



STANFORD
ROWING

BOATHOUSE OF CHAMPIONS

NEWSLETTER VOL. 6

SEMI-ANNUAL PUBLICATION
ON STANFORD ROWING

PRESENTED BY
THE ROWING ASSOCIATION



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THE ROWING ASSOCIATION

Our organization and purpose

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THE ROWING ASSOCIATION

Welcome to Volume 6 of Boathouse of Champions!

The Rowing Association was formed in 2020 with the purpose of *Ensuring the Experience of Rowing for Stanford Endures*. Since team reinstatement, the more specific focus has been on Securing and Strengthening Stanford Rowing with an eye on *Something Bigger* for the future of the program.

- We are now a larger community of 2500+ having recently completed a Women's database project that helped us find many of you who we had not reached yet.
- Engagement in the Association is high. Newsletters, Social Channels, and e-mails are read by most. Our recent calendar of events saw record turnouts for Reunion Reception, Reunion Row, and Head of the Charles.
- We have worked closely with the University and added to our endowments across all three teams. While Stanford holds contribution information confidentially, we would like to **THANK all of you who have answered the call to secure this program.**
- The University has been a great partner responding to our support, and helping the program secure additional resources including a Boatsman, a Director of Rowing Operations, and an additional assistant coach.

Stanford Rowing is in a great place. The Women added an NCAA Championship, the Lightweights are fighting their way back to the top, and the Men continue to solidify their position amongst the top crews nationally and are doing the work to move up. Both Women's and Men's boats raced at Henley this summer and Head of the Charles saw strong performances from 5 Women's boats . . . including 2 alumnae eights!

And . . . we are not done.

- Events are now Annual Events, and expect additional events including The Rowing Association's hosting hospitality at The San Diego Crew Classic.
- We will continue to push the University to secure more support for our teams, including stronger and more secure equipment budgets, additional scholarships, and support for assistant coaches.

We will continue to rely on The Stanford Rowing Community (you) to provide the generous support that has gotten us this far.

Questions on how to contribute to Stanford Rowing can be directed to:

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SWC'S FALL ROWING: ACHIEVEMENTS AND NEW INITIATIVES

by SWC Coaches: Molly Hamrick, Megan Biging and Maegan Neihart

We hope this newsletter finds you vibing the season. We are most definitely feeling especially thankful, grateful, and blessed. This Fall has flown by for us here on the Farm and left us with the memories of some amazing training, races, quality time and an equal amount of heartwarming stories to tell for years to come.

This year SWC headed back to the Head of the Charles with not one, but two eights. OH man the Charles did not disappoint. We were blessed with the most exciting starting positions in the field, 24th and 33rd, setting up our crews for some really fun passing, some spicy turns and absolutely no pressure on our sophomore coxswains. Staring down the barrel our crews blasted that first thousand fueling on sheer adrenaline and puddles. By Elliot Bridge our 2v had passed several crews leaving them in their wake for a swift finish taking 2nd amongst the second varsities, and 9th out of all collegiate boats. The first eight just didn't have enough fun, so they saved the last bit of passing for the final stretch, pulling three boats across around the finish line turn, resulting in a stellar 2nd place collegiately. We didn't bring home just some fun racing experience from the Charles, but also a new Hudson 8 and a quad! The Charles giveth and we received with great thanks.

An extra special Charles was also had by our two alum 8s. You can ask them for yourselves, but I hear they really leaned into the racing with one 8 maintaining their 2nd place finish and the second alum 8 having a blast cruising down with some real-life experience in their pockets and some bells on their shoes. What I found especially heartwarming was to hear that there were about 70 alums that showed up for Saturday night's Stanford reunion, if you will. To hear that these women are still very much so a part of each other's lives no matter how far and long they have spread out is truly cool. The Cardinal Spirit only seems to grow stronger with time, the enduring camaraderie and competitive spirit, lives on.

A few weekends later the Card traveled down to Mykonos Los Angeles, CA where we scrimmaged the likes of the Trojans and had a ton of fun hitting some rates coming out on top once again. The whole team threw down in LA, running 6 8s and 5 4s across in the Port of LA.

The last scrimmage hurrah for the Fall was (what we now have deemed) the "Lil Row" at Briones with the Cal Bears. Eights, fours, a quad, and a stacked coxswain 8 all hit the reservoir with wind in their sails and grit in their bellies. Hard to say who really came out on top because it was so much fun. But it did provide some insight as to where our growth edges may be for the upcoming year.

Lastly, we also want to bring attention to an exciting new initiative. Our team leaders have embarked on a groundbreaking campaign called Stem to Stern, associated with USRowing to expand the reach and accessibility of rowing for middle school and high school students by simultaneously supporting access to rowing and STEM education.

As we reflect on these accomplishments, we extend our gratitude to each alum who contributed to the rich legacy of Stanford Women's Rowing. Your continued support inspires our current athletes and enhances the sense of community that makes our program exceptional. Stay tuned for more updates as we navigate the exciting journey ahead. Wishing you all a Happy Holidays. Thankful for you all!

