

09/11/2021

Monkton Rowing Report for the Bluefriars AGM

2020/21 Season

As a school that only has two terms of rowing we have been hugely affected by the pandemic. We have lost many hours of training due to lockdowns and restrictions. It was very difficult to select crews as all the year groups were separated and couldn't mix, even minibus journeys had to be in year groups. This made any sixth form crews almost impossible to boat.

We had a GB girls trialist but unfortunately everything was cancelled and she missed her chance to perform.

The year groups all seem to really enjoy the training but the lack of racing took its toll and motivation to train hard just wasn't there. We tried our best to arrange private matches, the best being a match at Saltford with Bryanston, Cheltenham College and Winchester. But more often than not covid cases prevented us from doing more.

A crew was put together for National Schools but we were under prepared and had to use some year 11's to make the race happen. We were very low on experience and it showed with the result. The crew made some memories by attending and at least got to row on the Olympic course before leaving the school.

Four of our strongest boys wanted to train for Henley in a quad. The Bluefriars kindly made this happen by helping buy the boat. In the weeks leading up to qualifiers two of the boys suffered with covid and had to take at least two weeks off. Tom our year 13 still was not right on the day but was determined to race. The reality check the boys got with the qualifiers result has had a very positive effect on the training they are doing in Michaelmas. They ALL now know how hard the quad event is to do.

Staff changes at school

Monkton have appointed a new Director of Sport this year and I haven't had any much interaction with him so far as he has been very busy with rugby. His name is Richard Miller and he is from Colston School in Bristol and looks a very safe and competent pair of hands.

Netball and Hockey both have a new Head of sport so along with the new Director role there is a lot of inexperience of how the school works and this has been tricky for all sports to manage over the term.

Monkton is looking to employ a Head of rugby and cricket as we do not have one.

I have lost my assistant who has tripled his salary with a move to Bryanston to be a boatman for them. The GTA that I had lined up for the role decided on the last day of the holiday to not come to Monkton which dropped me right in it. His decision was purely financial and he

wasn't happy with the pay. I have a replacement but he has not the experience or expertise to be much use with anything but the most basic of training.

Michaelmas term Rowing

I have been allowed to train 12 sixth form students during Michaelmas which has been great. Looking to improve our skills by sculling and working in small boats.

Flora Carson is our GB trialist this year with 2 boys looking to follow the Welsh pathway for a possible home countries selection in the summer. Flora recently did 7:39 for her 2k at rate 24 which put her 47th in all girls and top 20 for sweep.

Rowing season 2022

We are expecting the boat club numbers to be around the 100 student mark (including year 9's in the summer) . Many of the squad are training with me on Saturdays when they don't have a fixture with rugby or hockey which is an encouraging sign.

I am hoping for the boys to have two 8's for J15 , J16 boys and 1 first 8 and 2nd 4 at J18. The girls will hopefully be able to do a J18 8 project to try and get to both womens and Henley Royal. Girls' numbers have continued to rise in the lower years and this will help get this off the ground.

Our biggest weakness is the staffing and coaches available. I will have very limited help from school staff and will have to rely on outside professional coaches which will cost more money and they won't have the same time to spend off the water with the team. I do have quite a few coaches ready to help who can provide some top class advice and expertise to our rowers.

We will aim to race at all the local and main Head races during Lent term and then fingers crossed be allowed to have an Easter camp away from school. Unfortunately going abroad is not on the cards because of the insurance cost due to covid.

An improved performance at National schools has to happen this year from all year groups with the aim of Henley Royal in at least 1 boat class.

Monkton Bluefriars Rowing

Max Manley has helped me over the years with so many hours of coaching and promoting rowing at the school. He has raised the profile of rowing within the staff and his energy has definitely rubbed off on the students. We both feel that the Bluefriars rowing club should continue to offer a route to summer races for students and OM's and race whenever we can. I'm sure Max will email soon with more information about this project but we already have nearly 2 eights to race at Bristol Uni head on the 5th Dec.

External Relations

The school has a lady called [Becki Mckinlay](#) in charge of external relations and she has a great passion for rowing and has helped clubs like Reading Uni and Fulham Reach with Alumni and fundraising. She is very excited about fundraising to help rowers in poorer inner city schools get to Monkton for the sixth form. This could be a massively rewarding project and also strengthen our school crews. I have had a few meetings with her and the only thing that she doesn't want is to upset Bluefriars with her ideas. I hope soon she can join us so she can explain her ideas a lot better than I can communicate with you.

Thank you

Lastly, a big thank you for the financial support over the last year. Being able to buy the crew a meal at the service station on the way home or pay for a piece of equipment we desperately need help so much. With budgets and money so tight it is a huge support to know you are there.

[Simon Brown](#)

Head of Rowing