

Squaring the blade

A Newsletter for MIT Crew Alumni

Director's Message

by Tony Kilbridge

A number of years ago when I was coaching at the University of Virginia I attended a talk by UVA football coach Al Groh. Before coming to UVA, Groh had coached in two Super Bowls, winning one with the Giants and losing one with the Patriots. Groh had a lot of interesting things to say about team building, but one which stuck with me was the importance of understanding the things that can help you win and the things that can make you lose. Groh wasn't talking about the obvious variables of how good your athletes are and how hard they work. I believe he meant that the coach has to understand the important details of preparing a team, which, over the course of a season, can add up to the difference between winning and losing.

One small example from the men's heavyweight crew is our mobility warm-up. Every day before we row the crew does a series of exercises that are designed to increase range of motion. The goal is to decrease the risk of injury by ensuring that each athlete has the range of motion needed to row and lift weights with good technique.

These exercises aren't difficult, but they only work if done correctly. The athletes' technique in performing this warm-up is one of the details that can help us win.

I believe that the best way to control these details is to create a team culture in which older athletes model correct behavior for the younger ones and everyone understands that being on the team means doing things right. This is easier said than done, and having often been frustrated in trying to create such a culture through top-down coaching, I, and the other MIT crew coaches, have decided to try something different. At the suggestion of Paul Dill, MIT's very successful volleyball coach, we have embarked on leadership training with our teams. Each squad has approached this differently, but the general idea is to teach principles of leadership to every athlete, and to put the athletes out front in setting and implementing team goals and culture. We are hoping to make our captains more effective, and to teach every athlete to act as a leader, whether they have a title or not. For example, on the men's heavyweight team, in addition to meetings and exercises to teach leadership, we have a mentorship system in which upper classmen

meet regularly one-on-one with freshmen to help with academic issues.

We are just entering the second year of this leadership training experiment, and I expect our approach will change as we figure out what works and what doesn't. It has already made me a better coach to have conversations with my team about matters that were rarely mentioned before. Likewise, I hope that the athletes will absorb the concepts of leadership and use them when they leave MIT. However, the leadership program will prove its worth only if it helps us make a better team, and put faster boats on the water. That, after all, is what we are all about.

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New Additions

Previn Chandraratna

By Holly Metcalf

MIT crew welcomes Previn Chandraratna as assistant women's openweight coach, replacing Aaron Benson, who left last summer after 7 years with the program to be head coach of the Puget Sound University varsity men's and women's program.

Previn Chandraratna brings over fourteen years of coaching experience to the MIT staff.

No stranger to the collegiate level, Chandraratna was the freshman men's heavyweight crew coach at his alma mater, Columbia University, from 1999 to 2003. As Director of Recruiting, he tripled the size of the varsity squad, and he coached his crews to some of the program's fastest results in decades, including finishes ahead of Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Cornell.

As a coach of juniors at Community Rowing, Row New York, and PCRA, Chandraratna helped his squads to achieve tremen-

dous success, including over sixty medalling performances, ten state championships, and a national championship. As a Director of Programs and Head Coach at Row New York, he was a founding member of the US Rowing Task Force that focused on broadening access to the sport of rowing, he earned the 2008 PASEsetter Award for excellence in youth development across all New York City non-profit organizations, and his program earned the 2011 US Rowing Anita De Frantz Award.

A 1997 graduate of Columbia University, Chandraratna was a three-time member of the first varsity heavyweight eight, a team captain, and a Most Valuable Rower Award recipient. He was an accomplished sculler with Riverside Boat Club and Union Boat Club High Performance Camp and won a National Club Championship with New York Athletic Club. Shortly after graduating, he trained with the U.S. National Team at the National Sculling Center in Augusta, GA.

The MIT openweight women's



team is on an upward trajectory and has done so with a combination of walk-ons and recruits. The team environment is one of high challenge and high support, so that "anything is possible" becomes a reality and not a pipe dream. Previn's positive energy, superb technical coaching skills, and experience bringing the best out of his athletes are the assets needed to help bring the MIT openweight Engineers to the next level. We are very lucky to have him!

