

The Pull Hard

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Varsity Spot Light: Paul Ehlers

By Kramer Wahlberg



Five from the left Paul Ehlers with his senior Class Day boat.

Paul Ehlers is the only member of the senior class to have rowed all four years on the Varsity team for Cougar Crew.

In a collegiate sport as grueling and demanding as crew, four-year oarsmen are commended for their perseverance and dedication. Paul Ehlers has been rowing competitively for five years, and is the only member of the se-

In high school, Paul rowed for Mt. Baker Rowing Club out of Mercer Island. He came to WSU eager to take his rowing to the next level and test his abilities at the collegiate level. “Novice junior rowing is orders of magnitude less rigorous than what I’ve experienced as a collegiate athlete. Prior to entering Coach Arthur’s training schedule, the longest piece I’d ever done on the erg was 20 minutes, and at the time it was complete torture; now, a 60 minute steady state piece barely elicits the bat of an eye,” said Paul. “Surviving the transition to Cougar Crew meant learning what it meant to really work hard and push yourself farther than your mind believes it can go.” On the latest 2k erg test,



Ehlers celebrating after winning in the V8+ at WIRAs.

Paul improved his time on the Erg Hall of Fame Honors (sub 6:20) to 6:14.4.

During the 2010 season, Paul rowed 3 seat in the Varsity 8+ that won WIRA's and later placed third at the ACRA National Championships.

When asked about his experiences in that lineup, Paul said, "Even though the team knew that we were going to have an extremely competitive V8+ before the spring started, I don't think anyone quite expected it to be as successful as it was. The real significance of our season (winning WIRAs, taking 3rd at ACRA's) didn't even set in until well after the season concluded. It was truly something special, and that racing season is something I will always remember and cherish."

As his final racing season approaches, Paul is excited to see how the team can fare coming off of months of winter training, "Despite losing 5 members of last year's V8+, the power this year's team has shown on the ergs has exceeded even last year's. I'm confident that, once the rowing comes together, we will start making some very fast boats. As a senior, I obviously want to go out on top. Another WIRA title would definitely be amazing."

In addition to pulling on an oar, Paul has contributed to the team by serving as the Historian for the team. His duties

include managing historical data and records, taking down minutes at officer's meetings, and helping to educate his teammates about the history of the team. Paul has also been an invaluable asset to the publishing team, lending his eloquence to *The Pull Hard* and website articles including race recaps, previews, and of course, rower spotlights. It is only fitting that he finally gets his own. 🏻

Novice Spring Preview

By David Herrick



Novice class racing on Class Day

The beginning of the spring season began with trepidation as the novice returned from winter break, which meant 2 1/2 weeks of the ability to become lazy with assigned workouts and

a drop in fitness. The novice were promised a plan A,B and C. Plan A was a fitness test, a one mile run followed by 25 pushups, frog leaps up the field, 100 sit ups, bear crawls back down the field, with a second mile to wrap it up, completed within 23 minutes. Plan B would be used if 60% of the team didnt pass the fitness test, which consisted of a 6k in which 60% of the team must P.R. If this did not happen we “dont want to know what plan C is”. Unfortunately only 9 people of the novice team passed the fitness test, which led to the 6k the following weekend, which just over 60%



Novice at the Cougar Crew Banquet


set a personal record. With the fitness test behind them, the novice were introduced to high rate pieces in order to prepare for the upcoming races. These were new and forebod-

ing to many of the novice, but each oarsmen met the challenge and became stronger and faster, especially after the introduction of the weight lifting schedule assigned. Sooner than expected the novice did their first 2k's which surprised even coach, who expected many of these scores to be "trash 2k's" since they were the first of the season. Two weeks later the novice took their second shot at a 2k, many of which P.R'd, setting a hopeful and eager mood for the upcoming races.

Late February rolled around and the Erg Duel with Gonzaga University was before them. Those who were the for the fall remembered the sting of defeat at the head of the Spokane and Snake, and were eager to prove they were no pushovers. The erg duel began with a 5:30 departure with temperatures floating around -10, but none the less everyone was ready and set out for Spokane. The were grouped into pods of three per heat and tested themselves against the bulldogs. Overall the novice scores swept the field, combined

with many new personal records, everyone (coach especially) was grinning from ear to ear.

Two weeks later the novice were finally able to make it down to the river and get out on the water, some for the first time ever, quickly learning erg scores dont transfer immediately to the water. Despite being freezing and hungry afterwards, everyone was thrilled to be back.

