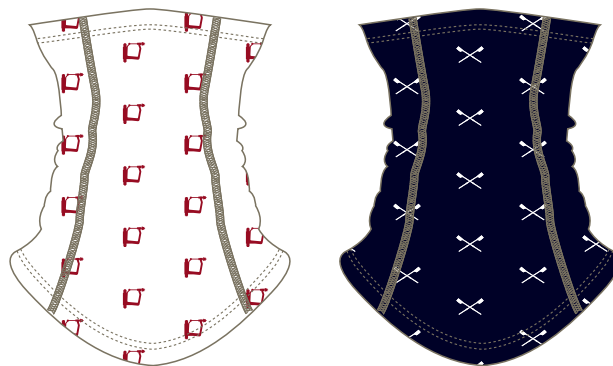


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DOCTOR ROWING CON'T FROM PAGE 66 >>>

The USA did win.
 “I was at a junior team camp one year riding with Tony Johnson, Yale’s coach, and they were doing a competitive workout,” Jordan continued. “The stroke of one boat caught a big crab and dropped way back but then brought them back to even at the end. Tony said, ‘That’s the guy you want in your boat. He’s got no fear.’”


You want to know about people with absolutely no fear, people who are on another level? The late Carie Graves of Wisconsin and the National Team pulled harder than anyone. In an extraordinary 1979 interview published in the old *Oarsman* magazine, Graves said, “When I go into a big race, I don’t know why it’s that particular word, but it’s ‘Kill.’ I’m not killing anybody, I’m killing myself. You’re peaking, when the blood is pounding and you’re getting ready: Kill, kill, kill! It’s something that surprises the hell out of

me, but I use it. It’s frightening.”

Surprisingly, I’d never talked with Charlie about that crab 50 years ago, although I’ve thought about the race frequently. But now, after calling Charlie, I have a new perspective.


“I agree with Ric; I had never felt a boat go so fast,” Charlie said. “I thought, ‘There’s no such thing as pain, and then it happened. You remember more about it than I do; it’s almost like I was losing consciousness.’”

Curtis and I agreed that Charlie was so up for the race, so intense, that the rest of the guys weren’t keeping up with his speed through the water, and that was what caused his crab. He had them racing outside of what they were used to. He was definitely the guy we wanted in the boat. If only we could have matched that intensity, would we have won? If only, if only, that awful *if only*. □

ROWING NEWS 

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Charlie's Big Crab

Our stroke—the guy you wanted in the boat, so smooth and steady—was suddenly sucked over to port, his hair in the water. What the devil happened?

Charlie was a perfect oarsman, an ideal stroke. He had a beautiful rhythm that made him easy to follow and he was quietly intense—although he did count out loud under his breath, which took a lot of heat off me. As we lined up for the semifinal of the Dad Vail—in those days the small-college championships—we were all up for it, no one more so than Charlie. I could feel an electric charge jumping from seat to seat.

“Are you ready? Row!”

We shot off the line. The boat felt great. On the 12th stroke of the start, disaster! In front of me, Charlie was sucked over to port, his hair was in the water. A boat-stopping crab. If we had been rowing in the days of rowing clogs and before shoes were mounted on the footboards, he would have been ejected. Although shocked—this was a guy so steady and smooth that never before had he caught even a mini-crab; how could he be the guy to crab?—I reached forward and grabbed his shirt. The seven-man helped, and together we pulled him back into the boat.

He was not hurt, at least that I could tell, and I called another start. Once again, we went through our shortened slide sequence and a high 20. Only when we settled did I survey the field. We were open water behind all five other crews. My brain was saying, “We’re screwed, we’ll never qualify for the finals,” but emotion and adrenaline helped me stay in the moment. Little by little, we were coming back on the field.

As we came into the last 500, the boat felt great, better than I’d ever felt it before. We could do it, we could qualify, we could win. When the flag went down, we were less than a second behind the winners. But we were in the final. The way we had moved, there was no doubt we could win the next day.

Recently, I was at a ceremony where Trinity College inducted our bowman and captain Ric Ricci into the college’s athletic hall of fame for his two IRA victories in the pair without. Someone asked if we had won the Dad Vail that year, Ric’s senior year. I told that story and said, “Unfortunately, no, we didn’t.”

My take was that the guys had pulled so hard that they were still sore the next day; our finals race was nowhere near the same level of intensity. Ric said that this has bothered him ever since.

“I had never felt a boat go so fast. It felt like a jet taking off. Why couldn’t we repeat that level of intensity the next day?”

Why indeed? Chances are most readers have experienced something similar—one terrific race and then a disappointing one. In most cases, it’s probably fatigue; true max efforts are very hard to replicate. I’ve talked about this with Curtis Jordan, an old friend and boatmate who was a National Team coach and director of high performance.

“I’ve seen lots of examples of boats that go past a point where they’ve never been before. It can be emotionally scary to go into a pain zone for the first time,” he told me.

He recalled the Goodwill Games of 1986 in Moscow when the USA men’s eight had a match race with the USSR.

“Before the race, I saw one of my guys who looked very nervous. I told him, ‘Don’t worry. Yes, the Russians are good, but so are we.’”

“I’m not worried about them,” he replied. “I’m scared about how much Sudduth [stroke Andy Sudduth, a legend at Harvard and for the USA] is going to make us hurt in order to win.”

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