Dan Baker

By Tony Kilbridge

MIT crew was very pleased this past December to welcome Dan Baker as our new part-time boatman. Dan is a Cape Cod native, who was employed as a woodworker and head coach of Cape Cod Rowing, Inc., before accepting the job with MIT. In addition to his long-time involvement with



Cape Cod Rowing, Dan has held a diverse mix of jobs, including life coach at an equine therapy facility and deputy sheriff in Barnstable County. Dan is also an endurance athlete with an impressive racing resume, including the Hawaii Ironman, road racing and cyclo-cross events. Dan's excellent skills and cheerful personality have made him a great addition to the boat-house.

Team Culture

High Challenge, High Support: Engineering a Culture of Success at MIT

By Holly Metcalf

Both the Lightweight Women's and the Lightweight Men's Crews, coached by Claire Martin-Doyle and Will Oliver respectively, have had notable success this fall. While it appears from the outside that each team has its own identity and thrives in its own individual way, both have prospered over the last few years, growing in size and success. I interviewed a captain from each team to discuss what factors have led to their squad's improvement. While on the surface the accounts seemed quite different, I started to contemplate the significance of the distinctions and how important it is for coaches and student-athletes to be allowed the time and freedom to establish their own identities, ceremony, and process.

Lightweight Women

Lauren Ayers, co-captain of the Lightweight Women's team, sat down with me after her morning workout. She has been coming in every day along with fellow teammates to put in extra aerobic work before her regular evening practice. The first thing she shared with me was how lucky she felt to be able to row on the team and to be a part of the speed the squad is enjoying after following coach Martin-Doyle's vision for the program.

I asked Lauren how that leadership played out in her opinion: "Claire and Amelia [Assistant Coach Ame-

lia Booth] wanted to get us to take more ownership for individual and team goals. We held more meetings to establish them." She pointed out that the team "is pretty young. And look what we did this past fall!"

We talked about the growth of the team and what contributed to its success. What Lauren chose to talk about was not the types of workouts they are doing, the technical



focus, or results in general—those were givens, but hardly the complete list. She spoke again of Martin-Doyle and Booth's leadership: "They never show worries about speed. They coach us to focus on ourselves—we can't do anything about other boats. The question asked of us is what we're going to do to make ourselves faster. They pound into us 'Don't waste time on what can't be changed!'" In other

words, the coaches consistently reflect back to their team a steady, matter-of-fact picture of its accomplishments, what is missing and the mantra question, "What are you going to commit to individually and as a team to move to the next level?"

The result: many miles rowed, sharpened focus on what is essential to individual improvement, and, therefore, overall team improvement. Lauren's energy, positive attitude, and belief in possibility are palpable. Her coaches exude the same sensibilities.

Lauren sums it up succinctly and poignantly: "We belong in Division I rowing, and we've earned the right to compete against anybody."

Lightweight Men

Senior, captain, and four-year rower, Stephen Freiberg, met with me after his morning workout. You can usually find him working out down in the boat bays, getting

Team Culture

Challenge & Support

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hours of mileage in during the long winter months.

I asked Stephen about his team and what he saw as the key elements contributing to its success over the last three seasons. Stephen pointed first and foremost to the growth of the program, the increase in numbers that has forced top-boat rowers

in two years, the effort seems to be paying off. Much like Coach Martin-Doyle, Oliver spent the last two years focusing primarily on individual and team improvement, worrying less about the team's performance against other squads and focusing more on its continued growth.

Only in the last year has that focus shifted outward; Oliver began the summer by outlining the steps nec-

it, insisting that the team remain accountable throughout the season.

The team has bought in and executed. Their efforts led to a 5th place finish at the Head of the Charles this fall; they were 7 seconds off Princeton and Yale, and within 20 seconds of Harvard's winning time. This was the first time the team had been within striking distance of the winning crew.

Stephen and his teammates did not take this speed for granted. They saw it as an indicator that they were on the right track and have set out to meet their coach's next challenge, achieving erg scores as a team that would reflect their commitment, strong culture, faith and competence.

At the end of our meeting, Stephen shares one of Oliver's primary philosophies about speed and winning: it takes a whole team working together and challenging one another to make one fast eight.