Go Card

SWC Coaches



MEET THE COACHES: TED SOBOLEWSKI

Farwell Family Director Of Men's Rowing

Most, if not all, of the attendees at the Reunion Reception and Alumni Row, commented on how both were such a great opportunity to meet our current coaches as well as a chance to get to know them a bit. The Rowing Association plans to bring you coaches' profiles in this and future editions so that we all might have a better idea of their backgrounds, accomplishments, and outlook on the season for their respective programs. We start with Coach Sobolewski.



Ted Sobolewski begins his 5th season with Stanford Rowing and looks forward to furthering the development of his squad. His tenure has seen the program further solidify its position amongst the top collegiate teams nationally, rally through both University and COVID challenges, and emerge as a group moving up the ranks in terms of speed and national ranking.

A native of Buffalo, Ted hit the rowing scene as a student-athlete in the 2005 Northeastern Freshman eight and subsequently into the 1V for the next three years. In the 1V, Sobolewski helped the Huskies make two appearances in the Grand Final of the Eastern Sprints, including a fourth-place finish in 2006. Sobolewski represented the US in two U-23 campaigns before graduating with a degree in Business Administration in 2009.

Sobolewski shifted his focus to coaching shortly thereafter, working with Boston's Community Rowing coaching both JR's and adult sculling. In 2010 Ted took the role of Assistant coach of Northeastern Men's Rowing where he focused on the frosh 8 and V4, overseeing two IRA podium finishes in 2011. While at Northeastern, he established a US U23 Development center out of the Northeastern boathouse.

Ted headed South to be the Head Coach of the Princeton National Rowing Association in 2012 where he oversaw all aspects of the nation's largest Junior program. Sobolewski led the Mercer Junior women's crews to their best performances in history with a runner-up finish in the Eight and third-place finish in the Lightweight Eight at the 2015 Youth Nationals. The teams followed up with an unprecedented sweep of the under-19 and under-17 women's divisions at the 2015 Royal Canadian Henley, bringing home nine gold medals. During his tenure, Ted continued to grow youth participation while working with athletes to secure D1 Rowing opportunities.

Ted made collegiate rowing his full focus in 2015 when he took the Men's Rowing Associate Head Coach position at Northeastern under Head Coach John Pojednic. Sobolewski worked both on the water and off the water with attention to stroke development, training regimen, expanded recruiting, and increasing the overall size of the team.

The Rowing Association spoke briefly to Sobolewski on his outlook for 2023-24 and asked him how he feels as the team heads into winter break:

"I'm really pleased with how this team is coming together. Our group of seven seniors have really stepped up as leaders. Add to that the continued development of our mid-classes and a frosh class that has hit the boathouse ready to compete, and I feel good about how this team should stack up. The entire squad knows that the work we do this winter will ultimately determine this, and they plan to return early in January to start. I'm happy to report Travis Senf and Nick Woerle, both Class of '24, have been elected co-captains. We look forward to seeing you at races this Spring!" -Ted Sobolewski

Sobolewski contributes a great breadth of rowing experience across junior, collegiate and national levels to Stanford. Ted is all about developing great athletes, building team belief, and driving competitive excellence at the highest level of collegiate rowing. Ted values team grit and integrity in his process-based approach to building great teams, believing in both academic and athletic excellence. We've seen the competitive trademark of his crews on display as the 1V has regularly pushed Washington and Cal, attacking throughout the race course. Most recently, the Men rowed to a 5th Place IRA finish in 2021 and an 8th in 2023 after narrowly missing the A final. As Coach Sobolewski continues to make Stanford the school where top Junior athletes want to row, we expect the team will add speed and depth, delivering more great Stanford crews.

The Rowing Association would like to thank Ted for bringing his passion and commitment to Stanford Rowing!

BOW #10

Stanford Lights road trip to Boston to kick off a new coaching era.

Lizzy Houston, recently appointed Associate Head Coach of the Stanford Women's Lightweight Rowing program, sat down with the Rowing Association right before Thanksgiving. A few weeks earlier, the Women's Lightweight Fours entry traveled to Boston for this year's Head of the Charles.

The weekend in Boston was a homecoming of sorts for Coach Houston. After graduating from Hobart and William Smith Colleges in 2019, she spent the last four years in Boston juggling her passion for rowing and so-called real life. Working two full-time jobs, she commuted daily between a desk in a downtown advertising office and a coach's launch on the Charles River. *"I'm so grateful to be coaching full time now,"* Coach Houston observed, *"It's a life-changing kind of moment for me."*

The coach and her brothers picked up rowing from their father, Vinny Houston, a long-time New York Athletic Club rower and current head coach at the Norwalk River Rowing Association. *"Clean rowing. You can out-row the competition. That's always been my philosophy. I get that from my dad. I want to get the athletes to the point where they are rowing as well as they possibly can. Clean rowing. My athletes will get tired of hearing that."*

