

Who wakes up at 5 a.m.?

Oregon crew does, and they're rowing by six

By Blair Thompson
Of the Emerald

When was the last time you accomplished anything at 5 a.m.? For most students, just the thought of not being asleep at that hour is scary.

But for the hardy group of men and women comprising Oregon's Club Sports crew team, 5 a.m. is practice time, not bedtime.

Crazy, maybe. Dedicated, yes, and crew members swear by their antics.

"It's like no other sport. Going rowing every morning and catching the sunrise is a great way to start the day," says Michael Thornburg, a two-year crew veteran.

Such dedication is almost a must for Oregon crew, because the road to success is full of obstacles.

Lack of money, inexperience and second-hand equipment are a few of those obstacles. Despite them, the Ducks have transformed themselves from Pac-10 patsies to respectable contenders.

Oregon's women rowers proved their respectability Nov. 12 at the Frostbite

Regatta in Seattle, Wash.

The women's novice eight and novice four boats took first-place trophies, while their novice lightweight four, varsity lightweight eight and flyweight four finished second. Overall, Oregon women's crew was fourth out of 17 teams, a performance coach Tim Meier dubbed, "the best ever by an Oregon women's crew team."

But competing with the rest of the Pac-10 is difficult for Oregon crew.

While conference powerhouses University of Washington and University of Southern California enjoy NCAA status (translation: money), the Ducks live in the penniless zone of club sports. That means that UW can hand out free rides, while Oregon is lucky to hand out free sweats.

"I'm just hoping all the time that they (the Ducks) could spend a little less time fighting obstacles and a lot more time just rowing," says Washington coach Dick Erickson.

The Ducks, though, are a determined team. Through fund-raising activities like rowathons, stadium cleanups and

donation drives, they raise more money than any other club team on campus.

The rowers' fund-raising efforts have brought them a four-person boat in 1981 and their latest acquisition, an eight-person boat.

"It makes a big difference having our own boats," says men's crew coach Mike Holcomb.

But as helpful as new boats are, new faces aren't.

Returning rowers are a luxury Oregon usually doesn't have. "Most of the people that come out have no experience in any type of rowing," says Thornburg.

Still, results like fourth-place at the 1982 National Sports Festival by the men's heavyweight four show that technique isn't everything.

Oregon's constant improvement, and the belief of Holcomb and Meier that the Ducks will get better, has made Washington's Erickson somewhat of a quacker backer.

"I have nothing but respect for those people," says the Huskies' coach. Fifteen-thousand students would probably agree.

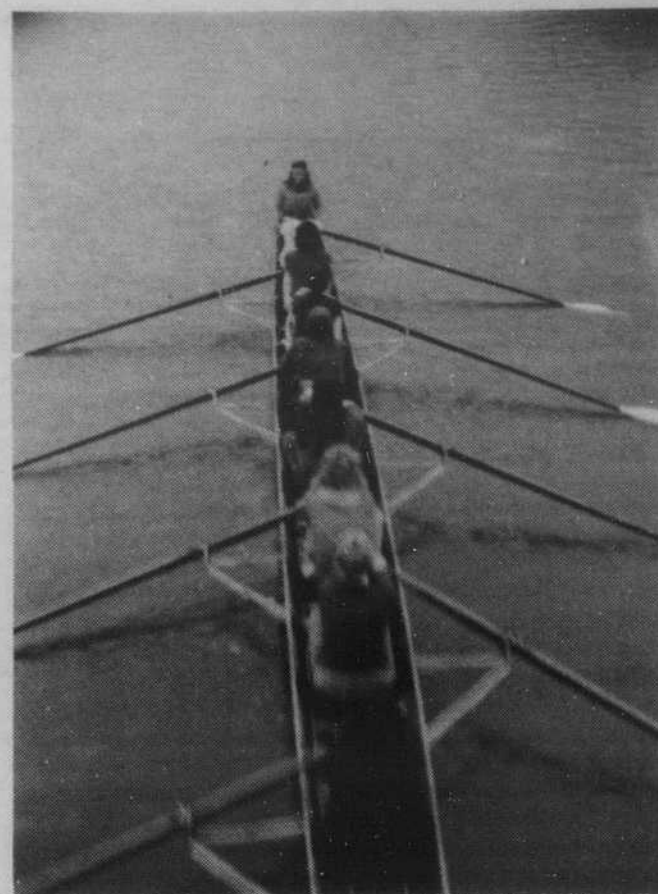


Photo courtesy of Tim Meier

Oregon's women's novice eight, rowing in the darkness of Dexter Lake here, finished first in the Frostbite Regatta Nov. 12.

Club volleyball hosts weekend net tournament

The Oregon Club Sports men's volleyball team will host a tournament at McArthur Court Sunday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The tournament includes a team from Bend, two clubs from Portland, one team from Ashland-Medford, and possibly a Eugene team, the Lane Community College Birdmen.

Oregon, coached by Ed Jacobson, has been practicing since fall and is entered in three tournaments this winter.

Jacobson and his players say that this year's club volleyball team, fueled by a few German exchange students, is probably the best ever at Oregon.

Sunday's tournament, which is a AA event, is free and open to the public.

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