One thing that's obvious from speaking to both athletes is how proud they are to be participating in the growth of their squads. While their perceptions of how their coaches operate might differ, they are fundamentally similar in their aspirations for personal improvement and accountability. It's clear the identities that both teams have developed didn't emerge overnight, but have been nurtured for some time. That they are seeing success now is a testament, not just to these athletes and coaches, but also to the program and community in which they thrive.



to respond to pressure from below and elevated each individual's performance. No coincidence, this growth is the product of a concentrated effort by rowers and coaches to create a more cohesive, focused squad.

With squad size more than doubled

essary for the team to be successful within the EARC. Stephen walks me through the program, beginning with an emphasis on summer fitness and progressing through the season with a series of benchmark goals and, finally, competitive end-of-season fitness standards. Each step relies on the one that preceded

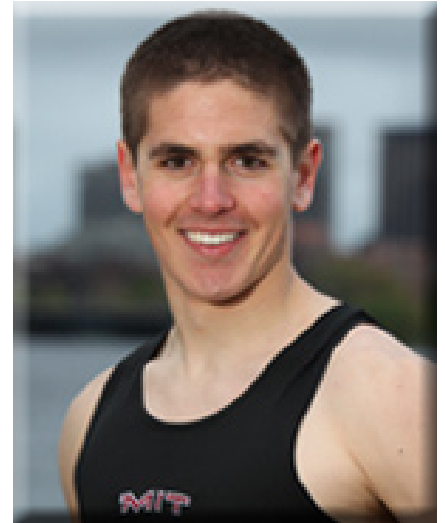
Dock Rescue

Sandy Hits MIT

By Will Oliver

When Hurricane Sandy arrived on the East Coast, most of Boston, including MIT, hunkered down. At Pierce Boathouse, preparations included securing launches and moving anything that might get away indoors. Something that no one expected to get away, however, was the dock itself. In the midst of the storm, students living in the dorms along Memorial Drive contacted the

coaching staff, letting them know that several pieces of the MIT dock had been spotted floating upstream. Coaches mobilized immediately to investigate, and, indeed, one section of dock had broken free of its heavy metal shackles. The docks were not free-floating, however, as, in the middle of the night, storm raging, one rower, John Kongoletos, '14, had already effected a rescue. Meeting the dock as it arrived at the upstream BU sailing pavilion, John lashed the sec-



John Kongoletos, '14



tions, coaching launches and all, to the shore, by the time coaches arrived. The coaching staff is extremely grateful for John's quick actions, which saved the dock and launches from almost certain damage and secured them until the storm passed, at which time they were returned, unharmed, to Pierce Boathouse.

Now in its third year of operation, the MIT Youth Rowing Camp offers a choice of two one-week day camps for high-school-age rowers, emphasizing sculling skills.

Teaching methods will include on-the-water coaching, video review, and tank demonstrations, with a high coach-to-athlete ratio to ensure that all campers receive lots of individual attention.

Session One: June 17 - June 21

Session Two: June 24 - June 28

*Anyone interested in the program should visit
<http://www.mitathletics.com/sports/m-crew/CrewCamp2013>
for more information.*

MIT

Youth Rowing Camp



Florida Training

Florida 2013

By Amelia Mockett '15

New Year's Eve – a day in American culture typically associated with watching a couple of football games, snagging the best deals in post-Christmas retail sales, and constantly caffeinating oneself in anticipation of the push to stay awake until midnight. However, as we all know, MIT Crew is anything but typical. This year's MIT Crew New Year's Eve began on airplanes, as 120-some rowers and coaches arrived at Orlando International Airport in waves. As soon as we all had a chance to take off our parkas and snow boots, and change into our shorts and flip flops, off we went, sorted into vans to race to the launch site.

The rest of the day was spent in a flurry of unloading and rigging boats, moving into hotel rooms, grocery shopping, and marveling at the existence of the sun. I was asleep by 8pm. 2013 happened anyway.

This year's trip was largely without weather drama – no spontaneously cold snaps, brutal rain storms, or blustering winds. However, on two mornings we arrived at the launch site to dense fog. The various responses that the teams and coaches had to the fog were all mercilessly parodied later in the week at skit night.

