



# The Backsplash

William & Mary Rowing Club Newsletter  
December 2013



## WMRC's First Experience at Head of the South

**By Ashley Koontz, '14**

WMRC finished out our final regatta of the 2013 fall season with a late (and new) addition to our schedule: Head of the South. Following a 7 hour drive down I-95 Friday afternoon, which for some included southern specialties for

dinner such as Waffle House and BBQ, the Tribe got up early on Saturday, ready to race. This regatta, held on the Savannah River in Augusta, Georgia, has been growing in size for the past several years and included some of WMRC's usual rivals such as Liberty, VCU, Richmond and Virginia Tech as well as some of our toughest competitors such as Clemson, University of Georgia, Wake Forest, and College of Charleston.

It was a successful first year across all four squads at HotS with the team taking home a collection of medals.

Amongst the highlights, the varsity men's lightweight 4+ earned the first medals for WMRC in Augusta placing second, for the silver medal, behind VCU followed by the varsity women's 8+ who claimed bronze behind second place Clemson by only 0.03 seconds.

...bragging rights, medals...  
and a bet of a dozen Krispy  
Kreme donuts.

Next up, the varsity men's 8+ also placed 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 11 crews to take home another bronze medal for the tribe. The novice squads had an equally successful day at the South with the novice men's 8+ claiming bronze out of 14 crews and the novice women's 8+

taking 6<sup>th</sup> place out of 11 crews.

Finally, the Tribe's success at the South was not completed without a heated race between 3 WMRC varsity women's fours. The varsity women had much at stake: bragging rights, medals...and a bet of a dozen Krispy Kreme donuts. The crew of Erin Brown, Jessie Viss, Ashley Koontz, Camila Fishtahler, and Mairin Haley took home the gold by 7 seconds over second place Clemson as well as the well-earned box of Krispy Kremes. Overall, Head of the South was a successful addition, in earning both hardware and donuts, to the WMRC Fall racing schedule that looks to be a promising addition to future fall racing schedules!

## The Head of the Hooch

**By Adam Mullet, '15**

What can make a 4 am departure time and nine hours in the car worth it? Try a jam-packed weekend of rockin', rowin', and racin' in the barbecue rich, blues-laden city of Chattanooga, Tennessee.

For a good portion of the team (myself included) the Head of the Hooch regatta was the first chance to race in the fall season. We arrived on the scene like the Golden Horde of Genghis Khan arrived on a sleepy central Asian village. Chattanooga (or "The Noog" as some call it) didn't know what hit them.

As the second largest regatta in the United States, the Head of the Hooch features over 1,000 boats, with two days of racing. With most of the spring competition present, the coaches and team knew that the regatta would be a great litmus test for 2K season.

The Hooch proved to be a successful weekend for all regattas—Notably, the team returned with a third place medal in the Varsity men's club 4+ (out of 39), and following a fierce Senior versus Junior showdown in the Mixed Open 8+ race, the Seniors raced their way to a second place medal. With all squads performing well, it's hard not to get excited about hitting the ergs and the spring racing season.

A special thanks goes out to rowing alum Brittany Williams and her family, as well as Signal Crest Methodist Church for hosting the entire team the whole weekend. Their generosity is unmatched in all the lands.



The Varsity Men's 4+, Marshall Irby, Bryan Monroe, Katie Oberg, Scott Klein and Danny Otto show off their medals. Photo by Connor Kee

## Photos from the Fall Season



## The Head of the Lafayette

**By Jake Hutner, '17**

On October 27, 2013, the William & Mary Rowing Club sent its novice teams to the Head of the Lafayette, a regatta in Norfolk, VA. It was a good first test for the novice squads, as it was also the first official race for many rowers. The novice men's squad started the day off with a strong second place finish against University of Richmond's varsity team in the Men's Collegiate 8+, clocking a time of 18:55. Next, the novice women's 4+ won their race with a time of 24:42, delivering the program's sole first-

place finish of the day. They continued their success with a second-place finish in the Women's Collegiate 8+, rowing 21:01 for the distance. Finally, the novice men's 4+ boats finished 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in their race with respective times of 20:36, and 22:24. Overall, the team rowed very well and gained experience that would help them at the next two weekend's regattas: Head of the Hooch and Head of the South.



