

The Finish Line



Fall/Winter 2016



MV4+ victorious at ACRA Double brings home the bronze

Success at ACRA

The Men's Varsity Four and Men's Double score big on the national stage. Find the report on page 6.

A big thank you for your continued support of rowing at UCI. The current generation of oarsmen continue to build on your legacy of success.

Men's Varsity Coach's Message AJ Brooks

With week one in the books I'm really excited for this year's crew. We have sixteen returning varsity oarsman to pave the way for a new crop of incoming student athletes. The goals of the team have been established, and the future looks bright inside the walls of the UC Irvine boathouse.

The word family has been repeated a lot during this first week of practice. With the addition of forty plus new oarsman to the boathouse, we as a team strive for a family based atmosphere, and culture. As a coaching staff, we are pushing for every oarsman in the boathouse to "finish" as a team. The team has been put through a series of team building exercises, which they have passed with flying colors. I really feel every oarsman has something special to bring to the table this year. We have a really deep unique set of skills this year.

Even after one week of scheduled practice you can really feel the energy down here at the boathouse. The inter-squad competition has been fabulous thus far. Every athlete from the bottom to the top has been pushing one another to "finish".

My goals for the team this fall include building a strong foundation of brotherhood. When we create this bond team wide, it will pay dividends on the race course come this spring. As we all know rowing is a team sport where each oarsman must have each other's back day in and day out. Maintaining this bond is going to be a perpetual theme throughout the season.

Looking forward into the fall racing schedule we are poised for a great fall season, we are pushing the novice oarsmen's experience levels by racing as much as possible.

We are loaded up on racing this fall with the addition of a brand new regatta down south in Mission Bay, the Winter Championships.

[Continued, page 2]



Coach AJ Brooks

Beginning his third year coaching the men at UCI, Coach Brooks looks to build upon last year's victories. With 16 returning oarsmen and over 40 new recruits, competition is alive at Shellmaker Island.

poetry in motion



The River Whisper

A lattice of light lay on
the water
and woke to the wake
of a boat passing,
slowly, quietly out
of the mouth of the river,
like a word being spoken
in a whisper.

-Philip Kuepper

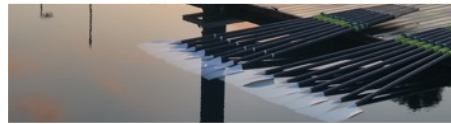
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I really encourage all alumni to schedule a visit to watch the team and share your experiences with this group of oarsman.

The brotherhood of fifty-one years of tradition run deep, please come share your stories of "finishing."

Lastly a special thank you is due to all of you who dedicate time and energy to enhance the program.