Coach Houston joined the Cardinal coaching staff this Summer from Boston College, where she served as assistant women's coach and head novice coach for the Eagles. She's appreciative of the guidance she received from Grace Hollowell, who heads the B.C. program. *"I've always liked to keep things pretty positive and to lead with kindness. But I learned at B.C. how to make the decisions you need to make for your team."*

Once everyone had arrived on campus this year, Coach Houston met with each athlete one-on-one to get to know everyone better. *"I'm new to you. You're new to me. That sort of thing. Everyone was really welcoming. That was awesome."*

As the coach-athlete coffee talks commenced, the team set to work. They had three weeks to prepare together before heading to Boston. *"For the Charles, we did a couple of days of selection. Everyone was ready to work hard. Right off the bat, it was evident who came in fit enough to race at our level."*

The team sets a high standard. There are 21 athletes on this year's lightweight squad. Prior to arriving at Stanford, most have competed seriously for some time. Today's squad averages around 7 minutes 30 seconds for 2000 meters on the ergometer. To deliver the 1000-plus watts required to cover that distance in that time, each athlete needs to maintain high power output from end to end.

Brooke Ruszkiewicz, who sat 3-seat in the 4+ at the Charles, illustrates just how good the athletes have to be at generating power. During high school, she set multiple Olympic weightlifting records in her home state of Wisconsin. In the 59 KG (130 lbs) weight class for the age group (130 lbs), her best mark for the clean and jerk was 67 kilograms (147 lbs).

The rest of this four's lineup may or may not be able to press more than their body weight above their heads. Our fact-checking squad will get back to you on that score. But the boat's composition speaks to the team's ambitions for their season.

For the uninitiated and those who scrupulously avoid this sort of thing, the clean-and-jerk is a two-part lift. First, the clean, Brooke lifts a barbell from the ground to her shoulders. Second, the jerk, Brooke presses and locks out the barbell overhead.

Continued. . .

Bow seat Hannah Justicz rowed in last Spring's IRA varsity 8+ runner-up as a freshman. 2-seat Juliette Lermusiaux sat stroke in that same eight. 4-seat Emily Molins, now in her 5th year, was a member of the program's last IRA women's lightweight champion 8+ in 2019, her first year at Stanford.

Two months in, Coach Houston is clear on what motivates the entire team. *"We want to bring Stanford back to the top of the podium at IRAs. Everyone shows up to practice every single day, knowing that's the goal."*

There are seven bridges on the Head of the Charles race course. The coxswain has to navigate those and the five curves, including the monster bend that stretches toward Eliot Bridge before the river turns again one last time before the finish.

Bow #10's coxswain, Stanford senior Lydia Garnett, was in the driver's seat last Spring at IRAs. An experienced rower and coxswain, she knows the Charles. Lydia had finished second in a HOCR 4+ event in high school. In 2021, she coxed the Stanford varsity four to a fifth-place finish at the Charles.

"The team was just really putting things into practice. Lydia is a Greenwich kid and had raced the Charles a ton of times before. And, of course, Antonella walked it with Lydia."

(Antonella Kugler, assistant coach for the Stanford lightweight rowing program, spent four years as a coxswain for Boston University.)

With only 11 entries in the race, being assigned bow #10 was a blessing in disguise. It gave the Stanford entry the chance to run their own race from the back of the pack. From that position, with higher-seeded boats well out of sight, the crew had no other option than to race the clock.

"They followed the plan that we set," Coach Houston said, "It was sweet how it came together. They said they felt good early, and they went for it." There are three moments in the Head of the Charles livestream where you can see Bow #10, the Stanford entry, going for it.

First, four minutes and twenty seconds in, outside of Riverside Boat Club, at the foot of the Powerhouse stretch, the crew has already passed entries #8 and #9.

"Watching them just past Riverside, they were moving. They looked collected – that rhythm where it looks effortless, but everyone knows it's not."



Continued. . .

The next moment occurs between the Weeks footbridge and the Anderson bridge as the crews race towards Weld Boathouse.

A Row2K.com article, *"How to Cox the Head of the Charles Like a Pro"*, describes how competitors should navigate this leg, one of the trickier spots in the race, a place where crews often wreak havoc with each other's plans unintentionally. To quote that article– *"In the fours events, clear communication is essential both within your boat and between you and other crews. This stretch can be dicey so you need to make clear to your crew what you need them to do at that moment – to accelerate and take the arch or to throw in the dreaded pause to avoid collision."*

The Stanford women pick the first option, acceleration. As they come into the picture before the Weld Boathouse, they overlap with bow #7, a Boston University entry. With the same steady rhythm intact, Stanford bids presses on past the B.U. Boat. Coxswain Lydia Garnett gains the better line going into the Anderson Bridge.



As the two boats cruise out of camera range, the commentators wonder offhand if Stanford can keep "that pace."

It's a good question. In this race against the clock, this is the place where crews show their staying power and start to separate themselves. The Stanford crew has entered the one-mile segment of the river that bends from this point to the Eliot Bridge.

