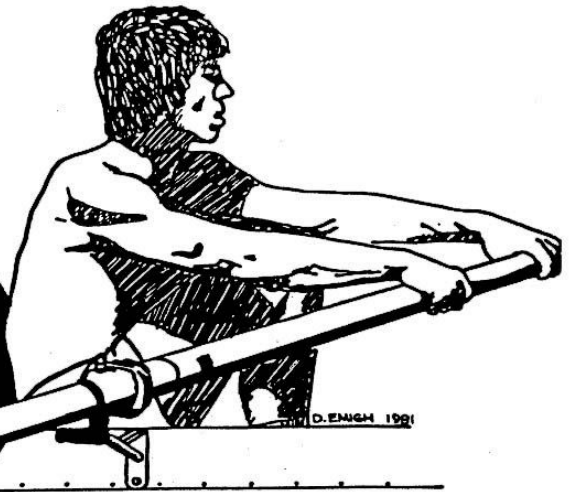


# WE PULL HARD



A Washington State University Men's Crew Publication, Winter 2008, Volume XIV, Issue III

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## Spring Break Training in the Tri-Cities

arthur ericsson

varsity coach

Perhaps there is no other thing that sets the members of Cougar Crew and your typical student apart than how they spend their spring break. We all know what spring break is famous for to most college students. And for those that aren't into the party scene, they are likely to drive back home, take it pretty easy and not have too much to show for the week.

We have a long history of serving up a grueling week of two-a-days, and this year will be no exception. But instead of plying the same waters we do all year, this time we are traveling to the Tri-Cities to stir things up for three days. There is some great history for the Cougars racing in Tri-Cities against other Northwest and California teams. But for us, this history is so far in the past that we might as well be reinventing the wheel. It will all be new to us. But there is generous support coming from many directions to welcome and assist the team.

Our host family will be the parents of 3<sup>rd</sup> year oarsman Andy Winters (Jr., Math). John and Maggie Winters have offered to house, feed and hose down our crew of 40 for three days and two nights. Next, our newly formed Parent Booster Club has found parents willing to make donations to the Winters family to help with the costs of

feeding us three times a day. Then staff members of WSU Tri-Cities Development and Events jumped in asking what they can do to help, and have now offered to host a BBQ, pizza night, and provide overnight classrooms and air mattresses, parking, student lounge recreation access, and additional food donations from local businesses. We feel very moved that our sister campus is treating us like their own. It will be great to wake up all of the Tri-Cities alumni. And for those who see shells once again rowing down the Columbia, it may hold some of the same emotion for them as it does for many of us.

The Cougars will be rowing out of Howard Amon Park, which is centrally located in the heart of Richland. We are hoping to generate some media interest and invite the community to come watch an inter-squad race on Tuesday afternoon along the shores followed by a meet & greet. One thing for sure is that we will take advantage of every opportunity to get some serious training in to make the trip not only fun and memorable, but very worthwhile. Isolating ourselves in a location purely for the purposes of executing our sport is something the coaches are eager to be spearheading. They embrace this training camp environment for creating a heightened level of intensity and by exposing just how deeply committed we all are to each other.



World Class. Face to Face.

## Varsity Spotlight: Weston Spivia

arthur ericsson

varsity coach

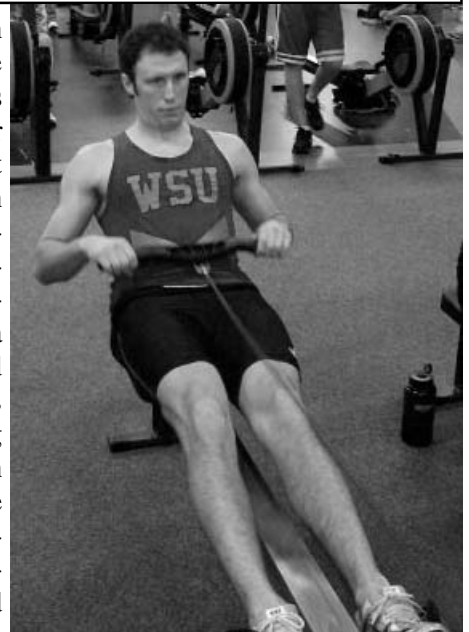
As the varsity coach, I'd have to blame the Running Start program. You see, Weston took advantage of this program his last two years at Tumwater High School in Olympia, WA. As a result, he soared ahead in college credits before he even got to WSU. As his freshman year was coming to a close, this former four-year high school wrestler saw himself withering away. So through conversations with some female friends who were rowing in college, impressions made by our IRA 4 results while visiting CougarCrew.com and inquiries on Facebook, he turned out his second year at WSU for the Men's Crew. He became the unofficial and official team captain for the novice team last year. The team wasn't looking for a team captain, and Weston wasn't looking to become one, but his motivation and team energy naturally carried him into that role. Then, while his third semester of rowing was gaining momentum, he told me that he was on track to graduate at the end of spring. As I saw a pillar from next season's top boat crumble to the ground, I congratulated him on what quick work this Biology major has made of it all.

