



STANFORD
ROWING



BOATHOUSE OF CHAMPIONS

NEWSLETTER VOL. 1

SEMI-ANNUAL PUBLICATION
ON STANFORD ROWING

PRESENTED BY
THE ROWING ASSOCIATION

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MORE FROM THE ROWING ASSOCIATION find us online and on social media @row.stanford

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS our team of incredible individuals who have worked to bring The Rowing Association to life

@ROW.STANFORD

THE ROWING ASSOCIATION

*Welcome to the first edition of
The Rowing Association Newsletter.*

We plan to bring you a version of this newsletter, along with other forms of regular communication so that we can keep you all updated and engaged with what's happening with Stanford Rowing. You're reading this because like 2,000+ others, Stanford Rowing is important to you. It was one of the most meaningful parts of your Stanford experience, you currently row for Stanford, you're a parent of one of our student-athletes, or you're one of the coaches we're fortunate to have. You may just be a friend of the program. Ultimately and collectively, we make up The Rowing Association.

July of 2020 caught all of us off guard. The announcement that Stanford was going to eliminate 11 of its Varsity Sports, including Men's and Lightweight Women's Rowing was a shot heard 'round the Stanford Rowing Community. Athletes, coaches, alums, parents and friends of Stanford Rowing were all in disbelief.

Within days of the Stanford announcement, the Stanford Rowing Community began to channel anger towards finding a solution. What started as phone calls and letters to the University soon became collective efforts, and several groups, Save Stanford Rowing and 36-Sports Strong among them, were launched with the purpose of reversing the University's decision and saving the 11 sports. While efforts to sway the University became increasingly frustrating, we began to realize that Stanford Rowing needed more than just a decision reversal. Stanford Rowing needed stronger advocacy from within the ranks of its community. We not only needed to save the programs, we also needed to strengthen them and build Stanford Rowing into something bigger.

Those of us who had rowed for Stanford recognized we would not have been on the water had it not been for the support of those who had come before us. Boathouses don't just magically appear, coaches don't just show up one day, and regattas don't just happen. Save Stanford Rowing evolved into The Rowing Association. We realized that it's now our turn to ensure the Stanford Rowing experience carries forward.

THE ROWING ASSOCIATION

The Rowing Association Purpose:

The Rowing Association inspires and supports Stanford Rowing through programs and activities that build inclusivity in the sport, enhance the competitiveness of our teams, lead positively in our communities, and ensure the unique experience of rowing for Stanford Endures.

The Rowing Association is built to support all three Stanford Rowing teams, and in order to deliver against our purpose, we set out to:

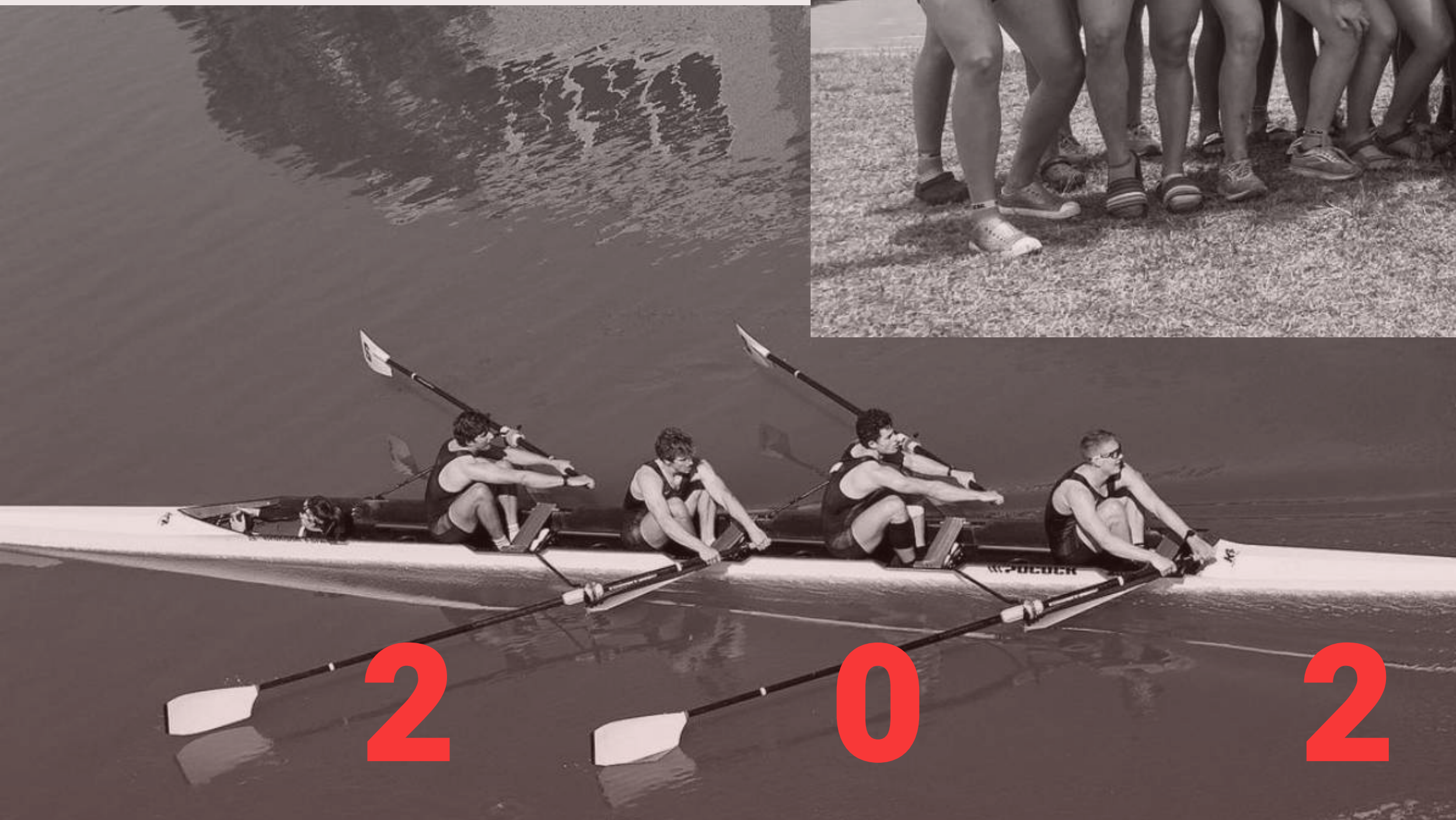
Save the Teams, Secure the Programs, Strengthen the Teams and Build Something Bigger for Stanford Rowing

You can expect The Rowing Association to keep you informed and in touch with Stanford Rowing via traditional and social channels, bring a presence to regattas, and help build a network for Stanford rowers past and present. You can expect us to work closely with coaches to understand what they need to strengthen their teams, then help facilitate that support from the Athletic Department. You can expect us to build stronger rowing engagement within the community, whether through learn to row programs, camps, or greater inclusion. You can expect us to support Stanford Rowers beyond the Farm in their pursuit of Rowing at the National and/or International level. And of course, you can expect us to invite you to get involved and participate.

