



The Backsplash

William & Mary Rowing Club Newsletter
June 2012



Duels Weekend

By Ashley Koontz, '14

Just a month after getting off the ergs and back onto the Chickahominy, the William and Mary rowers were already loading up the trailer and making their way to the Tribe's first race weekend of the Spring 2012 season! Their first stop? Lynchburg, Virginia. The Tribe raced in the 2nd Annual Liberty University Duel for the Ivy Hills Cup on Saturday, March 31st.

The Ivy Hills Cup provided a great start to WMRC's spring season. The varsity squads aptly demonstrated progress made over the winter while novice successfully translated that training into their very first sprint race. With only enough room for a 1200 meter course, each of the day's races truly tested the rowers sprinting capacity. Amongst the many highlights of this regatta, some of the most exciting races to watch came from both Varsity 8+ events. The men swept the top two places over Liberty, and the women edged out Liberty by three seconds!

In the novice events, the women's squad made a statement by winning both of their races while the men put

up a strong fight in the 8+, after a rough start of over-head crabs. William and Mary ended the day with seven out of ten wins; a memorable way to begin the spring season. After throwing in the coxswains, and an accidental rower or two, the Tribe travelled even further to Blacksburg, Virginia for the Waterfield Cup the following morning.

Despite some less than ideal circumstances sleeping on Tech's gym floor, the rowers were up and ready to race the next morning. Taking on a larger field, William and Mary competed against James Madison, Virginia Tech, and, once again, Liberty in contention for the Waterfield Cup. The Tribe built upon their success from the day before, adding more distance between themselves and Liberty. Throughout the morning, it was clear that it would come down to the last event to determine who would take home the Waterfield Cup. Up to the final race, William and Mary gave a strong performance across the

board by taking first place in four events: MV8+ (1wt entry), MV4+, WV8+, WV4+ (2nd heat); and second place in four events: MV8+ (1wt entry), MN8+, WN8+, WN4+. Up until the last event, William and Mary was tied with Tech. It fell to the Varsity Men's Lightweight 4+ crews to determine if the Cup would remain on its home turf with Tech or leave with William and Mary. As the rest of the Tribe cheered on from the shore, William and Mary took a decisive win over Virginia Tech by 48 seconds to claim the Waterfield Cup and finish off a great weekend of racing!



Photo by the Schultz Family. Entire team with both cups.

Rockett's Landing Regatta

By Emma Rudebusch, '14

On April 7th, Tribe Rowing made their way to Richmond, VA for the fourth annual Rockett's Landing Collegiate Regatta, hosted by Virginia Commonwealth University. Other crews included University of Richmond, James Madison University, and George Mason University.

One of the most memorable races of the day was the 500 meter coxswain's race, where senior Emily Schultz, junior Tyler Winchester, and freshmen Sarah Vorona and Olivia Walton were able to put their rowing abilities to the test. The catches and timing could

have used a little bit of work, and a crab or two may have been caught, but it still was a fun addition to a full days worth of racing.

After coxing the women's varsity eight to a win in the WV8+ event, captain Emily Schultz was interviewed by The Richmond Times-Dispatch. Schultz made sure to share Program Director Travis Hall's newly coined nickname "Trav-Daddy" with the reporter, so that new name would live on in print and on the internet (go ahead—Google "Trav Daddy rowing"). Other notable finishes include second place for the WN8+ and the men's varsity lightweight eight, and third

and fourth places for the two women's varsity fours.

Despite the 15-mile per hour headwind that persisted throughout the day, the Tribe was able to get in a solid day of Virginia racing in the last regatta before facing crews from across the country at the championship regattas of SIRAs, Dad Vails and ACRAs.



Photo by the Koontz Family. The coxswains try their hand at rowing during the coxswains race.

SIRAs

By Jamie Lewis, '13

On a cool Friday morning in late April, the William and Mary rowing team packed up its bags once again to seek fame and fortune across the Appalachian Mountains. The drive along I-81 was familiar to most from the week before, but this time the team would continue past its vanquished opponents and go all the way to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, home of SIRAs (pronounced SIRAs) regatta, one of the largest of the spring season.



Photo by Connor Kee '14. Team Tribes it up one last time before heading home.

With high spirits, the team arrived at the beautiful venue in time to rig their boats and take a few practice laps up and down the racecourse. Coxswains and lightweights all successfully made weight on the first try and the team headed to Knoxville to feast (some more than others) and get some much needed rest.

Throughout the next day the team struggled against tough competition in a busy day of heats. Varsity schools from California to New England were competing and only a handful of club teams were entered in each event. In spite of this, William and Mary had a successful day, and every entry advanced to the semi-finals, some of were held later that evening.

