

The Pull Hard

A WSU Men's Crew Publication

**Cougar Crew Days is
Approaching! RSVP Now!**

**Senior Spotlight:
Josh Wadagnolo
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Cover photo courtesy of cougarcrew.com.
Rowing from Boyer Park, 1980.

From Erg Room to Lab Room

*By
Joe Sudar*

Winter training is treated by rowers with a combination of apprehension and respect. It is often said that races are won aerobically during the winter months, since it is a time when form can be put to the wayside temporarily so that raw power and endurance ability can be fostered. Unfortunately, this type of training also means exhaustion and the painful stressing of physical limits for the athletes.



Music is often used as a tool to distract rowers from the pain of heavy indoor training. Playing songs that the rowers like can help foster a positive attitude towards the workout, and recent research has suggested that certain musical genres can create an ergogenic benefit that may increase training efficacy. Unfortunately, it is often difficult to find music that everyone likes, and research on how music can affect rowing training specifically is hard to come by.

As a member of the WSU honor's college, I am required to conduct an original research thesis on a subject of my choosing. The music that is played during rowing practice was a debated subject on a few occasions during my early time with the crew team, and I was curious whether or not there was a difference in the effect that certain music would produce. After talking with Coach Arthur, who was very receptive to the idea, I drafted an experiment to test whether or not varying the styles of music that are played during erg sessions can change the split scores that the team produces.

Over six experimental sessions, the team performed a series of forty-

five second long sprint pieces for their best score. Though the exercise was designed to be manageable, it still provided a significant challenge and some valuable training for the team. Nearly everyone posted a personal record after every session, which luckily did not affect the statistics due to the design of the study, but instead reflected an impressive level of effort and commitment on the part of the team.

The quantitative data is still being processed, but some valuable qualitative observations have already become apparent. Aggressive music has been found to increase power output in sports like football and weightlifting. While the data has not yet been processed to see whether or not this holds for rowing, it is interesting to note that aggressive music contributes to less talking and joking between rowers during rest periods. The athletes became isolated and moved around without interacting with one another between pieces when heavy metal music was played, with and without lyrics.

Electronic music, on the other hand, has the opposite effect. During both lyrical and instrumental electronic music sessions (which have previously been correlated with better performance during long endurance training) rowers joked, talked, and compared scores in between exercises. In addition, during the electronic sessions, rowers tended to sit down on the rowing machines and begin paddling to warm up for the next piece sooner than during the other sessions.

The last two rowing sessions were dedicated to popular songs that made it onto the Billboard Top 100 list, a compilation of the currently top selling songs on the market, and a playlist made up of songs chosen by vote by the rowers. The most valuable qualitative observations from these sessions showed that, in general, novelty in music tends to provide the highest distraction from the pain of rowing. A notable example is when Wagner's Ride of the Valkyrie came on: the rowers went from expressions of pain and exhaustion to almost immediately joking and laughing with one another. It is worth noting, however, that the Ride of the Valkyrie in fact produced some of the slowest scores in any of the sessions, and thus distraction may not be everything in the grand scheme of musical effects.

The research continues, and final conclusions will hopefully be drawn from the data within the next few weeks. I am extremely grateful to Coach Arthur for letting me use the team to help my academics, to the coxswains who gathered data for me, and of course to the rowers who were both willing to participate, and who have taken a genuine interest in the results of the study.



Winter Training Recap

by David Herrick



Shortly before winter break Cougar Crew packed up the launches, unplugged the cox boxes and locked up the boathouse, it was time for winter training. To begin the team committed to a twenty-minute test in which most set new personal records. Over winter break each oarsman did varying cardio workouts on the erg, ranging from long slow pieces to short three to four minute pieces for best score, combined with body weight circuits with the hope of returning to Pullman even stronger. As the spring semester began the workouts began to shift, more high rate pieces on the erg as well as weight lifting shift from max lifting to 70-80% power with more reps, with focus on explosive lifting. Other workouts included Hoover ball, consisting of throwing a ten-pound medicine ball over field goal posts, several combined workouts with the Novice and Varsity, and the ever-popular Broomball. Other aspects of training included a few Varsity traveling to Seattle to compete in Ergomania. Sophomore

Jeff Rhubottom, senior Joe Sudar and junior Eric DeMaris competed in the collegiate event, while senior Paul Lund and junior Orion McCabe-Gould competed in the men's open event, all of whom set new personal records.

