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# THE CATCH

The Official Newsletter of Sydney Rowing Club



## Henley Royal Regatta Review 2023

BY ALEX NICHOL

### Pre-Departure Training

After a long, successful domestic season involving National Team Trials in Penrith and a trip to Perth for the Nationals Championships, our crews charged into the winter with the goal of winning Henley Royal Regatta in mind. The crews were quickly formed after some tough selection periods run by our top coaches. Concluding the selection process our coaches decided to select a Thames Challenge Cup Eight, Britannia Challenge Cup Coxed Four, Fawley Challenge Cup junior Mens Quad and a Diamond Jubilee junior Womens Quad. The team trained thoroughly through this time to develop as much as possible before leaving for the UK. The crews were also involved in the Simulation Regatta held by Rowing Australia for National Team and overseas competing crews across the nation. The club performed well at this regatta, posting competitive prognostic times in relation to Senior and Underaged National Team crews. This was a productive training tool for our crews and where we began to see the fast nature of our fleet.



## This issue:

Pre-Departure Training

Training in the UK – Oxford  
Brookes + Marlow Regatta

Henley Women's Regatta

Henley Royal Regatta



## Training in the UK – Oxford Brookes + Marlow Regatta:

Arriving in the UK initiated our training in Wallingford where our generous boat lenders, Oxford Brookes' boatshed is located. This was a great benefit to crews as they could train competitively amongst high standard athletes from an internationally regarded program. Following the first few days, our mens crews participated in the Marlow Regatta held at the London 2012 Olympic Course, Eton Dorney.



Oxford Brookes University Boat Club

Our crews engaged in Time Trial and Multi-lane racing formats and received positive results. All boats made their respective A-finals. The Thames Eight managed a close 2nd behind a highly regarded Thames Rowing Club crew, the Britannia four finished 3rd in a very competitive final and our Fawley quad also produced a 3rd place having a strong battle with British schoolboy stronghold Windsor Boys School. Overall, great lessons were learnt by all crews involved and the potential of a Henley Royal Regatta win was real.

**SYDNEY  
ROWING  
CLUB**




Miles Harrold (Bow of SRC Thames 8+)







## Henley Women's Regatta:

### RAYNER CHALLENGE CUP

While our men's group were off preparing for Marlow, our junior Women were busy at the Henley Women's Regatta. Under the instruction of coach Felix Dieu, our junior women's quad split into two doubles to race for the Rayner Cup, which Sydney is the current holders of (Previously won by Laura Sypher and Liesel Page, 2022).

The decision to row doubles was a good one. The regatta went according to our hopes with the double of Talisa Knoke Driver and Lucy Searle winning the U19 Doubles event convincingly. Our second double of Neve Tierney and Amelia De Villiers, had a confidence-building outcome of getting to the Quarterfinals and losing to the eventual finalists who lost to our winning crew. Valuable experience was gained in both handling racing pressure as well as familiarity with the course.



2023 Rayner Cup Winners – Lucy Searle & Talisa Knoke-Driver





## Henley Royal Regatta:

### BRITANNIA CHALLENGE CUP

The Britannia Coxed Four was the first crew to race at this year's Henley Royal Regatta racing on the Tuesday. They came up against Nonesuch Boat Club, a local British club and defeated them comfortably. They progressed straight Thursday racing where they raced against City of Bristol Rowing Club where a similar margin was produced. They gained confidence from this race as they had posted the fastest times to the Barrier (650m) and Fawley (1050m) markers in the whole event. They had then progressed to the semi-final where they raced Molesey Boat Club.

Sydney Rowing Club and Molesey Boat Club have a rich history of competition at HRR. In this race, our boys started well and pushed out into a solid lead, holding a length or more for most of the race. By Remenham Club (1400m) we were up and expecting the usual push in front of the London support coming from that area with 600m to go. Molesey surged back strongly and regained the lead of the race with 250m to go. Despite the result, our men performed an outstanding effort and are highly credited for their achievement of making the semi-final, especially at such a young average age. Molesey went on to lose the Final to Thames Rowing Club.



