

ACRA - 2009
Men's Varsity 8

(1-4 to Semi Final A/B, Rest to Third Final)

| Heat 1 | | Heat 2 | | Heat 3 | |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|--------|---------------|--------|
| Michigan | 6:05.3 | Purdue | 6:06.5 | Grand Valley | 6:06.3 |
| UC Davis | 6:09.4 | Bucknell | 6:09.8 | Lehigh | 6:08.2 |
| Colorado | 6:15.7 | UCLA | 6:12.0 | Rochester | 6:09.5 |
| Sacramento St. | 6:22.9 | Ohio St. | 6:14.0 | Notre Dame | 6:11.6 |
| Texas | 6:39.0 | Virginia | 6:14.3 | Emory | 6:11.8 |
| | | | | Minnesota | 6:25.5 |

(1-3 to Grand Final, rest to Petite Final)

| Semi-Final A | | Semi-Final B | |
|---------------------|--------|---------------------|---------------|
| Michigan | 5:58.0 | Grand Valley | 6:00.1 |
| Lehigh | 6:03.3 | UC Davis | 6:02.0 |
| Rochester | 6:04.4 | Purdue | 6:02.3 |
| Bucknell | 6:05.8 | UCLA | 6:08.6 |
| Colorado | 6:11.5 | Notre Dame | 6:09.4 |
| Ohio St. | 6:18.6 | Sacramento St. | 6:09.8 |

| Grand Final | | Petite Final | | Third Final | |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|
| Michigan | 5:52.9 | Bucknell | 6:04.3 | Emory | 6:05.3 |
| UC Davis | 6:00.5 | Colorado | 6:05.6 | Virginia | 6:12.0 |
| Grand Valley | 6:01.3 | Sacramento St. | 6:06.6 | Minnesota | 6:17.4 |
| Purdue | 6:02.1 | UCLA | 6:07.1 | Texas | 6:31.1 |
| Lehigh | 6:05.1 | Notre Dame | 6:11.1 | | |
| Rochester | 6:08.4 | Ohio St. | 6:14.3 | | |

TEAM POINTS

| Overall | Men's | Women's |
|---------|-------|---------|
|---------|-------|---------|

TEAM POINTS NOT AVAILABLE



**American Collegiate Rowing Association Championships 2009
Oak Ridge TN**

Back row (left to right) - Andrea Gutierrez, Kelly Inabnett (Hughes), Chad Christiansen, Will Wiersig,
Caton Mande, Seth Weil, Pat Geddes, Brandon Nuckles, Cooper Johnson;
Bottom Row (left to right) - Asst. Coach Jeremiah Renfro, John Chase, Head Coach Sam Sweitzer

2009 Men's Varsity 8 Silver Medalists at ACRA

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|----------|-------------------------|
| Coach | Sam Sweitzer | Coxswain | Andrea Gutierrez |
| | | Stroke | Chad Christiansen |
| | | 7 | Seth Weil |
| | | 6 | Pat Geddes |
| Asst. Coach | Jeremiah Renfro | 5 | Will Wiersig |
| | | 4 | Brandon Nuckles |
| | | 3 | Caton Mande |
| | | 2 | Cooper Johnson |
| Spare | John Chase | Bow | Kelly Inabnett (Hughes) |

ACRA Recap

The 2009 American Collegiate Rowing Association Championships was held in beautiful Oak Ridge, Tennessee, May 23rd and 24th.

Earlier in the year we had a meeting to discuss which boats to field for this experience. We knew that the trip would be expensive for each individual. After considerable thought, we decided to take only the varsity eight.

After not performing up to our potential in the varsity eight at WIRA championships we were eager to train harder and improve our boat speed in the two and a half weeks we had before ACRA's. Training went very well, mixing it up with the novices and JV guys who were still training for PCRC's. We trained hard and well with the entire team up through the time we got on a plane. We made some adjustments in the line-up and it seemed to be working. One of the positive notes in our training was a practice at Lake Natoma with the varsity 8+ prior to loading our shell on Sonoma State's trailer for transportation to ACRA's. The idea was to see how the training had gone. We wanted to see what the new line-up could do for a full 2K piece. The varsity went out on the course at Natoma during the early morning hours before PCRC racing started for 1x2K, 2x1st 1K, and 2xLast 500. It was good to hear that they laid down a 5:58 2K all by themselves. It was a good confidence builder leading into the last few days of training before ACRA's.