The last couple of weeks Cougar Crew were able to open up the boathouse and get back on the water to much relief, despite the cold and fickle conditions. Bundling up, the team has been able to get on the water several times, in the face of poor weather, and has focused on regaining technique that was lost over winter training and becoming even better. With spring break training approaching, class day races and the first regattas of the season around the corner, anticipation is high. Each respective boat is having increased expectations as technical skill improves and boat chemistry increases. This season should prove to be an exciting one.



The Transition from Erg to Boat

by Shayla Boyle



Winter training found way into our mornings shortly after our race at Head of the Lake in Seattle, WA. The transition was nice, only because it meant we could sleep in that extra hour. However, that extra hour of sleep soon became the realization that we would be facing the erg day after day. When broken down, winter training does not seem that long;

about a month's worth of erging before winter break, three weeks of training at home, and about a month and a half of erging together again before heading back down to the water.

This year, winter training got the best for some, testing their dedication to this team. In losing some, we were able to gain another. Facing the erg, morning upon morning, can be seen as a tiring process but has also shown the commitment in the girls we still have as part of our Lightweight Women's Crew team. The pieces that Coach Dan Thayer had us do would vary depending on the week. We found ourselves alternating between a week filled with volume-longer pieces reaching between 12-18K; and a week of intervals- repetitive shorter pieces at a higher stroke rate; all of which is built around making us stronger. Stronger both physically and mentally; a battle all rowers strive to overcome when facing the raw numbers an erg presents.

Coming out of winter training has made our team reach new levels. Having only been on the water for two practices, our technique is already stronger than when we left in November. We are finding ways within ourselves to apply unknown power despite our smaller stature. We keep searching for progress: matching catch timing, pressing more with our legs, a set boat...the checklist is endless. Yet being back on the water in the early mornings, a renewed determination has been lit again. We have come out with an eight that is ready to take the spring racing season head on.





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Senior Spotlight: Josh Wadagnolo

by Caitlin Aldrich

Josh, sitting 7 seat in the Varsity 8+ last fall



Photo courtesy of Row2k.com

If you're wondering who that loud rower you can hear yelling and carrying on upstairs in the erg room is, it's probably not Josh. That is not to say that he won't speak up; Josh knows the power of an authoritative request or a respectfully assertive challenge. Josh Wadagnolo is not a rower who ever considers half-heartedly pulling his way through a piece. However, if you are looking for a highly driven, self-disciplined athlete who leads by example, he is your man. The 6'4" senior is in his 4th year of rowing and carries much experience in 7 seat of the team's fastest boats. Among his most outstanding career accomplishments are: 7 seat of the 2009 Novice 8 that beat Oregon State University, claimed bronze at WIRAs and took 2nd at ACRA's (Nationals), falling only to Michigan; sophomore year he was 7 seat of the 2010 JV8 which bested Gonzaga at Fawley Cup and took a bronze medal home from WIRAs; junior year he was once again 7 seat in the 2011 Varsity 8 that decisively reclaimed the Fawley Cup against GU and went on to a strong showing in the Grand Finals of ACRA's in Gainesville, GA. A few intermittent times over the years he has been a bow seat but always returns to being the stern pair starboard. Currently he is 7 seat of the 2011-2012 Varsity 8 which ended the fall on a strong note at Head of the Lake with huge promise.

When Josh is erging, no matter what the pieces are that day, his intense focus is visibly manifested in his expressions and actions. As if possessed by a fire known only to him, there are no excuses that he allows himself. On the water his work ethic is equally evident as he pushes himself to the absolute limits. As 7 seat, he has extra responsibility to his boat as the “stroke” of the starboard side and he takes unchallenged ownership of this role. Invariably he makes an extraordinary effort to sync up perfectly with his stroke seat and will back up his pair partner with unquestioning support and quiet input. Additionally he is incredibly helpful to his coxswains- giving constructive criticism when necessary, helping connect the powerful (but usually rough and wily) engine room with the stroke and cox, all while bringing a unique brand of sanity and humor to the stern, which helps immensely with the strain and wear of long practices with high stakes.

