



St. Catharines Rowing Club  
Annual Meeting January 20, 2022  
Vice President Rowing Report

The 2021 season started in lockdown from Covid-19 much the same way we left the 2020 season. There was hope going into the year with the availability of vaccines coming that we would return to a somewhat normal rowing season, but that proved to be incorrect.

February 16<sup>th</sup>, the lockdown was lifted and training was able to resume for our athletes looking to compete in the Henley Royal Regatta. When the weather cooperated, this group was able to get on the water for training as well as land training at the Alumni Clubhouse. Unfortunately, a decision was made March 25<sup>th</sup> to cancel the Henley Royal trip once again due to the uncertainty of travel to the UK.

With the continued cloud of Covid over our community, we had to innovatively plan to get athletes back on the water any way we could. Since all high school sports had been severely restricted or cancelled, the goal was to get high school athletes on the water with the help of the lead coaches from our local high schools. We were to start on water April 1<sup>st</sup> but at that time another Emergency Brake Lockdown was implemented and we were unable to get on the water. It wasn't until May 21<sup>st</sup>, that we were able to start the program to get these athletes in singles on the water. Unfortunately, due to that fact that we were limited to singles, many first-time rowers were denied access due to equipment and experience sculling limitations.

Having said all this, Early Bird, Mother's Day, CSSRA champs as well as all the other spring regattas were cancelled again this year. As well, as the year progressed, all regular summer regattas including the Royal Canadian Henley Regatta were cancelled. Summer rowing started with singles but in early July we were approved to put crew boats on the water by Niagara Public Health. As restrictions became more relaxed, we were planning on fall rowing to be a return to normal.

With that came more planning and it became very apparent that we were going to have to hire a full-time manager to replace Mark Welsh, who had left our organization a year earlier. Jim Marino was filling in on a volunteer basis since Mark had left, but the job was about to become bigger than part time could handle with the hope of a regular fall season. A committee of Rick Crooker, Brian Fisher, Michelle Kerr and Bob Schenck was tasked to put a job description together, post it on several websites and fill the position. After receiving resumes, three candidates were chosen to interview and from those interviews, 2<sup>nd</sup> interviews were given to two of the candidates. After Board approval, it was then that Jim Marino was chosen to fill the role of our full-time club manager. Jim officially started on October 1, 2021.



The club was also able to run the Youth Rowing School with Marion Markarian leading the program. Coaches were hired and kids were signed up and were able to have complete sessions. It was great to see our future athletes being able to get out and enjoy rowing.

Fall rowing was finally a return to normalcy. We were able to boat crews and attend regattas. The Head of the Welland was our first regatta since Head of the Fish in 2019, almost two years ago. The club also went to Head of the Trent for the first time in many years. With the United States border still closed to non-essential traffic, going to regattas in the USA proved to be near impossible but you were still able to fly into the USA. And that is what Michele Fisher did with some of her girls' crews to attend Head of the Charles regatta, renting boats and doing very well in the process securing their start spots for next year. The club also managed to run our own Head of the Raging Basshole for SCRC crews only for another fun day of racing.

This past fall, the decision was made to make another attempt to attend Henley Royal Regatta 2022 and crews continued to train right up until our latest lockdown which happened January 5, 2022.

Some of the other highlights of the year included

1. Our own Kristen Kit winning Olympic Gold in the Women's 8 and she was gracious enough to speak at a function put on in her honour at the shellhouse.
2. Jacob Buczek, competed in the Men's Four at the Olympic games and Laura Court in the PR3 mixed coxed four in the Para Olympics
3. Giancarlo DiPompeo and Teagan Orth were selected to the Junior National Team
4. Brian Thorne was inducted into the Ontario Rowing Hall of Fame as well as Paul Douma as part of the quad that won the 1985 World Championships
5. Ryan Holland was hired as our summer student and helped Jim Marino with many tasks including getting the outboard motors in top condition.
6. A new eight has been cost shared and purchased with Denis Morris high school and is due to arrive this spring.

All the work that was put into this season wouldn't be possible without the tremendous work our coaching staff does. Without them, we would not be able to offer the programs we do and make them affordable to our athletes. A special thank you to our lead coaches that go above and beyond organizing what happens on and off the water. Thank you to all the coaches for your tremendous contribution to rowing.

I would also like to thank the rowing committee; tireless hours were put into getting athletes on the water safely. The number of Zoom invites goes beyond the imagination that were participated in.



I would also like to thank Jim Marino for helping us navigate through this convoluted season we had. And to congratulate him on his new role as Club Manager.

And finally thank you to all the board members, many long meetings were had, all in the interest of providing the St. Catharines Rowing Club a foundation for the future.

Although we are currently in lockdown, I anticipate that this year will be a closer return to normal. There still is a lot of hard work ahead to get back to our numbers we had pre Covid but I know that the St Catharines Rowing Club will continue to "Forge Ahead"

Yours in Rowing,

Bob Schenck  
Vice President Rowing  
January 20, 2022