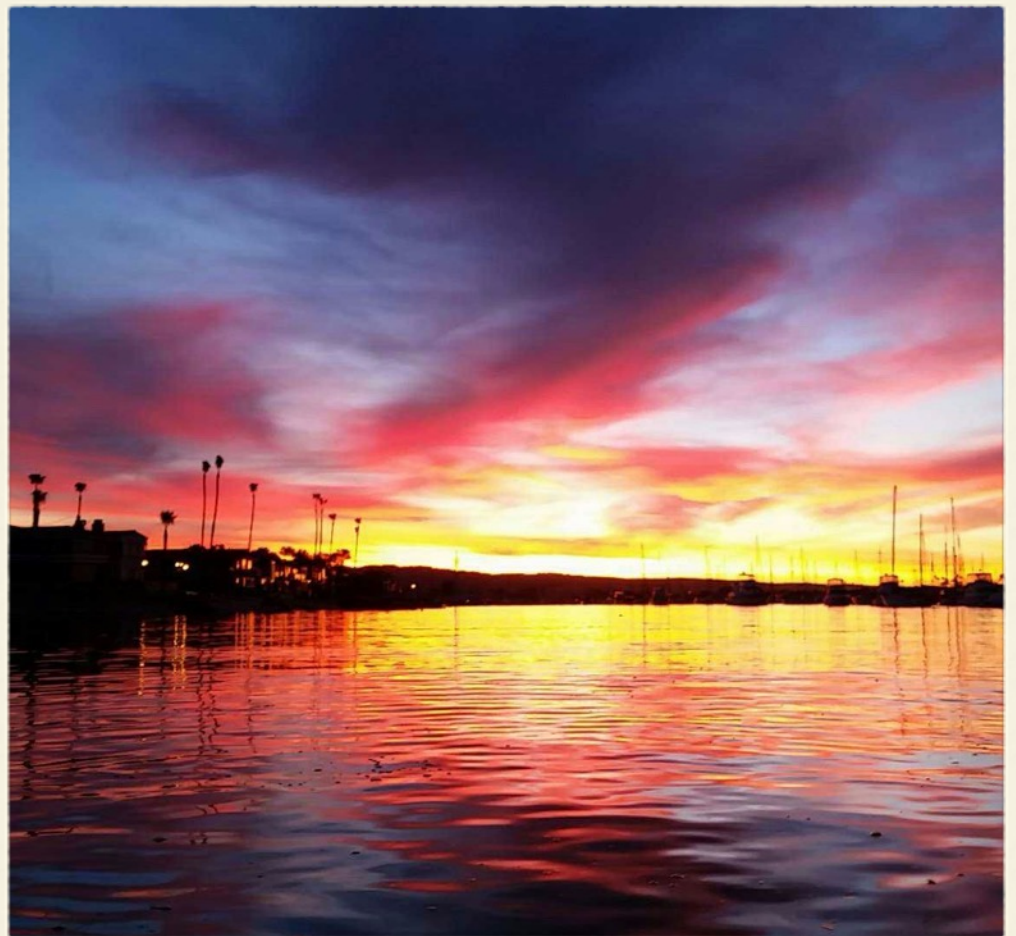
Zot Zot Zot!
Coach AJ Brooks



Message from the Friends of UC Irvine Rowing

Theo Khachaturian
Chief of Stewards

Hello fellow UCI Crew Alums!
Having just stepped into the "Chief of Stewards" position this year, I'm excited about some of the changes we're making to our organization, Friends of UCI Rowing. First, we are expanding the number of Directors on the Board. I'm very pleased that Powell Thurston (class of '90) has agreed to join us as a new Director. As a successful businessman in the institutional asset management industry, Powell adds business acumen and practical experience to our roster. The Board endeavors to connect more closely with every generation of UCI oarsmen and Powell also gives us a closer connection to graduates from his generation. In the coming months, we're going to look to expand board membership further so that every generation of oarsmen feels that they have a connection to the Board.



Another change I'd like to see is an increased presence by Alumni among active rowers. This was something that has been emphasized by Powell Thurston.

Our Alumni community is composed of a huge amount of successful people in a wide variety of professions and creative endeavors. Together we are an extremely valuable resource for our undergrads. Just think of what our mentors did for us before we were able to figure things out.

I'm also excited about the Alumni dinners scheduled in January. If you do not have a chance to make it to one of these get-togethers, please keep an eye out for the Alumni Day we're planning for February 18th.

Best Regards,

Theo Khachaturian
Chief of Stewards



Entering my final year as a Senior

Ved Kirloskar - Class of 2017

I sat in a boat for the first time as a freshman, horribly out of shape 6-months out of having rotator cuff surgery. I wanted to develop again physically after a long injury ridden high school. I didn't continue with rowing my freshman year because there wasn't much interest from other freshman. There were mornings when we couldn't even put together a boat.

My sophomore year I got recruited on campus by Nick Whitehead one of the varsity rowers who had been in the boat with me my freshman year. He told me the coaching was different and I should check it out again. That was enough for me. The first two days I came to practice were on land, but I stuck with it because it

reminded me why I decided to check out rowing in the first place.

My junior year I returned and found my spot on the Varsity 8 and a bronze medal finish at ACRA. In a rollercoaster I learned how much deeper this sport was both physically and mentally and I found myself enjoying being out on the water taking strokes and the importance of doing it efficiently.

Going into my senior year I know how I want to improve. The overarching goal will be to, move the boat faster, get fitter, get stronger, and have fun with it. I find myself looking forward to the morning steady states and races with my best friends. I am going to enjoy every morning of my last year of college rowing.

Mark your calendars for Alumni Day!



Can you donate items for our silent auction? Timeshare stays, game tickets, gift baskets, special experiences, and more are welcome! Let us know at ucirowing.org > About > Contact

Saturday, February 18th, 2017

Marina Park

On the water in Newport Harbor

We've rented out Marina Park for a fun day on the water. Bring the family for an adventure filled day reuniting with friends. No alumni event is complete without races on the water! Don't forget your trou!

More details to come. Make sure we have your email address!

Visit ucirowing.org/subscribe to update your contact information.



Marina Park - Newport Harbor

I find myself looking forward to the morning steady states and races with my best friends. I am going to enjoy every morning of my last year of college rowing.



