

Middlebury Crew

Volumen 5: Spring 2011

Dear Friends of Middlebury Crew,

Another spring season completed--- a season of great challenges and great rewards. When contemplating our races, we always try to think of our competitors as collaborators in the effort to get the best out of ourselves--- the quality of our rivals' effort demands nothing less than our best. This spring's weather itself created that kind of challenge for us--- a cold and stormy spring kept ice on Lake Dunmore until nearly halfway through the season, and gave each practice a kind of Antarctic grandeur.

Nonetheless, the team raced admirably at the New England Championships. In the eights for the first time in many years, the varsity boats had their best races against the top level of competition in the region, shocking many crews who had beaten them earlier in the season. The strong performances continued with great races from the 2V men's eight and the novice eights, with a particular highlight coming from the women's varsity 4+, our women's 2v squad, who made the Grand Final against many school's top boats and finished 5th overall.

Many coaches from around New England came to me and commented on the strength and depth of the Middlebury team--- a compliment from those who know the sport best, and who know what unstinting group effort it takes to build a team. This effort would not be possible without the support of our alumni, parents, and friends-- every day we take the water is the result of your engagement with the program. We are grateful for that opportunity, and we strive every day to make the most of it.

To succeed against the best varsity programs in New England, we need to upgrade our top racing equipment. Our fundraising goal for next year will focus on the purchase of two 8+'s, to give our top squads racing hulls that will match the quality of their effort. In the long term, we aim to build a permanent rowing facility on Lake Dunmore, the home which the team has long lacked. These are big dreams, but with hard work and your support we can make them real.

The final races of the season took place two weeks later at the Dad Vail Regatta, the oldest and largest intercollegiate sprint regatta in the country, with over 100 colleges participating. All our boats raced strongly against deep competition, but the women's varsity 4+ stood out, racing with a fierce confidence that was the summation of an entire year of stellar work. This group, who comprised the stern four of the women's 8+, tore through the regatta before coming up just short against an undefeated and very strong Washington University 4+ in the final-- a fantastic silver medal performance, giving them the very first Dad Vail medal in the short history of Middlebury rowing.

The season was too short by far, as every boat was gaining speed each day, so we are left to anticipate the fall season to come, when former novices will shine as new varsity rowers, when new leaders will emerge, and when the challenge and promise of a new year will again call forth the efforts of our best selves. Or, to say it more simply, when we will be a rowing team.

Thank you all,
--Noel Wanner



Varsity Men



The varsity men experienced a tumultuous spring season filled with both hardships and successes. From the outset of the season, an abnormally large number of rowers dealt with injuries or illness. Despite this, the team retained enough rowers to field two highly competitive 8+ for nearly every regatta. Another obstacle faced was the lack of time

on the water due to a later than normal Spring Break training trip and a late thawing of Lake Dunmore. The team put in a quality effort in Georgia and returned to race at Lake Quinsigamond. Middlebury's lack of water time relative to the other crews was apparent. The first 8+ finished 18 seconds slower than Wesleyan, the winner; the second 8+ finished 46 seconds slower than the winning WPI boat.

From that regatta onward the team saw marked improvement. The first, second, and third 4+s placed third, second, and first in their respective heats at the Big Three versus Bowdoin and Amherst. The next weekend at Tufts, the first 8+ beat Tufts by a huge margin, only to be disqualified by suspect buoy violations. The second 8+ was split into fours, with the first 4+ beating Tufts by 2 seconds and the second 4+ winning by 4 seconds. The team then traveled the following weekend to Colby to race against Colby, UVM, and UNH. Despite following two consecutive positive regattas, this regatta was not a bright spot in the season. The weather was miserable, with frigid temperatures and a mixture of rain, sleet, and hail, and the men's boats finished second in each of the head-to-head style races.