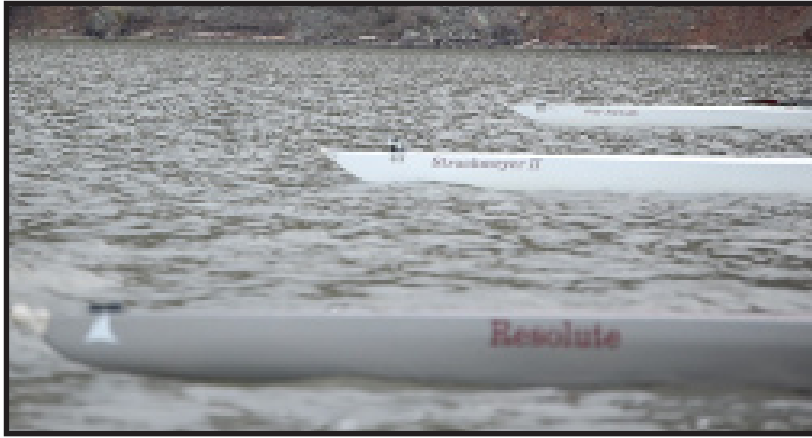
Now spring break training has begun, with morning rows and afternoon land workouts, many of the novice are starting to feel the wear of the first two days of the workouts, but the joke “it hurts so good” is often thrown around. In the last two days the novice have rowed in whitecaps, seat raced and began to really practice official racing starts along with regatta procedure. With each oarsmen throwing themselves into the workouts with determination and vigor and expectations mounting, this season should be an exciting one. 

Do You Have What It Takes to Pull a *POWER 10*?

For just \$10, \$20 or even \$30 a month your small donation can help keep Cougar Crew alive! Check out the power 10 Campaign under the alumni tab on cougarcrew.com

Around The ShellHouse: Reynolds

By Paul Ehlers



*The Reynolds lining up for Cougar Crew
Days Races*

Every shell has a story. From the Resolute, our brand new Hudson 8+ - generously donated by Ernie Eiseminger and our top racing shell - to the newly-christened Arthur Ericsson, a reliable Vespoli

shell that is invaluable to our novice fleet, all the boats in the boathouse are integral to the success of Cougar Crew. Nearly all of the shells have immediately recognizable names – big donors, legendary coaches, or a word that has special meaning to the crew in general. One shell in particular, however, is a bit of a mystery – most of the current rowers and even the recent alumni don't know the full story behind it. The Reynolds, a shell that as recently as the fall of 2007 was the top varsity racing shell, is an enigma.

The Reynolds is named for Gary Reynolds, the father of Paul Reynolds, who was a novice rower during the 1999-2000 season. Gary was terminally ill with a brain tumor, but his love for the team and exuberance at regattas was unparalleled. Luke Olona, the Commodore during the season when the Reynolds was purchased, remembers that, “despite his



*V8+ racing the Fremont Four
Miler in 2007*

condition, Mr. Reynolds displayed a tremendous amount of passion and enthusiasm for WSU rowing. Putting that name to our varsity shell was a no brainer.” Brett Mitchell, who was one of Paul Reynolds’ closest friends and someone who knew Gary through the years, says that, “he was truly a great man, generous, enthusiastic, a great father and very passionate about the things he cared about.”

He recounts a story about speaking with Gary at one of the early season regattas, and Gary was completely enthralled by the beauty of the rowing stroke. Gary was moved to tears whenever he would see the team row – it was a source of great strength as he had to deal with the trials of brain cancer and, ultimately, his passing.

New boats are always a momentous occasion for the crew that purchases them. The last time the team bought new shells with their own funds, it was 40+ rowers and coxswains coming together to purchase new 4+s, and the fundraising vehicles in place at the time made such an accomplishment relatively painless. The Reynolds, however, was purchased at a different time in WSU Crew’s history. The team was less than 30 strong, with only two seniors and three juniors among them, and did not have the extensive fundraising capabilities that allow us to run a quarter-million-dollar



Sophomore Class in the Reynolds on Class Day

budget as we do today. At the time, the top racing shell was a 1995 Pocock, the Defiant. The current seniors and alumni will all have fond memories of that

crimson (and, prior to that, white!) beast. As Josh Proctor, rower at the time and current CCAA Vice Chair, recounts, “We chose a Pocock shell because, at the time, nearly all the shells in the boathouse were Pocock shells and the team had great experience with their shells. They proved to be very durable and competitive. They also had favorable financing terms over Vespoli, which was the other shell we were considering.” The purchasing of a new shell instills a great sense of pride in a crew, which goes a long way to explain the team’s much better than expected performance at the San Diego Crew Classic that year in the Reynolds.

When the shell was purchased, one of the varsity coxswains, Erin Walker, suggested that it be named after Paul’s dad. The proposal was met with immediate, unanimous approval – Gary was a special part of the team, and his dedication and heart were unwavering, even in the face of such extreme adversity.

Given the recent passing of one our own, Jaimeson Jones, to cancer, I believe that rediscovering the history of the Reynolds is as apropos as ever. Whenever we take out this shell,

we should be mindful of the great man it was named for and how hard the team works for the privilege of new equipment.