Summer rowing at U23

Cole McGuire returned to U23 Selection Camp at University of Washington for a second summer of rowing. This year, fellow UCI oarsman Khalid Elassaad hitched a ride and joined Cole. Your support of Friends of UCI Rowing helps make this possible.



Captain's report

Cole McGuire - Class of 2017

My name is Cole McGuire. I'm a fourth year Civil Engineering major at UCI, and Captain of the Rowing team. I love rowing. This seems to be a logical place to start, seeing as most of you will understand the feeling. I'll start with a very brief background into my rowing experience. I had almost no inclination of what rowing was until Freshman year. I was convinced by a baritone 3rd year rower at the gym to come and try it. Big thanks to Nick Whitehead. After a shaky and naïve first year of rowing I haven't looked back.

Last year's season was capped off with ACRA National Championships in Gainesville, Georgia. After a full year of not quite finding what we wanted out of a Varsity 8+, we decided to split into smaller boats and increase our chances of success. My spot was at stroke seat of the Varsity 4+. Behind me was Khalid Elassaad, a young and untried eighteen-year-old, yet massive in both character and stature. Next was Mike Galanif, a Boston native finishing his MBA at Irvine. He was the head of the wise crack and sarcasm division of our boat. Sitting bow in our Pocock shell was Anthony Lewis. Him you'd just have to meet to understand. Sitting up front in the pilot position was Alyssa Ford, a true novice coxswain. We had a blast training for that last race. Our confidence continued to grow. These were my friends, and we all had a desire for success. We had a good feeling about it. A dominating performance in both the heat and the semi-finals left us feeling even better. In the Grand Final we used our power advantage to get out ahead

Last year's season was capped off with a victory for the MV4+ at ACRA National Championships

400 meters into the race. After a boat length had been gained on 2nd place Georgia Tech it was time to shift into a long rhythm and hold them off. We crossed the finish line maintaining an even greater margin between us and Georgia Tech. They had tried to make a move to gain some ground but failed. I'd like to thank the big guys in the middle for that. The feeling was great. We gained a gold medal, shared memories, and about thirty or so tanks and shirts from the defeated schools. I still smile every time I think back to that moment.

This summer I was able to return to the U23 selection camp at the University of Washington. I had been last year, but this time brought some oversized luggage. Six foot eight Khalid came with me. At this camp we were to train and compete with top rowers looking to go to the under 23 World Championships in Rotterdam later that summer. This time around the group consisted of Khalid, myself, and exclusively Washington Rowers from their Varsity, JV, and Freshman boats. We practiced every day out of Connibear Shellhouse from 6:00am to 8:00am in addition to working full time (50-60 hours some weeks) for Gentle Giant Moving company to cover some of the costs. We experienced rowing in every boat class, on the waters of Lake Union and Lake Washington. This was followed by a week of seat racing. 4 x 1250m races on a buoyed course, where once having completed one piece, we would switch seats with a temporary foe across the other boat, and repeat.

Rowing for Irvine means so much to this group of people I've come to meet and help lead.

I hope you can still imagine the burning in your legs. Khalid and I didn't make the selected racing boat by a small margin, but the experience was invaluable. The selected U23 boat went into training on their own, while the rest of the group continued with the camp. We were now gearing towards our big race in BC, Canada that would take place in a few weeks. At BC Champs on Elk Lake in Victoria we got to race six 2000m sprints in two days, one of those being in a Husky-Anteater hybrid 8+ and going against the Canadian National team. They finished first with a time of 5:40.834 and us in second with 5:47.005. Khalid and I still talk about some of the strokes we took that weekend. When the camp had ended, we stayed for an additional week to finish our work for the moving company. Following this, I took Khalid on a short and rushed backpacking trip in Eastern Washington. Then it was time for the twenty-hour drive home to Irvine.

This year's goal can be summed up as "success". This means a few different things to the rowers and other members of the program. For most of the rowers, it means success in a boat class, including the Varsity 8+. For others it may be a success through completion of personal goals. Holistically, success means a continued growth of the program through retention of athletes and a better team culture. Currently in week two of school, we have more than forty members. The strong will survive a winter of training and icy docks. This group is showing more potential than I've seen in past years, and has me very excited for the upcoming season. I urge all of the alumni to stay tuned into the team through social media and newsletters, and hopefully become more connected with the current oarsman. Finally, I'd like to say thank you for your past and continued support. Rowing for Irvine means so much to this group of people I've come to meet and help lead. These guys and gals are friends, roommates, and fellow classmates that I see on campus every day and can discuss that morning's practice with. Some of the details have changed but it's still the rowing we all love. So thanks again for helping us continue the program at UCI and allowing a lot of tall, hard-

working, and very nerdy students to find the deep happiness, memories, and fulfillment that are found in rowing. I hope sharing a small bit of my experiences and perspective can connect our current team to the battle-hardened oarsmen and coxswains of Irvine's past, and bring back a few memories. Attention... Row!