**The Novice feast on bagels after racing. Photo by WMRC**



**The Novice Women's 4+ passes another boat. Photo by WMRC**

## Novice Women: "In Love" with Erging

**By Emma Rudebusch ('14), Novice Women's Coach**

This fall, the Novice women started off their first season with WMRC eager to learn the intricacies of the stroke and the ins and outs of the sport. The team was full of quick learners, who were soon excited for their first 5K race at the Head of the Lafayette, where our 8+ was the first novice boat to finish. At the Hooch, our 8+ finished 23 out of 47 teams. We finished out the season by racing three boats at the South—one 8+ and two 4+'s, with the 8+ finishing sixth and the first 4+ finishing seventh. We are excited to announce that we recently elected co-captains, Katherine "KP" Peck and Gabby "Gabbicus" Negus to lead us into winter conditioning. Now that the fall season has finished up, the squad has fallen in love with the erg and is excited to get into the thick of training for sprint season!



**The Novice Women Race at Head of the Hooch. Photo by SportsGraphics**

## Novice Men: Sights set on Spring Races

**By Mike Bayersdorfer, Novice Men's Coach**

The novice men recently wrapped up a successful fall season, competing on an abbreviated but intense racing schedule that saw them improve dramatically over the course of the last few weeks of the season. Sporting ten rowers and a coxswain for the vast majority of the season, the boys got an early start on the water after a few days on the ergs and didn't look back. After three days of rowing mixed in with varsity rowers, the novice men began practicing together in the 8+ and began their battle against the familiar novice demons of slide control and catch timing. Those new to rowing quickly learned the basics, and with others bringing high school experience to the table, the squad was able to transition from focusing on survival to focusing on precision- and the results of this fall's racing showed it.

The Occoquan- traditional proving ground for new novice since time immemorial- was unfortunately canceled due to weather this year, so the novice men had to wait until the Lafayette to test themselves against other competition. They posted solid results in the race- finishing a close second in the 8+ to Richmond's varsity 8+, which was the only other boat in that event. The next weekend at the Head of the Hooch in Chattanooga, Tennessee, gave them a much better field of competition- and the novice men answered the call. Finishing 18<sup>th</sup> out of 36 in the Novice Men's 8+ event, they beat schools such as Northwestern, Texas, Tennessee, Vanderbilt, and Emory, and were able to experience the challenges and festivities of a big race.

The following weekend, the Tribe headed to Augusta, Georgia for the Head of the South, and the novice men wrapped up their racing season with a strong showing. They came out firing for the Novice 8+ event at the end of the day. With their sights set on the Clemson and Georgia boats that had finished in front of them at the Hooch, the novice men wrapped up their fall season by finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 14 and taking home a bronze medal—overtaking the Georgia boat that beat them by 35 seconds the previous week.

With their strong finish to the fall season, the novice men have moved into winter training with their eye on SIRA's, Dad Vail, and ACRA, knowing that their hard work has begun to be rewarded already but that there is still much more work to do before the spring racing season begins.

## WMRC Happenings

- WMRC just gained its newest (and tiniest) coxswain – congratulations to Coach Jason Mitchell and wife Jillian on their son, Jaxson, on December 10!



- Congratulations to WMRC for showing their tribe pride and placing in the annual William & Mary Homecoming Parade!
- Remember to check out the William & Mary Rowing Club's Facebook page and visit our newly designed website (<http://www.wmrowing.org/>) for the most current information.

## Varsity Women: Building Strength for Spring

### By Graham Ludmer, Varsity Women's Coach

The fall season has had its fill of challenges, rewards, mistakes, corrections, losses and victories. At the beginning of every season, novice rowers from the previous year move up and join their fellow teammates in the rank of Varsity. The women's squad at William & Mary was no different; with a new batch of rowers moving from novice to varsity, the squad nearly doubled in size! And after a couple weeks of practices and getting back into rowing shape, the new varsity girls started to find their place with in the squad, helping the team grow in strength. Due to some complications this year, the Head of the Charles was our first race. However, the varsity women were able to find a way to overcome this challenge, and had a great performance. They had a strong race and finished just .9 sec off an automatic bid next year, and I believe next year we can break that barrier. The next race was the Head of the Hooch, and with some late lineup switches we didn't finish as well as we were hoping. However, by the time the Head of the South came around, we were ready to rock and roll. We were able to pull off a bronze medal in the Women's 8+ event and the real surprise was our Women's club 4+ grabbed Gold in their event. Congrats, girls... and enjoy the donuts! Let's get excited for the spring!



