



The Backsplash

William & Mary Rowing Club Newsletter
Fall 2014



WMRC Sweeps the HOTS

By Jessie Viss, '16

One fine Friday afternoon in November the William and Mary Rowing Club piled into vans miraculously provided by Rec Sports and struck out for Augusta, GA to compete at the Head of the South Regatta. It was to be our final race of the season—one last gasp of fresh air before being consigned to the erg room and the terror of winter training. Last year, our first time attending, we did pretty well, winning a gold, silver, and three bronze medals. It also has the illustrious distinction of being the birthplace of the donut bet, which has since become an integral part of the Tribe Rowing experience. As the vans rumbled down the highway, carrying us ever southward, the question loomed large in everyone's mind: Would we match our debut performance? Looming less largely, though still pressing, was the question: Would there be more donuts?

Race day dawned as it always does, and brought with it the usual controlled chaos. Before the first boats could launch a medley of issues had to be dealt with—all the boats had to be rigged but not all the riggers

made the journey; foot stretchers were stuck; Lauren and Katie were left behind at the hotel, trapped in an elevator; the WinTech riggers were being difficult—typical rowing problems. As always, though, solutions were found, teammates were rescued, and the Tribe's fleet launched.

Lo and behold it was a fleet to be reckoned with and the question as to whether or not we'd do as well as last year was put to rest. Four boats walked away with gold medals: both the men's and women's varsity eights, the women's four and the mixed four. Even better, this year we finished third in overall team points, a significant improvement over last year's sixth place finish. This answered the other question that had been eating at us, as celebratory donuts were naturally in order. And in other news, Graham Ludmer remains the reigning one-bite champion.

Top: The annual end-of-season team photo.
Middle: The varsity women's club 8+ poses with their gold medals.

Bottom: The varsity men's club 8+ shows off their matching hardware. Photos courtesy of WMRC.



Head of the Hooch

By Jessica Beckett, '15

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times. It was the regatta of cold temperatures, the first snowfall of the year, it was the van ride filled with Halloween decorations, it was the weekend of anxiously waiting for race times, it was the disappointment when races never came, it was the long lines for cinnamon crunch bagels at Panera, it was the church filled with sounds of coaches practicing their Rockband skills, it was the church full of rowers hoping to forget Matt Scott's singing voice, and most importantly it was the regatta of triumphant seniors with gold medals around their necks. Due to the freezing temperatures and ferocious wind in Chattanooga, all Saturday races were cancelled. Despite the disappointment of travelling all the way to Tennessee and not being able to race, rowers made the most of it by exploring the various dining



Above: Rowers explore Chattanooga while waiting to hear about cancellations. Photo courtesy of Jessica Beckett.

establishments in Chattanooga including some genuine Southern barbeque and participating in the Vermonster challenge (20 scoops of Ben and Jerry's in one sitting!). Sunday races continued as scheduled, allowing most of the novices to participate in their first race off of the Chickahominy in the novice open 8 events. The Hooch

also marks the most important event in WMRC's history; The Senior 8 vs. the Junior 8. The tense rivalry had been building since the previous year when the junior 8 experienced some last minute lineup changes and the seniors were able to pull ahead to 2nd place leaving the juniors feeling slighted in 7th place. The juniors of last year came back as seniors with a vengeance this year. After some intense seat racing for spots, lineups were carefully determined and the two boats set out for their final race at the Head of the Hooch. Not surprisingly, the seniors destroyed the juniors, finishing in first place ahead of last year's champions Lincoln Park, a full 22 seconds ahead of the juniors. Overall, rowers were able to make the most of unfortunate weather conditions and use it to motivate themselves to race twice as hard the next weekend at the Head of the South.

50th Head of the Charles

By Adam Mullet, '15

“The best thing in rowing.” That’s how my novice coach, Martin Bayersdorfer III, described the Head of the Charles to me my first year on the team. Two years and many meters later on a crisp October afternoon I found out why. Two varsity men’s boats and one varsity women’s boat made the pilgrimage this year to the largest regatta in the world. On the men’s side our goals were simple:

1) earn a bid for next year and continue to solidify ourselves as a HOCHR regular and 2) defeat the Middlebury alumni boat and our former novice coach rowing it. The same Martin Bayersdorfer III, the illustrious Coach Mike.

On rowing’s biggest stage we performed. The men’s four, expertly coxed by veteran coxswain Katie Oberg, secured the bid and continued our steady, yearly climb up the rankings by finishing 19th out of a strong field of 52. And the pupils defeated their former master; the varsity 8 defeated Mike’s Middlebury Alumni eight and thereby secured bragging rights and Middlebury Alumni betting tees.

