

NMMU Rowing Club
South African Senior Championship Regatta
2008
14th 15th 16th February

This past weekend the NMMU Rowing Club traveled down to East London to participate in the pinnacle and climax of the South African rowing season, the South African National Senior Championships. The regatta is the premier event on the South African Rowing calendar with over twenty one clubs being represented, including international participation from the Hunyani Rowing Club in Zimbabwe. The regatta is run to international standards over a straight six lane course on the Buffalo River and is raced over the Olympic distance of 2000m.

The competition, as is to be expected, was of an exceptionally high standard with all the South African national team members present to fine tune their racing tactics for the Olympics later in the year. The regatta kicked off at 08:00am on Saturday morning and continued until lunchtime on Sunday. The weather was perfect for racing the whole weekend, being cool and slightly overcast with a faint hint of a tail wind coming down the course.

Our novice women started off the regatta for NMMU with an impressive fourth place in the doubles. The Men's B Eight had to race in the C division due to a lack of entries in the B division. They performed admirably, having only rowed with each other once before and took a solid 3rd place behind Rhodes and the Hunyani crew from Zimbabwe. Our novice four did extremely well to finish in second place just behind Rhodes University.

Next up were the Ladies in the C Coxed Four, and after running into some initial trouble in having to borrow a boat due to a clash, showed great character to win this race convincingly. The Men then dominated the C sculls event with Jason Taylor taking gold, his brother Brad finishing in a close second place behind him and Gareth Lochhead taking a solid fourth place. The Men's C double finished with an excellent 3rd place behind some strong opposition from Cape Town in the form of Elgin Rowing Club.

The ladies then took to the water to compete in the B quads and finished in a superb fourth place. Claire Hulbert continued her great form this season by winning the C sculls event after having just rowed in the quad. A great result!

Next up were the novice Men in the D double's event, where Andrew Dunn and Mbongeni Mkaza rowed brilliantly to finish in 2nd place. The women were next in the C double where they finish a credible 3rd. The men were next in the quad and finished in an excellent 2nd place behind a powerful Elgin crew. This was followed up by a close 2nd place in the Men's C Coxed fours event. Andrew Dunn and Mbongeni Mkaza took their excellent performance in their doubles race into their singles where they finished 3rd and 4th respectively.

The race of the season so far came from the Men's 1st VIII in their heat on Saturday morning. The Men's A VIII, being the main event of the regatta, is always fiercely competitive with the best rowers in the country vying for medals. NMMU had a difficult heat being drawn against Rhodes, Leander, UCT, and the South African Academy. NMMU had to beat at least two of these Clubs in order to make it into the final event of the season on Sunday. The Men got off to a decent start and were holding all the crews after the initial 250m. By the 500m mark the RowSA Academy had opened up a half a canvas lead, but NMMU remained with the other crews. By the 1000m mark NMMU had dropped UCT and the race was now down to four crews. By this stage the Academy had stretched their lead to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a boat length. Rhodes and Leander remained neck and neck with NMMU. The crew kept their heads and continued with their same stroke rate and power output until the 500m mark where they put in a slight push to get in front of Rhodes. NMMU were had lost their slight advantage by the final 3000m, but the crew kept to their race plan and in the final 250m pushed for home. NMMU had done enough to beat the Rhodes 1st VIII in a competitive race for what must be the first time in the Club's history. Beating them on the grandest stage of them all made the victory even sweeter for the 1st VIII. The final times showed how close it was, with NMMU beating Rhodes by less than a second. The times also showed that NMMU had beaten Stellenbosch in the other heat and had thus achieved the fastest time by any university crew at the regatta.

The final of the A Eights turned out to be a real disappointment after the elation in the heats. NMMU were put in lane 6 and had to contend with the wake from the umpire's motorboat for the final 1000m of the race. The crew was highly disappointed as they were confident they could have achieved something in this race, but unfortunately nothing could be done about it.

Overall the regatta was a massive success. The ladies division really stepped up to the plate and is going from strength to strength and will hopefully have a large contingent at Boatrace this year. The men's A VIII achieved their goal of making it into the A final and has put NMMU firmly on the rowing map and have cemented their name as one of the top university crews in the country.

The Club's attention now turns to the Boatrace. Serious dedication and commitment is needed to get through the next four months of intensive training and hopefully the Club will make a real statement at this regatta.

David Pearton
Chairman
NMMU Rowing Club

Don Donegan Overall Points Trophy	
University of Pietermaritzburg	26
Rhodes	23
Germiston	12
Hunyani (Zimbabwe)	10
NMMU	10
Stellenbosch	10
Leander	9
UCT	8
Claredon	7
VLC/UJ	7
Midlands	6
Roodeplaat	6
Elgin	5
Old Eds	3
St Albans	3
University of Durban	3
Academy	2
Ravens	2
ZRC	1
Alfred's	0
Wemmer Pan	0

New Crab Trophy – For Novice Crews	
Leander	15
Rhodes	12
Alfred's	8
NMMU	5
Elgin	3
Hunyani	3
UNPMB	1
Academy	0
Claredon	0
Germiston	0
Midlands	0
Old Eds	0
Ravens	0
Roodeplaat	0
Stellenbosch	0
University of Cape Town	0
UND	2
VLC/UJ	2
Wemmer	1
Wits	0
ZRC	0

First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth
Women's C Four	Men's D Double	Men's C Eight	Women's D Double	Men's B Scull	Men's B Coxless Four
Men's C Scull	Men's D Four	Men's C Double	Men's C Scull		Men's B Scull
Women's C Scull	Men's C Scull	Women's C Double	Women's B Quad		Men's A Eight
	Men's B Quad	Men's D Scull	Men's D Scull		
	Men's C Four				

NMMU Rowing Club	
Men's Division	Ladies Division
Stacey Howcroft	Jaclyn Dawson
Grant Ahshlager	Rachel Cooper
Mbongeni Mkaza	Claire Hulbert
Nick Pittaway	Sisanda Xiphu
David Pearton	Cari Maclean
Marvin Nelson	Litha Goduka
Shaun Welman	
Shane Reynolds	
Bradley Taylor	
Jason Taylor	
Tarquin De Vega	
Blake Atherton	
Chris Osmond	
Andrew Dunn	
Chaulon Wu	