We are excited to have Saved the teams, and we are well on the way to Securing them, though there is still much to be done. Thank you for your support here.

We are just beginning to work on how we can appropriately influence the Strengthening process and Build Something Bigger. Stay tuned as we develop those activities more thoroughly over the coming year.

There is a new energy in the Stanford Boathouse. Rowers are ecstatic that teams have been reinstated. All crews had tremendous success at National Championships, and the future of Stanford Rowing looks bright. It's great to have you all on board!



SPRING SEASON



2021 SPRING SEASON REVIEW

This year's abbreviated season was no less exciting with dual racing followed by standout performances at the Pac-12s, IRAs, and NCAAs.

Here's a brief recap of the action for all three Stanford Rowing teams.

Week of April 17th

- Men- Fell to Washington at Redwood Shores.
- Women's Lwt- Won three of four races against San Diego and Saint Mary's at Redwood Shores.

Week of April 24th

- Women- Swept Cal at Big Row. The Cardinal won all five races in Berkeley.
- Men- (Double-header weekend) beat both Oregon State and Santa Clara on Saturday. Fell on Sunday to Cal at Big Row.

Week of May 1st

- Women- Swept both host USC and No. 18 UCLA in Los Angeles.

Week of May 8th

- Women's Lwt- Swept USC in all three races at Chula Vista.

Week of May 15th - Pac-12 Championships

- Men- First and Second Varsity took 3rd at Pac-12s.
- Women- Took 2nd overall at Lake Natoma. The varsity four earned its first Pac-12 title since 2014. Grace McGinley named Pac-12 Women's Rowing Scholar-Athlete of the Year.

Week of May 22nd

Stanford Announced Continuation of Varsity Status for All 11 Teams.

Week of May 29th

- Women- Placed 2nd at NCAAs- the best team finish since 2011- having been ranked 7th in the pre-season polls. All Pac-12 honors for 4 athletes- a Stanford rower won Newcomer of the Year for the 2nd year in a row. NCAA recognized Grace McGinley as the student-athlete with the highest cumulative GPA participating at the finals site for each of the NCAA's 90 championships.
- Women's Lwt- Won the varsity four and placed second in the double at the IRAs.
- Men- Placed 5th at the IRAs- having been ranked 9th going into the competition. Peter Chatain named the Pac-12 Men's Rowing Athlete of the Year and was a first-team All-Pac-12 selection.

Week of June 17th

CRCA named 23 Stanford rowers National Scholar-Athletes. 18 from Women's Rowing, 5 from Women's Lightweight Rowing.

UNDAUNTED AMIDST UNCERTAINTY

Derek Byrnes, Head Coach, Stanford Women's Rowing

Before the team arrived, the overwhelming sentiment was a desire to be surrounded by friends, get back onto campus and practice with an intent to qualify for NCAAs. By opting-in, the group committed themselves to one certainty: a season of uncertainty. For a team of goal-oriented individuals, opting-in for a season of uncertainty was THE massive ask. We kept telling the team “you need to play the hand you are dealt. Yes, you were dealt a crappy hand but it's your hand now, so figure out how you're going to play it”. The team could have wasted its time lamenting all the what-could-have-beens if they were just afforded the opportunity to practice last fall or if they just could have gotten back to campus in late-December, like they were told to expect, instead of in mid-February. In the end, I am not sure if this group could have played their hand any better.

One of our team leaders knew she needed surgery if she wanted to compete at NCAAs. To get enough time to fully rehab, she scheduled the procedure for early June 2020. So the kid flew across the country in the middle of a pandemic to get that procedure done, then crushed her rehab.

One athlete from Spain, lived under an extended lockdown, which required her to shelter in place for months. The kid could have logged hours a day sitting on the couch popping bon-bons. Instead, she logged miles a day running up and down the stairs of her apartment building because she wasn't permitted to go outside.

Another athlete who was also under an extended lockdown didn't have stairs to run because she lived in a flat. So, she created her own body circuits to grind away in her room. Two weeks after arriving at Stanford the kid wanted to test her fitness, so she borrowed an erg, placed it in the quad outside her dorm and pulled a 6:44 with her team cheering her on from their dorm room windows. If you need a body circuit to kick you into shape, I know a kid you should talk to.

We had another athlete who struggled with long term effects of Covid-19. They lost their sense of taste and developed an adverse reaction to oils and spices. County guidelines prevented them from rowing in team boats because they were housed in a separate dorm, so they drove to practice alone every day to row a single and waited for the guidelines to change. Six months later the guidelines shifted and they were finally allowed to row with their teammates. The athletes' sole goal was to race at NCAAs, something they hadn't done in four years at Stanford. Seeing that kid race in our 2V at NCAAs brought tears to my eyes. Such a long journey for such a classy kid.

We had a group of first years who wanted a collegiate experience with future teammates, so they relocated to Sarasota to live, do Zoom school and row together. A few of the sophomores and juniors found out, so they packed up as well and relocated to Sarasota. Together that group did their best to get in the volume, but more importantly they started to come together as a team. That bond they created will be the backbone of this team for years.

We had four seniors who wanted their last year at Stanford to be at Stanford, so during the fall they moved to Palo Alto, rented an apartment, did Zoom school together and rowed off our trailer. Because they hadn't officially been invited back to campus, this training was all considered voluntary. In fact, because they hadn't been invited back, they were told by the administration to not expect to use any Stanford facility, but they came anyway. Those seniors created their own training schedule, which included double-days and rowed over 20K-a-day in a straight four. Because it was all voluntary work, coaches needed to be invited to practice. It was a privilege to get that invite.