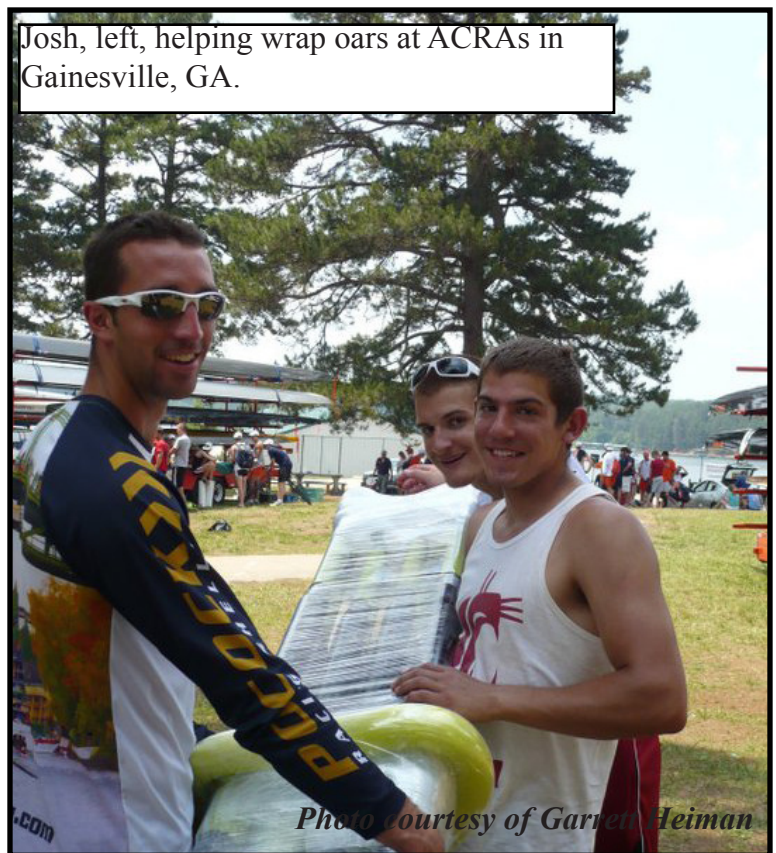
In his own words:

How did you end up rowing?

“All throughout school I have been playing sports – Soccer, swim, track – and I felt that I

needed to find that when I went off to college. Former commodore Mitch Williams went to the same high school as I did and I guess you could say that he recruited me.”

So far what is your most cherished accomplishment? “I have so many great memories, but taking the silver at ACRA's my novice year is probably at the top of that list. I never thought I'd be a college athlete, but walking down the course before that regatta and thinking to myself,



“Here I am, competing at the club national championships for a collegiate sport... wow.” I had never thought that I’d be in that position and that’s a moment I’ll never forget.”

What are your goals/expectations for spring 2012, your last semester of rowing? “I’m going to be cliché and say giving it all I’ve got. I would REALLY like to take the gold at WIRAs this year. When Cougar Crew won the V8 event 2 years ago I was so excited for the team, but I was very jealous of those guys, especially knowing that I had narrowly lost my place in that boat. That picture of King with his arms spread wide with tanks hanging off of them, I want that.”

You’re a Mechanical Engineering major. Do you currently have a plan for after graduation this year (obviously after we get back from a successful trip to ACRAs) ? “I’ve got an internship lined up with a manufacturing company near where I leave on the west side that I may do for the summer. I’ve been applying to various other jobs though, and may end up working if someone makes me an offer. All I know for sure, I want to stay on the west coast; anywhere between Washington and Southern California.”

