



Rowers end fall season 1981

By Lina Goode

For the sixth consecutive year, the women's crew team participated in Boston's famous Head-of-the-Charles regatta on October 18. With 80,000 spectators watching 720 boats and 3,200 competitors entered in 18 events, the Head-of-the-Charles simply has no parallel in United States rowing. As UCWC Coach and National Women's Rowing Association President Susan Urbas puts it, "Tradition has a lot to do with it. Many teams go every year whether or not they are competitive. The point of the Head is less winning than simply being there, partaking of this unique festival of rowing. It is too large and the varieties of participation too diverse for intense competition to be the major motivation for most teams."

Entries run the gamut from the ultra serious to the purely recreational in this regatta which offers events for veterans, masters, juniors, elites, clubs, and mixed sex crews. Some events are segregated by sex while others, like the club eights, contain both men's and women's crews. In an atypical sense, a team's finish is absolutely a function of the category it races in. For instance, Coach Urbas explained that her crew's second to last place finish time in the tough women's championship fours would have put UCWC in the top twenty of the comparable club event.

An auspicious start could not overcome the crew's overall lack of physical preparation. UCWC President and coxswain Elisse Ghitelman explained, "If you are looking at the Head competitively, it is an endurance race. We had UC oarswomen who had rowed at schools like Radcliffe, Oxford and Mount Holyoke, but we did not view the race that way because everyone was out of condition. Add to that the restricted water time we had compared to teams which were on the water a month ahead of us and either flew out to Boston or did not have as far to drive, and you realize we did fine because we did our best under disadvantaged circumstances." →

women personally and for UCWC to make them work that hard to pass us was no small feat."

UCWC does not plan any more races this fall. 1982 is a rebuilding year for the team and Urbas now wants to concentrate on teaching basics to novices and refreshing the experienced people on technique. Noting they are "big and enthusiastic" Urbas is pleased with the new recruits. "We'll start bringing medals and trophies home again this spring," she said.

UCWC's season was cut short last spring due to problems gaining access to the Chicago River. The women were filmed recently for a soon to be released movie on the Chicago River, which details in part the team's role as a leader in making public recreational use of the river. Urbas, who founded the team in 1975 and has steered it successfully through a series of environmental obstacles during the past six years, believes the team's future is very bright now that year-round access to the river has been achieved. A new boathouse facility will be available in the spring, and a rowing program at Northwestern University has gotten underway this fall.

UCWC is still recruiting both experienced and inexperienced rowers and coxswains, and women with a recreational interest in rowing. For more information call Elisse at 955-5253 or Susan at 875-0265.

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UCWC had to enter its four in the elite women's championship event since there is no "club" event for fours such as the club eights race the men's crew was able to enter. Urbas had hoped UCWC could finish nine places higher, but says the team achieved its win goals of a credible racing performance and having a good time. UCWC bettered its time in the same event at last year's Head by more than two minutes in severe headwind conditions. The team also held the second place 1980 rowing club, composed of recent Olympic Team members, off for 500 meters and the eventual winner, the Victoria City Rowing Club of Canada, off for another 250 meters. "That amazed me," said Urbas, "I know those