The starting line is now 10 minutes and 20 seconds behind them. They're a little more than halfway done with this race. Said another way: they have almost halfway to go. The crew is in the thick of it. You can imagine someone longing for simpler things, like pressing the cast iron equivalent of their body weight plus a gallon of water over their head.

It will be another five long minutes before the crew appears again in the livestream. From the riverbank near the Cambridge Boat Club, a spectator can squint to spy crews coming 'round the bend. It is famously the last good spot to see the action up close.

If, like Coach Houston, you have followed the race by bike, you sprint ahead and scramble to find a spot among the crowd. And then you wait. More good questions present themselves. Will the cox hug the corner just right or drift off point? Will the crew bring it 'round without dropping speed?



Continued. . .

As the women approached the Cambridge Boat Club, the fellow from the livestream summed it up nicely: *“And in a very aggressive line, that is bow #10 Stanford University. They have walked their way through the pack. That is the most aggressive coxing line I’ve seen all day today.”*

Or in the words of Coach Houston: *“Lydia had a fantastic line coming through Eliot. As they came through they looked great. They kept the rhythm they found early.”*

If you were to watch only one of these clips from this race, you should watch this one. The buzzsaw motion the crew has kept throughout the race is on display as they slip by the docks of the Cambridge Boat Club and disappear under the Eliot Bridge bound for the finish.

The crew races for another 3 minutes. They finish 18 minutes and 42 seconds after they started. The second-place finisher clocks in 16.7 seconds slower.

It's Fall. It's one race. True enough. And, yes, head racing is a different animal, chock full of curves, asterisks, and what-ifs. But Coach Houston saw in person what's there in the replay: *“They put a great race down on that course.”*

And that's how the Stanford Women's Lightweight program said hello to the 2023–2024 season and their new coach.

Back in Palo Alto, this year's Head of the Charles is in the rearview mirror. With the holidays approaching, the coaches have the crews piling on quality work. *“When we got back, I reminded everyone that this was a team win. We just need to continue to elevate each other every time we show up. We all make each other better every single day.”*

There are a lot of days ahead between now and Spring. It's low rating season on the water. And they have a healthy serving of cross-training coming up over winter break. *“Most mornings, we work to keep it calm and controlled, running at 60 or 70 percent just locking and loading together. Find the rhythm and the balance. Maybe one day a week we open it up and tell the crews– this is the day you can get after it.”*

But the long-term goal of hitting their stride at IRAs, is never far from Coach Houston's or the team's mind. *“These women want to win. So we have to get fit, stay healthy, and bring a full squad to IRAs in the spring. And then bring everything we have come that first weekend in June.”*



CONGRATULATIONS | 2023 INDUCTEE

GRACE LUCZAK

STANFORD ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME

GRACE LUCZAK '11

2023 Stanford Athletics Hall of Fame Inductee



Congratulations to Grace Luczak on her recent induction to the Stanford Athletics Hall of Fame!

Grace brought her trademark energy and enthusiasm to the Stanford Boathouse when she arrived in 2008, channeling that energy into a competitive spirit that helped lead the Cardinal to an NCAA Championship in 2009. Grace is a twelve-time US National Team Member and two-time Olympian. Her National Team presence spans fourteen years across multiple boat classes at the Junior, U23, and Senior level.

While at Stanford from 2008–2011, Grace became a fixture of the US U23 teams, winning gold in both the W8+ and the W2-. It was not unusual to see Grace double up at the U23 level as she did in 2009 and 2011, racing in both the 8+ and the 2-. In 2010, Grace had just finished winning Gold in the US U23 8+ when she was asked to jump up to the Senior 4- for the World Championships.

As part of Team USA, Grace has won three World Championships, has numerous World Cup medals, and has set 2 world records. Grace was recognized by *World Rowing* as a *Top 10 Rower in the World*. Grace is known for her always-positive attitude and never-ending smile. Her ascent from her roots in Michigan to the World and Olympic Stage is a testament to her extraordinary rowing spirit, and Stanford is honored to welcome her to their Hall of Fame.



STANFORD MOVES TO THE ACC: WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO STANFORD ROWING?

After months of speculation and the rapid deterioration of the Pac-12, Stanford announced plans to join the ACC at the conclusion of the 2023-24 season. Stanford, CAL, and SMU will all be making the move.

So what does that mean to Stanford Rowing?

Coach Byrnes expects little change from the Women's standpoint. Cal remains in the same conference, so BIG ROW stays the same. What changes will be an additional cross-country trip at the end of the season in those years that both the ACC Championship and NCAA Championship are on the East Coast.

Men's Rowing and other Stanford Teams without ACC sponsorship will be joining The Mountain Pacific Sports Federation. Other Stanford teams joining will be Water polo, Men's Gymnastics, Beach Volleyball, Fencing, Artistic Swimming, and Men's Volleyball. We expect that transition to happen as early as the end of 2023 so that the conference can begin organizing schedules. Coach Sobolewski expects little else to change. Big Row and the Washington Dual will continue, while the Pac-12 Challenge may have a slightly different mix of teams and a different name.