After the race, the varsity men and their former coach hugged it out, and discussed what makes the HOCHR special. It’s something like this.



Top: Rowers smile for the camera at the Resolute tent. Photo courtesy of Jessica Beckett.

Below: The women’s 4+ rows up to the start. Photo courtesy of WMRC.

Rowing at the HOCHR establishes a lifelong legacy. We can go back 50 years later at the 100th anniversary and walk around like we own the race. Because we do. We were and will forever be an author in one of the greatest traditions in American sports.

A big thanks to Coach Mike from the varsity men. You planted a deep love of this sport in all of us, and for that we are thankful. Like the lifelong magic of the HOCHR, that love will continue to positively impact our lives years after we graduate. Drinks on us at the 100th anniversary of the Head of the Charles.

Chick Chase

By Marshall Irby, '15

Saturday, October 25th was a great day to be a Tribesman. It was one of the few opportunities when William and Mary rowers are able to host a competition. This fall, we had VCU, University of Richmond, and University of Mary Washington show up for the Chick Chase. It was a great chance for both novice and varsity to be able to get a sense of competition before the bigger races of the fall such as the Head of the Hooch and the Head of the South. Additionally, with it being a local regatta, it was nice to have parents and friends cheering us on as we crossed the finish line. After the 5 kilometer races in the morning, we also got a chance to row mixed (men, women, novice, and varsity) eights for 500 meters in the creek by the dock. This gave “boat buddy” pairings a chance to race in their “boat families,” with preliminary heats before a final championship. All in all, the Chick Chase was an exciting chance to have spectators come out and cheer us on at our home course, and served as a positive introduction to the rest of the season.



Scott Klein poses with his boat after coxing his first race. Although a naturally-talented coxswain, he soon returned to rowing. Photo courtesy of Katie Clements.

Making Waves off the Water: WMRC Around Campus

In addition to making their names known at regattas up and down the East Coast, WMRC rowers also increased their presence back home on campus. The club hosted a fundraiser called “Dog Days,” the first of hopefully many successful fundraisers—students and faculty came and got to hang out with some friendly dogs while raising money for both WMRC and the ASPCA.

From participating in (and winning) the Muscarelle Museum of Art’s contest to placing at the annual Bee & Goody 5K, rowers have been making a name for themselves all semester. Who knows what next year could bring?



Occoquan Challenge

By Marhsall Irby, '15

A little past 2:00 in the afternoon on Saturday, October 4th, a fleet of shiny, sleek new 2014 Rec Sports vans (plus one older, non-air-conditioned jalopy) departed Williamsburg bound for Northern Virginia. It was a warm afternoon, still reminiscent of summer, and the vans headed up to the homes of rower's families, who graciously hosted the hungry hoards of college athletes. Activities that night allowed students of different squads to get to know each other and included a diverse range of experiences such as learning basic French in La Madeleine restaurant in Fairfax and watching *Zoolander*. Rowers were able to sleep in until 7:00 A.M. and converged on the race site soon after 8:00. Nothing in Williamsburg could've prepared them for the conditions - it was bitter cold! Fortunately, the day warmed up quickly after the sun came out. Being the Occoquan CHALLENGE, the course featured the notorious 180 degree turn halfway through that generally requires

port rowers to stop rowing and "hold water". A spot at the grandstands gave a spectator the ability to see boats both as they were headed out towards the buoyed turn and coming back towards the finish line. In fact, soon after 12:00, coaches and rowers present at the grandstands could see both William and Mary men's novice fours and the men's varsity eight simultaneously. One of those novice fours would end up taking first place in the event, beating River City Crew and the Catholic University of America. The women's varsity eight took third, and not long after, the novice women medaled in fours. Following fourth place finishes in the novice women's eight and varsity men's four categories; the women's four boat took the gold medal racing against nine other boats. By the time 4:10 rolled around, it was time to have some fun and try our hand at mixed boats. Novice, varsity, men, and women were thrown into lineups they'd never seen before. A coxswain's nightmare, this race was entertaining to say the least. One boat even had to switch two rower's positions on the water before the race began. Overall, the Occoquan was a good start to the fall racing season. Novices were able to get a taste of competition and varsity could test out new lineups. The team bonding didn't end at the Occoquan, though. Rowers piled back into vans and headed to Starbucks, a team member's home for dinner, and a desolate parking lot to grab some ham biscuits from a rower's mom. The Occoquan proved to be, yet again, a fall favorite that provided a good starting point for the semester.



The novice women pose along with their coach, Matt Scott, at their first race of the season. Photo courtesy of Katie Clements.

Photos from the Season



Surge!!

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a not-for-profit 501(c)3 corporation, organized for charitable purposes*

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