But perhaps Running Start isn't so bad after all. It generates college students so motivated, that they actually do stay a fourth year to pursue a minor in Chemistry. Weston is on track to do lab research in Pullman this summer, and after graduation plans to pursue graduate school in either Marine Biology or Genetics. Much of his inspiration is modeled off his late grandfather, Leland Spivia. "He is the embodiment of a true man. He didn't have the opportunities that some people had, a product of the depression. He was super hardworking, a farmer. And he was intelligent. He would read every day and he was a skillful backyard inventor. If I had his build, I'd be pulling a 6:03 2k and on the national team. He was a thick, thick man."

Everyone on the team knows that Weston loves fishing, hunting and camping. Also, Weston is into a lot of different types of music that his peers usually aren't familiar with. He was impressed by a jazz guitarist that he got to know, and plays the guitar himself. He especially wants to improve his piano playing. The team's picks for erg workouts works fine for him, but he doesn't like listening to his favorite music while erging. "I keep those separate." One memory that makes

a strong impression of him is the time when he helped his dad build their family house. "It was an old barn that we had to rebuild from the inside out. Meanwhile we lived in a trailer for a good year, sometimes without running water." When called upon for the various Rent-A-Rower jobs, Weston is considered qualified in just about anything that they throw at us.

He rows because of the competition. He hates being second at anything. "Coming into many of our races, it seems like we're usually the underdog. It's the will and desire to stick it to the guy who's physically superior to you." He wants to have a really fast 8. But has concerns whether this year's crew will fulfill their potential. "This year stands on a knife edge. We've got technical things that we absolutely have to fix. And mentally we each have to buy into it every day. My high school baseball coach would say, 'you've got to sell yourself to buy in.' It's not that our 8 isn't committed, but when they start hurting is when you have to sell yourself. We row in good boats on good water and train like our varsity competitors. We have to stop thinking of ourselves as trying to be the best club team we can be, and try to be the best Division I Pac-10 team we can be."



*Weston warms up for his 2k piece at the Gonzaga erg duel.*



*Weston rowed 2 seat in the Novice 4+ last year at PCRCs placing second.*

## Lightweight 8+ Returns to the San Diego Crew Classic

brandon caesar

vice commadore

The last year any major west coast regatta held the men's lightweight eight event was 2004. For the next two years, the Cal Lightweights fielded the only varsity lightweight eight on the west coast, and they raced nothing but openweight competition. In 2007, in part driven by WSU Men's Coach Arthur Ericsson, there were enough entries for the Western Intercollegiate Rowing Association (WIRA) and the Pacific Coast Rowing Championships (PCRC) to run the Men's Lightweight Eight event again, marking the first increase in west coast lightweight rowing in many years.

WSU's Lightweight Eight took second to the Cal Lightweights at WIRA in 2007 and then beat them two weeks later in a rematch at PCRC, finishing the year as the fastest Lightweight Eight on the West Coast. There were only five west coast men's teams with lightweight eights last year, but things have to start somewhere.

This is my senior year. I was in the Lightweight Eight last year, and shortly after we won PCRC I decided my next goal was to race in the boat that wins the 2008 San Diego Crew Classic Men's Lightweight Eight. I had raced in the event in 2004 with Orange Coast College and that was the last time that event took place in San Diego. Some work had to be done.

The first step was making sure that the event took place. I contacted the regatta officials and they told me that at least three teams needed to enter for them to run the race. I had discussed the matter with members of the Cal Lightweights last spring and summer, so I contacted them and every other team that had entered a lightweight boat of any kind in the past few years.

There are two major factors working against teams entering a lightweight eight. The first is that most of the west coast teams are small and do not have the numbers to consistently enter more than one eight. The second is that the San Diego Crew Classic does not allow rowers to row in



more than one event, meaning that any team that wants to enter a lightweight eight has to prioritize that race for their lightweight rowers, and not use them in the Openweight Varsity, JV, or Novice Eight events.