In 5 years, how will rowing have impacted your life? “Rowing has definitely taught me about hard work and forced me to hone my time management skills; I’ll be able to apply that to whatever I’m doing. Maybe it will help me get my foot in the door for a job; I’ve had several interviews where the interviewer has noticed rowing and made the comment about how I must be a hard worker. I definitely want to give back to the team ...I’ve definitely made some lifelong friends and hope to stay in touch with them.”



The New Trailer

by Eric DeMaris

During the Head of the Lake Regatta last November, Cougar Crew's new boat trailer made its debut. With a larger boat-carrying capacity and sturdier structure, this trailer is a mammoth. The old trailer was quickly becoming a relic of the past (a valued one at that), so it was necessary for the team to pursue purchasing the newer and safer trailer. With the help of the UREC staff, a request was made to the Services & Activities Committee (S&A Fee Committee) for the trailer. S&A Fees are those collected with tuition each semester that support activities like Athletics, Student Involvement, the Daily Evergreen, and UREC. Arthur provided the specifications as well as made a contact with Pocock and those involved in UREC worked through WSU Purchasing to buy the trailer from Pocock Racing. This new trailer will be a part of Cougar Crew for many years to come.

Currently, the new trailer is seeking some Cougar Crew spirit. Logos and signage that could possibly adorn the structure are requested. If interested in donating some decoration, please contact Head Coach Arthur Ericsson at wsucrowcoach@gmail.com.



100,000 Strokes A Day

by Head Coach Arthur Ericsson

As the head coach, I am intimately familiar with our equipment. Our shells are heavily used day after day, year after year. On any given day, Cougar Crew will execute more than 100,000 strokes on the water. Boats are kept in service with spare parts, repairs are done in-house, even shoelaces are reused. We use the whole buffalo, comments Coach Ericsson. Nothing goes to waste. Our rowing shells are the very core of our pro-



gram. It is my goal to match the quality of the shells with the effort put forth by our athletes. The time has come for a call out for donations to support the acquisition of new rowing shells in several categories. A new 8 costs \$37,000. A new 4 costs \$23,000. A new pair costs \$13,500. It is because the price tags on these boats are so high, that we must seek help from outside the team itself. If one large donation is not feasible, alumni, parents, and friends of Cougar Crew can join together as a team to pool their resources. A fun tradition is that the donor of a shell gets to decide what to name the boat. The team is not above acquiring “almost new” boats, and has frequently purchased demo boats at a discount to help reduce the total cost. We thank you for considering the following:

1 heavyweight 8 (our #2 shell, the Struckmeyer is no spring chicken anymore, it is now 9 years old). We could then retire our oldest shell, which is now 22 years old.

1 heavyweight 4 (our #2 shell, the Kistler is a poorly made shell to

start with, it is now 8 years old).

4 mid/hvywt 2-/2X (we have two pairs which are strictly training shells, 19 years old).

Having four pairs is a dream so that on a nice day I can break an 8 lineup into pairs and they can do pieces against each other to see who can move boats. It's conducive to skill development and will be tons of fun for the guys. Pairs are made that can also be switched to sculling doubles, which will add another dimension to the team.

It is hard to prioritize these for if we always overlook the pairs then the dream will never come true. But the 8 is most practical for the entire team, and the 4 is most needed for the varsity.

~Coach Arthur Ericsson 

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Spring Race Schedule

March 16-17	Cougar Crew Days	Pullman, WA
March 24	Daffodil Cup	American Lake, Tacoma, WA
Mar 31-April 1	San Diego Crew Classic	Mission Bay, San Diego, CA
March 31	Husky Open (Lt. Wt. Women)	Montlake Cut, Seattle, WA
April 7	Apple Cup Dual vs UW	Montlake Cut, Seattle, WA
April 14	Fawley Cup vs Gonzaga	Wawawai Landing, Pullman, WA
April 28-29	WIRA Championships	Lake Natoma, Sacramento, CA
May 5	Opening Day Windermere Cup Regatta	Montlake Cut, Seattle, WA
May 12-13	PCRC/Pac-12 Championships	Lake Natoma, Sacramento, CA
May 26-27	ACRA National Championships	Lake Lanier, Gainesville, GA

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