The competition was even tougher in the semi-finals, but the Tribe put up a valiant effort and posted some fast times. The Varsity Woman's 4 finished 6th in its final and 8th overall amongst club teams. The Varsity Women's 8 finished 6th as well, ending up 5th among all club teams. The Novice Women's 8 finished 6th in

their final and 12th out of club teams. The Novice Men's Lightweight 4 made 5th in a very close grand final. The Varsity Men's Lightweight 8 ended up a close 4th in their grand final as well. The Varsity men's heavyweight eight were forced to contend with illness for their second day of racing, but fortunately coxswain Tyler Winchester was able to take over and Novice Men's Coach Alex Sullivan was able to cox them to a respectable finish. All in all, it was a fun weekend, as SIRAs (remember- its pronounced SIRAs) always is. It gave new rowers a chance to experience one of the biggest regattas of the spring season on a beautiful racecourse. The team left excitedly Sunday afternoon, ready for three more weeks of intense training and looking to end the season on a high note.

Full Boats and Strong Hearts in Philly

By David Barnisin, '14

In horseracing, it is the Triple Crown; football, the Super Bowl; Baseball, the World Series; but for the world of Club Collegiate Rowing, it's Dad Vails. Dad Vails is in the back of every rower's mind as they emerge from the winter retreat of their erg rooms to the warm spring weather of sprint season. It's the end all be all for the club-rowing world: the magnum opus of coaching dynasties and the keystone of memories for rowers of every generation. Rowers from around North America; spanning from Canada to Texas, San Diego to Boston; converge on Philadelphia seeking glory and competition. Like all those rowers past and present, the College of William and Mary Rowing Club came seeking the same prize. In our wake, we left hard fought battles, personal triumphs, and memories that will outlast any 2k.

William and Mary, when competitively paired "Big" rowing schools, sometimes falls short. It's not that UVA or Michigan has better rowers than us (even though their guys and gals are HUGE) it's just that we have to do a lot more with a lot less. Any program, when funded the way their clubs are, can make a good showing at a regatta; however, it takes a special kind of person to compete the way we did at Vails. The big thing about Dad Vails is, even though everybody comes out to win that medal or touch that trophy, is it's the last time many of us will ever row again. For the seniors it's an extra

special time because this regatta, this last 7 or 8 minutes spent pulling their heart out, may be the last time they're ever in a boat. Let alone a boat with their 8 or 4 best friends. That's where I believe William and Mary differs from other schools at Vails: we're not just rowing for the "glory" or the medal, we're sending ourselves, our seniors, and our best friends off the only way we, as William and Mary Students, know how: hard work.

...the keystone of memories
for rowers of every
generation.

Sure, medals and getting to finals is always nice and no matter how much you try to sugar coat it, losing always stings, but there is something special about one last race, where nothing matters, where you can sell out, all out of the love and respect for the guy or girl sitting in front and behind you. One unit, 4-8 adaptations of the same rower, rowing through blistering pain, all for the sake of camaraderie and friendship for 2000 meters, and that's what we did. This time was extra special, for the men's team at least, because we weren't just sending off our seniors, but we were saying goodbye to Coach Walker, who has been as much of a friend to us as he has been a teacher and a leader for our team. I can say comfortably that I as well as the entire men's team, rowed extra hard for him that day.

However, the team as a whole, both men and women, left everything on the water.

I know usually these articles give you races and times but I'm not going to do that. It's not important for this race. If you want to know, the results are online. Places and times don't accurately portray the effort and passion each one of us put into every stroke we took, every early morning where we rolled out of bed to get soaked in the spirit of camaraderie, that's because times are relative. If you have four 5ft 11 inch Barnisins in a boat and put us up against a boat full of Danny Ottos (?ft tall) you don't have to be a sports analyst to know who's going to win. However, even though we didn't advance in our races, our team had a boatload of victories. Both teams, who practiced tirelessly for weeks on end, through finals (which at William and Mary are no cakewalk) all to do our best on race day had their victories. Sacrifices and dedication like these are the reason any of us row.

Vails is the culmination of an entire year. It's where we say our goodbyes and it's where we put forth our last effort in the sport we love. This year was no different. All of us competed to the very best of our abilities; we left nothing on the table, and were proud of what we did. It was a good show this year and we always have next year to motivate us for another go.

ACRA Championships

by Connor Finch, '13

The William and Mary Rowing Club competed along with dozens of other schools at the American Collegiate Rowing Association (ACRA) Championship Regatta on May 26th and 27th. Located at the 1996 Olympic rowing venue in Gainesville, Georgia, ACRA has in recent years attracted top club programs from across the country, including a number of West Coast schools.