As chairs of the Social Committee, Coach Amelia and Coach Evan came up with a delightful new social event this year – pizza and van art! For those of you who may not have caught the “van art” tide, the task is essentially this – to compete to see who can best decorate their



van's windows with paint pens, all the while meticulously avoiding getting any “art” on the van's crisp white paint. Although the heavy-weight men interpreted “van art” to mean “write various slogans on the sides of your van”, the rest of the teams got quite artistically creative. Multiple vans were decorated using an appropriate Van Gogh theme, with Starry Night represented with surprising beauty (and frequency!). As always, the end of the trip was bittersweet – by day 10, we had gotten in some dozen or more practices, and had seen great improvements in our technique and speed. Our catches were looking sharp, our finishes connected, we had all relearned how to feather and were just starting to turn our blisters into callouses! And yet, all good things must come to an end. With final stops at Ice Cream Junction (part ice cream shop, part Asian food store, part karaoke bar), I Dream of Yogurt and Steak n' Shake, we headed back to the airport to return to Boston and resume our indoor training. Now that we're all back in Boston, digging out from the latest winter storm and considering using flamethrowers to melt the Charles, I'm sure I can speak for all of us: Florida, take us back? Please?

Florida Training



Florida 2013

By Ben Potash '14

The Florida training trips are hands down some of my favorite memories rowing at MIT. It's a chance to get away from all the stress of classes and MIT and just focus on a passion we all share, rowing. Florida is the perfect way to kick-start our winter training regiment and

get everyone back into the swing of things after taking the Holidays off at home with your family.

It's all about having fun, building our speed, and building our sense of camaraderie. Not only do we have quality bonding events with our own team, such as dinner and karaoke, but we also have the opportunity to mingle with the other

squads from MIT, something we unfortunately don't do enough of on campus. We reminisce about our past trips all year and start looking forward to the next trip as soon as the fall season starts. Not to mention it's the last nice weather we'll have before returning to the frozen tundra that is a Boston winter. What's not to love?



Fall Recap

Heavyweight Men

By *Evan Thews-Wassell*

MIT's heavyweight men entered the 2012 fall season with a young but hungry team. Of the twenty-three athletes on the roster, seven are freshmen, nine are sophomores, six are juniors, and one is a senior. With the loss of only one senior from last year's team, and the new ability to race freshmen in varsity events, the team came together quickly and began to pick up speed throughout the fall season.

After both the varsity and JV had mixed results at the Head of the Charles and Princeton Chase, Tech finished the fall season on a strong note at the Foot of the Charles with a top thirty finish by both varsity 4+'s.

The heavyweight men added a strong freshman class to a tight-knit group of varsity athletes this year. They are training hard through the winter months on the rowing machines and in the weight room. Assuming the absence of any major

injuries, this group has the talent and the desire to be a competitive EARC and IRA crew.

In addition to our usual EARC competition, which will have us traveling to Worcester and Princeton, we have added out-of-league races against Bates, Boston College, and DIII powerhouses Trinity and Williams College. We hope to see the friends, family, and alumni of MIT crew at the races. See you in the spring!



Heavy Men Spring Schedule

vs. Bates & Boston College	Home	March 30
Alumni Cup vs. Holy Cross & Columbia	Home	April 6
Donahue Cup vs. Williams College & WPI	Worcester, MA	April 13
Compton Cup vs. Harvard & Princeton	Princeton, NJ	April 20
vs. Trinity	Home	April 28
Cochrane Cup vs. Wisconsin	Home	May 4
EARC Sprints	Worcester, MA	May 19
IRA National Championship (by invitation)	Sacramento, CA	May 31 - June 2

Fall Recap

Lightweight Men

By Will Oliver &
Claire Martin-Doyle

On a crisp fall afternoon, the men's and women's lightweight crews opened the 2012-2013 racing season with a pair of historic performances at the 48th annual Head of the Charles.

Led by senior coxswain Michael Hwang, MIT (bow #14) began the Men's Lightweight Eight event close to the rear of the field. Undeterred, the Engineers would overtake the Harvard B entry and come within striking distance of Princeton B. Ultimately, MIT finished 5th overall, beating most of its EARC competition (behind only Harvard, Princeton and Yale) and posting the team's best results for the regatta in over 20 years.

