



Easy Oar

Newsletter of the Leichhardt Rowing Club

September 2007

AGM 07 – our new committee

And our new boat: Premiers 2007



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- Grade regattas in 2008
- Looking for BROs

Richard Stanistreet and Michael Bath christen LRC's new lightweight quad/four named in honour of the club's premiership win.

At the AGM on 19 August, the following committee members were elected to run our club for the next 12 months. The committee meets the second Monday of each month.

Patron Ted Curtain
President Tim Clare
Vice-Presidents Len McPherson, Dave Bodell, Bob Stone, Tony Potter, Vic Williamson, Rod Moynahan, Steve Roll, Bill Monaghan, Barry Moynahan, Kevin Bond, Michael Bath
Club Secretary Steve Jaques
Treasurer Peter Trives
Assistant Treasure Liz Brown
Club Captain Jane Hutchison

Vice-Captain Rod Richardson
Vice-Captain Deanna Fekete–Wheatley
Property Master Tim Tindale
Junior Vice-Captain Rebecca Chapman
General committee Barbara Chapman (merchandise), Lee Hutchison (merchandise), Kerry Woodward (regatta secretary), Sue Philpot, Helena Granziera, Richard Stanistreet (new pontoon guru), Anne Parbury (communications).

Coaches corner

This month we hear from Charlie Bartlett and Michael Bath

Charlie Bartlett : the Senior Group

With Frank and Kerry away over most of the cold winter months I keenly volunteered to take the programmed weekend on water sessions hoping to be inundated with athletes wanting to get an early start to the season. But for a handful of regulars including Charles Bazzina, John Turner and James Gerofi it seems the winter blues and a cosy bed have erased the memory on how great a good row can feel and convinced a few bodies to go AWOL.

Well although the NSW time trials have commenced for next season, it's not too late to make a start. The weather has improved so let's get into it.

I remain optimistic that Leichhardt can build on 2006–07 and raise the standard amongst those who want for high achievement. However, based on commitment to date I think we might have to get a little more realistic about what our minds will really let our bodies do before we can start the journey.

My plan is still to identify what each athlete wants from their rowing in 2007–08 and I haven't started that process yet because the numbers I expected just aren't there to begin. I believe it is important to match athlete commitment and ability so everyone gets an opportunity to do their best and make improvements at their personal level of ability. Remember always that the harder you work at something the better you get.

Frank has set a great program for all to follow; what we need is to coordinate our availability and commitment to each other so crews can be formed which suit our individual needs. I am a big supporter of crew boat rowing supplemented by 15–20% of on water time in small boats. It is based on this premise that I will seek your commitment.

So come along on the weekend after the Corporate Regatta to sit, discuss and agree our plans for the season. Your diary date is **7.00am Sunday 16 September** at the Club for breakfast and a planning session. Please let me know if you can't come along. In the meantime it's training as usual. See you there.

Diary date: 7.00am Sunday 16 September

Michael Bath: J3 and J4 squads

The J4 girls squad came back to training in early June with one focus being on competitive results at the under 19 and under 21 levels at the state and national regattas. Most of last year's squad have returned with the squad currently comprising Rosa Brown, Amy van den Nieuwenhof, Zoe Thomas, Maddy van Ewyk, Liz Lester, Ella Collins-White, Rebecca Chapman and Nicola Gollan, with Alex Hutchison from J3 also currently rowing with the squad on Thursdays and Saturdays. While Helena Granziera started with the squad, she is currently sidelined by illness. The early stages of training have focussed on skills and strength development and learning how to move the boat. Liz, Ella, Nicola and Beck recently had one of those 'I get it' moments in the quad and the boat speed since then has improved significantly.

This year, in addition to the regular 6K ergs, we have also introduced 2K, set rate, ergs every 3 weeks to both monitor progress and identify areas of racing where the girls need to focus on boat speed.

Results from these tests show that we are right on track for this stage of the season, with most of the squad close to breaking eight minutes or doing significant personal best times. We hope to test out this speed in some of the upcoming long distance events, before the racing season proper begins. Stay tuned for more updates.

From the Treasurer:

A reminder that final deadline for payment of subs is **Saturday 8 September** (unless agreed otherwise with the Club Captain and/or Treasurer).

And a special reminder to any late payers: you must be financial or you will not be entered in races.

Boat handling : Doing it properly

The first in a series 'The Leichhardt mysteries'

The first issue of *Easy Oar* for the 2008 season prompted a request that we have a series on what was described as 'The Leichhardt mysteries', for example, some tips on bringing an eight into the pontoon.

Bill Monaghan has done that, and has gone even further. Here are his pointers on how to protect our boats and at the same time make getting on and off the water easier, faster and less traumatic for rowers and the property master.

Read how to treat the boats well and keep them out of the repair shop - what you see as one repair, Bill sees as one in a queue of boats to be repaired. Here is how we can take more care.