We had kids with no access to rowing equipment, so they created Strava accounts to push each other remotely. NCAA rules prevent coaches from viewing those Strava accounts but word on the street is that we could also now field a solid triathlon team.

We had two kids from New Zealand that opted-in. They opted-in from New Zealand, a place with no Covid-19!!! They departed New Zealand knowing that when they returned, they would each be subjected to a two-week self-isolation in a hotel of their government's choosing and also be expected to pay thousands of dollars in quarantine expenses. And they still opted-in.

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CONTINUED: UNDAUNTED AMIDST UNCERTAINTY

Derek Byrnes, Head Coach, Stanford Women's Rowing

We switched kids' sides all the time just to get bodies on the water, and no one ever questioned it. In fact, we had three kids in our 2nd eight at NCAA sitting on starboard side who had all rowed port prior to arriving in March.

This was clearly the year of learning how to queue up. For up to an hour, three times a week the team would wait in a line for their Covid-19 tests. They would wait in lines for food at the dining halls, as space was limited. All meals were pre-boxed and the selection was limited, so if you had a dietary restriction, you needed to be on it. They would wait in lines to see the athletic trainer, as space was limited in the training room.

In late February, the county guidelines required the team to practice and travel in households. Stanford housed the team in suites of four, so rowing straight fours and pairs were the only option. Our coxswains hadn't been invited back to campus yet, so coxed boats were out anyway. Methodically, the team began to increase their daily meters, they created a bond we hadn't seen in years and the seniors started to stamp their legacy; apparently, everything can be made into a competition.

The following weeks were some of the most competitive practice sessions I have witnessed. Senior Sarah Commesso, who has never been shy with her words, went full-hype-beast, encouraging her teammates to just go harder. Distance didn't matter. Everyone was just willing to bring it. On May 5th, I knew we would make a run at NAAs. In the "year of uncertainty", we did our workout of uncertainty: ?? x 4-minutes at SR 34. On this particular day, we had three 8s across that were never separated by more than 6-seats. After each piece, rowers were bent over their handles gasping, lungs hacking and after a brief moment to catch their breath, a senior would start strategizing how to attack the next piece. We kept piecing them, waiting for a boat to drop off, but no one gave in. For once, the coaches called it.

Weeks later, we brought that same tenacity to NAAs. When we lined up for the finals, we were surrounded by universities that each had a full year of on-campus training. To their credit, the team didn't care. In their minds, they had done everything within their ability to prepare themselves and so they launched with the full intent to bust down that course. As coaches, we couldn't be more proud of how they played their hand, honored their commitment to each other, grew tighter as a whole team, embraced the one-boathouse mindset, and raced with an uncompromising full-measure.



NEVER GIVE UP

Ted Sobolewski, Farwell Family Director, Stanford Men's Rowing

What an incredible year it has been for Stanford Men's Rowing. Between everything we have all have faced with the pandemic, the programs' battle for reinstatement, and the uncertainty of whether or not we would race this spring, there has never been a time where more major elements of our future were so outside of our direct control.

A lot of what we faced over the past year brought the team closer together. Knowing it was potentially the last year of varsity rowing at Stanford, the team trained hard and consistently for the year we were apart. When we finally returned to campus in February, the restrictions we agreed upon in order to live on-campus meant the team had to live together in five-person suites, and they were really only allowed to study in their rooms, pick up prepackaged food from the dining hall, or come to practice. There is no doubt that the lack of outside distractions and the shortened time we had to prepare for the season, heightened the focus that we all brought to practice every day and ultimately made us faster.

There were also so many opportunities for the team to give up on the season, on each other, and on the program as a whole. I am thankful that every time one of those opportunities came, they would double down and recommit to being the team we believe we can be. When the program was cut, no one flinched. No-one stopped training, no one said I am quitting or transferring, they stayed the course. When in-person classes were canceled and our return to campus kept getting pushed back, the team organized into small groups and found opportunities to live and train together in various sites across the country. When they got back to campus and quickly realized the restrictions they agreed upon were real, and being enforced, they sacrificed every other part of their college experience in order to row.

Through all of this we learned that we have a remarkably persistent group of athletes, and their persistence not only kept our season going but at a pivotal moment in our history, they kept the program going. I couldn't be prouder of the way they represented themselves and the program through this, both on and off the water.

The challenge we face heading into next year is different, but in many ways, it's even greater than the ones we faced this year. We lose six incredible seniors whom all brought essential elements to the culture of the team this year. We no longer will have the pressure of potentially representing Stanford Men's Rowing in its last varsity year, or the forced focus brought on by the restrictions on campus. We also won't have a frosh class bringing new energy to the boathouse, when many of the teams will have that plus athletes returning from gap years with their national team, or seniors returning for a 5th year of eligibility.

As a coach, I am always thinking about how we can gain advantages and neutralize our disadvantages. Even though we have great challenges ahead, I am buoyed by the fact we have great people on the team and within our alumni to help us meet those challenges. Furthermore, there has rarely been a time I've felt more grateful for just the opportunity to be challenged like this! Two months ago, we didn't have a future, and now our future possibilities seem infinite.

We owe so much to the people who worked tirelessly in support of the program this year. The number of hours that were spent organizing the Save Stanford Rowing effort, and eventually into setting up our new 501c3, made me fully understand what makes Stanford Rowing Alumni remarkable. The people who got behind this effort are a direct reflection of what rowing can do for your life, and why supporting rowing at Stanford is so important for the future. If you voiced your support, sat in on a webinar or a class call, made a pledge, or just never doubted that we would find a way through all of this – THANK YOU! I hope the team made you proud this year, and I hope we can continue to make you proud for many years to come.

See you at Redwood Shores next spring and Go CARD!

MAKING US PROUD, PROVIDING HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Kate Bertko, Head Coach, Stanford Women's Lightweight Rowing

In 2021, we welcomed a group of 15 lightweights back to campus. Due to travel restrictions, University rules, and Covid-19 protocols, student-athletes arrived in staggered cohorts beginning in January and culminating in late March. By early April, we were training as a full squad and preparing to race. This year presented greater challenges than ever experienced in the history of our program. But in the face of uncertainty and ambiguity, the 2021 team brought resiliency, enthusiasm, and a relentless desire to improve at every practice.

