

VP Rowing Report 2021

The year 2020 started off with much more promise than most years at the St. Catharines Rowing Club. We were sending two crews to Henley Royal, Matthew Pinsent, was coming to speak at our spring gala, we had planned to buy more boats to help our club continue forward into the future. Then COVID hit in early March.

The sequence of events after Coronavirus hit were happening at a fast pace and required many hours of meetings when so many curveballs were being thrown at us. The biggest loss of the year was our Club Captain Mark Welsh. He informed us in early June that he would be leaving us for a new job after 14 years at the rowing club. His last day was June 27th. He will be greatly missed for years to come but his legacy will be felt for years. I want to thank Mark on behalf of the SCRC for all his hard work, dedication and to his countless hours he put in to make our club better each and every day.

As most of you know, almost all the events of the year were cancelled, but we had a few bright spots that happened before and after the pandemic hit. All the ergattas were completed. Brian and Michele Fisher took the Jr Boys and Jr. Girls crews that were to compete in the trial to go to Henley Royal to Florida to train during March break.

There was a virtual Early Bird and Mother's Day regatta.

Jim Marino agreed to take Mark's position guiding our way through the season.

Athletes did get on the water June 6th, first with 5 singles a shift on the water, progressing to more singles per shift, to Double Bubbles, Social Double Bubbles, and then to rowing circles. All with Covid safety protocols in place with Rowing Canada, RowOntario CHRC and Niagara Public Health monitoring and approving our plans along the way.

Four athletes, Owen Hughes, Rebecca Dockray, Isaiah Yoder and Ben Niemi were awarded our Athlete Bursary which is generously donated each year by an anonymous donor.

Our Past President Ken (Jasper) Campbell was inducted to the RowOntario Hall of Fame.

Pat Morris, was hired on a summer student grant, sanded and prepped all our sweep oars to be painted by Carl McCulloch and helpers this winter.

We had no positive cases of COVID on the island. What with our tight protocols, athlete self-monitoring by checklist every day, personal cleaning kits, social distancing, masks, disinfecting boats after each use and lots of hand sanitizer. I commend all the athletes and coaches for all their diligence in keeping everyone safe.

Training resumed for the chance to row at Henley Royal and the committee of Paul Beedling, Christine Wilson and I continue to meet to set guidelines for selection of the crews that will be eventually selected to go.

I cannot begin to thank all the people that put this season together, but I want to highlight a few that made a significant contribution to ensure we continue to Forge Ahead in the years to come. First the executive, Rick Crooker, Brian Fisher, Louise Hastings and the rest of the Board of Directors for all the long hours of Zoom meetings. All the coaches that worked with the athletes on the water especially shift leads Scott Anderson, Rich Moreau, Michele Fisher and Brian Fisher. And a big thank you to Jim Marino, for agreeing to take on the role of Club Captain and guiding us through very difficult times. He went above and beyond when it came to running our summer and fall programs and has continued this role to date.

As of now, we are currently in a lockdown again, but when we come out of it, we will be prepared to get athletes training as much as the guidelines will allow us.

Although the coming season doesn't look like a return to normal, I look forward to the day when we see full crews back on the water, spreading the disease we all caught years ago called "**Rowing**".

Yours in rowing,

Bob Schenck

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