

NMMU Rowing Club

SASSU Sprints Regatta

27-30 March 2008

The NMMU Rowing Club recently attended the intervarsity SASSU Sprints Regatta, hosted by the University of Johannesburg. The regatta took place from the 27th to the 30th of March. The event was again held at the Vanderkloof Dam on the border of the Freestate and the Northern Cape. Events were raced over a 900m straight six lane course. The temperature was in the high 30's for both days of racing.

The team of 26 left for the Vanderkloof Dam early on the Thursday morning and after a short stop in Cradock arrived safely at their destination. The team proceeded to check in to the accommodation and then made their way down to the dam to set up all the equipment for Friday's racing and to get in a short session before supper.

The regatta was well organised, there was continuous communication between regatta-control and the competitors. The main managers meeting on the Thursday evening was used to rectify any problems with the programme and accommodate the various clubs who had equipment and oarsmen clashes. There were also frequent meetings during the regatta ensuring the event ran smoothly. The NMMU aspect was very well organised.

Racing started early on the Friday morning with the heats for the Men's A single scull. Shane Reynolds did extremely well to finish 3rd in this race. This was the first time ever that NMMU has competed in an A division sculling race at SASSU Sprints. The men had 4 entries in the Men's C sculls and Nick Jones did extremely well to make it through into the final in what turned out to be a very competitive race. Brad and Jason Taylor were in the double next and did well to finish 2nd in their heat and move on into the finals. NMMU had four entries in the Men's Novice sculls and three made it through to the final, which was a fine achievement for the newcomers to the Club. The long hours of practice put in by the novices were starting to show dividends. The Men's B single sculls were next and Jason Taylor did extremely well to finish in 2nd place just ahead of his team mate Benji Ekron who took 3rd spot. Both made it through to the finals.

The Women's novice four was up next and did well to finish 2nd and move on into the final, getting the women off to a good start. Cari Maclean and Leigh Stephenson performed brilliantly in the Women's B double to win their heat, convincingly beating their nearest rivals UJ by a solid 4 seconds. The ladies B coxed four did well to finish 2nd in their race and proceeded to the finals.

Overall NMMU did extremely well on their first day of racing making it into all their finals except for the Men's B coxless four due to a steering board breakage.

The finals took place late in the afternoon on Friday and all day Saturday. The first final to be raced was a straight final in the Men's A coxless quad, consisting of Benji Ekron, Shane Reynolds, Brad Taylor and Jason Taylor. In a very tight race the men took a solid 5th place finish but were unlucky to just be out of the medals in a very close race. The ladies did well in their B Four and B pair to finish 5th in both.

The Men's B VIII proved to be the race of the day filled with drama and excitement. The men got off to an excellent start and were in the lead but after 300m were impeded by the Wits crew coming into their lane. After constant warnings from the umpire the Wits crew still did not move over and continued to cut into NMMU's racing line. NMMU finished a disappointed 4th, behind UJ, Wits and Stellenbosch. Tarquin De Vega rightly appealed and the umpires ordered a re-row. In the second attempt NMMU were determined to put things right but had a poor start and were half a length down on the other crews for the majority of the race, but with 200m to go, the men showed real character and determination and put

in a massive push overtaking UJ and were neck on neck with Wits with the finish line closing in fast. After the hooter had sounded neither Wits nor NMMU knew who had won the race, it was so close. Unfortunately NMMU left their push just too late and Wits won by a split second. The ladies crew rowed an excellent race to also finish second in the B Eights beating the likes of Rhodes and Tuks.

After the tough Eights race, Brad and Jason Taylor had to compete in the double and did extremely well to place second in a hard fought race behind the RowSA Academy. Some more good results came from Jason Taylor finishing in 4th in the Men's B single scull final, closely followed by Benji Ekron in 5th.

The women's B Quad did well to finish in 4th place in a highly competitive field. The ladies again performed well to finish in 3rd spot in the Women's B Coxless Four. Excellent performances were shown by our Men's novice scullers taking 2nd, 4th and 5th place respectively.

Overall the results achieved by the NMMU Rowing Club were excellent, showing a vast improvement over the previous year's results. The men were a little disappointed and felt that they could have done better in some races but the squad was stretched thin due to a lot of injuries and certain key rowers had to compete in far more races than they would normally have had to. Racing all these extra races at altitude in the scorching heat put a real strain on them.

The NMMU team members who travelled to Vanderkloof for this regatta conducted themselves in an exemplary manner and were great ambassadors for the NMMU.

In conclusion, although a massive amount of time and effort went into the preparation for this regatta, the fact that NMMU attended a SASSU National event without owning a single boat on its trailer puts the team's results into more perspective. In order to be able to compete for the top honours the Club needs a desperate capital injection. There is potential and talent abound in the NMMU Rowing Club but it is next to impossible to develop it without decent equipment. The constant reliance on other rowing clubs to keep the NMMURC operational cannot continue. A decent fleet of boats is a prerequisite for a Rowing Club not a luxury. In spite of the lack of resources the Club continues to far exceed anyone's expectations.

A special thank you must be extended on behalf of the Club to Geoffrey Jones who gave freely of his time and expertise to come up and manage the team. The success achieved by the NMMU Rowing Club this past weekend would not have been possible without him.

David Pearton
Chairman
NMMU Rowing Club

NMMU entered 22 events and made finals for 21 of them. An excellent achievement. A summary of the results in the finals is tabulated below:

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

Overall University Club Points		
1 st	University of Johannesburg	384
2 nd	Wits University	358
3 rd	Rhodes University	304
4 th	Tuks/RowSA Academy	212
5 th	University of Stellenbosch	135
6 th	NMMU	71
7 th	UCT	51
8 th	University of Fort Hare	19
9 th	UKZN	10

Men's Division Overall Points		
1 st	Wits University	208
2 nd	University of Johannesburg	200
3 rd	Tuks/RowSA Academy	150
4 th	University of Stellenbosch	130
5 th	NMMU	42
6 th	Rhodes University	34
7 th	UCT	32
8 th	UKZN	10
9 th	University of Fort Hare	10

Women's Division Overall Points		
1 st	Rhodes University	270
2 nd	University of Johannesburg	184
3 rd	Wits University	150
4 th	Tuks/RowSA Academy	62
5 th	NMMU	29
6 th	UCT	19
7 th	University of Fort Hare	13
8 th	University of Stellenbosch	5
9 th	UKZN	0

NMMU Rowing Club	
Men's Division	Ladies Division
Stacey Howcroft	Pauline Hulbert
James Crawford	Leigh Stephenson
Mbongeni Mkaza	Claire Hulbert
Nicholas Jones	Genevieve Rankin
David Pearton	Cari Maclean
Marvin Nelson	Sisanda Xiphu
Shaun Welman	Litha Goduka
Shane Reynolds	Ruth Saunders
Bradley Taylor	Jaclyn Dawson
Jason Taylor	Rachel Cooper
Tarquin De Vega	
Nick Pittaway	
Robin Goosen	
Michael Doria	
Andrew Dunn	
Dylan Benyon	
Chaulon Wu	