Our spring season, while shorter than typical, included racing at Redwood Shores, the Oakland Estuary, Otay Lake at the Chula Vista Elite Athlete Training Center, and ultimately at Mercer Lake for the IRA Championship. Regular season racing was typified by tight margins against D1, openweight competitors from University of San Diego, St. Mary's, UC Berkeley, and UC San Diego. One of my favorite memories was watching a boat of relative newcomers, including one student-athlete who had taken her first strokes on the water only a few weeks earlier, charge past their competition in Chula Vista.

In late May, the team raced a 4+ and 2x at the IRA where, in blustery, headwind conditions, the 4+ stormed to a decisive victory and the 2x had an aggressive and gutsy race to 2nd place (Stanford's best result in the event since 2017). The results at IRAs reflect the hard work and daily effort of each member on the team.

In the week preceding our departure for the IRA, we learned of the exciting (and relieving) decision by Stanford to reinstate varsity status for all eliminated sports. There are perhaps no words to fully describe the intensity of this moment. For the younger classes, it represents a hope for the future and for the graduating seniors, the knowledge that the team culture and vision they built over the past 4 years will be passed on, and preserved by future lightweights. I have always deeply believed in the power of education through athletics and the importance of the student-athlete experience in developing character. The continuation of lightweight rowing at Stanford gives me hope for the future of our sport, collegiate athletics and the young people who dream big and take risks.



"The continuation of lightweight rowing at Stanford gives me hope for the future of our sport, collegiate athletics and the young people who dream big and take risks."



THANK YOU KATE

Christine Cavallo '17

Kate Bertko, to put it simply, is one of the names that will endure in rowing. After 5 years leading the Stanford Lightweight Women and 3 National Championships, Kate Bertko has decided to pursue new challenges. Her own athletic career is colored with instances of tenacity, perseverance and defying odds all the way to the pinnacle of the sport.

Bertko narrowly missed the 2012 Games before earning her Olympic berth and racing in the 2016 Lightweight Women's double sculls. Shortly after docking in Rio, she turned her focus toward the Stanford Lightweights for the 2016-2017 season.

For the next 5 years, she brought continuity and a standard of excellence to a team of young Stanford women that ranged from national team alumni to pure novices. Each athlete was met with the same basic opportunity structure: you can continue on the path that you are on, or you can make a small choice today to become a little bit better. With each practice and season, the athlete could explore those options and find out how it best applied to her and her own path in life.

Said application was rarely clear and almost never linear, especially at a west-coast university of all-nighters and endless opportunities. Nevertheless, the Stanford Lightweight Rowing team athletes opted into that process of searching for just a little bit more than yesterday.

***Quoting several of the greats here:
"Live your best life' - Oprah" - Kate Bertko.***

Thank you for everything!



THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE



Drew Taylor, '20 stroked the Cambridge men's eight to a one-length victory in the 2021 Boat Race and is one of five Stanford Men's Rowing alums having competed for Cambridge, along with Jim Pew '84, Jake Cornelius '06, Silas Stafford '08, and Jason Lupatkin '13. Drew was originally a tennis player in high school in Texas, but after breaking his arm and going on an intensive hiking trip at his school, one of the adults noticed his performance and suggested the rowing team might be a good fit. And the rest, they say, is history. Drew graduated with a degree in Management Science & Engineering at Stanford, but always maintained an interest in healthcare and medicine (both his parents are doctors). At Cambridge, Drew is in an interdisciplinary science/business program but is now starting the process of med school by taking the MCAT.

"If you are ever thinking about continuing on, give it a shot! You can't leave a rowing career without feeling as if you have turned every stone." - excerpt from Drew's Instagram Live interview with Christine Cavallo, '17 on IGTV via [@row.stanford](https://www.instagram.com/row.stanford)

Anja Zehfuss, '20 was in the two-seat of the Oxford women's eight in the 2021 Boat Race. Anja is the first Stanford woman on record to row for Oxford. Both Anja and Drew remarked how much the media and general public support rowing as a popular spectator sport. She was even a little surprised at the pyrotechnics each rower received when leaving the boathouse to go to the dock! Unfortunately, the Oxford boat was not victorious this year, but Anja is definitely committed to coming back next year to turn the tables.

At Stanford, Anja received a BS in Human Biology and Global Studies as well as an MA in History. While Oxford was attractive for its post-Stanford elite rowing, Anja was perhaps even more interested in a program that focuses on investment and innovation in African health. Anja is from Chicago and attended a public high school with specialized academics but without a major focus on sports. The Chicago Rowing Foundation discovered her one day after demonstrating rowing at her school, which led to her career at Stanford, as well as that of her younger sister, Faith, '24 who is a member of the Stanford Lightweight Women's team.

"After my senior season was canceled, I started feeling different about rowing. It felt as if I had some unfinished business." - Excerpt from Anja's Instagram Live interview with Christine Cavallo, '17 on IGTV via [@row.stanford](https://www.instagram.com/row.stanford)



SUMMER RACING

KEY DATES

RACE

COMPETING STANFORD ATHLETES

JULY 7-11

**U23 WORLD ROWING
CHAMPIONSHIPS
(RACICE, CZECH REPUBLIC)**

USA- EMILY MOLINS, LW
USA- LINDSEY RUSH, LW
USA- PETER CHATAIN, OM
USA- KELSEY MCGINLEY, OW
CAN- LUCY BLACK: 2X
NED- IRIS KLOK: 8+
GB- LETTIE CABOT: 4-
DE- ANNABELLE BACHMANN: 8+
DE- LUISE BACHMANN: 2X OR 4X

JULY 16-18

NON-OLYMPIC TRIALS

USA (USA-ONLY)
CHRISTINE CAVALLO (LW)

JULY 23-30

**OLYMPICS
(TOKYO, JAPAN)**

USA- AUSTIN HACK, M (M8+)
USA- GRACE LUCZAK, OW (W4-)
USA- ALIE RUSHER, OW (W4X)
CAN- STEPHANIE GRAUER (W4-)

OCTOBER 17-24

**NON-OLYMPIC
WORLD ROWING
CHAMPIONSHIPS**

SPAIN
ESTHER BRIS: 1X (OW)

AUSTIN HACK ALIE RUSHER
GRAUER GRACE LUCZAK
STEPHANIE

TOKYO



20 20

THE ROW TO TOKYO

Stephanie Grauer, OW (W4-) Austin Hack, M (M8+) Grace Luczak, OW (W4-) Alie Rusher, OW (W4X)



Four Stanford Rowing Alumni have earned the opportunity to compete on the world's leading stage at the Tokyo Olympics. Austin Hack, Grace Luczak, and Alie Rusher have been selected to the U.S. Rowing Olympic Team through USRowing's Training Centers and camps, while Stephanie Grauer has qualified to compete with Canada.