The travel to Oak Ridge went very smoothly. We arrived very late Thursday night but were able to sleep in a little Friday morning and still get to the course with plenty of time to practice.

Friday was a fairly normal pre-race practice day. We did two laps in the morning and two laps in the evening. The guys were extremely focused. The weather was great and the course was new and exciting for them. There were of course those crews grab-assing and playing frisbee and I pointed out to the guys that elite crews don't do that at National Championships. The guys handled themselves extremely well in that regard the entire trip.



In our pre-race talk on Friday night we reviewed our errors from WIRA championships and discussed how everyone involved was NOT going to repeat the same mistake at this regatta. I made it very clear in no uncertain terms did we get to just "let" this event happen to us and not play an active, offensive, plan oriented part in the outcome. We were going to take it one step at a time, period. So, the first step was the heat. I was very pleased by the draw. Yes we had the #1 seed but everyone else was a familiar face. We had raced Colorado and Texas in San Diego and obviously had raced Sac State. The race plan was simple, don't not listen to coach and change the plan like at WIRA's. The plan was to let Michigan do their thing and focus on controlling our race and take a solid second place. We also talked about the only sure thing we would commit to the next step after the heat: WE WERE GOING TO TAKE EVERYTHING UP A NOTCH WITH EACH STEP OF THE PROCESS.

According to what the guys tell me it worked great. They liked coming off the line with Michigan and they were in a very controlled rhythm throughout the first half of the race. So controlled that they already had the length we discussed on third place (Colorado) before our planned move at the 750 to go. They were able to not need our 20 and just took a finishing 10 rather than a sprint.

So, step one done. One plan, one plan executed perfectly, back to the hotel for rest and food. Step two, the semi.

The rowing Gods must have been watching because we got the semi draw that I wanted. In studying all the statistics I knew we had a hard semi but I thought that there was one boat in the other semi that was going to get pumped that was a grand final type crew.

Continuing on the ratchet it up each time path we looked like the 5th fastest time coming out of the heats. Our goal for the semi was



simple, race for second. Don't let the lead boat out too far and stay in position to take a solid second place and advance to the final. After the semi's everyone will have seen everyone else and we will have a better understanding of the field but the bottom line was ADVANCE = Grand Final.

Once again the guys had the best piece of the year to date in the semi. Watching from the last 300 meters it was the best looking finishing sprint I had seen from this boat. To watch them power through Purdue was awesome. Needless to say they were ready for the final.

We were now going into the final with the third fastest time coming out of the semi's. The guys were taking their focus and determination to the next level. They were all business, not a single distraction, loose but focused on the goal.

The talk Saturday night was one of the highlights of the trip. It was still simple, we are here, we have done all the work, we have an opportunity, no one is going to give us anything, we MUST take it. Purdue is going to want that 0.3 back, Grand Valley beat us once and will try to do it again. It will be a barn burner. The easy thing would be to fail.

The pre-race talk on Sunday was very emotional. I asked the guys to call on all that we had been through this year, all the emotion, all the change, all their teammates both current and past, every erg piece, every seat race, it all comes down to this moment. I told them that I had absolutely no regrets about any of my decisions up to and including this point in time. Now it was up to them to go out and get what they deserved.

It's a good thing I talk with most of the guys AFTER the race about my next little bit of insight. I knew when they launched that barring any major mistake they had a great chance at medaling. I knew it would be a tight race but 3rd was well within reach. Basically I saw 4th as being a little disappointing but still a great step up from the past. Third place was where we belonged based on all the facts, and 2nd would be the miracle story. With Grand Valley looking huge and beating us by 2 seconds in the semi for us to finish 2nd would be a huge credit to our guys and this entire process.

The only thing left to say...in a year of change and transition we did fairly well...the only place to go now is up...and win the whole thing!

I would like to thank all of the alumni that donated funds to help us facilitate this experience. I would also like to thank Vince Rodgers '08 and Travis Clymer '08 for the cold drinks and support at the regatta, you guys were great!

Pictured below is our 2009 Silver Medal Crew!

Coach S