



Easy Oar

Newsletter of the Leichhardt Rowing Club

Issue no. 8 April 2008

LRC at the nationals

Thirteen LRC athletes went to the Australian Championships. Sarah Moxon, Amy van den Nieuwenhof, Rosa Brown and Liz Lester came together as a group as recently as January and exceeded expectations at the regatta, achieving personal best times.



Liz goes over the line

Liz Lester placed first in F final of the Schoolgirl Single – her time would have placed her sixth in the A final. Liz also teamed with Rosa Brown to fill fourth spot in the semi-final of the U23 lightweight double. Rosa also took out sixth spot in the C final of the U23 lightweight single, and Amy van den Nieuwenhof was second in the D final of the U23 single.



WU23 LtWt 4x

In a similar fashion, Isabel James, Alex Hutchison Georgia Girdler, Freya Cole and Erin Spencer, who

came together as a group in December, have shown huge improvement. As they learned the art of racing and became more efficient with each of their races during the week, they continued to improve, to get faster each race and all achieved personal best times.

Isabel and Alex were sixth in the U16 double, and they teamed with Georgia and Freya to fill sixth place in the U17 quad.



The U17 quad

In other results, James Gerofi placed fourth in the E final of the U23 lightweight single scull, and he joined Will Schouten, Roger Graham and Charles Bezzina to finish fourth in the lightweight quad. Charles and Will also teamed to compete in the lightweight double, placing fourth.

In other regattas

As well as the recent spate of schoolgirl and schoolboy regattas, we also had the Combined Universities Regatta on Iron Cove, when LRC stepped in, at close to the last minute, to run.

It was another successful regatta for the club, netting 11 first placings, 21 second placings and 18 thirds.

Also in this issue:

More than you ever wanted to know about rigging

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The Property Master's page

Coaches and crews: remember it is your responsibility to keep your allocated boats in good condition.

Once every three months, it is a good idea to pull all the fittings off the boats you row. Check whether the gear will last another three months before putting it back in place. Make sure the fittings are free of corrosion and that all the parts work properly, that there is no water in the hull or sealed compartments of the boat. If stroke coaches are fitted, check that the wires work and are neatly stowed away when the boat is on the rack & on the water. Do a thorough job.

Some items of work, such as polishing the hull, can be done perhaps once a year. Setting the riggers and gates at the right pitch, height and spread will have a dramatic effect on boat and rowing performance as the article below shows.

April notices:

- take care of the wires in the boat, particularly when moving the foot chocks
- take care when putting the boat on the trailer - boats are damaged in transit to every regatta.

More than you ever wanted to know about rigging

What's it all about anyway?

Athletes come in different shapes and sizes, levels of fitness and skill. The same rig won't suit them all, so we can either change the athlete to suit the boat or alter the boat to change the athlete. Things we can change are:

- stroke length
- catch position
- finish position
- blade depth through the stroke
- gearing

We do this by altering

- the stretcher
- the riggers and pins
- the blade length

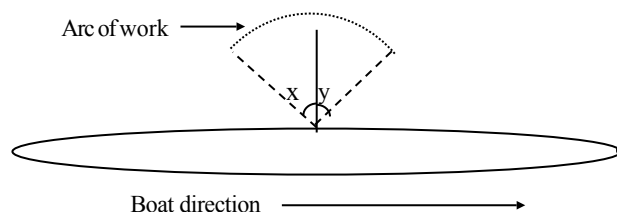
The stretcher

Moving the stretcher backwards or forwards changes the arc of work:

With thanks to Caroline Turnbull,
Weybridge Rowing Club, www.weybridge.rowing.org.uk/

Warning

don't try this at home, or at least make sure you do it with someone who knows what they are doing.

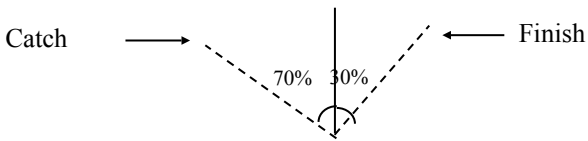


In sweep-oar rowing this arc ($x + y$) is about 90° and in sculling about 110° . In a faster boat (e.g. an eight) you want more work in front of the pin, and in a slower boat (e.g. a pair) more work behind the pin.

