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# SIDELINES

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## Crew: Renaissance on the water

Each weekday morning this fall, the boats of the University crew teams will slip into the calm darkness of Dexter Reservoir. An hour or more later, when the rowing workout is finished, the sun will finally be coming up over the eastern hills.

"We are doing something a little more absurd than the average person does," admits veteran rower Mark Wolfe.

What these men and women do is row four- and eight-person boats, or shells, in perfect unison for an exhausting mile-plus while under the direction of a smaller person — a coxswain.

But absurd as getting up at 4:30 a.m. to row seems to be, this hasn't slowed the growth of crew from a faltering EMU club sport into a popular and successful one.

"The first year I rowed (1981) we had barely enough women to fill an eight (-person boat)," says women's team member Anne Donahue. "The second year we had just under two boats and, last year, we had four boats of women by spring," she says.

This year, a crew orientation meeting attracted about 170 people — half men and half women.

Since the men's team began in 1967, with the women's team joining in 1976, the crew team has undergone a recent renaissance on the water as well as swelling in popularity.

"We're good support for each other," says Donahue, "with the guys cheering for us and us cheering for them."

In 1982, after purchasing a four-person racing shell, the men's heavyweight four team won the Pac-10 championship. They went on to compete in the nationals at Indianapolis, says head coach Mike Holcomb.

"In 1983, we purchased a racing eight and the women's light eight (130 pounds and under) cleaned up at the regionals," Holcomb says, "and then they went on to take third at the nationals in Seattle."

At the nationals this summer, the men's elite four brought home a silver medal, Holcomb says.

The purchase of these modern lightweight boats is partly responsible for the success of the crew teams, says women's coach John Widder. "It was a real turning point for us."

Because crew is a club sport, the team receives no money from the athletic department. Its official funding comes solely from a \$7,000 incidental fee stipend.

"We have a boathouse, equipment (the eight-person shell cost \$7,700), travel and insurance expenses, so we have to supplement that with fundraising," Widder says.

Crew team members sell hats, pick up garbage after athletic events and conduct a Row-a-Thon in December to supplement their funding.

This year, the team hopes to have several light and heavyweight crews in both the men's and women's teams.

Drawing from the 170 crew hopefuls and the over 20 returning experienced rowers, the team will train on the water this fall. The team will compete in regattas at Corvallis and on Seattle's Green Lake.

December and January bring weight training and conditioning. Those team hopefuls who are left in the spring will make

up the men's and women's teams for the nine spring regattas.

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