

Monkton Rowing - 2023 Head of Rowing Report for Bluefriars

Michaelmas-

Thanks to new sport options we had 20 seniors rowing this term. It was a very productive term with early signs that we had the core of a very good girls crew and some very coachable boys keen to learn. The land training led by Charlie at 6:30am ergos were well attended and we tried to get the work done on the ergos to free up maximum time on the river to work on technique. It was surprising how many of the squad struggled in the 1x and 2- highlighting how much work we had to do.

Lent-

New season officially starts with good numbers in senior and junior games. Like most rowing clubs we had a lot of missed sessions with flooding and both Saltford and Dundas landing stages heavily damaged. The ergo room and swingulator at school were in constant use and Charlie did a fantastic job in motivating the seniors to adopt his style of rowing.

The head race calendar we followed worked really well and we raced at Wycliffe , Reading , Avon & Schools Head. The results showed in all the boys events we have a huge amount of work to do and that in the girls squad we had a very competitive 4 and 8.

Easter Camp-

25 members of the squad attended Nantes Easter camp. The Uni were so accommodating and we even had a mini regatta against them mid week which was greater fun. The newly refurbished crew room with Kitchen , Wide screen TV and better work space made life much more comfortable. The rooms we booked on the campsite were also amazing and gave the squad a warm , safe area to relax and also work.

Cam Bucchan also came with us and took a few sessions with the squad.

The midweek row to Suce was a high point

Summer-

The regatta season was definitely a split between girls winning most races they entered and the boys not being able to buy a win.

Despite this the boys seemed to get more determined to stick together. They asked to stay in the 8 for Nat schools and raced well considering they had a last minute sub.

The girls split into a 4 and they came 5th in the A final. The same 4 also raced at women's Henley and made it through to Saturday. For Henley Royal the girls just missed qualification in the 8 which was a shame for them.

The highlight of the year for the boys was qualifying for the PE. Considering how far behind they started it is a credit to Charlie and the boys how they kept going and the improvement in the crew was incredible. Only 1 boy was in year 13 is leaving so this 8 will only get stronger for next year.

Tara Lloyd gained selection for team England and raced in Cork in the 1x and 4x. She won a gold in the girls quad but since then has made plans to leave Monkton for Shrewsbury which I don't really understand as she has rowed at Monkton since year 9 and seemed very happy.

Summer Rowing Courses-

Over 4 weeks we ran Mon-Friday learn to row courses from 10am-4pm
Charging £300 per person we had nearly 100 young rowers attend.
We have bought a £12,000 new launch from the profits.
The boats used got a real battering and that will have to be factored in for next year

Equipment

New
Hudson 4x4- - Bluefriars
Hudson 4+ - School
New cat launch - Monkton Commercial

For Sale
Wintech 8 - £14,000 ono.

Looking Forward 2024-

Staffing

I have taken the decision to stand down as Head of Rowing as I felt the job was not about rowing coaching anymore. House duties and school activities have put over 15 hours extra a week on my schedule and makes it impossible to continue as an effective head of rowing. I have enjoyed my time directing the rowing at Monkton and I feel I am leaving it in a much healthier place than when I took over, especially with equipment.

I have taken the position of Boathouse manager (boatman) ,coach and to assist the new head of rowing. My role will be based at Saltford and Dundas where I can start work on the upkeep of our fleet. Plus I have time to coach a crew again. I am very happy with this job change and it is essential to keep the club moving forward.

David Rumble is our new Head of Rowing who has done great things with Durham schools. Myself and Charlie have had meetings with him and I think the school has chosen a fantastic individual for Monkton Rowing.

Charlie Newbould has also been offered a new role as Head of Performance rowing to work alongside the Head of Rowing. This is such good news for all our squads to have some consistency in the coaching. He is a hard task master and the students seem to be motivated by his no nonsense approach to rowing and raising standards on and off the water.

We have a new teacher that has rowed before joining the school called Rory Worsman who will help us coaching at Saltford. The girls have the new house parent from School house

Alex Palmer who is very keen to coach the girls squad. Our GTA is a local lad who will be amazing with the students and seems much more able than previous years. We are losing Matt Pringle to Canford which is a great shame as he was amazing with the new year 9's and 10's.

The year 9's in Wednesday enrichment and then in the summer term will be using Dundas to row from. I have already taken some of the beginner boats back down and a new launch is being bought to share with outdoor Ed to coach from. Some new racking and TLC will be needed to bring Dundas back to life but with my new role it can be achieved. Some more singles and doubles would be good to help the younger years with better boat skills.

Transport costs have put a lot of pressure on the school travel logistics. When I began getting a coach to Saltford on Saturdays it was £250 for 55 students. Now it's almost double with travel to Wycliffe nearly £1000 !. I have booked minibuses wherever possible but costs of regattas and transport is going to be a problem going forward.

My top tip for 2024 will be our year 11 (j16) boys squad. We have got a huge amount of very strong lads and most came to the summer rowing courses and seem really up for it. They had some bad luck this year so went a bit under the radar but I think they could turn a few heads.

The girls squad was voted 'team of the year ' by students and staff at Monkton. This is huge for the girls squad and hopefully inspires more girls to take up the sport.

Simon Brown