Austin Hack ('14) is competing in his second Olympic Games in the same boat class, the U.S. Men's eight. He is the sole returnee among the men's lineup selected by USRowing, having finished fourth in Rio in 2016 in the same division. During his time on The Farm, Austin stroked port for the Stanford men's varsity eight and was named 2014 Pac-12 Athlete of the Year and Scholar-Athlete of the Year.



Grace Luczak ('11) will make her first appearance in the women's four and second Olympic team, after taking fourth in Rio in 2016 in the women's pair. She rowed in the five-seat of Stanford's 2009 NCAA Champion varsity eight and was a three-time All-American at Stanford.

Alie Rusher earns her first nod with Team USA, competing in the women's quadruple sculls. Rusher was one of 10 athletes in contention at the USRowing selection camp that took place this spring and was an All-American at Stanford in 2018.



Stephanie Grauer ('19) will compete in the women's four, representing Canada. Grauer was a three-time first-team CRCA All-America selection during her time on The Farm, competing in the varsity eight in each of her four collegiate seasons.

The Rowing Association is incredibly proud of these athletes and their dedication to our sport. We look forward to following along as their illustrious careers progress over the summer and beyond.

CATCHING UP WITH ANDY HARGADON ('85)

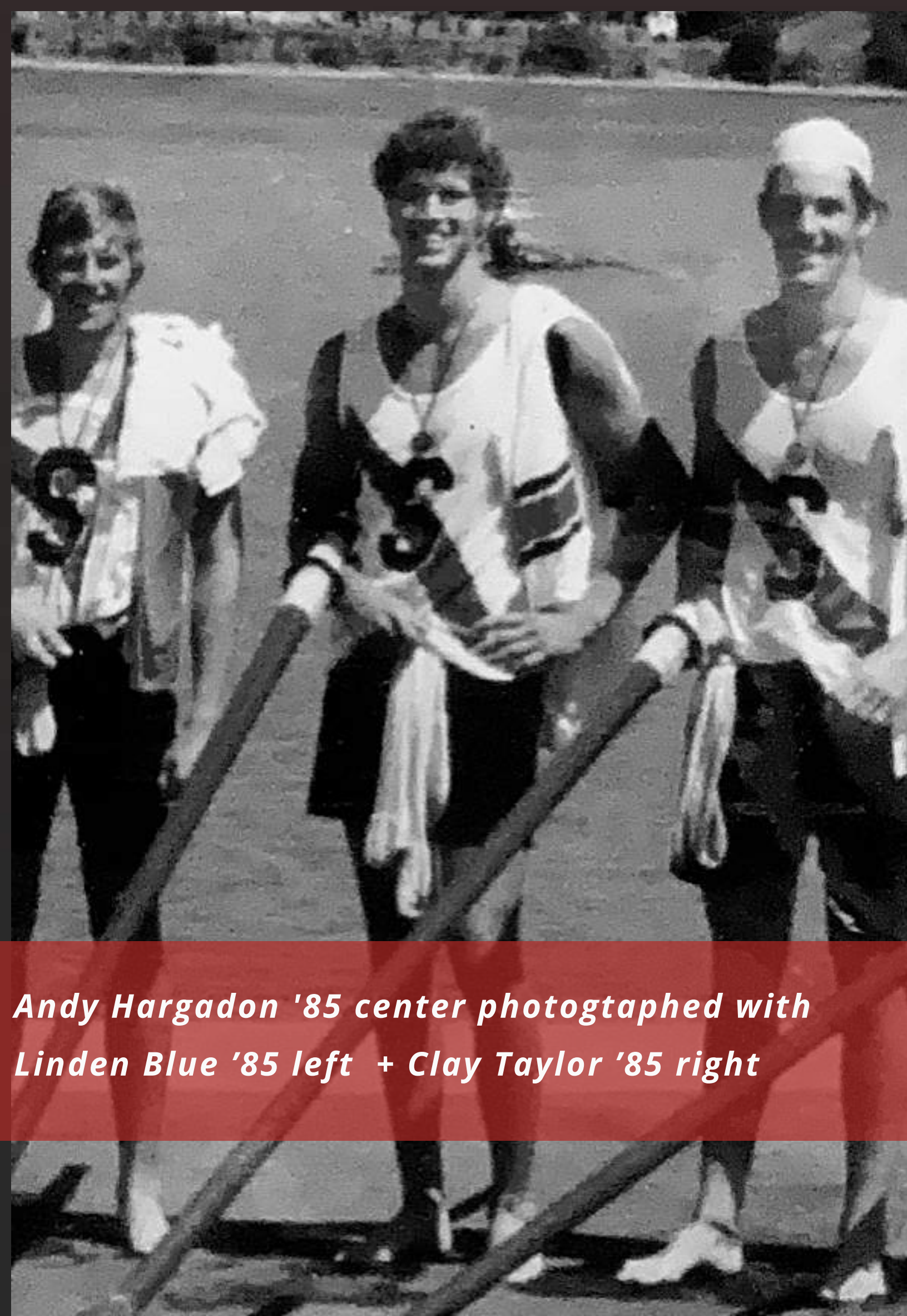
Q & A with Andy Hargadon, Professor of Technology Management at UC Davis, Ph.D., Stanford University

So, how did you end up rowing at Stanford?

The usual story, I suspect... I was approached at registration like every other tall guy. I had transferred in as a sophomore, after a year of DIII Basketball, and still wanted to compete. There wasn't much coverage of rowing back then but I had been to a regatta once and it looked like a great challenge, mentally and physically, so I signed up.

What are the things about rowing at Stanford that are most meaningful to you today?

The collective effort. Sunrises on the bay. Running stadiums on Tuesday, cleaning them on Sunday. There was something too about going from pain to laughing and back again for a couple hours on the water before most people had even gotten up.



Andy Hargadon '85 center photographed with Linden Blue '85 left + Clay Taylor '85 right

Is there a specific event (or two) that you remember as crystallizing the experience?

I remember winning a major regatta, our second-to-last race of the season and we finally clicked. We won it in the last twenty strokes (all fifty of them, and I can still hear our coxswain screaming). I think that was the first time we realized what we were capable of and I realized what the sport was about.