After many discussions with West Coast coaches, and many polite rejections, the top three lightweight eights from last year (ourselves, the Cal Lightweights (UC Berkeley), and UC Santa Barbara) all entered, and remain, in the event. University of the Pacific and Sonoma State initially entered, but have since lost the numbers to field a lightweight eight at the SDCC and withdrew. Similarly, USC and Long Beach both expressed interest but currently lack the numbers to field one without conflicting with their priority entries.

In addition to the three west coast teams, Texas and Purdue have entered eights. Purdue was expected to so, since they have to defend the trophy they won in 2004, but the addition of Texas Crew was a pleasant surprise. This brings the current number to five, but the final deadline is not until April fourth, so it is possible another crew or two will join us.

All the crews entered are from club teams, and I do not see a favorite or an underdog in the field. These five lightweight crews could finish in any order without surprise. We could get first. We could get last. There is no way to know. The only thing we can do is arrive as fast as possible, race to our best ability, and pray that is enough. Pray for us. If you do not pray, then think good thoughts. We are going to need them.

## Parent Booster Club: A New Construct for Men's Crew

lisa curtis

alumnus

WSU Men's Crew now has yet another enthusiastic organization out there to help and support them during their entire year of training and racing. The newly formed Men's Crew Parent Booster Club will be having its first meeting the weekend of Cougar Crew Days, March 15, 2008. This is an organization that will operate independently of the Cougar Crew Alumni Association, but intends to work together in sharing information and ideas on how best to support the team.

This enthusiasm for this new organization has many sides. First, we are going to be a reliable channel for parents to hear news about the team. This will be a way for the team to communicate information on race dates, locations, directions, and race start times to their families so they will be able to see them race, at the right time and place. The booster club also intends to have a staffed tent at as many races as possible, providing food and drinks for the rowers as well as a place for families to gather and hear race results. Many parents in the past have had a difficult time finding out information on race day, so it will not only be a source of support for the team, but a means for the parents to get to know each other and share information and support. If a family is unable to attend a race, the booster club will be able to provide up-to-date race results as well. The booster club will have an active liaison so the information will be as current as possible. The club will also be able to better communicate with the team re-

garding needs for housing the rowers during their many weekend trips around the northwest for races.

This year the Booster Club plans to have staffed tents with food and beverages for the team (and for purchase by friends and families) at the Daffodil Cup on April 29 in Tacoma, as well as the UW WSU duel on April 12. In addition, some parents have indicated interest in helping out at the tent at the San Diego Crew Classic on the weekend of April 5. This tent is one that the San Diego chapter of the WSU Alumni Association has each year at the races. Next year we will be able to have a staffed tent with hot food and drinks during those chilly fall races.

In the future, the Men's Crew Booster Club may become more involved in fund raising for the team itself in addition to the fundraising efforts of the CCAA. Being made up of parents of rowers and coxswains, parents know too well how hard their sons and daughters are working to earn money for their team in addition to training, racing, and of course, their academics. Anything we can do as parents and alumni to help lighten their load will only benefit the team in the long run.

If you are interested in helping or finding out more about the newly forming Men's Crew Parent Booster Club, please contact Yvonne Lindbom (team parent) at [yvindbom@comcast.net](mailto:yvindbom@comcast.net) or Lisa Curtis (crew alumni, team parent, and team liaison) at [lcurtis60@comcast.net](mailto:lcurtis60@comcast.net). We welcome any discussion and ideas on how to best support this great organization.



WSU Men's Crew would like to congratulate senior oarsman Tak Niino. An animal science major he was recently accepted to the veterinary school at the University of Pennsylvania. He'll be pursuing his DVM following in the footsteps of former oarsman Tim "Haole" Richards.

## Novice Spotlight: Karri Simao

mitch williams

varsity oarsman

Sunny skies, beautiful sandy beaches, and temperatures nearly always in the eighties. Why would anyone choose to live elsewhere? Karri Simao's answer is simple. "The weather. It's all the same."

Living in a Hawaiian tropical paradise may be too much of a good thing at times. Karri is a coxswain on this year's novice team and is from Kaiser High School in Honolulu. She applied to many colleges all over the nation, but decided on WSU because it was where she felt the most comfortable. Another key factor in her decision was whether or not the college had a rowing program. In Hawaii, she paddled in outrigger canoes and actually sat in the stroke seat. She wishes she could be a collegiate rower, but understands her height puts her at a disadvantage. In her own words: "I'm too small!"