The Lightweight Women will continue to create a Home and Away schedule that puts them face-to-face with the top Lightweight teams in the country leading up to the IRA Championship.



THE ACC: (NOT QUITE) EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW



The Rowing Association is excited Stanford found a new home in the ACC and looks forward to seeing the Open Women compete in a future ACC Championship Regatta. (an ACC Championship banner would sure look good hanging from the boathouse rafters)

To get you up-to-speed on what you need to know about the ACC, we offer below a somewhat tongue-in-cheek perspective, courtesy of one of our correspondents, who took advantage of a friend's wedding in early September in Charlotte to do some ACC reconnaissance (with apologies for those of you who really do know the ACC). Here are the Top 10 things our in-depth investigation revealed:

1. "ACC" stands for Atlantic Coast Conference.

2. Almost every university currently in the Atlantic Coast Conference is located in a state that borders the Atlantic Ocean (go figure), the only exceptions being the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt), whose Pennsylvania is close, the University of Louisville, whose Kentucky is nowhere near, and, depending whether you really count it as an ACC school, Notre Dame, whose Indiana is even less near.

3. There are 15 current schools in the ACC:

- The aforementioned Pitt, Louisville, and Notre Dame.
- 4 North Carolina schools: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC), Duke University, North Carolina State University (NC State), and Wake Forest.
- Two schools each in Virginia and Florida: The University of Virginia (UVA), Virginia Tech, Florida State University, and The University of Miami ("The U").
- Clemson (South Carolina), The Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), Syracuse University, and Boston College (BC).

4. We're not the only newcomers to the conference:

- CAL and Dallas' Southern Methodist University (SMU) are entering the conference with us next year.
- Louisville, Syracuse, and Pitt joined in 2013-14, along with Notre Dame (sort of) in a shake-up of the Big East Conference.
- BC, Virginia Tech, and Miami joined about a decade before that in a previous Big East shake-up.
- Florida State and Georgia Tech joined from the now-defunct Metro Conference in 1991 and 1979, respectively.
- UVA joined in 1954, one year after the conference's inaugural season.

5. Clemson, Duke, NC State, UNC, and Wake Forest are charter members of the ACC. They were joined by the University of Maryland and The University of South Carolina (the other USC) when the conference launched in 1953. South Carolina left the conference to be an Independent in 1971 and is now in the SEC. Maryland left in 2015 for the Big Ten, much to the chagrin of many in the Chesapeake Bay State.

Continued. . .

6. So what are the big rivalries in the ACC? (in addition, of course, to Stanford-CAL)

- UNC-Duke is the obvious one, but UNC-NC State and NC State-Duke are fierce as well with all three schools located in the same metro area defined by Raleigh-Durham and forming The Research Triangle.
- UVA and Virginia Tech play for supremacy of Old Dominion.
- Georgia Tech, Clemson, and Louisville's biggest rivals – Georgia, South Carolina, and Kentucky, respectively – are in the SEC.
- Florida State and Miami are natural Sunshine State rivals, though both probably claim Florida, another SEC school, as their biggest rival.

7. What's the deal with Notre Dame?

Notre Dame is in the ACC for virtually all sports where it competes with notable exceptions being football (Independent) and ice hockey (Big 10).

8. The ACC is passionate about football.

Your correspondent reports that downtown Charlotte on that early September Saturday was flooded by supporters donning the baby blue of UNC or garnet and black of South Carolina (another big UNC rival) ahead of their game that night in the city.



9. Ok that's all great, but does anyone row in the ACC?

Absolutely yes on the Openweight Women side with Virginia, SMU, and Syracuse all making the varsity 8 Petite Final at NCAA's last year and Duke making the third-level final. These four schools, along with Stanford and CAL, made up six of the top 14 schools based on overall points, more than any other conference. UVA is also a two-time national champion, winning in 2010 and 2012.

Not so much on the Men's and Lightweight Women's sides – which explains why Stanford's conference realignment will be limited to the Open Women – with only the Syracuse Men competing at IRAs, finishing 5th in the varsity 8 final and 8th in the overall points standings.

10. Is there anything left to say about the Pac-12?

It goes without saying that from its beginnings as The Pacific Coast Conference in 1915 (Stanford joined in 1918) to its rebrandings as the Athletic Association of Western Universities in 1959 and then the Pac-8 in 1968, later growing to become the Pac-10 (1978) and then Pac-12 (2011), the conference has had a great run. And while West Coast rowing has operated outside the conference for much of its history, the conference will be greatly missed nonetheless. (is it okay to admit to rooting for U-Dub in this year's College Football Playoff?)