You stayed engaged in rowing after Stanford. Tell us about that?

After graduating, I started sculling out of the boathouse and found another side of the sport entirely. Except the sunrises, there aren't a lot of zen moments in eights so it's fair to say I learned how to row hard in sweeps and learned how to row controlled in sculls. When then my girlfriend, now wife, went to medical school in Dartmouth, I took a job there coaching the freshman lightweight men and racing a single. Coaching gave me another great perspective on the sport (how racing, form, training, overtraining, and undersleeping) all come together —nothing like teaching someone else to learn it yourself. Racing a single was great. The Dartmouth Boathouse and Connecticut River there was idyllic. Past and aspiring world-class rowers trained there or came through often, so I got to row with some great and fun people. And it seemed like there were races on any given weekend. I got to row the head of the Charles, the Royal Canadian Henley, Head of the Connecticut, and some early version of the US Rowing Nationals on the Schuylkill.

Tell us a little about your career path?

I had majored in product design at Stanford and decided to return to graduate school for my masters. I interned at IDEO (then David Kelley Design) and when I finished, I got a job at Apple and got to work on the early Apple PowerBooks.

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CONTINUED: CATCHING UP WITH ANDY HARGADON ('85)

How did that lead to being a Professor?

After three years of working on some really cool projects, I realized that the best parts of the job (the design work) happened between around 6pm and midnight—when the day's meetings were done. So I thought I'd go back to get a PhD studying design and innovation. Having grown up on campuses, it was a bit like returning to the family farm. It's a very distinct environment, full of traditions and yet constantly learning and changing. Anyway, I landed back in the Industrial Engineering & Engineering Management (now MS&E) and from there to studying and teaching innovation. We've been at University of California Davis for the past twenty years, and outside of research I spend most of my time working with science and engineering PhDs, postdocs, and faculty looking to get their ideas out into broader use.

How did learnings from rowing impact that path (or other life events)?

Aside from still getting up at 5:30 to work most mornings? Probably that hard work and fun aren't mutually exclusive... some of the best times have been in between, or even in the middle of the hardest sets (as a metaphor). Like I said, sweep rowing taught me that I was capable of working harder than I thought I could. Sculling taught me that working harder didn't help if you weren't under control and aware of what's going on outside your boat.

What's your perspective on the concept of the student-athlete? The value of the combination?

Being a student-athlete is one of the best ways to get the most from of your college education. Just like being a student-"anything" — just so long as that anything pushes you to grow beyond your comfort zone, to find a balance between work and fun, to meet people you wouldn't otherwise, working for a cause that bigger than you, and to grow outside the classwork.

We're all thrilled Stanford will be reinstating Men and Lightweight Women's rowing. Any further thoughts on that?

Rowing was great for me and I think for many others. I'm thrilled it's being reinstated and just as thrilled the other sports were too. I have always felt that Stanford's unique stature came from a commitment to its breadth of excellence, not any one discipline, or sport, or contribution. Its contributions over the past 50 years came from these very margins. So it was painful to hear about narrowing support to some common core of sports, just as it would be to hear the same motivations for narrowing its academics or research.

"I have always felt that Stanford's unique stature came from a commitment to its breadth of excellence, not any one discipline, or sport, or contribution."



*Training on Lake Washington in 1956
Coxswain Kurt Seiffert, Stroke Conn Findlay, Bow Dan Ayrault
(photo by Duvall Hecht)*

REMEMBERING

CONN FINDLAY

April 24, 1930 - April 8, 2021

CONN FINDLAY: THE COACH FOR WHOM THE IMPOSSIBLE WAS MERELY A WORTHY CHALLENGE

Dave Lewis '62

Editor's note: As many of you know, the Stanford Rowing community lost one of its icons earlier this year when legendary coach and Olympian Conn Findlay (1930-2021) passed away on April 8 at the age of 90. Below, Stanford Rowing alum Dave Lewis, '62, recounts some of his favorite memories of rowing for Conn.

Conn Findlay's athletic achievements are legendary. He medaled in rowing (2+) in three successive Olympics, including two golds, and then returned again to medal in Sailing. He was also a member of the crew on the yacht Courageous that was victorious twice in defending the America's Cup.

But it was as a coach that he will be remembered by generations of Stanford Rowing members. When I was at Stanford, the Crew was a club organization that subsisted on a tiny grant each year. There were no travel funds; we car-pooled to regattas, paid for our own meals, and stayed with kind-hearted relatives of Crew members. Conn was not paid to coach, he did it voluntarily. Yet despite all the constraints, he was consistently able to transform each year's crop of random walk-ons into crews that competed aggressively with those of strongly supported programs such as Cal and Washington.

Conn had an instinctive sense for how to bring out the potential in a boat. In the spring of 1962, we had traveled to San Diego for the Harbach Cup regatta. Our oarsmen were in good physical condition, but the boat was not coming together with the finesse we needed. On the morning of our race, Conn and I (I was the coxswain) were discussing the problem and lamenting that the man with the best form was rowing bow. Finally, he took a deep breath and said, "Let's move him to seven." I protested that there was no time to practice and that we would just be making the problem worse. He smiled and replied, "Let's try it."

We were standing on the dock waiting to get into the boat and head for the starting line when Conn gave us the new seating lineup. He then turned to me and said quietly, "Remember, your advantage will be in the power of a lower stroke rate." Off we wobbled for a start that was not encouraging. At the halfway point, things were looking better: we were in fourth and beginning to swing smoothly with our new seven-man providing the ratio we needed. With the finish line in sight, we hadn't increased our stroke and were hanging on to third even though the other boats were in their final sprint. At that point, Conn's wisdom kicked in, "In three strokes, take it down two" I yelled. Everything came together like this had always been our strategy. It unleashed latent power we didn't know we had. We cruised smoothly by the two boats ahead of us and won by a comfortable half length. Conn had been right.

My last race at Stanford was perhaps the most memorable example of how he, as a coach, could get us to do things we thought were impossible. The regular racing season was over and our first boat eight was preparing for the Western Sprint Championships when four guys from our second boat decided they wanted to compete also. They asked me to cox, and Conn agreed to coach us. We were an oddly matched group of a sophomore, two juniors, and two seniors. The oarsmen ranged in height from 5'10" to 6'4", and none had more than a year of rowing experience. I was not the lightest coxswain who had ever steered a boat. Stanford crews came in all shapes and sizes.