Luckily, the high point in the season arrived the next weekend at the New England Championships. Racing varsity 8+s for the first time at this regatta was a momentous occasion for Middlebury Crew, and both of the men's boats performed admirably. The first 8+ placed fifth in the petite finals, only 10 seconds off Colby, the winner of that final. A good barometer for the improvements that the first 8+ made over the course of the season is their performance relative to Wesleyan. In the first regatta, Middlebury finished behind Wesleyan by 18 seconds, yet at the New Englands they trailed by only 6 seconds. The second 8+ saw similar improvements, finishing 16 seconds behind Wesleyan, compared to the 46 second difference in their first race. Moving forward, the team hopes for this season to have been the first of many competitive races in 8+s at the New England Championships.

The following weekend at the Dad Vail Regatta can be classified only as a heartbreaking experience for the men's team. The team raced a heavyweight and a lightweight 4+ that were both victimized by horrible luck. Despite finishing fifth in the heavyweight grand final the previous season, Middlebury was seeded in what was easily the fast qualifying heat. They finished third in the heat and did not advance to the semifinals, but their time was the fifth fastest among all 50 boats that raced in the first heat. The lightweight 4+, which experienced almost exactly the same misfortune the previous season at Dad Vails, suffered an equipment malfunction in the first heat that prevented them from qualifying. The 2-seat got jammed in the tracks just outside of the breakage zone, forcing the rower to race the remainder of the course with only his arms and body. Despite this clear disadvantage, they finished only 7 seconds off of the qualifying third place boat.





Varsity Women

The Varsity Women rowed with one race plan in mind this season: Go Fast and Beat Boats! At first, it seemed as though this wasn't going to be possible, as the team returned from training in Georgia only to be plagued

by illness, injury and a massive amount of ice still sitting on Dunmore. The first few regattas, while disappointing, only fueled the team's desire to stop settling and to start fighting for what each boat knew it deserved. The first 4+ took home the cup once more at The Big Three Regatta against Amherst and Dowdoin and from then on prospects started looking up. The next two weeks brought on a mixture of wins and loses at Tufts and Colby for the women's 8+ and 4+. But after all the ups and downs of the season under the team's belt, the New England Championships became the foremost goal in everyone's mind.

New England's marked perhaps the most impressive push from a Middlebury Women's squad in many years, breaking into racing 8+s against schools already renowned for their programs. The 8+ moved from heats into the third round of finals. and took the race plan very much to heart, beating everyone in their race in a thrilling demonstration of heart. The affectionately named "Fearless Four" carried Middlebury rowing pride easily through the heats, and went on to row in the grand final, placing 5th and rowing their best race of the season.

After New England's, no one was ready to rest on their laurels, and a select group moved onto The Dad Vail regatta in Philadelphia two weeks later. The women's team fielded a 4+ and a pair, both chomping at the bit to prove themselves against some of the fastest boats in the country. The pair (Hallie Woods & Christina Azodi) placed 10th out of over 30 schools. The 4+ (Meghan Blumstein, Cailin Ross, Rebecca Myhre & Brittany Thomas) breezed through the heats and semi-finals, winning each respective race, before concluding the season with a 2nd place finish in the finals, earning silver medals for the boat and proving that Middlebury Women's Rowing is a force to be reckoned with in the coming year.



Emily Wei, Astrid Rademeyer, Hallie Woods, Liia Koiv-Haus and Frances Aderhold



Elise Cohen, Meghan Blumstein, Rebecca Hyhre, Cailin Ross, Brittany Thomas, Eliza Gilmore, Christina Azodi, Catherine Hayes, Kalie Mix

Novice Men

The men's novice crew began the season with high hopes, coming off a solid fall season and a rigorous winter pre-season. However, there were many questions about the exexpectations to have for the season, as Middlebury Crew was switching over to rowing 8+'s rather than 4+'s and only five of the novice rowers from the fall would be making the annual spring break training trip to Georgia, a critical element for the less experienced rowers. But four new men decided to join, giving the team plenty of numbers to make the spring season unforgettable.

The spring 2011 Middlebury Men's Novice Crew was one of the strongest and most successful men's novice crews in the history of the program. Immediately following the team's return from Georgia, in which the crew worked to adapt the four new members into the lineup, the men's novice crew was faced with their first test. Surprising everyone at Lake Quinsigamond, they managed to gut out a second place finish, overtaking WPI and the UMass "B" boat.