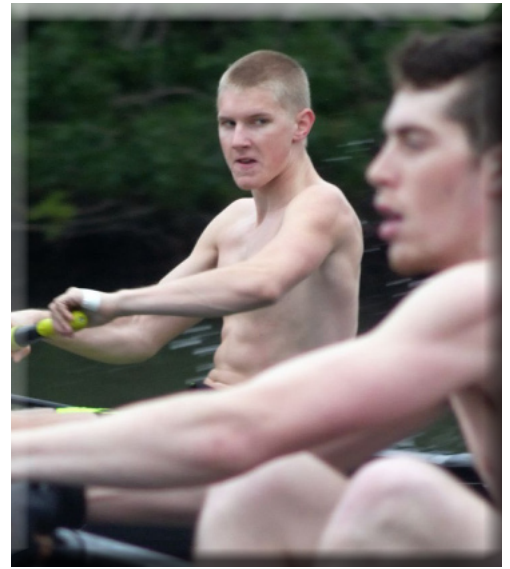
Including Hwang, a graduate of Lakeside School and native of Seattle, WA, four seniors led the crew. Captain Stephen Freiberg, an alumnus of Wayland-Weston

in Weston, MA, stroked the eight; Zach Segal, captain in 2011-12 and originally from Los Altos, CA, rowed in the seven-seat; and Cameron McAlpine, a Portland, OR native and two-time US World Trials competitor, rowed in the four-seat. All three rowers have competed as members of the Tech Varsity Eight for the last three seasons.

Joining the crew's seniors were four sophomores and a freshman. Sophomores Chris Schlaepfer and Peter Augusciak, both Seattle natives and graduates of Lakeside School, sat five and two-seat respectively. Prior to coming to MIT, they both placed nationally at the USRowing Youth National Championship and represented the US at the CanAMex Regatta. Another Seattle native, Brian Alvarez sat three-seat in the eight; he rowed for Sammamish in high school and was a member of their crew's gold-medal-winning four at Youth Nationals in 2011. Rounding out the sophomore contingent

and sitting in the bow-seat was DC Danko, formerly of Ithaca, NY and Cascadilla Boat Club. Representing the freshman class in six-seat, Ijan Zhakiya came to MIT via Philips Academy, where he was a member of their NEIRA gold-medal-winning Varsity Eight in 2012.

The lightweight men's squad looks forward to opening the spring racing season at home on Saturday, March 30th versus the University of Pennsylvania and Delaware.



Light Men Spring Schedule

vs. Penn	Home	March 30
vs. Delaware	Home	March 30
Joy Cup vs. Yale with Georgetown	New Haven, CT	April 6
Biglin Bowl vs. Dartmouth & Harvard	Hanover, NH	April 13
Geiger Cup vs. Columbia & Cornell	Ithaca, NY	April 20
vs. Wisconsin	Home	May 4
Dad Vail Regatta	Philadelphia, PA	May 10-11
EARC Sprints	Worcester, MA	May 19
IRA National Championship (by invitation)	Sacramento, CA	May 31 - June 2

Fall Recap

Lightweight Women

By Claire Martin-Doyle

The Tech lightweight women's crew turned in their best Head of the Charles performance since the program's 2004 inception. In a very competitive field that included the top Division I schools in the country, including the 2012 IRA National Champions, Tech's strong performance stood out.

The Engineers finished fifth overall, turning in a time of 17:50.8 to finish ahead of the Georgetown Hoyas and the Harvard-Radcliffe B entry. Tech was a gut-wrenching half-second behind the Princeton Tigers over the 3-mile racecourse.

The Engineers overall time was just 5.1 percent off the winning time. In the past nine years, the closest MIT had been previously was 8.27% in 2010.

This year's crew included three freshman: Ella Branch from St. Pauls' School (NH), a varsity athlete in crew and cross-country, Madison Noteware from Baldwin

School (PA), a multi-sport athlete who won gold at Stotesbury and silver at Youth Nationals, and Anne Kim from Montclair High School (NJ), a multiple gold and silver medalist at Stotesbury over her stellar four-year high school rowing career.

