

## Ottawa Rowing Club - 2018 Vice President Recreational and Instructional Programs Report

2018 was an exciting year on the water for Ottawa Rowing Club members. The season saw continued growth and success for the Ottawa Rowing Club's Recreational and Instructional programs.

Between April and November, 82 recreational athletes rowed out of the ORC, including 44 full year members. Under the guidance of our two Recreational program coaches, Janet and Tan, plus additional cameo appearances by special guest coaches (thank you!), Rec rowers put together a memorable year on the water. Recreational rowers kicked the season off with a strong contingent of participants at the April ORC ergatta, and carried that effort on through the to the end of the season. Rec rowers competed at the ERA Regatta in Montreal, the Canadian Sculling Marathon 10km event, Head of the Madawaska, Head of the Rideau, Head of the Trent, and, for the first time ever, a mixed Rec crew raced (a very memorable race) at the Head of the Charles Regatta in Boston.

In addition to regular on-water practices three times a week, Rec rowers gained new skills and improved existing technique through additional morning rows, sculling clinics, and off-water group training sessions. As well, several Rec rowers collaborated on the creation of a Coxswains Guide for Rec Rowers, which was distributed electronically to program members. The results of the team's hard work could be seen through the participation and successes of first-year rowers in the Head of the Madawaska and Head of the Rideau competitions, and the strong showings of experienced Rec rowers throughout the fall head race season. Many thanks to the Rec coaches for their dedication to the program and its rowers this season.

The Recreational program faced some capacity challenges at times in 2018, though Rec rowers are a resourceful bunch with many program members stepping up to drive safety boats, coxie, and offer instruction and advice to newer members when needed. I am committed to working with our existing coaches to increase the capacity of the Rec program through promotion of coach development programs to Recreational rowers and the recruitment of additional Rec program volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering with the Recreational program in 2019, please contact [recreation@ottawarowingclub.com](mailto:recreation@ottawarowingclub.com).

As the Recreational and Masters rowers can attest to, the ORC docks were the busiest spot on the Ottawa River on June and July evenings with the addition of 137 Adult Rowing League members to the mix. ARL participants, a combination of new rowers and many returning rowers, practiced one night a week with their crews in the month of June. Come July, Thursday nights were race nights, with ARL crews facing off on the river and bonding over food truck eats on the front lawn. There was great energy from all the crews.

The ARL program does not run without the support of many volunteers, from the coaches to the umpires and safety boat drivers, to the race night emcees. Thank you to the 23 volunteer coaches and to the 23 race night volunteers who shared their time and talents to make the 2018 ARL season such a success. Special thanks to Melissa, Liliane and David for ensuring ARL happens. If you would like to help coach or volunteer with ARL, please contact Jenn Shortall at [arl@ottawarowingclub.com](mailto:arl@ottawarowingclub.com).

Through the popular Learn-to-Row program, 89 new rowers were introduced to our sport in 2018. Over the course of five evening sessions spread over two weeks, LTR participants

learned the basics of the rowing stroke and on-water safety. The LTR program continues to be an important point of entry to the Rec program, with a number of participants from each LTR session upgrading to Rec members for the remainder of the season.

Finally, the 2018 fall season saw the introduction of a new pilot program - a 10-row drop-in pass. The pilot program was a success with 10 users, attracting participants to the club who would have not otherwise rowed with us this past season. Many of the participants filled out the post-pilot survey and were happy with their participation. They also provided some great suggestions for next season. The 10-row pass was piloted in the fall season specifically to gauge how it would work with ARL and late-season LTR graduates. Moving forward it will be a new option for rowers and be available all season. Huge thanks to Jenn, Rob, Paul and Melanie for getting the pilot pass off the ground.

As part of my responsibilities representing Recreational and Instructional Program rowers on the ORC Executive Board, I have responded to numerous inquiries (nearly 300 emails over the past 12 months) from the general public and ORC members on a variety of topics, including how to register with the ORC, providing advice on which ORC program is the best fit for a new or returning rower, guest rower inquiries, questions about regattas, safety training scheduling, and ORC Board business, among other items. An end-of-season survey was circulated to Recreational members, seeking feedback on the season - thank you to everyone who took the time to participate and provide comments.

As always, I encourage members to contact me at [recreation@ottawarowingclub.com](mailto:recreation@ottawarowingclub.com) with any feedback or questions they may have about ORC Recreational and Instructional Programs. I appreciate hearing your suggestions on how we as a club can improve the member experience, and answering your questions. Of course, I am always very happy to chat rowing anytime!

I would like to end by saying a special thank you to Jenn Shortall for her tireless work in coordinating the ARL program, and for being the catalyst behind the 10-row pass program pilot this season. I am as well grateful for her assistance in drafting this report.

Thank you to all ORC members for an excellent 2018 season, and I look forward to celebrating the successes of the 2019 rowing season to come.

Lauren Essiambre  
Vice President, Recreational and Instructional Programs