



BMRC Newsletter – August/September 2022

Apologies for the recent hiatus in newsletter production. The editor has been distracted by 'off-water matters' and is now sporting a large knee brace as a consequence of some poor decision making on the snow ☹, and a broken arm as a consequence of a rampaging toddler at the ookfair! Big shout out to anyone who is recovering from illness or injury and hope to see you back on the water soon.

It is still a bit chilly out on the water at times, but there is a definite hint of spring in the air! Please take care in icy, foggy or windy conditions, particularly on the pontoons.

From the President

Welcome to the August/September newsletter, and my best to Leslee who has been in the wars. In some exciting news, BMRC has finally been granted the site for the new rowing shed on Black Mountain Peninsula. John and Jeanette Gasson have been progressing their plans for the Big Red Shed, and have provided some information for BMRC members which is included with this newsletter. Please review and consider what questions you have for the upcoming AGM.

With the Winter Time Trial series completed, attention turns to the marathons, and then the regular ACT regatta series. While the weather is mixed, the days are generally warmer, and it is good to see more activity around the shed. Please remember to keep a good lookout as we see more boats from other clubs on the water.

The Regatta calendar has been set, with BMRC teaming up with Daramalan to support the 3 December ACT regatta. Please pencil this in so we can have a good list of volunteers helping out on the day.

Until then – enjoy your rowing and see you around the shed

Leigh Gordon

Main points from Committee Meetings – August and September

- BMRC members have been meeting with the National Capital Authority about the condition of the pontoons, in particular their apparent slow sinking. The NCA is responsible for the pontoons (which may be a bit of a mixed blessing for the Club). We await further developments but, in the meantime, please take care when using the pontoons.
- The Annual General Meeting of BMRC will be held on **8 October 2022**. **Please mark this date in your diaries.** Nominations have closed and the final list has been circulated.

Members who can't attend the AGM can fill out one of the proxy forms located at the shed. Members attending can hold a maximum of 5 proxy votes.

- The Committee is progressing a review of the Club boat storage and boat allocation policies. A link to the new policies will be sent to members when this work is finalised.
- The 2022 Learn to Row program will be run from 30 October for about 5 weeks. We expect 8-10 novice rowers to join the program for 10 training sessions. Thanks to those who help to run this important event.
- There continue to be some lovely handcrafts (e.g. handtowels) for sale at the shed, with proceeds from the sale going to support the rowing fraternity in Murwillumbah.
 - The Committee has agreed to donate \$1000.00 to Murwillumbah Rowing Club as proceeds from the sales. What a wonderfully kind effort from our crafty club members (led by Mary Bonney), and those who purchased the pogies and other items!
- The lane ropes /buoys for lane 1 on the course appear to have moved as a result of recent water flow through the Lake. Lane 1 now becomes quite narrow as you head toward Government House. Take care your oars don't get tangled. (This looks like a great opportunity to practice clean, controlled finishes!)
 - BMRC understands Rowing ACT is working with the NCA Lake Management to realign the ropes on lane 1.

Annual Dinner

The 2022 BMRC Annual Dinner was held on 16 September 2022, at the Duxton in O'Connor. Annual Club awards for the 21/22 rowing season were duly made and the guest speaker was our own Luke Letcher, 2022 BMRC Rower of the Year and Tokyo Olympic bronze medallist.

In his thoughtful presentation, Luke gave some fascinating insights into the development of his medal-winning quad crew for the Olympics, along with some great technical tips which we could all apply for better rowing. It was a good night for the (smallish) crowd who attended.

As advised by email, the awards for the night were as follows:

Captain's awards

- David Nash
- Paul Williams
- Philip and Leslee
- Mary Bonney

Junior Rower - Paloma Padovan

Master - Damien Pentony

Most improved - Alvar Closas

Crew of the Year - Peter Dall, Stephen Trowell, Rick Martin and Philip Winkworth

Steve Fairfax - Sheida Hadavi and Mhairin Hilliker
Rowers' Rower - Jane Robinson
Rower of the Year - Luke Letcher

Thanks to the group of organisers (Mary Bonney, Mary Quilty and Dot Barclay) for their work to make the event happen - turning the Duxton into a shimmer of raindrops and devising the ritual embarrassment of a music quiz!

Changes to Seat Fees

The Board of Rowing ACT has reviewed its budget, and has made the decision to increase seat fees. Rowing ACT receives a triennial grant from the ACT government and the remainder of revenue is collected through affiliation, registration, and seat fees.

