**Captains Report for the Tees Rowing Club Annual General Meeting – 15th March 2020**

I am starting my report this year a little differently to how I did it last year as this year I have been the captain for a full year rather than the 2 months that it was in 2019!

Being the captain for this year has reinforced my opinion with regards to the levels of commitment I picked up in the short time before last years AGM. I would like to thank all members of the committee and the wider team including the equipment team, the regatta committee and now the junior committee plus all coaches, trailer drivers and those others in the club that volunteer for their continued commitment and support to myself and the club as whole. Many of you will know that at times I have found it hard as captain this year but there have been moments in the year that make me realise exactly why I have stayed in my role and have filled me with pride and almost make me want to brag that “I am the captain of that club.”

A lot happens in a year and therefore I will no doubt have forgotten a lot of things that have happened! I may only be 26 (as of yesterday) but sadly I cannot remember every great moment that has happened in the past year but here are the few that I do remember and feel that we need to celebrate:

* World Masters – the usual suspects attended World Masters this year and yet again they brought home the bacon with a number of medals – massive congratulations to Chris Kenyon, Bob Bainbridge, Ralph Pickles, Julian Wilkinson and Tony Stocking
* National Masters – this year hosted up in Strathclyde and from what I have heard it was particularly windy. There were a number of crews who took part, all posting respectable times and results with a couple of wins
* Juniors Inter Regional Trials – I had the privilege of going up to Cambois to watch this event in which the juniors again posted some great results and looked technically very clean. The highlight of the event was the J16 2x who are now preparing to represent the Northern Region at the JIRR in Peterborough in April. Congratulations to the juniors that competed at this event and best of luck the Ben Summers and Lewis Henson for the regatta next year
* Local Racing – there have been a massive amount of wins this year (too many for me to list – partly because the list would be massively long and also because it would be a too strong test of my memory to collate them all)
* Our own events – we hosted a very successful regatta and LDS/SBH this year so fingers crossed for the same achievements in the upcoming year! Thank you to the regatta committee for organising both events

Our successes this year were not just on the water. As a club we have been recognised at a couple of different awards events with the Masters H 4x- winning at the The Gazette Sports Awards and the club as a whole being nominated and making the final of the Northern Echo Local Heroes Awards. Let’s continue to get the results on the water that mean we are noticed off the water and nominated for further awards.

Over the winter period, we again had our annual visit from Tideway Scullers for their training camp with a large group of athletes attending. More than ever before this year with Kieran Clark bringing some of the men’s squad up as well. I have not heard whether they will definitely be returning to the club to partake in their camp again, however, I do hope this relationship will continue as it is great to see more people enjoying our marvellous river and appreciating our facilities.

Teesside University Boat Club continue to be valued members of the Tees RC membership and I would like to welcome any new members who haven’t met me before. The ambitions of the athletes continue to be with eyes on BUCS regatta at the start of May, fingers crossed for getting a few crews out there racing alongside the other universities, not just getting them racing but also getting the Teesside University name out there.

The junior section continue to go from strength to strength under the guidance of Kate O’Sullivan and the coaching team. Having spoken to Kate and a number of the athletes in the squad there are some high aims for the section including visits to National Schools and British Junior Championships.

The past couple of months have been very difficult for many clubs across the country with races being cancelled and a number of clubs not being able to even access their boathouses due to the flooding. We are very lucky at Tees to be able to still train (when the storms haven’t been lingering). Hopefully things will improve over the coming months so we can compete in all planned races in the short term and that the weather stays nice for our Regatta in May.

During my year as captain you will have seen a couple of new boats entering the boathouse and a couple of our older boats leaving. It is my hope and ambition to ensure that we have the best fleet we can possibly have. We mucst also ensure that our current fleet stay in the great condition the majority of our boats are in. In the near future, there will be a 5 year plan for the club composed to try to give the club some ambition and drive. This plan will guide thinking of the committee for future purchases.

One new boat in the boathouse this year is Stan. This boat is named after one of the clubs great friends and successful coaches Stan Collingwood who sadly passed away in the latter part of 2019. Our thoughts continue to be with his widow and family and his presence will live on at the club through the stories of club members and now the Single Scull that continues to journey along our river and those on which it competes.

I look forward to seeing where the club goes over the coming year as I am aware of some great plans in the pipeline across a number of different squads including racing at World, National and Local level again. I am also looking forward to seeing the continued growth in the number of recreational rowers on the river enjoying the sport as much as those that compete regularly.

The captaincy this year has been tough at times, but overall it has been a great personal achievement for me to be the captain of such a great bunch of people. I have one request – please continue to produce the times that have made me proud to be the captain and create those memories that we all remember as rowers. Whether that be a great race, a great trip up the Tees or simply the great social aspect of Tees!

Many Thanks

Tom Hillier