2023 Britannia Challenge Cup - Mietta Jones (C), Declan Glendinning (B), Tom Hart (2), Rory Menzies (3) & Alec Hoskin (4)







## THAMES CHALLENGE CUP

Our Thames Eight started their HRR Campaign on the Wednesday when they came against Vesta Rowing Club in the first round. This race was won before what seemed to be the  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile marker. This was an opportunity for the crew to show their true ability. This was followed by a similar performance on the Thursday racing when the crew defeated Molesey Boat Club 'B' in a very convincing and aggressive style. Although a highly anticipated race, the quarter final for our crew was done in similar fashion. Lining up against Molesey Boat Club 'A' on Friday initiated a revenge mission mentality in the crew as 5 members from last year's Thames had Lost to Molesey who went on to the win the event entirely.

The crew once again showed they were worthy Sunday finalists posting the fastest times to the Barrier and Fawley. In fact, the times were right up there with the very best of the Ladies Plate crews (Intermediate Mens Eights event), quite an accolade. This progressed the crew to the Semi-finals against the biggest competition, Thames Rowing Club. This race was referred to as the real Final as the times suggested throughout the week that these two crews were outliers amongst the field. Our Head and Assistant Coaches were in the Umpire's launch to watch the race and they had noticed our crew looking 'unsettled'. The race took off and was extremely close until around the Barrier marker where the Thames crew started moving away more efficiently. Just after halfway the Thames crew progressed to a length ahead and held their margin strongly. Our men fought hard and came back at the men from Putney but it was too little too late.

The times of this race, although raced in slightly better conditions, produced as good a time to the Barrier, Fawley, and the finish as the very best Ladies Plate crews in their semi-finals, a rare situation. One would normally expect Ladies Plate crews to be 3-6 seconds faster to the Barrier and Fawley markers, potentially more to the finish. Perhaps this really was a special Thames crew as some people had tipped them to be but we know our crew was a special SRC outfit as well.



2023 Thames Challenge Cup - Tess Harris (C), Brad Graham (S), Alex Nichol (7), Alex Wolf (6), Harry Crouch (5), Matt Morgan (4), Tom Cregan (3), Torun Olsson (2) & Miles Harrold (B)





## FAWLEY CHALLENGE CUP

Our Fawley Quad started racing on the Thursday racing against Claires Court School 'A' which proved to be a slight challenge for our boys in tough head wind conditions. This posted them right up there with the best times in the event on that day. They then progressed to the Friday racing against Hinksey Sculling School 'A'. Conditions worsened throughout the day and seemed to peak during this race. Our boys lead well right to the end until Hinksey put the pressure on in the 400m of the race. This gave them the confidence to power through to the line in the lead as our boys were stunned by the comeback. With limited experience, our boys put their best effort out on the course and were defeated by a strong, more experienced, local crew. A disappointing end to the campaign with many lessons learnt about the nature of competitive international racing at HRR.



2023 Fawley Challenge Cup - Nick Whalan (B), Jackson Gursoy (2), Charlie Hine (3) & Maxim Moloney (4)



Henley Royal Regatta Course



## DIAMOND JUBILEE CHALLENGE CUP

Following the Success at Henley Women's Regatta, our Diamond Jubilee Quad were building good confidence heading into Henley Royal Regatta. They began racing on the Thursday and showed their ability in a strong showing against Lea Rowing Club. This race was amongst the fastest in the event even if the crew slowing their pace across the line to preserve energy. They progressed to the Friday racing against the favourites, Wycliffe Junior Rowing Club 'A'. Our girls battled against the tough conditions to fall to the Wycliffe crew by 2 lengths. With the limited preparation these girls had leading up to the regatta, the club is proud of their efforts and see lots of valuable learnings in their campaign which will pay great dividends for the girls in the future.



2023 Diamond Jubilee Quad - NeveTierney (B), Amelia De Villiers (2), Lucy Searle (3) & Talisa Knoke Driver (4)



Henley Church Tower