The boat's two sophomores included Amelia Mockett from Holy



Names Academy (WA), where she was a multiple-year competitor at US Youth Nationals, and Katie Gorick, a walk-on who began rowing in the fall of 2011. Both sophomores were members of Tech's 2012 Varsity Eight.

Junior Emily Chen, in her second year steering the varsity, led her crew relentlessly down the course.

Chen held her ground and mastered a difficult turn while passing Harvard-Radcliffe B between Weeks and Anderson, arguably the most difficult line to navigate over the 3-mile course.

Three seniors anchored the crew: Stroke Chandler Burfield first stepped in a shell in the spring of 2012. Burfield, a cross-country runner, who converted to rowing just last spring led the crew down the course at an aggressive 34 strokes per minute. Rounding out the lineup were Katie Inman, 2nd year co-captain from Indianapolis who has been a member of the varsity eight since her freshman year at MIT, and Lauren Ayers, 2nd year co-captain, and a fourth-year rower who makes her third consecutive appearance in Tech's Varsity Eight at Head of the Charles.

The lightweight women's squad looks forward to opening the spring racing season on Saturday, March 30th at home versus Boston University and Harvard-Radcliffe.

Light Women Spring Schedule

Bean Pot	Home	March 30
Knecht Cup	Cherry Hill, NJ	April 13-14
vs. Stanford & Wisconsin	Home	April 20
Lightweight Invitational	Home	April 21
Muri Cup	Home	April 27
Dad Vail Regatta	Philadelphia, PA	May 10-11
IRA National Championship (by invitation)	Sacramento, CA	May 31 - June 2

Fall Recap

Openweight Women

By Holly Metcalf

This past Fall was a key moment in the new life of MIT's women's varsity openweight rowing program: eight seniors graduated—key contributors to the growth of the program, producing a 2nd place finish in the V8 at the Patriot League championship and a 5th place finish in the grand finals at Sprints; a young team left to fill their shoes.

Three juniors, three sophomores, one freshman, and one senior sit in the V8. The team overall is comprised of a good-sized sophomore class, strong juniors, three seniors, and several strong recruited freshmen joined by a large group of

walk-ons.

The team was determined to continue the winning attitude and persistence of its graduated seniors and not look back. They developed surprising speed given their youth and, in spite of a thirty-second penalty during the Championship 8 race at the Head of the Charles, finished ahead of programs like the University of Tennessee. The team entered winter training determined to exceed their fitness goals and reach the next level of technical competence.

Spring Racing Bean Pot

The team faces off with Radcliffe, Boston University, Boston College and Northeastern University, formi-

dable opponents. The team is determined to be ready. Already the top eight athletes have surpassed last year's V8 average 2k erg scores. The 2V8 is close to doing the same. The team's attention to technical detail has been exceptional—knowing that their youth requires it if they hope to see wins this spring.

MIT/BC Cup

The team's next race will challenge all to prove their desire to win: the MIT/BC cup race. MIT is undefeated, but Boston College will be looking for their first win.

Patriot League Championship

Boston University has joined the Patriot League, bringing a whole other level of speed to the mix. Our last race of the year, the Patriot League Championships will offer the team a final opportunity of racing to the max.

A great Spring racing schedule; a team settled into it's 2013 identity, ready to challenge itself and opponents. The student-athletes have taken their fitness and mental attitude to the next level, and are looking forward to testing their speed.



Open Women Spring Schedule

Beanpot vs. BC, BU, Northeastern, & Radcliffe	Home	March 23
vs. Boston College	Home	April 6
George Washington Invitational	Washington, DC	April 12-13
vs. UMass	Home	April 20
Patriot League Championships	Cherry Hill, NJ	April 28
EAWRC Sprints	Cherry Hill, NJ	May 5



Coaching staff

**Head Coach, Heavyweight Men
Assistant Coach, Heavyweight Men**

**Tony Kilbridge
Evan Thews-Wassell**

**Head Coach, Lightweight Men
Assistant Coach, Lightweight Men**

**Will Oliver
Jeff Forrester**

**Head Coach, Openweight Women
Assistant Coach, Openweight Women**

**Holly Metcalfe
Previn Chandraratna**

**Head Coach, Lightweight Women
Assistant Coach, Lightweight Women**

**Claire Martin-Doyle
Amelia Booth**