A lot has been said already about the end of this era with no doubt more to come, but perhaps no one will capture the essence of the Pac-12 better than Chuck Culpepper, writing recently in The Washington Post: *"To an East Coast child you beamed through the television as exotica, as a living being downright mystical with your colors and your sunlight . . . your beautiful rainy days in Corvallis and Pullman and Eugene . . . and the sight of tailgating on boats at Lake Washington and the sense in Strawberry Canyon and Palo Alto that football might not be the biggest thing in life and that a band might just march onto a field prematurely. Those programs . . . will remain . . . but they will be melded into elsewhere, and pretty soon those of us who remember will have to bore others with stories of what a stylish anchor of the western land you were and how very much we loved you. . ."*



CATCHING UP WITH STEVE MESSNER '78

Steve Messner '78 showed up and stroked the class of '78 4+ for the Alumni Row. The Rowing Association took the opportunity to catch up with him as well as gain insight into Stanford Rowing in the mid-70s.

Steve was a four-year Stanford oarsman, rowing from 1975-1978. After Stanford, Steve put his engineering background to work in environmental compliance in the oil industry. He has since spent the past 20+ years doing consulting work in climate change and clean technologies. Steve has continued to be active in rowing both as an oarsman and coach. He and his wife Anita live in Sonoma County and have 2 daughters and 6 grandchildren.



The '76 varsity team from L-R: Mike Glass, Roger Thompson, Tom Killeen, Jim Bateson, Jed Gorlin, Kraig Williams, Steve Messner, Miles White, Jim Wickersham, Randy Thomas, Dick Dreissigacker, and in front coxes Dave Kimelman and Laurie Levensen.

You rowed for Stanford in the mid-70s; what can you tell us about that?

Yes, I rowed in the mid 70's – from 1975-1978. We were fairly awestruck by the presence of the Dreissigackers and by Conn Findlay's support. Dick and Pete were there for the 1975 and 1976 years, and for me, those were the most memorable times and races. In 1975, we had a surprisingly plucky freshman squad which totaled just ten rowers and one cox by the time racing season came around. Alex Frasco supported Dick with the coaching. I think we gave Cal a reasonably close race that year. In 1976, we had a good varsity squad – photo attached. Nice view of the old A-frame boathouse.

I have a couple of racing memories from '76. The first one was going to the San Diego Crew Classic. It was only the fourth time the SDCC was run, but it was already attracting most of the rowing powerhouses from the East and West Coasts. We actually flew down to San Diego, the first time I had ever been in a plane. I thought this was an incredible luxury, but it was actually cheaper than driving since Western Airlines was offering \$19 round-trip fares. I also remember sitting at the starting line with Harvard, Brown, Washington, and others wondering if we had enough to keep up. Well, we didn't and unsurprisingly didn't progress to the final.

Continued. . .

We did have a really good race at Newport Beach later that season. This is when John Wayne still lived in a mansion near the starting line which we thought was really cool. We jumped out to a lead and held on to defeat a Bruce Ibbetson (future Olympic eight stroke) powered UCI eight as well as Long Beach State.

The 1976 team photo tells a story by itself. We were a small team of walk-ons who were trying to compete with older equipment out of a very quaint boathouse. So, we all had to have a special connection with the water and the discipline of long training hours. By the time I graduated after the 1978 season, along with a couple of teammates from the 1975 frosh squad (Bob Werle and Jed Gorlin), things were changing. There were larger crews coming up from the freshman ranks, an influx of newer equipment, the women's crew had gotten going, and we were even getting transfers from other rowing colleges like Orange Coast College. I think it was an important evolutionary period for Stanford rowing.



From the 2014 reunion - pictured from L-R: Don Flickinger '78, Murray Peck '78, Jim Bateson '77, Steve Messner '78, Anita Messner, and cox Dave Kimelman '78

How did you end up Rowing for Stanford?

I came to Stanford hoping to make the tennis team. So, my first quarter there, I mainly played and lost to guys on the JV squad. In January 1975, some scary crew seniors on varsity squad probably decided that the freshman team needed some more height and approached me in the food line at El Toro eating club. I was too afraid to say no to them, so the next morning went with them to practice with the freshmen. I decided I really liked rowing, dropped tennis, and stuck with it.

How did Rowing for Stanford make your Stanford experience "Bigger?"

I wasn't assigned to a freshman dorm as I lived in a four-class dorm (Toyon), so I didn't have the dorm bonding experience that others had. But I did feel that bonding experience at the boathouse. I always felt sadness when others from the 1975 frosh crew stopped rowing or took a year off like Jed and Bob did. The majority of the rowers from 1975 and 1976 are still in touch. We organized previous reunion rows and social activities in 2014 in Ashland, Oregon, and in 2018 at our 40th Stanford reunion.

Tell us about life after the Farm and how Rowing influenced it.

After Stanford, my career involved engineering and environmental compliance work. For the past 20+ years, I've been doing consulting work in the fields of climate change and clean technologies. During all of this time, my life has never drifted far from rowing. In 1980, I was asked to coach the Long Beach State varsity men's team. I'm still proud of the Western Sprints title they won that year in the varsity IV. In 1983, I was training out of the Harvard boathouse and had the chance to visit the Dreissigackers in Vermont. They gave me a great tour of their "factory," which was their barn in Morrisville that produced the oars and ergs they had just started selling. After getting cut from the Olympic selection camp in 1984, I was asked to row in a double at US Nationals at Lexington Reservoir, where we proceeded to make the finals and then win.