Thanks for reading.
Cole McGuire
Captain - Men's Varsity

2016-2017 Race and Event Schedule

We hope to see you at one of our races this year. The details on most races are still being finalized. Below is the preliminary schedule. For updates visit our website at ucirowing.org/events.

- ➔ **Sat, October 29** - Head of the American Lake Natoma, Sacramento area
- ➔ **Sat, November 5** - Newport Chase Newport Harbor
- ➔ **Sun, November 13** - San Diego Fall Classic Mission Bay, San Diego
- ➔ **Sun, November 20** - Head of the Harbor Port of Los Angeles
- ➔ **Thurs, January 19** - Alumni Dinner Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club Newport Beach
- ➔ **Sat, January 21** - Alumni Dinner San Francisco - Location TBD
- ➔ **Thurs, January 26** - Alumni Dinner L.A. Athletic Club, Los Angeles
- ➔ **Sat, February 18** - Alumni Day Reunion Marina Park, Newport Beach
- ➔ **Sat, March 4** - UC Challenge Cup Newport Harbor
- ➔ **Sun, March 12** - Newport Regatta Newport Harbor
- ➔ **Sun, March 19** - Parker Cup Newport Harbor
- ➔ **Sun, March 26** - UCI/UCLA Duel Newport Harbor
- ➔ **Sat, April 8** - Budge Collins Cup Newport Harbor
- ➔ **Sat & Sun, April 15 & 16** - Stanford Invite Redwood City
- ➔ **May (Dates TBD)** - WIRA Championships Lake Natoma, Sacramento area
- ➔ **Sat & Sun May 27 & 28** - ACRA National Championships Gainesville, GA

Mornings on the water



*The sweet taste
of Victory..*



Small boats find Gold and Bronze at ACRA

Now that the 2016 rowing season has drawn to a close, the Friends of UCI Rowing, Coach AJ Brooks and the Men's Crew thank all of our alumni for their support!

AJ Brooks, Mens Varsity Coach

This year we were able to take four boats back east to the ACRA National Championship in Georgia. After WIRA the boys broke into smaller boats and



were able to compete within themselves at a very high level. Not only did this invigorate the team but you could see a direct change in the culture. Everyone who was going east was dedicated to a task and that was to bring home some hardware.

The **Men's Varsity 4+** won their heat with the fastest time of the day at 6:38.8, moving directly into the A/B Semifinal where again they won & set the fastest time of 6:40.3. The team to beat was Georgia Tech who won the Dad Vail Regatta and was deemed the kings of the east. The boys were up for the challenge, as they took down the Yellow Jackets to win the National Championship in a blazing time of 6:37.8.

The **Men's Novice 4+** won their heat with a time of 6:54.3 (2nd fastest time of the day) and moved directly into the

A Final. The novices ultimately claimed 4th in the A Final after battling for 2nd position most of the race.

The **Men's Pair**, composed of two 4-year oarsman, were able to claim 12th in Nationals after battling a tough weekend of racing.

The **Men's Double** was a surprise, in that both of the oarsman were taught to scull only three weeks prior to the regatta. The double just missed a direct qualification to the A Final directly from the heats by 2 seconds. They were forced into the Reps where their backs were against the wall. They needed to win the Rep to go into the A Final and they did just that. Once in the A Final they gave it their all and placed 3rd, bringing home a Bronze Medal from the National Championship.

Interview with senior graduate Anthony Lewis after winning at ACRA

Coach Brooks: How do you feel becoming a National Champion?

Lewis: Tired.

Brooks: Do you feel different than before?

Lewis: Yes, winning the national championship has not only opened my eyes to the endless possibility of striving for greatness but has helped me understand what teamwork really means. That waking up every morning and pushing through the pain, showed me, "pain is only temporary." I have learned that I do not want to go through life anymore just getting by, or being average, and that with hard work and determination, anything is possible.

Brooks: What has rowing taught you?

Lewis: Rowing is not just a sport, but a way of life. A culture of exceptional people who want nothing more than greatness, but also know that greatness does not come easy. I wrote a letter to myself last year when my team lost and never forgot the feeling of losing. I learned a valuable lesson that I will take with me for the rest of my life and that is "to always give it your all because you might not be able to have the same opportunity ever again."