William and Mary had an impressive performance on the first day of racing. While temperatures rose into the 90s as the day progressed, the winds were relatively calm making for fair and clean racing. Sophomores Ashley Koontz and Charlotte Dobry won their respective heats in the women's single. In addition, both the men's lightweight four and women's open four won their heats to advance directly to the grand final. Unfortunately an obstruction on the course slowed the women's pair halfway into a contentious race.

William and Mary had an equally impressive performance on the second day of racing. Ashley and Charlotte began the day for William and Mary by winning gold and bronze after 2000 meters of close racing. Both rowers had

held the lead at different times, but Ashley pulled away in the last 500 meters to take gold. As the day progressed a strong tail wind blew down the course, making for some very fast racing. The ML4+ of Ryan Fliss, Connor Finch, Bruce Pfirrmann, and Bryan Monroe led by senior coxswain Emily Stephens took bronze in a field of 15. Shortly after, the women's four of Kate Nolan, Emma Rudebusch, Jessica Beckett, Christine LaRoche, and coxswain Emily Schultz took 4th in the grand final, an event with 17 competitors. William and Mary had a very strong performance at its final regatta of the season. Considering the high representation of freshmen, sophomores, and juniors in its top boats, the club is in a good position for next year.



Photo By Emily Schultz, '12. Sophomores Ashley Koontz and Charlotte Dobry posing with medals.

End-of-Year Banquet

By Charlotte Dobry, '14

Rowers, parents and guests alike braved the rain to convene for the second annual crew banquet. The banquet had a new venue this year: the Tack Family Boathouse at Chickahominy Riverfront Park. The event's location allowed the season, site, and seniors to be showcased for guests and grads.

...highlighting key moments from the year, be they on the water or on land.

The end-of-year crew banquet again featured a slide show highlighting key moments from the year, be they on the water or on land, as well as a comedic collection of superlatives voted on by members of the team. A number of graduating seniors were presented with oars honoring their time on the team. The presentation of the Ehrlic Award (Emily Schultz), the Most Valuable Oarsman (Ryan Fliss) and Oarswoman (Emily Schultz) awards were main points of the event.

"What is Crew?"

By David Barnisin, '14

It's starting off the day, waking before the crack of dawn

It's sneaking past our slumbering roommates to put our spandex on

It's a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, any day of the week

It's learning to get by on minimal hours of sleep

It's sitting at the UC waiting for cars
It's getting to the site and looking at the Stars

It's cold mornings, choppy waters, and rowing anyway

It's the payoff when you walk through boats on race day

It's a brand new Boathouse. Finally! No more hiding in the shed

It's even with multiple practice time changes
"Damn the classes full steam ahead!"

It's east German drills and really working with your core

It's looking around in shock as Nathan says "I've never been this far upriver before"

It's choppy waters, soaked and shivering coxswains, weather related crabs
It's hours in the erg room, running, rowing, and getting body of Adonis Abs

It's waking up early going into the cold and waiting outside the Rec
It's getting a new trophy despite one God-awful, miserable, sleep in a gym at Tech

It's bonding moments you won't find at any frat house or sorority

Bonding moments like driving to the Hooch, meeting a friendly cop, and a lady from the Tennessee Valley Authority

It's singing songs, trading stories, long rides in the Van

It's forgetting your sunscreen and getting one hell of a Uni Tan

Rowing's a way of life, more than any sport, club or frat

It's looking at any body of water larger than a swimming pool and asking yourself "could I row on that?"

It's off the water: hanging out on weekends, or a study group at swem

It's an adult to call when you're hopelessly lost in VA Beach at 11 pm

It's rowing 4s, bowloaders, and 8s
It's holding your breath as you scale up for light weight

It's rowing on recaday and pulling so hard you think you just might die

It's the adrenaline as you move in a unit and you swear that boat could fly

It's pulling hard on your oar getting maximum bend

Sometimes it's your "special someone" getting a bouquet of flowers you didn't send

It's coxing with a broken arm and rowing port for your first time

It's managing a crap-show by jerry-rigging and quick thinking just to avoid a fine

It's motorin', it's the dangerzone, beast mode, your price for flight

It's kicking ass, chewing bubblegum, jungle rules, it's a bar fight

It's your 8 best friends and rowing through hell to win

It's a larger family that sticks with you through thick and thin

It's a place to sit at breakfast and a friendly face saying "Hey"