Continued on Next Page...



*1962 Lake Washington Coxed-Pair (Conn Findlay, center)
Winners, U.S. Nationals - Pan Am Trials, Niagara River
(photo by Kent Mitchell)*

CONTINUED:

CONN FINDLAY: THE COACH FOR WHOM THE IMPOSSIBLE WAS MERELY A WORTHY CHALLENGE- DAVE LEWIS '62

On arrival at the Sprints, the goalposts got moved. We were placed in the "Club" category which was not limited to collegiate competitors. Several of the other boats featured returned Olympians. Just before the race, Conn gathered us together for a pep-talk. He was brief and to the point. "I guess you have seen the competition. They are bigger than we are. They are stronger than we are." Yeah, thanks coach. "And they are quite a bit faster than we are." You could have scraped our spirits off of the dock with a pancake turner. "But, I think you can beat them." He then laid out a strategy we had never tried before. "You sprint hard the entire first 500 meters to get a full boat length plus a little open water ahead of the second boat. During the middle 1,000 you settle into a working stroke that makes the other boats pay dearly to catch up. Do not let any of them get more than half a length up on you going into the last 500. At that point, take the stroke up to your final sprint pace. With ten strokes to go, you want to be within a deck-length. Then quietly pull out all the stops with everything you've got to squeeze by the lead boat before they realize what is happening and have time to respond."

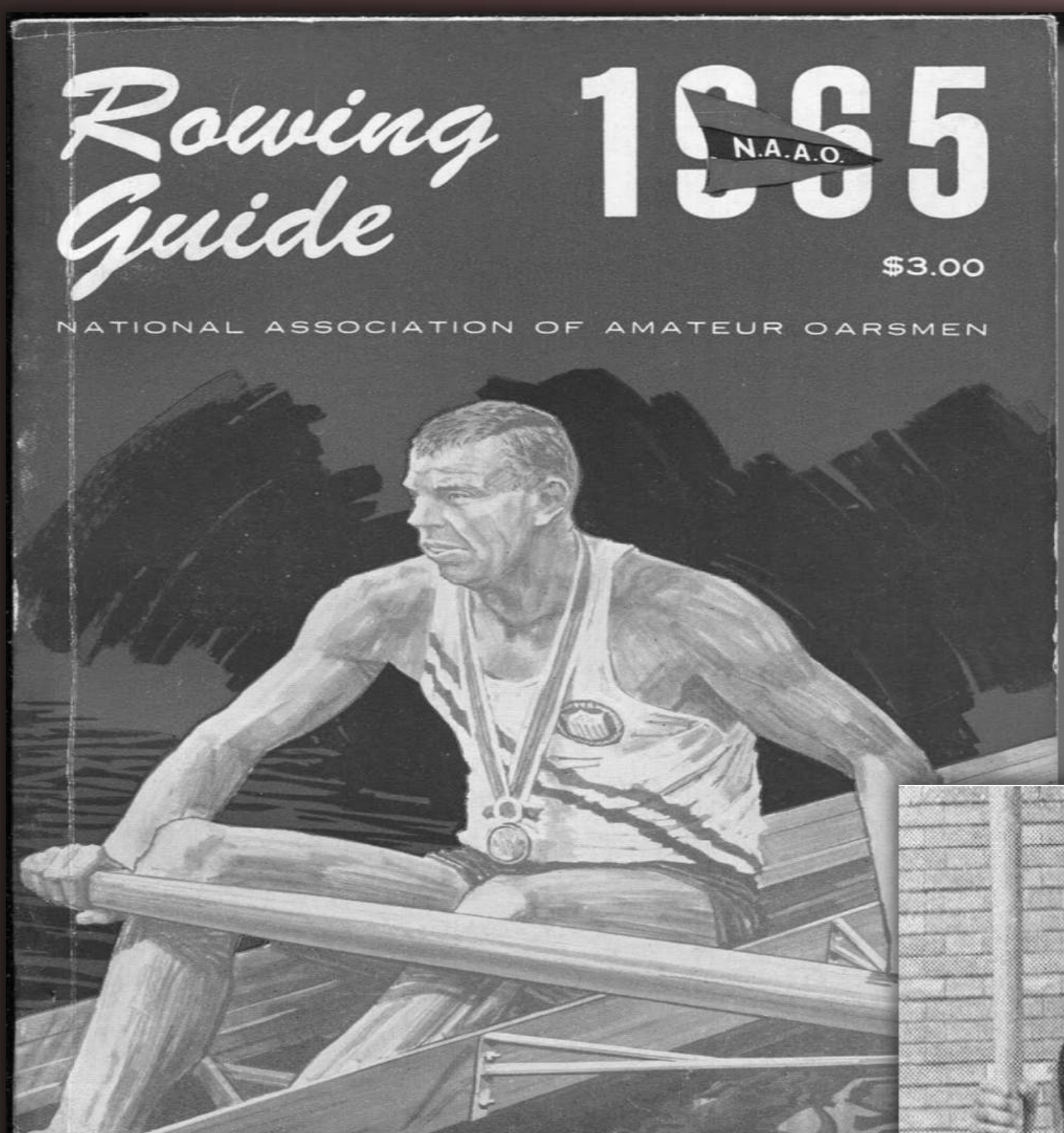
We headed out to the starting line feeling a bit like David going into battle with Goliath. The first 500 meters went according to plan, but it was soon clear that it was going to be difficult to hold off the other boats for the next 1,000. Fatigue was setting in. Then the boat next to us started drifting into our lane. An intense exchange of invective with the other coxswain ensued, and he flinched. I snapped back to focusing on our boat, but we continued to slip. By the 1,500 mark when we began our sprint, we were down a full length. Not good! We were not moving, so we upped the stroke a second time, and started to claw our way forward. Closing on the finish line, we were still down more than a deck-length and not gaining fast enough. I hollered, "Sit tall, breath deep," our agreed signal for a big-ten. We dug in, and took it up a third time. The first of those strokes was mushy, then things fell into place and the boat really came together. The last few strokes were a blur of concentration, hyper-intense rowing, and noise. At the end of our big-ten, there was no eleventh stroke. There was no need for "Weigh Enough." There was nothing left! We were across the line, and the guys literally collapsed over their oars. Finally, an exhausted voice from somewhere up the boat asked, "Did we make it?" I had to say, "It was awfully close, I don't know."