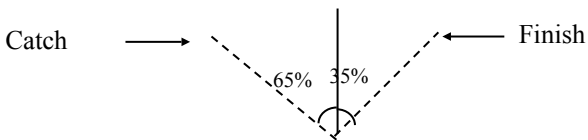
You also want the athlete to be comfortable in the boat, i.e. the outside hand should be able to pull to the finish without having to bend the wrist out as the stroke comes in to the body. You also want the whole crew to finish at the same position, so it's all a big compromise really.



Effect of moving the stretcher forwards (for an eight):



Effect of moving the stretcher backwards (for a pair):

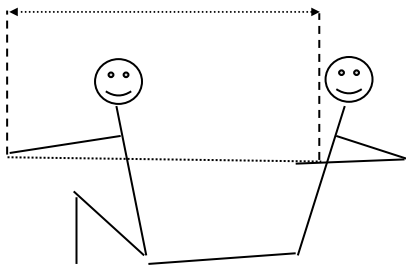


You can also adjust the height and angle of the footplate. The rower should be able to attain a vertical shin at the catch, so the footplate should be set low down and at an angle of 42°. If the footplate is set too high, the rower will not be able to achieve full compression and in addition the boat will be less stable.

The riggers and pins

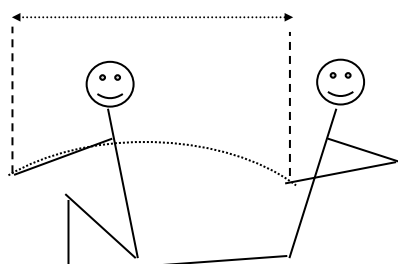
The main adjustment is the height of the work, which should be set so that the rower can pull in a straight line, producing a long stroke.

S1



If the pin is set too low, the rower will pull the oar in an arc, producing a shorter stroke:

S2



The height range will be 16–19 cm for sweep oar, 15–18 cm for sculling.

The stroke length is also determined by the span (the distance from the centre of the boat to the pin). The span should be reduced for a shorter crew and increased for a taller crew in order to maintain the correct angle and arc of work. In sculling we measure the spread (distance between the two pins) rather than the span.

Crew height and span/spread		
Height (cm)	Span (four)	Spread (single)
185–195	84–85	158–160
176–185	83–84	156–158
166–175	82–83	154–156
155–165	81–82	152–154

These figures are rather theoretical – in practice most coxed fours are rigged with a span of 85.5 cm (half a cm less for coxless) and most scullers go for a spread of 159–160 cm.

The span is also reduced as the boat speed increases – the span of a double scull will be about 1 cm less and a quad about 1½ cm less than a single. An eight will have a span about 1 cm less than a four and 2 cm less than a pair.

Pitch

Pitch is the angle of the pin from vertical. There are two planes of movement:

- towards the bow or stern
- inwards or outwards.

You need some pitch to hold the oar in position in the water, since the oar is not horizontal when you pull on it, but angled downwards. About 4° is normal, which used to be set by having angled blades but these days is done using the plastic inserts in the swivels. At the catch it is better to have a little more to prevent the oar going too deep. At the finish you need a little less to make it easier to hold the blade in the water. So how do we achieve this?

- You could try setting stern pitch, but this will give less at the catch and finish and more in the

middle, giving a good finish, but a poor catch and drive. Setting the pitch towards the bow has the opposite effect, giving a good catch but poor finish and drive!

- You could have neutral pitch, giving the same angle throughout the stroke. Not much better!
- Now for the clever bit (someone with a degree in maths might be able to explain this!). If you angle the pin outwards, you really do get more at the catch and less at the finish. $1\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ of outward pitch gives you 5° at the catch, 4° in the middle and $3\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ at the finish, assuming you are using 4° inserts. Just right!

Blade length

Taller people need longer oars than shorter people. Seems obvious, but why? Because they have longer arms and legs! As we said above, the span should be set wider for tall people to achieve the same arc of work. This means the inboard of the oar will need to be greater so that they can reach right out to the catch and draw through at the finish. You don't want less outboard as this will shorten the stroke length, so you need to start with a longer oar or scull.