It's Kevin, Lindsay, Rose, Brittany, Kathleen, and SK

It's Emily Schultz and getting a kick out of watching her row

And then her turning around next race and pushing you further than you thought you could go

It's Emily Stephens yelling about having bowball as you finish a race

It's those morning hours brightening up with a grin from Jake Buck's face

It's being amused and slightly disturbed by jokes from Mr. Lou

Hell, it's everybody even Sperry too

It's a coach that's done more than anyone ever will

It's an empty space and shoes impossible to fill

It's us at our worst and it's us at our best
Whatever it is we're together... us against the rest

It's new faces, learning about teammates and making new friends

It's a team and a family that keeps growing and never, ever, ends

Letters from Our Captains

Men's Varsity Team Captain- Bruce Pfirrmann



Bruce Pfirrmann, '13

Greetings Parents, Alumni and Friends of WMRC, As we settle into our summer routines, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on the past season's highlights and accomplishments. The Varsity Men's squad attended several regattas, both near and far, over the course of the spring sprint (only 2000m races) season. We began with an exhausting overnight trip to Lynchburg and Blacksburg that culminated in resounding Tribe victories over both Liberty and Virginia Tech. The trophies from the Ivy Hills and Waterfield Cups now stand proudly in our new boathouse, a testament to a string of great racing on the part of every squad over the course of the weekend.

The month of April saw the squad take two trips, one to Richmond for the Rockett's Landing Regatta, where the squad fared well against competition from VCU and GMU, and the other an 8+ hour trek to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, for the Southern Intercollegiate Rowing Association (SIRA; or, if you're Coach Hall, See-Ra) Championship Regatta. In the face of raging sickness and unyielding course rules, the Men's 8+ threw together a heroic race, with coxswain Tyler Winchester rowing bow while Men's Novice Coach Alex Sullivan coxed from the stern. The Lightweight Men's 8+, only racing once the entire weekend, hung tough with Michigan State for over a 1000 meters before falling slightly to finish fourth place. Both to and from Tennessee,

the squad took part in it's favorite past-time besides rowing, eating, taking advantage of the trip South to enjoy some good ol' BBQ,

In the closing weeks of our season, the team held its second annual End of the Year Awards Banquet at the Tack Boathouse, attended by the coaches, rowers and their families. The contributions of various rowers from all squads were recognized, superlative awards were compiled and awarded in a top-rate slide show composed by senior Emily Schultz. Additionally, Coach Walker announced the results of voting for next year's Men's Captain, and I'm pleased to announce that next year the position will be held by rising junior Ryan Fliss. Congratulations, and best of luck to Ryan! The majority of the squad finished the season in Philadelphia, racing our toughest competition of the season in the largest collegiate regatta held in the country, the Dad Vail Championships on the Schuylkill River. Though neither varsity men's boat managed to advance out of their preliminary heats, the Men's 4+ had by far it's best race of the season, and the Men's Lightweight 8 fought hard against a heat composed of the eventual 1st, 2nd and 4th place boats in the event. As always, however, it was hard not to enjoy the electric atmosphere of such a large regatta, the proximity to classic Boathouse Row, and the hospitality of rower David Wasserstein and his parents at their lovely abode. Finally, while most of the squad departed Williamsburg to head onward to summer activities at home and abroad, four lightweight rowers, led by just graduated coxswain Emily Stephens, stuck around in the 'Burg to train for one final regatta, the America

Collegiate Rowing Association (ACRA) National Championship, held at the 1996 Olympic Rowing Venue in Gainesville, GA. The boat managed to survive cramming seven individuals in a 2-bedroom apartment, all the while scrounging for food and training twice-a-day. The work paid off, however, and the boat represented the rest of the squad and the club well with an incredibly exciting third place, medal-winning finish in Georgia, right behind UVA and the University of Chicago.

In the course of reflecting on regatta's and accomplishments, it would be a shame to forget to highlight the day-in and day-out realities of the season -- the morning practices in the midst of William and Mary-unique weeks filled with exams, papers, and meetings, the post-practice meals in the Sadler Center, where jokes and donut-eating contests, squad-vs-squad pranks, and even the occasional awfully played yet awfully fun pick-up basketball games in place of rained-out water practices. Lastly, I'd like to recognize our graduate seniors, coxswain Emily Stephens and rowers Jake Buck and Lou Zhang, as they leave the 'Burg following Commencement 2012. Their jolly nature, smiling faces and dedication to the squad, club and sport of rowing will most certainly be missed next year!

As always, we greatly appreciate your past and continued support for the team. Take care, enjoy all that summer has to offer, and look forward to another exciting season in Fall.