A week later, Middlebury raced against Amherst and Bowdoin in "The Big 3" regatta. This year, the men's novice crew had primarily practiced in the 8+ and therefore had to mix things up and divide into two boats. Showing versatility, the novice men's 4+ coxed by Shannon Fiedler and stroked by Duncan Harvey finished a close second to Bowdoin. In their only back-to-back races of the season, the team traveled to UVM on Sunday and again saw success. While the novice men's 8+ lost to UVM, the 4+ won their race by well over a minute in some rough conditions.



Ben Savard, Lander Karath, Jenner Currier, Malcolm Littlefield, Brandt Silver-Korn, Duncan Harvey, Henry Bell, Connor Gomez, Madison Stebbins & Scott Robinson

Over the next two weeks, Middlebury Crew traveled to regattas at Tufts and Colby, and while the weather was cold and rainy and the racing results of the men's novice crew were disappointing, these regattas gave the novice team much needed practice and experience that would come to pay off at the New England Rowing Championships on April 30th.

The New England Championships on Lake Quinsigamond were the final chance for the novice men to prove themselves in the 8+ against some stiff competition. They did. Following a qualifying heat in which they narrowly missed beating rival UVM by a mere two seconds, the novice men came back out in the Petite Final and rowed by far their best race of the season. Their time for the two-kilometer race, 6:29.4, was a full 55 seconds faster than their time for their first race of the season on the same course, and good enough to give them second place, ahead of UConn and the same UMass boat that had beaten them soundly at that first regatta. The novice men's 6:29.4 was also a second faster than Tufts' time in the other final, another team that had beaten Middlebury's novice men earlier in the season.

Middlebury Men's Novice Crew of coxswain Ben Savard and rowers Duncan Harvey, Henry Bell, Connor Gomez, Malcolm Littlefield, Lander Karath, Brandt Silver-Korn, Jenner Currier, and Madison Stebbins unquestionably rowed as if they "were made of iron," as their coach, Scott Robinson, was fond of telling them.

Novice Women



The novice women headed down to Georgia this year with eight rowers and one coxswain – a perfect boat - except that over half of the novice women had never rowed before. They were excited to learn how to row and undaunted by the three a day practices in the rain. They learned quickly, working their way up to rowing by all eights within the first few days of the trip. The novice women bonded over small mishaps, crab attacks and blistered hands, learning to pull together and improve their technique.

The novice women were launched into their first race in Worcester in near freezing temps as soon as they got back from the trip in Georgia. The girls got to show off their newfound skill and power as a boat, finishing last, but not by much. The novice women who had rowed in the fall joined some of the varsity women for a JV eight. Spirits high, the women used the loss as motivation to get through a week of driving to UVM to practice there while waiting for Lake Dunmore to thaw.

The next weekend, the novice took on Amherst and Bowdoin in fours, both boats finishing closer to their competition than ever before. Cheered by this, they came back strong the next day against UVM, taking their first boat in a win over UVM's second eight. They also raced a four that day, taking a close second to UVM, powering through the rough, choppy water.

Lake Dunmore eventually thawed, and the women were practicing hard every afternoon, working on their quick catches and lengthening their strokes for the upcoming weekend regattas at Tufts and Colby, respectively. The girls once again defeated UVM's second eight at Colby where a strong current cut the race short by 500 meters, and freezing rain resulted in some very cold novices.

The last week of practice is where it all came together, with the novices rowing harder than ever, getting excited and ready for The New England Championship. They began working on building speed, having finally gotten technique down, and were learning to race, going faster than they ever had before.

The New England Championship regatta is where the women really got to shine, beating UVM's first eight for the first time, pulling their way into the finals heat. Middlebury saw Smith College, Mount Holyoke, and the United States Coast Guard academy in their final heat. They quickly overtook UVM, and snuck up on Coast Guard, crossing the finish line halfway through their boat, and improving on their time from the preliminary heat that morning.

The novice women had an amazing spring season, not only learning how to row, but coming together as a team to row fast and show the competition what they could do.