Special thanks go to Josh Proctor, Luke Olona, and Brett Mitchell for their invaluable assistance in fleshing out the narrative behind the Reynolds. 

Jaimeson 5K memorial Run



Left: Men's Varsity and Novice 5k run to honor their teammate Jaimeson Jones.

Bottom right: current members of the Men's team wearing their funky, bright spandex in memory of Jones.



An Olympian Pays A Visit

By Kramer Wahlberg



*Paul above in 1984
Olympics*

On March 4th, former Cougar oarsman and Olympic champion, Paul Enquist, graciously took some time to travel down to the river to offer advice and inspiration to the members of Cougar Crew.

Enquist began his rowing career as a member of the Heavyweight Crew at Washington State University, graduating in 1977. Following his collegiate experience,

he continued to pursue rowing on an international level. His hard work and dedication culminated in the greatest achievement in the sport, an Olympic gold medal at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics in the men's double sculls.

After he arrived at the boathouse, all eyes were glued on Enquist as he eagerly shared his passion for the sport. Down on the dock, he gave a quick clinic on the key technical issues that he believed were essential to moving boats. Senior oarsman Paul Ehlers was lucky enough to be the model for Enquist's lesson, "Well, other than being completely surprised, it was pretty intimidating having my rowing critiqued by an Olympic gold medalist," said Ehlers.

Speaking from personal experience, the team rowed with



Paul's Gold Medal from the Men's Double sculls.

an inspired vigor that day as Enquist watched from the launch, offering coaching tips as the crews battled one another in a series of pieces. Sophomore Lee Peha reflected on the experience, “Meeting Cougar Alumni is always a time to learn old tricks that

improve rowing. The story of Paul Enquist going to the Olympics was incredible. Hearing about drills we still do today making the difference between silver and gold puts them in a different light.”

Following the row, the team gathered for some final words from Paul. As he reached into his pocket and brandished the 1984 gold medal, Enquist explained how through hard work and a relentless desire to succeed, you are capable of achieving greatness. Hailing from WSU, and his doubles partner from UC Irvine, he described that it is not so much important as to where you rowed, or whether or not you were a scholarship athlete, but that you had the attitude and drive to push yourself further than your opponents. Inspired by Paul's story, novice captain, David Herrick had this to say, “At the end of the day when he pulled out his medal to show us I was honestly blown away. That medal represents more sweat, grueling work, and a tenacity I cannot begin to fathom. To know he came from such humble origins to win that medal made it that much more incredible.”

After fielding questions and letting the rowers awe over

his medal, Enquist concluded practice by bringing it in, and leading the team in a “Cougs on 3!”

Link to the 1984 men’s double sculls grand final, <http://www.row2k.com/video/view.cfm?vid=9383>



Thank You To All Who Attended Cougar Crew Days!

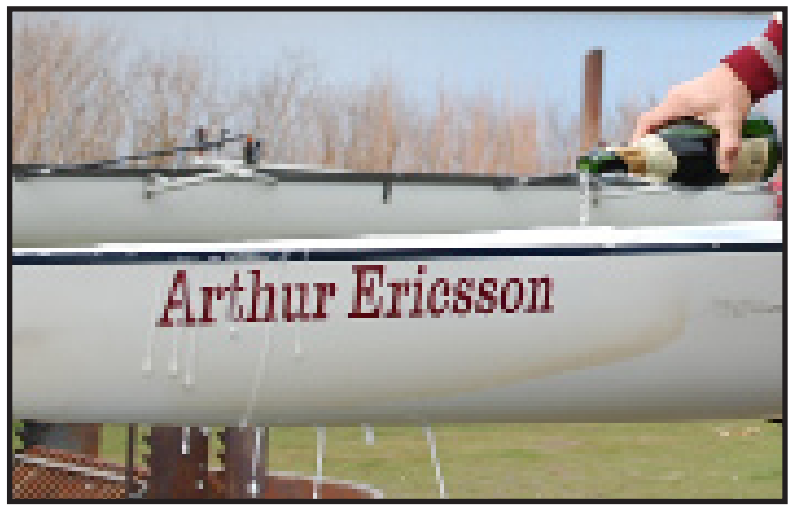


Junior Class Day Winners, with Jaimeson written down their arms to remember a rower who would have been a Junior and in their boat for the race.



Above Ernie Iseminger and his wife Alice Iseminger christening the Resolute which was bought and donated by the Isemingers and is the team’s top racing shell.





Cougar Crew Days consisted of the naming of three rowing shells, the newly named Resolute, Arthur Ericsson and Ken Abbey II.



Alumni fielding two 8+ went to battle with the Juniors to take the win in a 500 meter sprint.