My wife, Anita, and I live in Sonoma, California, and are mostly retired these days, although I still am occasionally called up for interesting work assignments in places like Pakistan and Dubai due to my background in clean tech. I also coach masters sculling programs in Petaluma and Oakland. My family has put up with my rowing over the years, and my wife and I now row a pretty mean mixed double.





A BRIEF TRIP BACK IN TIME

Chris Stanek '93 chronicles his experience during the 2023 Reunion Weekend

“...‘the boat’ was something more than just the shell or its crew. . . It was a shared experience – a singular thing that had unfolded in a golden sliver of time long gone. . .”

– Excerpt from the prologue of *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown

On a brilliant Northern California Fall weekend, Stanford Rowing opened that “golden sliver of time long gone”, if only briefly, for the roughly 75 Stanford Rowing alums who participated in Reunion 2023.

The festivities kicked off with a reception outside the coaches’ offices at Arrillaga Hall on a perfect late Friday afternoon with temperatures in the 70s, perfect blue skies, and the distinctive Stanford campus smell of Mock Orange in the air (Mock Orange is a tree, people). Those of us who arrived early were treated to a tour of the new erg room in the Arrillaga basement. With wall-to-wall ergs, the music blaring, and flashing lights (courtesy of the women’s teams we suspect), the space was a far cry from the days of having the “erg room” in the corner of Encina Gym where we worked out with the rest of the student body. (not that Encina wasn’t fun also!)

The reception itself was a great chance to catch up with former classmates, meet Stanford Rowing alums from other generations, and get to know current coaches and athletes. A special thanks to Stanford Rowing legends Kent Mitchell ‘61 and Dick Herzog ‘66 for being in attendance!

Things only got better Saturday with more blue skies and flat water greeting the alums who made the trip up to the boathouse for a morning row. For those who haven’t had a chance to see it, the boathouse looks terrific. As you would expect, there’s tons of space and first-rate equipment, but the coolest part to me (besides flushing toilets) are the photos on its walls and the championship banners hanging from its ceiling that speak to our history. (congratulations again to the 2023 Women’s National Champs!)



The alums started hitting the water around 8am. The ‘93s were particularly well-represented, needing multiple boats to get everyone on the water, while the young alums looked fit enough to give the current team a run for its money. The author (part of the ‘93 crowd) went out in a 4+ with three 3 ‘78ers – shout-out to Steve Messner, Jed Gorlin, and Roger Thompson – and frosh coxswain Kannan Alford ‘27. In what turned out to be a “real” row and not the easy stroll I had expected, the four of us channeled our inner Conn Findlay, not letting ourselves ask Kannan to turn the boat around until we were well into the Bay where the view is practically unchanged from 30 years ago. Fortunately, Coach Niles Garratt, keeping an eye on us from the launch, took mercy and suggested it was time to head back in. Just how much of a real row this was was evidenced by my shredded hands, which haven’t felt that good in at least 20 years!

Waiting for us back on the dock were bagels, coffee, and one last chance to catch up with everyone before going our separate ways.

Thanks to all the alums who participated and to Coach Ted, the rest of the staff, and the current team for a terrific couple of days. We can’t wait until next time!



HONORING ED FERRY '63

Stanford Athletics Hall of Fame and Olympic Gold Medalist

Stanford Hall of Fame member Edward Payson Ferry '63 passed away on September 18, 2023, at his home in Mill Valley, CA. Ed was a member of the first decade of illustrious Stanford Rowing Olympians in the 1950s and 1960s, and his photo headlines the Stanford Men's Rowing Olympians web page, rowing port in between legends Conn Findlay (stroke) and Kent Mitchell '61 (cox) in their Tokyo 1964 Gold-winning M2+.



Read an excellent and comprehensive obituary at row2k.com, including an excerpt of Kent Mitchell's comments at Ed's memorial service, which bring in a lot of the connections to Stanford Rowing. This content is copyrighted by row2k, so please [click here](#) to read Ed's amazing life and contributions to rowing and Stanford.

Ed came to Stanford in a different era of collegiate sports – freshman-only teams (including Stanford Football), many (or mostly) walk-on athletes, and a less-clear distinction between club and varsity programs across sports. Thankfully for Stanford Rowing, Ed chose to come south from his native Seattle for college and decided to try rowing after a start on Stanford's freshman football squad.

While Stanford Rowing was still a mostly grassroots effort (like many sports), there was a recent history of Olympic success with Jim Fifer, Jim Beggs, Dan Ayrault, Kurt Seiffert, Dick Draeger, Lou Lindsey, Duvall Hecht, and Conn Findlay that infused the program and pushed it to the highest levels of performance. While Stanford was a far western outpost of rowing, the US Olympic team of that era was well-supplied by the established eastern base, and the Olympics themselves were very competitive with the strong European national programs where rowing was considered a major sport. With this in mind, Ed's achievement from walk-on to gold medalist was no easy task. While Ed's story comes a bit later and in a slightly different context, there are many similarities to his achievement and the story told in *The Boys In The Boat*, a movie we expect most Stanford Rowing athletes and alums will see this winter holiday season.