Gearing is the ratio of inboard to overall blade length. If it is too high, then rowing will be very hard work, resulting in a 'two part' stroke where the rower is unable to maintain pressure through to the finish. If the gearing is too light, the crew will have to take more strokes to achieve the same amount of work, pushing the rating up which uses up energy. So the level of fitness of the crew also needs to be taken into account.

Because cleavers have bigger spoons than Macons you need less outboard, so you have a shorter blade – typically 10cm shorter than a Macon for the same crew. Typical oar lengths range from 372 cm (lightweight women) to 378 (heavyweight men) and sculls from 288 cm (lightweight women) to 294 cm (heavyweight men).

You also need to adjust the gearing for the type of boat – rowing an eight is easier than rowing a pair (you have seven people to help you) so you can cope with a higher gearing.

So the inboard depends on a number of things, but principally:

- the rower (height, level of skill fitness)
- the type and span of the boat.

Typical inboard oar lengths are 114 cm for an eight, 115 cm for a coxed four and 116 cm for a coxless pair, and scull lengths 88.5 cm for a single, 88 cm for a double and 87.5 cm for a quad. These lengths are taken from statistics for international crews, who are generally tall with long legs. Lesser mortals will require shorter inboards!

Points to remember

- All rig changes the way you row
- Some rig changes are designed to change the way you row
- Adjustable rigging is for the benefit of the athlete, not vice versa
- Rig requirements will vary from time to time (as you get fitter and more skilled)
- All crew members do not have to be rigged the same, but it is a good starting point.
- Adjust one thing only, then try it out
- Keep a note of measurements, how it feels/looks, how it affects the boat speed (do timed pieces).

Order of adjustment

Start with the easiest thing first:

- stretcher
- slide bed
- spread/span
- height
- oar/scull
- pitch.



The Kings Cup - 2008

with thanks to Chris Noel, Vice President and Rowing Program Coordinator, Sydney University Boat Club

Sydney International Regatta Centre, 9 March 2008

The 2008 National Regatta was marked by fantastic conditions and in the final race, the Kings Cup, one of the most spectacular finishes in the recent history of interstate rowing.

They say if you want victory or power you must grab it in a most uncompromising way – that is exactly what the Sky Blues of the NSW Men's Eight did in the Kings Cup. A narrow, tenacious victory in a race where the three leading crews competed with passion, determination and a ruthlessness that brought the emotions of both competitors and supporters out in the open.

The NSW crew had been steadily building their momentum since pushing the champions, Victoria, at Nagambie in 2007.

The crew was boosted with Athen's bronze medallist Steve Stewart changing sides to stroke on bowside and newcomer Terrence Alfred in the seven seat. Backing up in six was Stewart's fellow UTS stalwart James Chapman and immediately behind in the engine room was NSW's biggest gun, Tom Laurich from Mosman. In 4, 3 and 2 were Alfred's fellow SUBC club mates – Fergus Pragnell, Francis Hegerty and Matt Ryan. The bow position was brilliantly handled by Sam Loch who returned to Australia in 2006 from Princeton and achieved selection this year in the Olympic eight. Fergus Pragnell and fellow crew members joked that with an athlete of Sam's ability in the bow they had invented a 'front wheel drive' boat.

Steering was 2008 Olympic cox Marty Rabjohns. Marty who recently entered the windscreen repair business but was, on this occasion, working in a field in which he had greater expertise.

Although all members of the crew and reserve Nick Baxter were competing against each other for positions in the Australian Men's Olympic Eight over the last 12 months they never lost connection

with their desire to claim this prestigious trophy which has been rarely in NSW hands in the past 20 years.

The draw which saw the most favoured crews NSW and Victoria in lanes 1 and 6, on opposite sides of the course, was always going to affect how the race was run but ultimately heightened the tension of an incredibly close finish.

The race

The West Aussies started like an express train in the following conditions and knocked over the first 500 in 1.21.25 taking a 2.5 second lead over NSW with the Vics only 0.17 behind. The Sandgroppers were trying to steal the race but the Light Blues and the Navy Blues of NSW and Victoria stayed calm, believing their race tactics would bring them through WA as the event progressed.