1 Off the rack

- Care to be taken when carrying boats ... remember there are two ends: bow and stern ... keep the boat clear of all obstructions.
- Pull all sliding arms (racks) out at the same time.
- Half the crew on each side of the boat to lift off the rack
- Lift and move off the rack taking care that the boat and riggers are clear of the boats **above** and **below** (riggers can make nasty gouges in the surface of a boat).
- Push the siding racks back before moving the boat out of the shed.

Important! *When moving out of the shed make sure your riggers do not hit other boats – in most cases you need to carry the boat at half turn, so the riggers are vertical.*

- Place boat in slings and check feet settings, adjust and check that seats and slides are working correctly, and check all riggers are secure – check the nuts and bolts
- When everything with the boat is adjusted to everyone's happiness, lift the boat off the sling and walk it down the pontoon, bow towards Iron Cove bridge end of pontoon.

2 Pontoon to water

At Leichhardt, priority is given to the crew about to leave the pontoon ... if you check the boat while it is on the slings it should take not longer than 2 to 3 minutes at the pontoon.

Note: Be mindful of all rowers - do not have incoming crews waiting for longer than 3 departures (just as in the golf protocol, call the waiting crew on).

- There are two common methods of putting the boat into the water, depending on experience
 - 1 *For beginners and intermediate rowers* bowsiders hold the boat while the strokesiders duck under the boat **one at a time**. This way there are always 3 or 7 people holding the boat at any one time.
 - 2 *For experienced rowers* the boat is lifted to shoulder height then on a call from stroke the boat is lifted to full arms and rolled towards the water. When tossing the boat, grab a rib or strong point or gunwales of the boat - do not grab any moving parts as they may break.
For pairs / double sculls: carry the boat at approximately two-thirds of the way along the bow and stern. Be careful when rolling the boat over as there are few, if any, grab points.
- Stroke to call, step down to the pontoon ... move to the edge, lift the boat away from the pontoon and place into the water (make sure the fin is clear). Do not drop the boat into the water ... lower it, taking care not to scrape the boat into the pontoon edge.
- While bow side holds the boat, stroke side gets the oars.

3 Getting into the boat

Important: *Do not step onto the bottom of the boat as it's not made to take the full weight of the rower ... failure to step in the right place can damage the boat*
Bow side place their oars in the gates and hold the boat. (Hold the boat rather than standing on the riggers - doing this can cause undue stress on the riggers and the boat.)

Boat handling : Doing it properly (ctd)

3 Getting into the boat

- Stroke side then steps in together while bow side is holding the boat. Take care - step only onto the foot plate and then ease yourself down onto the seat.
- Bow side then gets into the boat together and carefully sits down. For doubles and pairs follow the same technique – half the crew gets in at one time. Secure all oars in the gates.
- The boat is ready to push away from the pontoon - avoid using the oars to push away from the pontoon as this damages the oars.

4 Pushing off the pontoon

Note: do not lock the feet into shoes until you are clear of the pontoon ... if the boat rolls over it will be dangerous to have your feet locked in.

- *For novice crews:* I like bow and 2 to row lightly away from the pontoon
- *For beginners:* can retract the bow side oars and place across the boat leaving only the blade of the oar exposed (shipped oars) when the boat is pushed away from the pontoon the oar can slowly be extended until the button of the oar is hard against the gate.
- *For more experienced rowers:* lay the bow side oars parallel to the boat on the pontoon. As the boat is pushed off the pontoon, stroke side (and coxswains in the case of 4s and 8s) take the oars and use them to tap away from the pontoon. When clear of the pontoon the oars are passed back to bow side rowers.
** this method relies on balance and a slip can result in a swim!
- *For experienced rowers only:* after locking all oars into gates the whole crew steps into the boat together and then sits down as the boat floats away from the pontoon.
- If rowing in the dark, make sure lights are carried on the boat. Failure to have suitable lights can result in a fine - and increases the risk of an accident.

Watch out for more tips next month.

5 Returning to the pontoon

See the note re priority given to crews leaving the pontoon.

- On most occasions we travel into the pontoon from the Dobroyd Point (west) end ... when there are strong westerly winds, all crews should row into the wind for better control into the pontoon.
- When approaching the pontoon after a row, the coxswain should bring in the boat at a slight angle to the pontoon. The closer to parallel to the pontoon the better.
- As the boat approaches the pontoon, all crew members should be aware of what is happening as failure to react to directions could result in the boat hitting the pontoon and damage the boat.
- I suggest the stern pair of rowers should do the manoeuvring as the boat comes in. This is because they are the last to come in.
Note: bow side should either retract (ship) oars or pass them around to stroke side in front of them ... depend on the level of experience.
- Once the crews have hand contact with the pontoon, bow side can get out of the boat, and hold the boat while stroke side gets out.
- Stroke side then takes the oars to the side of the staging, leaving room to walk the boat up.
- When lifting the boat from the water, grab a strong point on the boat or both gunwales. Make sure to clear the fin and pontoon, to prevent damage.
- The boat can be tossed or held up while half the crew go under to the other side, similar to that done when putting the boat in the water. Place the boat in slings, and wash down with fresh water and chamois dry.
- If there is damage or breakage please report to the property officer - our aim is to keep each boat in good repair, ready for the next row.



