

**OTTAWA ROWING CLUB  
2010 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**REPORT FROM THE RECREATIONAL PROGRAM**

*9 January 2010*

***Considering that the recreational program's 2009 season was very successful, it is recommended that only incremental improvements be made in 2010 as described herein***

1. The **importance of the recreational program** should be recognized not just from its sheer size but also as it provides services to citizens who wish to row at their own pace and because of its support to other ORC programs (e.g. ARL) and events (e.g. the holding of Head of the Rideau).
2. For the third year in a row, a **record number of rowers** (approximately 120) registered in the recreational program. The proportion of rowers who register for at least two consecutive recreational seasons is increasing each year.
3. A **survey** was conducted among recreational rowers in August 2009, i.e. at the start of the fall recreational season. The objectives of the survey were to better assess rowers' profile and needs, and to identify elements of the program which could be improved before the end of the season. An important proportion of the rowers (36) responded to the survey. Here are the highlights:
  - Vast array in rowing experience (37% have rowed for more than four years; 50% have rowed for less than two years)
  - Strong appetite in learning (47% want to enjoy being on the water while looking forward to improve their skills; 44% want to improve their fitness and technical skills)
  - 83% felt the general ambiance in the rec program is very good (72%) or excellent (11%); however, there is a need for more social events
  - 90% felt communications to recreational members is excellent or very good
  - 67% felt coaching is very good (56%) or excellent (11%); however, need for more consistency, cohesiveness and closer work with coxswains
  - 85% considered their overall appreciation for the program to be very good (74%) or excellent (11%)

The proportion of rowers who strive to improve their skills and push themselves to the limit while having fun has been steadily increasing over the last years. This is far from being a touring program. Recreational rowers do not join competitive programs mainly because of other time commitments.

The following programs' elements should again be provided in 2010 to support the growth of the program:

- Participation to Ottawa Recreational Regatta, Montreal Recreational Regatta, Head of the Madawaska and Head of the Rideau);
- Possibility to row on non-practice days (week nights and week end mornings) on the conditions that safety practices are followed, that the shell is booked ahead of time and available to the rec program, that the general manager is informed about the shell usage, and that the rowers are experienced enough;
- Ability to follow clinics (e.g. sculling, coxing, boat maintenance).

A flourishing recreational program significantly contributes to a strong ORC.

4. In order to enhance safety, a **clinic to learn how to securely attach shells on trailers** has been requested in 2010.

The ratio in the number of rowers versus the number of coaches can be fairly high at some practices. Under those circumstances, not only we will favour the use of larger boats but we would also like encouraging rowers to bring life jackets and safety kits with them in the shells. **We therefore invite ORC to explore having more safety kits and individual life jackets being made available (and not just kept in bags).**

5. A **mentorship program** was provided for two months on a weekly basis by experienced recreational rowers to the less experienced members. As this initiative was successful, the mentorship program will be provided in 2010 from the start of the season to the end of August, i.e. just before the head race season. This will greatly improve the skills of the new members while helping the work of the recreational coaches.
6. With the hard work of the **recreational coach coordinator**, Andy Hall, rowers were supervised by one of two coaches at every practice. Six coaches supported the recreational program this year. We look forward to having the same number of coaches if not more for next year. Especially with the increasing popularity of the recreational program. We would like to work towards having a minimum of two coaches per session.
7. The **ORC Recreational Regatta** is growing each year. In 2009, the regatta attracted a record number of clubs (eight) and rowers (150); a record number of races were also held (19).

The next edition will take place at the same time of the year, i.e. Saturday, July 17, 2010. A request for sanctioning will be made to RowOntario. The same categories will be eligible to compete (i.e. recreational, novice-ARL, juniors, adaptive).

**The ORC recreational regatta is a unique experience for umpires with little experience. Hence, there will be a request to the Head Umpire that these umpires be increasingly involved in the event.**

Eric Aubin  
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