Stanford Rowing is honored to have Ed as one of its own, and his legacy is an early thread line to the achievements of all three programs (Women's, Lightweight Women's, and Men's) today.



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To Ensure that the Unique Experience of Rowing for Stanford Endures

We hope you, as part of our 2500+ Community of Stanford Rowing Alumni, Parents, and Friends have enjoyed remaining connected to Stanford Rowing! The Rowing Association will continue to bring you Boathouse of Champions, periodic e-mail race updates, social channels, and events like the Alumni Row and Head of the Charles gathering. We do this while working closely with the University to help strengthen Stanford Rowing.

We ask that you consider becoming a sponsor member so that we can continue to fund these efforts by expanding in areas such as networking opportunities for the Stanford Rowing Community.



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Questions about membership can be directed to:

Jordan Reist '20: jordanreist@gmail.com

Steve Munn '85: smunn92651@gmail.com

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Thank you to those who have already shown your support!

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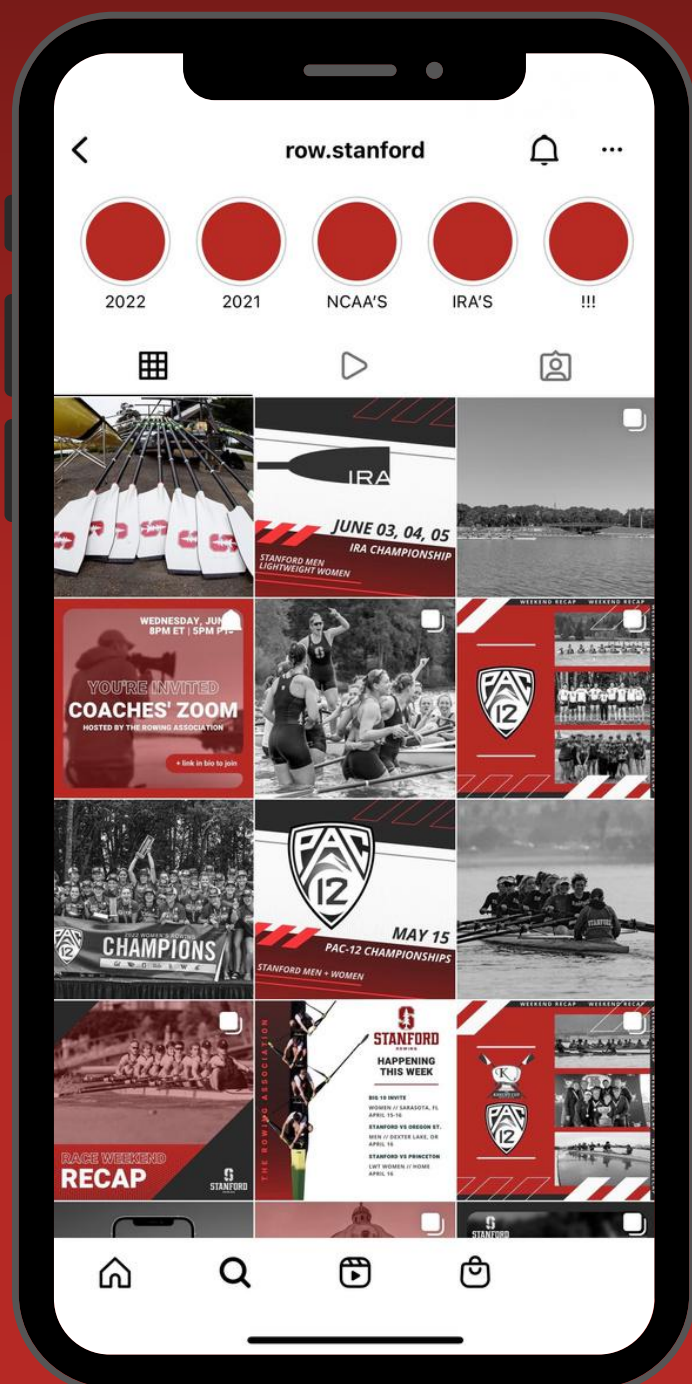
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Additional Thank You to Juan Sabater- '90 Law- who has sponsored all recent grads' first two years of Membership!



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SHARE YOUR STORY

As a member of The Rowing Association community, you have the opportunity to connect with other rowers who share a passion for the sport and a commitment to excellence. You also have access to a wealth of knowledge and experience, as well as opportunities to learn from and be inspired by some of the best rowers in the world.

Sharing your story with The Rowing Association community is a great way to inspire other rowers, and foster a sense of commonality within the rowing community. We want to hear from you! Reach out to us for the chance to be featured in future communications from The Rowing Association.

Email hello@stanfordrowing.org for more details.



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