Brooks: What are your plans after rowing?

Lewis: After rowing? I plan on spending the summer rowing, I feel as this is just the beginning. I would like to continue rowing in some way shape or form. I would hope to follow the footsteps of my cousin Kerry Walsh and bring home an Olympic Gold Medal.

Brooks: Who would you like to thank?

Lewis: I would like to thank my mom, my teammates, my coaches, and all the alumni. Without rowing I would not be the person I am today.

Always give it your all because you might not be able to have the same opportunity ever again.



A victory on the national stage helped in the Fall recruiting efforts.



Thank you for all of your support

Khalid Elassaad, Class of 2018

Rowing at UC Irvine is made possible with the help and financial support of oarsmen and like you. Contribute today.

My name is Khalid Elassaad. I am a 19-year-old 3rd-year undergraduate student at the University of California Irvine. I study Computer Science and I intend on specializing in Networked Systems. The first two years of my college career have been monumentally life-changing and unexpectedly action-packed. In the first week of my freshman year, I walked on the Men's Rowing team at Irvine as a novice oarsman. An exceptionally grand commitment to a severely trying sport, that decision has tested me, challenged me, and forged me into the man I am today. Just under two years later, in May of 2016, a handful of my closest friends and I locked down a 1st place Gold Medal in the ACRA National Championships at Lake Lanier, Georgia.

Starting college, I was not athletic and out of shape. Tall and gangly, yet chubby and slow, I knew sports weren't for me. When Head Coach A.J. Brooks approached me on campus and said I should come out to the shell house and try my hand at rowing, I was enthusiastic and eager for the experience, but I was skeptical and doubtful of my capacity as an athlete. However, the first time I got in a boat the feelings of doubt and skepticism were replaced by an immediate infatuation with the sport. I remember the Varsity oarsman were silent and impressive in the boat, moving it with a deliberate, confident rhythm that put my excited splashing to shame. From the first day, I wanted to be a Varsity oarsman.

Fellow rowers, past and present, will know what happens next. I fell into the routine, just like everybody else. It was hard at first, but after a while, it stayed hard. I made friends, some of the closest in my life, and I made blisters, some of the grossest in my life. I lost weight, got fit, and even started beating some of my teammates in the workouts we did. I learned how to work hard and persevere through tough competition. At the end of my novice year, the Men's Varsity 8 won gold at WIRA, and seeing them win a race flared the competitive spirit in me more than anything else. After my second year, now an oarsman in the winning Men's Varsity 4+ with a national title, I find myself still wanting more. Here I am now, about to start my 3rd year of school and sport. Halfway there, with 1000m left to go, I'm still hungry.

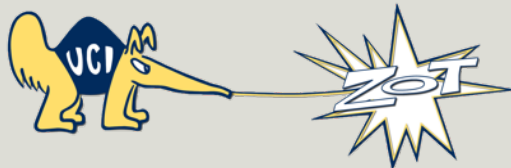
I am tremendously thankful for this experience and for everyone involved in our program. I am thankful for my teammates who I love like my own family. I am thankful for Head Coach A.J. Brooks for his flawless collegiate rowing experience that we learn from everyday and his unforgivably motivating attitude that pushes us to execute to our fullest capacity. I am thankful for

I am tremendously thankful for this experience and for everyone involved in our program



Founder and Coach Duvall Hecht who took an idea and shaped it into the national-title winning team it is today, and who takes us to get some of the best breakfast in Newport time and time again. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I am thankful to the Friends of UCI Rowing and our Alumni, whose support keeps me and my teammates, people they may not even have met, out on the water together. I speak on behalf of the team when I say we are indebted to them for paving the way for us to participate in the best sport in the country. It's an honor to represent their alma mater during our races. To everyone who has picked up an Irvine oar before, know this: My teammates and I are not done yet!

ZOT ZOT ZOT!



Donating to the Friends of UCI Rowing

Set up a sustaining membership

It's easy to set up a sustaining membership. Simply visit our website at ucirowing.org and click on the Donate button.

..or make a one-time donation

It's just as easy. Visit ucirowing.org and click on the Donate button.

Membership Levels

- Novice \$10 Monthly
- Varsity \$25 Monthly
- Masters \$50 Monthly
- Elite \$100 Monthly
- Or make a one-time donation in any amount

Friends of UC Irvine Rowing is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization. Your contributions may be tax-deductible per IRS guidelines.

FRIENDS OF UCI ROWING

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