As a result, she decided to become a coxswain and has really enjoyed the experience. "I love the friendships and being on the water. Back home, I never lived more than 5 minutes away from the ocean," she said. The Snake River is a very beautiful and picturesque place to row, but anyone familiar with the area knows that rain, wind, and frigid temperatures are quite common this time of year. One would think these wintry conditions would depress a Hawaiian, but not Karri.

"It's not as bad as I thought. Everybody told me how terrible the winters would be, but I just layer up," she said. "I really love playing in the snow. The only thing I don't like is slipping on ice when walking around campus." The weather in Pullman certainly does not dampen Karri's spirits, but there are certain things she greatly misses about Hawaii. "I really miss the food. We have *really* distinct cultural food. It's amazing. I also miss the diversity of people on the islands," she explained. But when she gets a little homesick, she realizes that she is having a blast at WSU. Karri also knows that spring rac-



*Karri prepares for her race at the Falcon Fremont 4-Miler hosted by SPU.*

ing season is right around the corner.

When asked what she looks forward to most about spring racing, she responded, "I really like traveling to compete and it will feel more like actual racing. Everything is more intense." Karri's schedule is about to become more intense, too. Nearly every weekend until the end of the school year is booked as a result of crew. Spring break training, regattas in California, and races in the Seattle and Spokane areas are looming on the horizon. She will find a way to juggle crew, classes, and commitments to her sorority, Kappa Kappa Gamma. It is not a tough task for Karri, though. Karri is a very motivated and energetic individual. Her competitiveness, when complimented with her bubbly and easy-going attitude, makes for a great coxswain. She will undoubtedly help make the novice team faster and more successful this year.



*Karri coxes the Novice 8+ B boat at the Falcon Fremont 4-miler in Seattle.*

## Gonzaga Erg Duel: The Prelude to Spring Racing



*At left: Varsity and Novice warm-up for the 1500 meter piece that took place three hours after the 2000 meter races*

*Below: Varsity members prepare physically as well as mentally for their 2000 meter piece.*

peter brevick

assistant novice coach

The Washington State vs. Gonzaga erg dual is an always anticipated event. For the coaches it is the first chance of the spring season to see how the team competes under pressure, while the athletes get to use it as a prime opportunity to put all their hard work over the winter to good use. Both parties this year were able to gain some valuable and encouraging information.

As all the recent alumni know, in addition to being our closest rival geographically, the Gonzaga rowing program and the Cougar Crew have had some *very* close competition the past several years. This current spate of trading race victories traces its start to an event mentioned in the fall 2004 *Pull Hard*, a victory by the V8+ at the Head of the Spokane regatta. Since then each team has earned its victories, and tasted its often bitter defeats.

With rowing at WSU, the indoor season of erging, running, lifting, stairs and every other method conceivable of making one tired can be a trying time. The fall racing season has whetted the appetite, but the fulfillment of spring racing is still a long way off. This is the background through which the oarsmen strived in their training. For the novice especially, who have yet to taste a 2k on the water, the winter is a period of looking deep for the reserves and desire to perform on a high level. Thankfully this erging event is just the carrot needed to keep all of the team eager and working.

The day started off with the varsity teams of WSU and GU facing off in the 2k event. Each year there are bragging rights for the fastest on each team and the fastest time of the whole event. This year both of those distinctions went to WSU's sophomore oarsman Mitch Williams. He pulled a steady piece and won the event with an average split of 1.34.9, earning himself entrance to WSU's sub 6:20 club in the process with his time of 6.19.4. The rest of the varsity gave their all, but some were disappointed with how their races. The novice event followed, and for WSU this resulted in every oarsmen

pulling a personal record time. Although outsized by the GU rowers, the Cougar novice performed efficiently, placing 4 lightweights into WSU's top 8 oarsmen.

After everyone had pulled their 2k, and cheered the coxswains in their 500m dash, they then had the final event. It was a 1,500m piece, with seedings based on each competitor's 2k time. With WSU having the honor of Mitch on erg #1, every Cougar oarsman, novice included, bested their 2k splits considerably. For the novice, much of the improvement came from better pacing, while many of the varsity were fueled with a desire to show what they were really capable of pulling.