There has been no increase in the ACT Government grant in several years, and limited change to the affiliation, registration, and seat fees since the last major update in 2006. While temporary Government Business Relief Grants generated general business profits during COVID-19, Rowing ACT has identified that the overall cost of running the business, managing memberships, and holding regattas has increased significantly and will continue to do so with increasing inflation, contractor, and general expenses.

To maintain current standards of representation and administration, the following changes to Rowing ACT's fee structure has been ratified by the Rowing ACT Board:

- Club affiliation fee be maintained at \$20 per club member
- Rower Registration fees be maintained at: \$65 for senior, \$30 for junior, and \$25 for coxswains
- Seat fees will be increased to \$12.00 for standard regattas and Winter Time Trials (not including coxswains).
- Championship event seat fees (including Head of the Lake) will increase to \$18 per seat (not including coxswains)

These changes will come into effect for the 2022/23 rowing season.

From the Captains

It is great to see the new Swift Heavy Weight and Light Weight doubles in the shed. The boats are not Red Dot and are available for any Club members to row first-come first-served. They will be put on the booking board after the AGM.

In some not-so-pleasant news, there was recently a collision between a BMRC quad and a CRC double that has resulted in an injury to a BMRC member. As advised by email, BMRC rowers are **NOT** to row in lane 3 when coming down the course, while using Club equipment. Please only use lane 4-7. When travelling up the course please ensure you are using lane 1 or lane zero. Please ensure you check regularly for crews that may have drifted towards you on all parts of the Lake.

Please do not assume that the school crew/post-school or older rower know where they are on the Lake.

Finding the BMRC newsletter via the Club website - keeping in contact when you are not an active Club member

The BMRC newsletter is distributed via an email group of current Club members. However we understand that Club members may cease their membership, or perhaps, may leave Canberra from time to time, but still wish to stay in contact with the our activities.

One way of doing that is to access the BMRC newsletter from the publicly accessible part of the Club website (available to non-members). Go to the 'About' part of the BMRC website and you will see the link to the newsletters: <https://www.revolutionise.com.au/bmrc/about/updates-and-newsletters/>

Technical Tips

Finding the Finishwith Philip Winkworth

It is appropriate in our sport, where we travel 'backwards', that we begin our stroke at the finish. Everything we do flows from a good finish. From this point onwards we rest, and do as little as possible to upset the speed that we have worked hard to impart to our shell. It is at the finish, or just thereafter, that the boat attains its highest speed.

It is important to find a finish position that is not only comfortable, but one that is also efficient. Too long at the finish and your core strength is challenged. Too short at the finish and you will feel cramped.

Both extremes are inefficient in that they do not give you an optimum return for energy expended. This is because the arc of each stroke not only propels the boat forward toward your destination, but also squeezes or pinches the boat. At the catch and at the finish, there is more squeezing than propelling. In the middle of the stroke it is all propulsion.

Another way to think of this is as a game of diminishing returns. The 'longer' you row, the less efficient you are because you are doing more squeezing than propelling forward. Once you row past the optimum catch or finish position it is not worth going any further. Finish that stroke and go and take another one. That way you get another trip through square-off, which gives you the most forward moving bang for your buck.

How then do we find the optimum finish position? Well, the good news here is that it is really easy to set this angle. The bad news is that too many people with imperfect understanding of rigging have made this process unnecessarily complicated and confusing. Remember the KISS principle?

For the vast majority of us mortals on the Lake, the correct angle of the blades at the finish - when measured against the centreline of the boat - is about 40 degrees. If we begin with the correct finish angle, we can learn to row the correct catch angle. 'Set the finish, coach the catch' is the coaching wisdom. In crew boats, every member should be aiming to have the same finish position and row the same arc from catch to finish.

The quickest way to find 40 degrees at the finish (in a boat with a standard club rig) is to put your sculling boat on the water, install the blades in the swivels and get in the boat. When the tips of the grips are no more than 150mm apart, you have the correct angle for the finish. Now all you need to do is move the foot stretcher so that the grips are still in front of your body when you are sitting tall and your core is engaged. That is, move the rower to come up to (but not touch) the tips of the '150mm apart' grips.