The Women's Club 4+ reacts to their win at Head of the South. Photo by Connor Kee



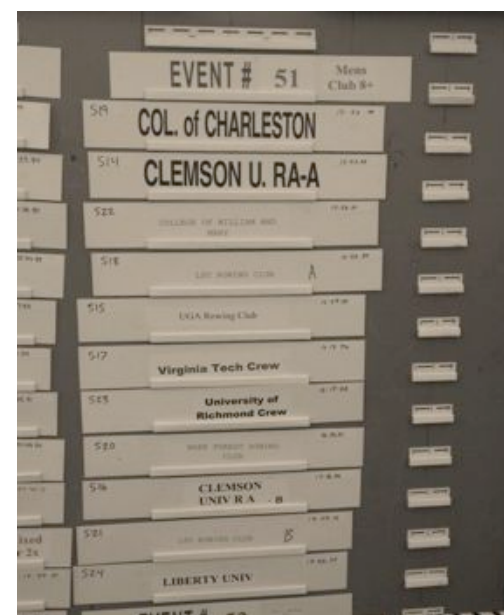
The Women's 8+ races at Head of the Hooch. Photo by WMRC

## Varsity Men: Busy Indoor Season Ahead

### By Jason Mitchell, Varsity Men's Coach

This fall, the Varsity men's squad started out with a bang, with each rower hitting the ground running...literally. With the first day of practice being a 5K run +5K erg test day, we never looked back, getting stronger each practice. The guys knew that to be where they wanted to be at the end of a race, they would need to put in meter after meter, stroke after stroke. We focused a lot on the efficiency of the stroke to get the Most out of each pull. This allowed us to know that when it came down to it, we would be able to pull better and smarter, not just pull harder, than our competition.

Even though this year's schedule was a little different than the norm, the varsity men kept their heads together and eyes focused on the prize. The proof was in the pudding with a good showing at Head of the Charles (22<sup>nd</sup> of 49), some medals at Head of the Hooch (3<sup>rd</sup> of 38 in Club 4 and 2<sup>nd</sup> in mixed) and more medals at Head of the South (2<sup>nd</sup> in Light 4, 3<sup>rd</sup> in Men's 8). With winter break upon us and the start of winter training past us, the guys have already been busy indoors. Even though this may be considered a successful fall season, the guys have shifted gears and set their sights on the spring.



Varsity Men place 3<sup>rd</sup> at HoTS. Photo by WMRC



Varsity Men's 8+ at HoTS. Photo by Connor Kee



## Getting to Know our Rowers

**Name:** Matt Everett

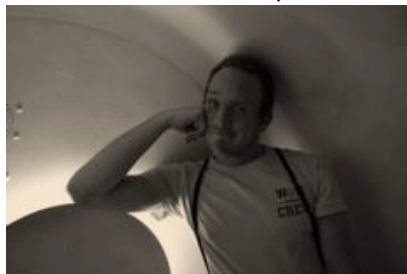
**Graduation Year:** 2015

**Majors:** History and Economics

**Hometown:** Fairfax, VA

**What's your favorite rowing memory?** I loved my first fall season race. We had done 5K races in high school, but I had never been to a formal, non-scrimmage 5K. So, when we went to the Occoquan Challenge my freshman year, it was so exciting to hear the announcer call out, "The College of William & Mary, mark!" as we passed through the starting gate. The entire concept was foreign to me—a time trial where you were racing the clock while bettering yourselves as a boat. It was a thrilling experience, and I'll never forget how Emily Stephens submerged her entire arm to help us turn tightly around the buoy on the far end of the race course. It was so interesting to be somewhere I had rowed a million times, yet experience something so new and exhilarating. It was a fantastic race!

**Matt Everett, '15**



**Erin Brown, '15**



**Name:** Erin Brown

**Graduation Year:** 2015

**Majors:** Marketing and Public Policy

**Hometown:** Scotch Plains, NJ

**What's your favorite rowing memory?** Since I didn't start rowing until college, every milestone I've hit on the William & Mary rowing team has been new and exciting. But nothing has topped my experience at last year's ACRA regatta, when our 4+ took silver in an extremely close race. The last 250 meters were some of the hardest I've ever rowed, and I knew that my teammates felt the same way. There were three crews neck and neck at the end of the 2K—ourselves, VCU, and Vermont—and when the race was over, we didn't know where we had placed. Ultimately, we got second, and though losing to Vermont was bittersweet, I've still never been so proud after a race. That memory of ACRA is always my motivation on hard erg pieces now.



# Surge!!

Friends of Williamsburg Rowing Newsletter  
December 2013



## 2014 Alumni Challenge

By Travis Moore

Beginning in 2014, FWR plans to start reporting additional information on our supporters to analyze involvement by class year, type of donor, etc. Initially this information will be used to promote alumni involvement by each class during a fundraiser which will run for the first few months of the year.

The information we collect will be promoted on our website and in our newsletters to give thanks to the active class years and groups of friends and alumni. Specific details such as amounts donated and names will be kept confidential as always, but any donors who wish to be completely anonymous can be excluded from this publicity. Simply continue to check "anonymous" on our donation forms or include the word "anonymous" in a comment on your PayPal transaction.