Go Tribe!

Men's Novice Captain - Logan Ferrell



Logan Ferrell, '13

Spring 2012 brought an exciting season filled with adrenaline (and lactic acid) for the dashing rowers of the WMRC novice men's squad. The season began with quality time in the erg room; the novice men emerged from their first winter training bolstered by new members and eager to get back on the water. Beneath the Chickahominy sunrise they got their first taste of sprint racing, besting Fordham in a series of mixed line-up short pieces. After several weeks of renewed water practice, the entire

novice squad put up solid performances at the duels in Lynchburg and Blacksburg. Fielding both a 4+ and 8+, those early races set the tone for the season. The novice men again battled tight competition in the River City, taking on schools from around the state at the Rockett's Landing Regatta.

*...medaling in a tight contest
that will forever be
remembered as the "barfight"*

With one week off from racing, the valiant oarsmen sought to prove themselves in seat racing and erg tests; these trials ultimately decided the 4+

line-up for the season's remaining regattas. Racing as a lightweight crew in Oak Ridge, the 4+ came within two seconds of medaling in a tight contest that will forever be remembered as the "barfight". After pushing through exams, the 4+ closed out the novice season by racing at Dad Vails in Philadelphia; despite discovering themselves in an open weight category, the rowers faced the current in a proud final battle. As some of our novices head abroad to study and others move on to the varsity squad, there remain many great memories from spring 2012. It will remain a season best described as solid, or even too solid

Letters from Our Captains

Womens's Varsity Captain- Emily Schultz



As a new alumna of William & Mary, I often find myself reflecting on my four years at The College and trying to mentally organize my

Emily Schultz, '12 experiences into broad terms of "bests" and "worsts," "highs" and "lows," etc. The most surprising conclusion I have come to through this process of introspection is that WMRC has been the single most influential force in my collegiate life. The sport of rowing, the discipline of team-ship, and the teammates and athletes and coaches I have met through the club have characterized my time at W&M

more than any other presence -more than my freshman hall or my sorority, more than my off-campus job (while it lasted), and even more than my classes and majors (sorry, Mom). None of this was in my college game plan. I joined the team because one of my freshman roommates, a rower, said they needed coxswains (or, more specifically, she said they needed "small, loud people who get to be in charge and don't have to row,") and I decided to give it a shot. I cannot imagine how different I would be now if I had never shown up to that first morning practice.

My time with WMRC has had a lot of ups and downs and I've been lucky enough to witness a lot of change within the club. At this point, two weeks from the final regatta, I will honestly say that the 2011-2012 season was hands-down my best year on the team. This year, the

Varsity Women have stepped up as a squad and achieved more than I could have ever hoped as a coxswain and a team captain. We achieved at regattas - you can look up our results on row2k - but more importantly to me, we achieved in the boathouse, in the erg room, and on the Chickahominy. I have been constantly impressed with the commitment and drive that WMRC student athletes demonstrate every day, and it makes me so excited to watch what happens in the club over the next couple years in what is sure to be another strong transition period.

Thanks for making this year my best, girls. Congratulations to Brittany, SK, Rose, Kathleen, and Lindsay, my fellow graduates! To everyone else: row fast! Love you all! Emily.

Women's Novice Captain - Erin Brown



There's something special about a novice squad—the entire boat is learning about rowing while simultaneously developing a love for the sport. As a team, the novice

Erin Brown, '15 ladies learned how to "flutter," raced competitively at both SIRAs and Dad Vails, created the first-ever Stillwell Awards, and, with a little help, managed to jumpstart a battery-dead car. Personal achievement and

improvement were the major goals of our spring season. After gaining six new novices during winter training (giving us enough people to fill a boat **with** a coxswain, which was exciting for us!) we put our hard work to the test at our first official regatta: the Ivy Hills Cup versus Liberty University, during which both the 8+ and 4+ pulled away victorious. The next day at the Waterfield Cup, the novice 4+ and 8+ raced against Virginia Tech, James Madison, and Liberty. This time, both the 8+ and 4+ placed second behind Virginia Tech. A week later at the Rockett's Landing Regatta, the 8+ took second behind VCU, but still beat out

JMU, Old Dominion, and Richmond. Finally, although our 8+ didn't place at either SIRAs or Dad Vails, we believe that we raced our best at both regattas, working together as a boat to make every inch count. We were even interviewed by ABC News in Philadelphia while cheering on the Varsity men!

My teammates and I can't wait to get back on the water in the fall. Since we've graduated from the novice squad, we look forward to shedding our bright yellow betting shirts in favor of green and gold unis!

Photos

