
HISTORY OF THE REGINA ROWING CLUB

*Rowing in
Regina
Since 1907*

This year, **2004, marks 97** years since the founding of the Regina Rowing Club. Our predecessor, the Regina Boat Club (RBC), was established on June 15, 1907 as a private boating and yachting club. The club colors were dark blue and white, and Charles E. Wood was the first president. The first boathouse was built in 1910 on the north side of the lake, close to the start of our 1000-metre course. A stone cairn marks the location. That year, the membership was 186. The RBC was "the best in the west" and was the most popular of all summer amusements in Regina.

The first annual Dominion Day Regatta was held on July 1, 1910 with motor boat races, four-oared shells, skiff races, ladies' sculling, canoe races, swimming, diving and lifesaving competitions. The regatta was dubbed "Henley in Miniature". This annual regatta was cancelled in 1912 as a tornado destroyed the boathouse and equipment on June 30 - the day before the event. The challenges to club members during this era were boathouse expansion and equipment repair - some things never change!

In 1912-13, the boathouse was rebuilt thanks to \$600 in the bank and each member contributing \$10 in addition to their \$15 annual membership fee - up from \$10 the year before. Saturday night dances at the RBC with an admission charge of 50 cents were the highlight of Regina's social calendar during the summer months. The RBC stayed active during World War I, despite most of its members enlisting and many not returning.

In 1924, women's rowing started with Harry Murray (Ian and Gavin Mitchell's grandfather) coaching the first women's crew. The club traveled to regattas in Port Arthur (Thunder Bay), Duluth, Winnipeg and Minneapolis.

In 1931-32, the government drained Wascana Lake to build the Albert Street bridge as well as Willow and Goose Islands. With this, dust storms, and The Great Depression, rowing ceased until 1933, when it took off again with more than 200 members. This year saw the first official newsletter, The Water Log, being published and sold weekly for 25 cents a copy. The '30s saw Harry Duckett as a new member who went on to achieve national recognition as an oarsman and a coach at the same time. In 1938, Harry, along with crew members Jack Peart, Newt Hughes, and Dick Priest, won the Junior and Senior 4- at the Royal Canadian Henley and were named as Canada's 4 to the 1940 Olympic Games. These Games were cancelled due to World War II.

During WWII, the club was dormant as most of the male members had enlisted. In 1947-48, a new two-storey boathouse was constructed on Willow Island from surplus army huts. In 1949, the RBC hosted its first NWIRA at Regina Beach with more than 3,000 spectators on the second day of competition.

In the 1950s, the club continued to grow and do well and 1959 saw its largest membership of more than 400. That year also saw so little water in Wascana Lake that "a bird could walk across the Lake without getting its feet wet."

In 1964, the RBC disbanded largely due to the Lake being filled with weeds. During the '60s and '70s, all the equipment was either destroyed or sold. The bridge to the island was removed as was the boathouse. Rowing in Regina was dead.

In 1974, Harry Duckett, Al Kerr, and Jack Peart decided to rebuild the RBC for the 1975 Western Canada Summer Games in Regina. Under their new name - the Regina Rowing Club - they borrowed equipment from the Winnipeg Rowing Club and eventually bought a new 4-. This boat, The Harry Duckett, is still in use today. The new club grew steadily in the late 1970s under the leadership of Harry, Al Kerr, Bob Wallace, Don Jesse, and Bob Ellard. In 1978 we hosted the first annual Western Canada Sprints Regatta with participants coming from Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton.

HISTORICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

The 1980s saw the RRC once again take its rightful place in Canadian rowing, winning races at provincial, national and international regattas. Notable member accomplishments include:

- 1980 Regina hosts NWIRA regatta in Fort Qu'Appelle
- 1981 Bob Ellard named Canadian Coach of the Year
- 1982 Rob Currie wins Silver in 8+ at FISA Senior B World Championships in Vienna, Austria
- 1983 Tony Zasada wins Bronze in 8+ at Pan Am Games in Caracas, Venezuela
- 1984 Tony Zasada places 5th (out of 22) in 2+ at Olympic Games in Los Angeles. Tony was killed in a car accident five days after his return to Regina.
Ellen Gillies wins Bronze in Lightweight 2x at World Championships in Montreal.
- 1985 Bob Ellard wins Gold in 4x at World Masters' Games in Toronto.
In the 1990s and beyond the club continues to be a leader in Canadian rowing, winning many medals at the national level.
- 1991 Heidi Hackman rows for Canada at the World Juniors in the Women's 8+.
- 1995 Brie Ellard places 4th at the World Juniors rowing in Canada's Women's 4+.
- 1997 Brie Ellard wins silver in Lightweight 4x at World Championships in Aiguebelette, France.
- 1997 Rachelle DeJong rows for Canada at CanAmMex Regatta, Victoria, BC.
- 1998 Andrea Bundon rows for Canada at CanAmMex Regatta, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- 1998 Brie Ellard named to National Team.
- 1998 Michelle Carr wins Bronze in Ergometer Challenge at World Masters' Games in Portland.
- 1999 Andrea Bundon rows for Canada at CanAmMex Regatta in Merida, Mexico.
- 2001 Ingrid Currie named SaskSport Masters Athlete of the Year
- 2002 Josh Bancescue rows for Canada at CanAmMex Regatta in Cincinnati, USA.
- 2001 Rachelle DeJong named to National Team
- 2003 Rachelle DeJong wins silver in 4- at World's (Seville, Spain)
- 2003 Monica Clay wins gold in 2x and 2+ for Canada at CanAmMex Regatta in Monteray, Mexico

The Regina Rowing Club has a proud history and now you are a part of it!

In addition to membership fees and fundraising, funding for rowing in Saskatchewan is sponsored in part by *Saskatchewan Lotteries*.