Stay-tuned for more information on the competition and how you can power your class to victory.

## 2013 in Review

By Mark Miller

I'm pleased to report that the Friends of Williamsburg Rowing has had a productive and prosperous year in 2013. The executive board and directors have worked diligently to improve the organization through efforts such as promoting fundraising events, strengthening FWR/WMRC relations, and providing current information for alumni, family, and friends via social media and our website.

A couple of the more successful fundraising events this year were centered around major sports like NCAA basketball and pro football. Earlier in the spring FWR hosted a March Madness Bracket Challenge that brought 33 entries at \$10 a piece. And, just recently, FWR held a Fantasy Football Fundraiser that brought twelve alumni and friends together to compete for a chance to earn seat naming rights for a boat. Combined, both fundraising events have raised over \$800 for FWR. Both were great ways to raise a few extra dollars and keep alumni/family/friends engaged in supporting FWR.

Throughout the year FWR has also worked closely with the WMRC exec board and coaches in a

continual effort to strengthen relations between the two organizations. Earlier in the year they worked together to resolve budgeting issues. Later, in April, FWR met up with WMRC for the Rocket's Landing Regatta and FWR's annual meeting. Lastly, during homecoming, FWR was able to celebrate with WMRC in acquiring a brand new Vespoli V1 boat. FWR donated commemorative shirts honoring the Mary Mitchell '85 for the whole team.

All of these achievements have been carefully documented and posted on our website and Facebook page. Alumni, family, and friends of FWR can confidently go to either of these sources for current information about what's going on within FWR and WMRC. This has been a huge stride in reaching out to our supporters and keeping them informed. Our donations have certainly benefited as we've been able to raise almost \$10,000 this year alone!

Next year is just around the corner, and I'm confident that FWR will continue to grow and improve. Our alumni base is growing, our donations are increasing, and the organization has strong leadership to carry on to 2014.

## Financial Dashboard

Endowment fund balance:	\$5,900
Donations so far in 2013:	\$9,700
Disbursements so far in 2013:	\$2,900
Number of monthly subscribers:	16
Donations of monthly subscribers:	\$238

## WMRC Varsity Coaches' at a Glance

### Jason Mitchell

WMRC Program Director & Men's Varsity Coach

Undergrad Institution: Purdue University

Hometown: Merrillville, IN

*"Rowing to me became less of a sport and more of a lifestyle... To me, it epitomizes teamwork, dedication and hard work."*

Photo Right: Graham Ludmer (left) & Jason Mitchell (right) watch WMRC compete at a regatta in the fall.



### Graham Ludmer

WMRC Women's Varsity Coach

Undergrad Institution: Purdue University

Hometown: Lake Forest, IL

*"In any sport an athlete is given a challenge... and in most sports that athlete can take on that challenge internally. In rowing you are given this same format, but in order to plan for success you are forced to work with others. The more you embrace this attitude, the quicker you see that its not your success that awaits you at the end of the race course, but success of the program."*



**Congratulations to Jason on the birth of his first child, Jaxson, on December 10th!**

# Surge!!

*Newsletter of the Friends of Williamsburg Rowing  
a not-for-profit 501(c)3 corporation, organized for charitable purposes*

**Levels:**

Benefactor \$500

Patron \$300

Sponsor \$150

Member \$50

**Contribution Amount:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Designation:**

\_\_\_\_\_ % FWR General Fund

\_\_\_\_\_ % William and Mary Endowment Fund

\_\_\_\_\_ % William and Mary Rowing Club

\_\_\_\_\_ % Williamsburg Boat Club

\_\_\_\_\_ % Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like more information about the Williamsburg Boat Club?  Yes  NoWould you like more information about the William and Mary Rowing Club?  Yes  NoAre you a W&M Graduate?  Yes  No Graduation year: \_\_\_\_\_Former crew member?  Yes  No Years \_\_\_\_\_Are you a parent/relative of crew member?  Yes  No

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation \_\_\_\_\_

The name/address or other information above is new or corrected:  Yes  NoI / we wish to remain anonymous:  Yes  No

Return this form and check payable to "Friends of Williamsburg Rowing" to:

**Friends of Williamsburg Rowing  
PO Box 2276  
Springfield, VA 22153-2276**

Or donate online at: <http://williamsburgrowing.org/for-donors/donate-online/>. You can choose to pay by credit card, debit card, or PayPal.

Friends of Williamsburg Rowing is a non-profit organization incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and is exempt from Federal income taxes under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donors may deduct contributions as provided in section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.