Though Gonzaga ended up winning the event, just over 4 seconds for the varsity and about twice that for the novice, the Cougar coaches and oarsmen were pleased with the performance. The event resulted in many close rower vs. rower competitions (some even resulting in the exact same race times!) and the experience will be invaluable in the months to come.

As the team heads back to the water they are motivated by the competition and eager to see how each team can apply their power on the water. In just two short months WSU and GU will have the opportunity to see who has done better when the real race happens. The race for the Fawley Cup.

## ACRC: A Championship Regatta for Club Teams

karl huhta

commadore

who must always travel east every year.

The stewards of the Intercollegiate Rowing Association (IRA) National Championship Regatta have recently made the announcement that following the 2008 regatta in Camden, New Jersey, club programs will no longer be admitted to compete in the regatta against varsity programs. The 2008 IRA, which will be the 105<sup>th</sup> annual edition, will be the last time in which the Cougars and their Varsity 4+ will compete for an IRA national title.

You may now be asking yourself why a 105 year old regatta is all of a sudden changing its structure and no longer allowing club teams, which have been allowed to compete for a number of decades. The reason for the policy changes taking place are an attempt by the IRA stewards to create a national championship that is modeled and similarly structured to that of the NCAA Rowing Championship, the sanctioned national championship for women's rowing. After an unsuccessful NCAA bid for men's rowing to become an NCAA sanctioned sport last year, this restructuring of the national championships is believed to be an attempt by the stewards to show the changes and "progresses" that men's rowing is willing to take to gain acceptance by the NCAA. The costs however of these changes are the elimination of clubs competing in the regatta, as well as programs needing to qualify for the championships to be able to compete.

So after this year, what are the options for Cougar Crew on the national scale? Before word was officially announced as to the changes that were taking place, Greg Hartsuff, head coach of the University of Michigan men's crew, quickly acted to form a committee of men's crew club coaches specifically designed to give club teams that are no longer allowed to compete in Camden a season-ending national championship regatta that they may travel to. The regatta is known as the American Collegiate Rowing Association (ACRA) National Championship Regatta and it will take place for the first time on the Oklahoma River in Oklahoma City, on May 24-25, the weekend following the Pac-10 Championships. The Oklahoma River was chosen for its nationally central location, an issue that has brought the IRA Regatta under recent scrutiny by west coast crews

The University of Michigan men's crew is known to be the fastest club team in the United States, being ranked in the national top ten for the last seven years. But even the Wolverines are no longer being allowed to compete in the IRA, simply because of their "club status". "We have hundreds of collegiate club rowers who want and deserve the opportunity to race for a national championship title," said Hartsuff in a January 24<sup>th</sup> press release, "We decided to create this new organization with that as the sole mission. We are developing the American Collegiate Rowing Association with a singular focus on creating a national championship regatta that appeals to a very diverse group of programs." Much more information can be found on the organization's still young website, [www.americancollegerowing.com](http://www.americancollegerowing.com).

The Cougar Crew has traditionally sent small boats to the IRA (fours and pairs) over its 38-year existence as a program, most notably winning the national championship in 1979 in the Varsity 4+, as well as winning the national championship in 1980 in the coxed pair. Even more recent, the Cougs' Varsity 4+ finished 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation just two years ago. But the ACRA National Championships offer the Cougars something the IRA does not. "The ACRA Regatta is similarly structured to how the WIRA Conference Championships - in which we are current members - are structured," said WSU head coach Arthur Ericsson, "The ACRA Regatta gives our program a wide array of events to enter, ranging from not just a Varsity 4+ or Varsity 8+ event, but to Lightweight 4+'s and 8+'s, Novice 4+'s and 8+'s, and even sculling events. This is the only U.S. collegiate national championship regatta that offers sculling events. We will have the opportunity to bring many more athletes to Oklahoma than we ever have been able to bring to New Jersey."

Presently as I sit and write this article, our team is currently exploring options to send a boat to Oklahoma for the ACRA Regatta, which is the weekend before IRA's. We do not know yet how that situation will be able to play out, but the 2009 ACRA Regatta has already been slated to take place again on the Oklahoma River, and you can be sure that more than just a Varsity 4+ will be there to represent Washington State University.

*The Pull Hard*

*Washington State University Men's Crew Newsletter*

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# 2008 COUGAR CREW DAYS

COUGAR CREW DAYS MARCH 14TH & 15TH

OUR GOAL IS TO HAVE EVERYONE CURRENTLY OR  
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