Eventually, the announcer started reporting the results. "In eighth place we have . . .," working his way up to second when he said, "We have a photo-finish between first and second. It will take a minute for the picture to develop." (those were the days of Polaroid photography) After what seemed like an eternity, he started over again with, "In eighth place we have . . ., and in second we have the University of" That is not the way you say Stanford! Our guys let out a whoop and threw up their hands in celebration. The boat promptly heeled over and filled halfway to the seats with water. It didn't matter. We slowly made our way back to the dock where Conn was waiting for us. "We won, we won," one of the guys shouted. "I thought you could," he replied with a wry smile. "And by the way, you looked good at 42 as you crossed the finish line." The boat had never achieved more than an awkward 38 in practice.

Rest in peace Conn and thank you for your leadership in building Stanford Rowing. We are committed to continuing your legacy!



The 1956 U.S. Olympic champions- coxed pairs, left to right: Dan Ayrault, Conn Findlay & George Pocock, sitting Kurt Seiffert. Photo from Thomas E. Weil Collection



Conn Findlay on the cover of N.A.A.O. Rowing Guide 1965. Cover drawing by John Hutton, Jr. Courtesy of Bill Miller.

REMEMBERING CONN FINDLAY

April 24, 1930-April 8, 2021



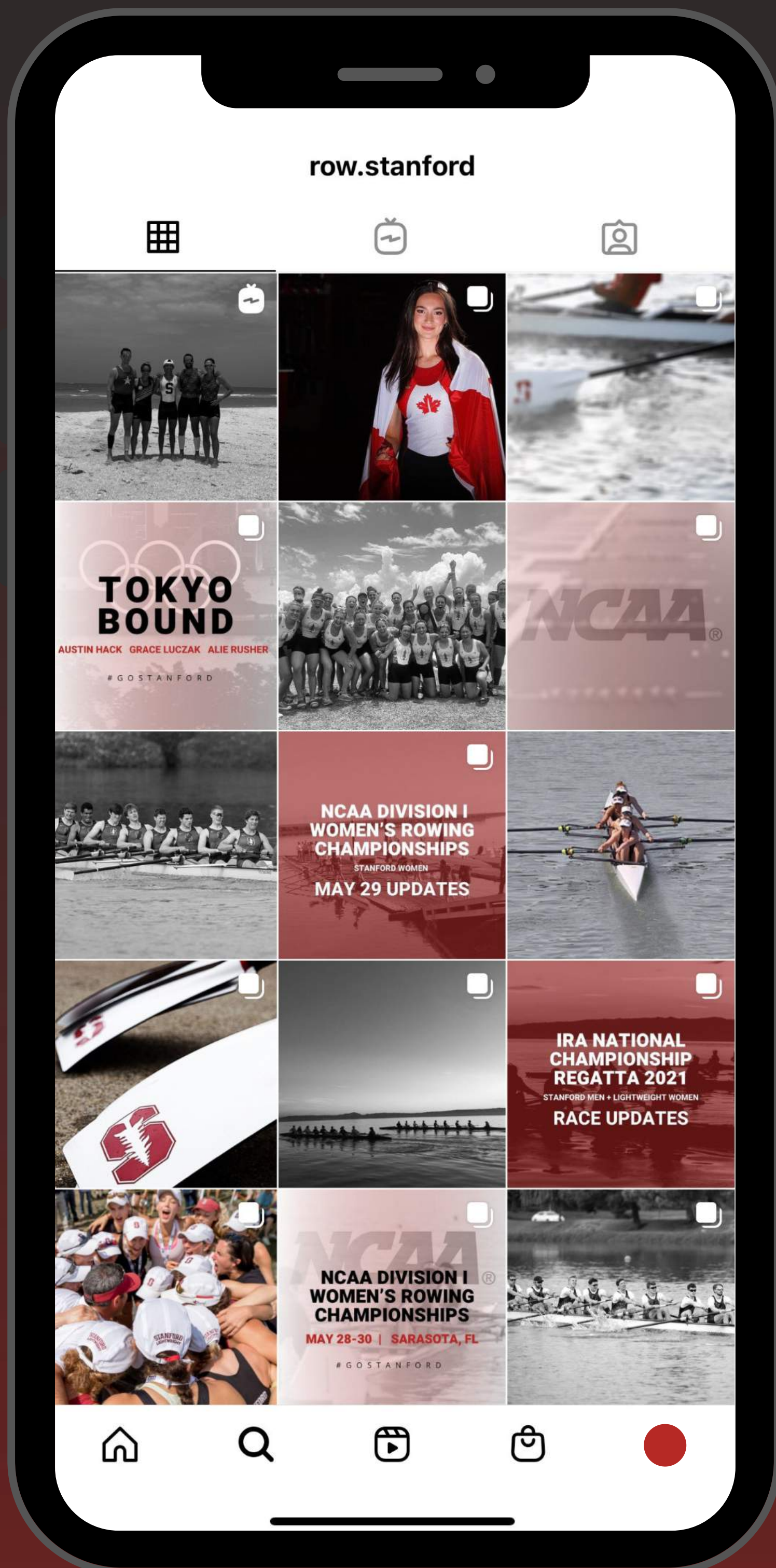
1960: U.S. coxed pair ready for the Olympic Games in Rome, from left to right - Conn Findlay, Kent Mitchell and Dick Draeger. Photo: "Bob Miller of Seattle". Courtesy of Bill Miller.



The 1964 Olympic champions in the coxed pairs - Ed Ferry, Kent Mitchell and Conn Findlay on the cover of Rowing News, December 1964. Courtesy of Bill Miller.

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PLEASE CONSIDER A CONTRIBUTION TO STANFORD ROWING

We hope you've enjoyed catching up with Stanford Rowing! Our plan to secure three teams going forward is to continue building the financial support behind them, specifically through adding to endowments with focus on Coaches, Scholarships, Equipment, and Operating Expenses. The University's opening of a new Pooled Endowment Program makes endowment gifts easier to make. Additionally, we will look to support at once needs such as Facility Refurbishment and Miscellaneous Equipment.

We have made significant progress to date and there is still much to be done.

THANK YOU to those who have made pledges and contributions!

For those wanting to know how they can contribute, visit
www.stanfordrowing.org/pledge

For those with questions on how they might support the program, please feel free to contact any of The Rowing Association Development Committee listed below.

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