In the second 500 NSW cut 1.2 seconds from the WA lead and the Victorians a little less. At the 1000 it was WA by 1.32 seconds and Victoria only 0.4 behind NSW. At the 1500 it was still WA but just into the last 500 NSW made a dramatic move, sliced the lead quickly and shot ahead of WA with around 350 to go BUT the Victorians were also now swamping the former leaders. The Vics were now attacking and cox Rabjohns and stroke Stewart were covering their effort and holding an advantage of about 0.45 with only 250 to run to the bubble line.

The Vics with their legends Tomkins, Ginn and Crawshay on board unwound their traditional blistering finish. A finish which, in most of the past 20 years, has destroyed the hopes of other contenders. A finish which is exciting and which brought the crowd to its feet. The Victorian supporters were hoping for the usual effect. The New South Wales crowd were willing their team to hold out the big V.

The crowd noise was drowning out the commentary and the NSW crew rose to the occasion, and despite some erratic movements in the boat's course as the Vics applied the pressure, it looked like NSW may have just held on in a photo for first.

A minute of tension for the crowd and then the announcement of the photo – NSW Kings Cup



winners over Victoria by 0.21 with WA 3.14 back in third.

The passion for this race was evident in the crew and the supporters of NSW and just as poignantly on the faces of the Victorian eight.

It was obvious in the crowd as parents of the winning and losing athletes cried tears of joy, elation and sadness for their sons. For this correspondent one of the moments of memory will be being offered gracious congratulation for NSW's victory by the mother of one of Australia's greatest ever rowers while the disappointment for her son was so evident on her face.

The emotions of the crews and the crowd combined with a thrilling race made this one of the most memorable of all Kings Cups.

The NSW crew wore black armbands to honour the memory of Francis Hegerty's grandmother who passed away only two days before.

After the race a magnanimous Rowing Victoria President, Andrew Guerin, presented the traditional slab of beer to the winners and the crew posed for photos before returning to the boat sheds to catch up with family and friends.

To all members of the NSW Eight our club offers congratulations. To our club members of the winning boat for 2008, Francis Hegerty, Matt Ryan, Fergus Pragnell and Terrence Alfred and cox Marty Rabjohns – well done and thanks for flying the colours of our state and club so high.

To quote some of the NSW athletes after the race:

'We treated this race with seriousness it deserves from day one and it is all worth it now.' James Chapman (UTS) No 6.

'The boat seemed to be bouncing around in the conditions and felt unstable as the pressure of the finish came on. I was concentrating on covering Victoria's moves.' Steve Stewart (UTS) stroke.

'I thought we were in a struggle with the Vics for second when we crossed the line. Marty was calling off the Vics and I was following Steve – I didn't realise we had passed WA.' Terrence Alfred (SUBC) No 6. (Terrence was 7 on stroke side and so was 'facing' away from all the other crews.)

'I looked across to the Victorians and saw them slumped in the boat and said "YESSS !!"' Francis Hegerty (SUBC).

Thanks to Chris Noel and Sydney University Boat Club for permission to reproduce this article.

Kerry's quote for the month:

The important thing is not to stop questioning (Einstein)

Congratulations

to Charles Bartlett on his appointment to Deputy President of NSWRA

His promotion leaves a casual vacancy for a Director of NSWRA, until the next AGM.

Saturday 17 May

Keep this date free for the LRC Presentation Dinner 2008, and watch out for your invitation - it will come to you soon.

Looking for single scullers

Any single scullers (or slow doubles) interested in midweek training as a small group - John Bransby is looking for a few other single scullers to train with.

The schedule is Monday to Friday and train any day(s) it suits you.

Be on the water in front of club at 5.55 am. We will row to North Shore Club on the Lane Cove River, turning around at 6.30 am and take a two-minute rest.

On the return leg we will be back at Lane Cove river mouth by 6.45 am to beat the Woolwich Ferry wash, and then back at Leichhardt by 7 am. If you fall behind, just turn wherever you are at 6.30 and join us on return leg.

It will be a non-stop row at a firm pace with various speed efforts or fartlek. In case of southerly winds we'll stay in Iron Cove. You must have two good lights on the boat, particularly for crossing the main harbour.

John Bransby
jbransby@bigpond.net.au



LRC's new pontoon

Plans for our club's new pontoon are gathering pace behind the scenes as discussions with NSW Maritime move toward resolving the details with our engineers of how the final design will meet authority requirements.