Grade regattas in the 2008 season

Rower status rules have been changed for season 2008

The NSWRA is optimistic that this new system will provide a better racing experience for all members and encourage greater participation and closer competition.

The 2008 regatta calendar

The 2008 season is divided into monthly pre-Christmas and fortnightly post-Christmas regatta rotations. Pre-Christmas offers the regular rotation of the usual time trials, age/open regattas, distance events and grade regattas. Post-Christmas will offer a regular rotation of age/open and grade regattas, giving regular racing athletes the choice of competing in either an age/open or grade regatta stream (although it is possible to race in both). New regattas have been added to the 2008 calendar to give this opportunity.

The two streams of competition are expected to reduce the number of competitors per regatta, so there is no repetition of the late finishing regattas of the 2007 season.

Age/ open regattas

The age competition promotes elite athlete development, but also incorporates masters. Clubs wanting to develop junior and youth development programs have requested that age racing in regattas continue. The aim is to develop crews who want to compete at state and national championship and selection regattas.

In masters competition it is recognised that within each age division there are quite diverse levels of ability and hence the grade system may be a more attractive option than age-based competition for some masters crews. Composite crews will be allowed in the age/open competition stream.

Grade regattas

Grade racing is aimed at club development. The rules allow for different levels of participation and ability within each club and promote athlete development. The system allows different standards of rowers to form a crew from within the one club, irrespective of age and past performance.

Grade competition will support club development programs and offers maximum flexibility. The crew competes at the combined average ranking of the individual rowers.

Composite crews are not permitted.

RGS changes

Every rower in NSW will receive a rower grade score (RGS) for sweep, multiple and single sculling ranging, from 1.5 (elite, or perhaps 0) to 4 (never rowed before).

After every regatta, a rower's RGS will be adjusted based on their performance, age and race distance. A win in a grade race lowers the RGS, and a loss increases the RGS towards 4 by a small increment. The RGS list will be updated shortly after each regatta.

The NSWRA Competition Commission will regularly review the NSW RGS change formula to ensure that progression and regression of crews and individuals is based on a win / loss ratio of 1 in 5 races.

*This is an edited version of the notice on the NSWRA website:
www.rowingnsw.asn.au/*

How it works: the Rower Grade Score

The starting points for calculating the RGS are:

- 4.0 Never raced before
- 3.75 novice
- 3.5 intermediate
- 2.5 senior
- 1.5 elite

From here, each rower's RGS will be adjusted based on results for 2007 and the list will be open to appeal from rowers before being made final. The RGS list is now available for review.

Forming crews

Clubs can form crews for competition in different grades:

GRADE	POINTS
A	0 - 1.50
B	1.51 - 2.50
C	2.51 - 3.50
D	3.51 - 4.00

The crew RGS is the average RGS of the rowers e.g. a quad with individual RGSs of 3.6, 3.1, 2.2 and 1.8 gives a crew total RGS of 10.7, and an average of 2.675. This crew will be eligible to compete in C Grade competition.

Grade regattas (ctd)

Entering crews

Updates to the RGS from each regatta may not be available in time for close of entries for the next regatta, so entries will be accepted based on the RGS current at the time the entry is lodged. If change in the entered crew RGS renders the crew ineligible, the club must choose one of the following options:

- make a crew change to allow the crew to comply with the grade entered, or
- withdraw from the entered grade and re-enter the crew into the new grade, without incurring a late entry fee.

Substitutions

Once the race draw is completed, crews may substitute rowers only if the substitute rower does not change the crew RGS to a higher standard grade. A substitution that changes the crew RGS to a lower standard grade is permitted but the crew is required to race in the grade entered, not the lower grade.

This is an edited version of the notice on the NSWRA website. To see the full text, go to www.rowingnsw.asn.au/



A selection of the trophies won by LRC last year was also on show at the AGM, seen here with some of the happy winners and coaches (all wearing their new club polo shirts!)

Looking for BROs - now is your chance

Members and parents: the New South Wales Rowing Association is looking for new applicants to become licensed boat race officials. The BROs run the regattas, marshal and start the boats for each race and make sure they don't run into each other.

The first step is to complete the online test on the NSWRA website: for more information go to www.rowingnsw.asn.au/officials/

Do you have something to say? Say it to the club.

Send your contributions to aparbury@gmail.com or call me on 0415 580 187, or speak to me at the shed.

Anne

Look out for the next edition of Easy Oar in October.