Rowing Club Report - 2011-12 Season

Head of the River 2012
At the Head of the River, Pembroke rowers had their final rowing exams for the season! We boated 21 crews and 121 rowers for two first places, six second places, two third places and six fourth places. We rowed in all A finals races. We had some excellent results and some unhappy results, but I know that the club, the rowers, the coaches and the supporters have again tried very hard this year, and we should all feel proud of our young people’s efforts. I say to all: well done!

Highlights of the day included a thrilling battle between our Girls Second VIII and the team from Walford Anglican School for Girls. At the 1000m mark, our rowers had almost a boat-length lead, but Walford gradually wore it down in the second half of the race to finish 3 seconds in front. Our ‘pocket rockets’ rowed to their full potential and were, as we all were, very happy with their work.

We were also absorbed in a hard-fought second place provided by our Girls First VIII, which tested the courage of this young crew. We look forward to their further development next season!

Our first to fourth placings were all hard fought and close on the day. Some races that thrilled include: the Year 10A boys with their best row of the season for a close fourth place; the Year 9A girls placing second to much bigger opposition in a very close tussle: the Year 9C girls using their intelligence to surprise the opposition with a quick push to win in the last 200m of their race; and the Year 9A boys excelling themselves with a fine second place against much bigger and stronger opposition. Our Year 10D boys completed their season with a fine win.

I predicted 2 years ago that we would not win so many gold medals as in the past due to improvements in competitor clubs’ staffing and approaches. Competition has indeed increased, and we must continue to embrace new and better approaches to our training and racing to meet the challenge.

Other season results
Pembroke did not attend interstate regattas as in past years. These were replaced with much less expensive training camps, which have contributed to many medal-winning performances from Junior crews, with nearly all Juniors winning races. One of the highlights of the season was the Girls First VIII win in the South Australian Champion Schoolgirl VIIIs!

Training load and performance
The Club continued to innovate in the 2011–12 season:
• The rowers were again tested for core strength, posture and flexibility by Leading Edge Physical Therapy using benchmarks developed in conjunction with Rowing Australia and the Australian Institute of Sport. Those tested in the 2010–11 season showed good improvement.
• We have again retained Mr Jancike as a strength and conditioning coach for the Senior squads, at Pembroke Rowing Parents Association (PRPA) and School expense. The Seniors focused on core strength in 2011 and then shifted emphasis to weights in the long break and Term 1. This program has been very successful, particularly in injury prevention.
• A further set of slides for the concept ergometers has been purchased, allowing three crews of four to work alongside each other in the gym. These and the eight Oartec Sliders plus core strength exercises have reduced injury rates.
• Gym sessions for the Juniors have become much more structured, which has required more coaching resources but has resulted in fitter, faster crews.
• We have continued the Year 7 Friday afternoon activity class with the help of the Masters, who very much enjoy introducing the young people to our sport.

Facilities and equipment
The Club focused on Old Watulunga as our primary training camp venue. We have relocated our pontoon and increased its length with another section, to allow launching of two eights or four quads at once! The new staff quarters are much appreciated by the coaches and we look forward to the construction of sleeping accommodation for students.

Our Ukee boat racks, two containers and dinghies will be relocated to Old Watulunga in May.

Wine sales from a donation by a generous benefactor and the School Directory have all continued to provide funds. The School and the PRPA have funded the purchase of two new quads, a coaching dinghy and the new pontoon section.
Social and administrative

The School has kindly enabled Ms Sheppard to provide the Club with administrative assistance. Her access to School databases, fast computer systems, the email system and understanding of the Club makes the administration of 150 student rowers easier. The Club is grateful to the School and Terri-Lee for this help.

The Club BBQ continues to be a social focus thanks to organiser Ms Sambell. It is very important at regattas as a focus for parent effort and creation of friendships!

The Head of the River Dinner and Awards Night at the SAJC was a great success, with 335 people attending. Ms Sheppard, her team of organisers and Mr Michell, MC and President of the Pembroke Parents Rowing Association, deserve praise and thanks.

Personnel

We had over 150 registered student rowers for the 2010–11 season.

There have been changes in the coaching staff for 2011–12 and we have welcomed: Mr Stunell to the lead Senior boys coaching role; Ms Halliday to support Mr Russell and Ms Robson with the Senior girls; Ms Cross for the Junior girls, focusing on beginners; Mr Semler for the Junior boys and Mr Nicolle, Mr Parletta, Mr Smyth, Ms Knowler, Ms Michell and Ms Jarvis as apprentice coaches. We have been delighted to have all these new coaches on the team and they have made an excellent contribution.

Our stalwarts—Mr Danby, Mr Russell, Mr Rettig, Ms Jamieson and Mr Cudmore—remain heavily involved and I am grateful for their work and wise counsel, as indeed I am for the work of the younger coaches—Miss Robson; Zander, Todd and Miss Evans; Miss Ross and Miss Moschakis.

2011–12 season camps

We hosted camps at Renmark in October and December and at Old Watulunga in January and March. We intend to continue this pattern of camps next season and anticipate trips to the Victorian Schools Championships and to Penrith for the National Championships.

Mr Elleway

Director of Rowing