Charles Bartlett, Richard Stanistreet and Wade Hewett who are working on this assignment collectively are hopeful that it will not be too much longer before we have some plans for approval by NSW Maritime and available for viewing around the club.

As the 2007–08 season comes near to closing, our window of opportunity for installing the pontoon is fast approaching. Our aim is to use this window so we can get the new pontoon in place by the 2008 corporate season.

Once designed and approved, the pontoon will be constructed elsewhere while new piles for the deck are installed. This will take about two weeks, and the new pontoon will then be floated into position and connected up with a new ramp to the existing deck.

All going to plan, the pontoon will be out of action for only two weeks or so in the later part of July – this will be a great time to work on your cross-training and winter strength work in the gym.

From August onwards we can all expect to spend much less time getting on and off the water.

The challenge will become to spend less time setting up boats on the deck otherwise the deck will become our new bottleneck rather than the pontoon.



At the nationals - the warm-up lake (above) and competitor tents and spectators (below)





Learn to Row course

It's time for the April Learn to Row program, so if you know anyone who is interested, read on.

We run two learn to row programs each year, usually in April and September, and the cost is \$125 for school students and \$250 for adults. The next course starts on 6 April and will run as follows:

All sessions start at 8.30 am.

Registration and Information session

Sunday 6 April 2008

Training sessions

Sunday 13 April (land-based)

Saturday 19 April

Sunday 20 April

Sunday 27 April

Saturday 3 May & Sunday 4 May.

For more information or if you can assist, contact Jane Hutchison, janelouisehutchison@hotmail.com

Season drawing to a close for juniors

After the Trickett Championship regatta the Junior 1, 2 & 3 squads and several other squads will end their season. Only the competing masters will continue their full training up to state championships in the middle of May or the nationals at the end.

Traditionally, at the season end all squads have about a month's rest (which means no rowing) before starting the next season. For juniors who may not have been rowing for very long this is a welcome rest break – just ask the coaches! The juniors will generally move up a level or two to make room for the new batch of rowers expected to flow in from the April Learn to Row program. Most squads will recommence Monday 19 May 2008.

However, in the break the juniors will be expected to come along to the working bees scheduled for that time and assist with fleet maintenance.

Not long after the season recommences and training gets a move on we will have the winter series of five JB Sharp mini-regattas on Iron Cove. These are great fun and a great way of getting everyone back into the swing for the new season.

LUER Winter Luncheon - Sunday 25 May 2008

Social rowers are particularly welcome

The Leichhardt Union of Ex Rowers will hold its winter get together on Sunday 25 May at 11 am.

All club members are invited. The LUER members are particularly interested in inviting the social rowing members of the club to this function. In fact we would like to have the social group use this day as a sort of special day for them to celebrate their membership as often the club focuses on the other more competitive groups of rowers in the club. It would be a great way for the social group to bring their partners to the shed to socialise and show them what goes on at LRC – they might even try a small stint in one of the boats before the lunch is served between 11 am and 3 pm.

A special hot gourmet luncheon is provided at a small cost of \$15 per head. Refreshments are also provided, at cost.

Diary dates

6 April	Saturday	Learn to row begins	8.30 am
19 April	Saturday	Shed clean up	8 - 10.30 am
3 May	Sunday	Boat maintenance	8 - 10.30 am
17 May	Saturday	Shed clean up	8 - 10.30 am
17 May	Saturday	Presentation dinner	6.30 pm - late
14 June	Saturday	Shed clean up	8 - 10.30 am
21 June	Saturday	Boat maintenance	8 - 10.30 am

Your committee:

President	Tim Clare
Captain	Jane Hutchison
Vice-Captains	Rod Richardson Deanna Fekete
Junior Vice-Captain	Rebecca Chapman
Secretary	Steve Jaques
Treasurer	Peter Trives
Property Master	Tim Timdale

Other Committee Members

Anne Parbury (Newsletter / Communications)
Richard Stanistreet (Capital Works Projects)
Kerry Thorn (Regatta Entries secretary)
Barbara Chapman (Merchandise Sales)
Sue Philpot, Lee Hutchison

Look out for the next edition of Easy Oar, in May