If you can draw the grips past your body and to the sides of your ribs at the finish position, you need to move your foot stretcher towards the stern. You are too long at the finish and in a weak and inefficient position. In a crew boat you will struggle to stay in time if everyone else is correctly

positioned. Further, if you need to fiddle with the rails beneath your seat to set the finish angle (and you are not really extraordinarily tall or short), you should hear the alarm bells ringing. Something is not right. Get help from a more experienced rower or coach.

So there you have it. Set the finish angle by having the tips of the grips 150mm apart. Move your body up to the grips when the grips are in the correct position. You do this by adjusting the position of the foot stretcher.

Don't be confused by people who tell you to set the position of the foot stretcher by measuring back from a certain mark on the slides or a piece of tape on the gunwale. Setting the correct finish angle is all about the relationship between the blades and the boat. Get that right, then worry about where you are sitting in relation to the blades.

There is a nifty little wooden jig hanging on the peg board in the shed for measuring 150mm between the grips. It comes complete with all instructions. When you get called up to the NTC because you are rowing so well, they will refine this process with string lines and trigonometric tables. They do it this way because they have unlimited time and because victory might turn on less than 1 degree of arc. But for the rest of us - at least to begin with- use the jig!

Upcoming Events 2022

October

8 October BMRC AGM

23 October Col Panton Memorial Marathon

From the Editor

Newsletters are published roughly once per month after Committee meetings. Short articles or photos about Club life are always welcome for inclusion. Please contact me on 0417668916 if you would like to send in a contribution. Regards, Leslee



The Red Shed

Information for BMRC members from Jega (John and Jeanette Gasson)

Eight years after our initial application, BMRC has been granted a block of land to the south of the boat ramp on Black Mountain Peninsula to build a new facility, currently known as the Red Shed.

The Red Shed will be around four times the size of the current shed. The plans are approved by the National Capital Authority and Jega will fund the cost of building the Red Shed. Works will commence as soon as we finalise the Lease and Management Agreement with BMRC.

BMRC will move into an area of the Red Shed bigger than the current shed and retain two of the three bays in the old shed and the existing toilets and amenities area (RACT will lease the third bay).

Jega will lease space in the Red Shed. The purpose of the Lease and Management Agreement is twofold: to protect the asset from takeover by another party, either another rowing club or an organisation not interested in rowing; and to conduct activities that promote rowing and a healthy lifestyle in general, including community activities, to create income to fund activities on an ongoing basis.

Jega proposes to conduct programs that may or may not work. We will experiment to see if there is sufficient interest and we will cover all costs. Where we are successful and profit is made, all of that profit will be used for further programs and to fund BMRC rowing-related expenses. Note that Jega will not be claiming a return of capital, but we do hope be able to cover the running costs from the programs over time.

We have done significant research and modelled some of our ideas on successful community programmes. Some of Jega's ideas for programs are

- Public School/Supportive/Indigenous rowing

- Rowing Tourism – camps for rowers which include coaching, meals, Canberra-centric tourism (eg Museums, Parliament House, Arboretum, local wineries etc)

- Mums & Bubs – childcare for approx. 1 hour so Mum can row

- School holiday programs

- Erg with Friends – exercise followed by a social opportunity

Lifestyle Reset Program – an all-day program incorporating morning and afternoon exercise, meals and nutrition education, work from the shed, sleep at home

Private Rowing Coaching (for a fee)

Gym – suitable for rowers, rehab. strength and fitness, InfraRed Sauna and Ice Bath

On-site physiotherapist / masseuse (for a fee)

Wedding /Corporate Function venue

Café and catering opportunity for suitable operator/s

Kayaks / Paddleboats

We hope that from the broad base of programs offered will come an elite program that will propel BMRC to a very successful competitive rowing club at all levels.

Jega will be employing a full time Facility Manager and a Rowing Manager as well as paying for casual coaching and ancillary casual staff to manage operations. Obviously, this is a big undertaking and there will be opportunities for members to give back to the sport in many ways, indeed this is a significant driver in this undertaking.

If we are successful in creating a sustainable rowing organisation, a gradual shift away from Jega and towards BMRC managing and running the programs alongside existing club activities is ideal. However, the Club is not currently in a position to take on the risks and responsibilities of this type of endeavour.

Our hope is that members understand that this is a long-term passion of ours and a desire to complete a plan that began back in the eighties when we moved from the old Kingston Harbour and built the current shed at a time when our capacity to pursue further “shed dreams” was not possible.

John and Jeanette Gasson

12/09/2022

The logo for Jega, featuring the word "jega." in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters are a bright yellow color. The dot on the period is a small square.