



PRESS RELEASE: 31 July 2023

LONDON – Dormant rowing clubs in the North West of England are brought to life with support from the Boat Race Fund to support pupils at risk of underachieving, using rowing as an early intervention tool to foster personal growth and engagement.

The Boat Race Fund, supported by Gemini, was established to support youth rowing projects and initiatives. The fund has recently helped to facilitate the expansion of Warrington Youth Rowing, bringing the exhilarating sport of rowing to hundreds of youngsters in the Greater Manchester area. Warrington Youth Rowing facilitates rowing for state schools in Liverpool, Northwich, and Manchester. The most recent establishment being Greater Manchester Youth Rowing.

This expansion has seen the introduction of an impressive 36 on-water sessions each week across four hubs, drawing participants from over thirty schools in the region. The ongoing initiative targets children who are at risk of underachieving academically and socially, using rowing as an early intervention tool to foster personal growth and engagement in students from the 'Pupil Premium Cohort'. The impact has been tremendous, with reported improvements in school attendance, reductions in exclusions, and boosts in students' confidence and attitude.

This exciting project is a collaboration between Ben Dunne and Richard Sinnott. Their combined skills matched local schools to existing rowing clubs which, while busy during mornings, evenings and during weekends, typically lay dormant during the day but are now vibrant with activity as young rowers from state schools hit the waters to learn the incredible sport that we love. These students, over 300 of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds, now enjoy weekly rowing sessions during school hours, held at rowing clubs near where they live.

A testament to the program's success unfolded recently on the River Mersey with young rowers, the majority of whom are on the Pupil Premium Register, racing over a 300 metre course culminating at the Warrington Rowing Club. Many of these children were participating in their first-ever school sporting event and their infectious excitement, pride, and passion filled the air.



There was enthusiastic participation from several schools under various rowing programs. Warrington Youth Rowing saw strong representation from schools including Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School, which boasted the fastest overall crew, and St Gregory's Catholic High School, which fielded the fastest Year 8 Open Crew.

Winsford Academy emerged as a stand-out from Northwich Youth Rowing, securing the fastest Year 8 Girls' Crew overall and within NYR, and taking home the Roger Chicken Trophy for 'School of the Year'.

Mersey Youth Rowing saw a strong performance from South Wirral Academy, with the fastest Year 8 Girls' and Open Crews. And Greater Manchester Youth Rowing was represented by Lowry Academy, which boasted the fastest Year 8 Girls' and Open Crews.

Phil Lloyd, Executive Principal at the North Liverpool Academy said, "It's been fantastic to see the teamwork develop alongside their enthusiasm for being out on the water. Our aim as a school is to offer young people a world class education regardless of background. The Warrington youth rowing programme has given us another step towards that goal."

Established in 2016, Warrington Youth Rowing is dedicated to opening the sport of rowing to young people who might otherwise not have the opportunity. With hubs across Warrington, Liverpool, Northwich, and Manchester, and with the support from the Boat Race Fund and Gemini, the organisation's expansion has been nothing short of spectacular with Richard Sinnott, CEO of Warrington Youth Rowing reflecting; "The help given to us by The Boat Race fund is very important and has enabled us to expand our schools programme. This in turn has enabled more youngsters to get on the water experience the sport of rowing, learning many vital life skills along the way."

The event and the larger program have been a collaborative effort of dedicated coaches, umpires, trustees, and volunteers and it serves as a testament to the transformative power of sport, and in this case, rowing - as an agent for fostering confidence, camaraderie, and resilience.

Erin Kennedy MBE and Trustee at OCRF said; "Oxford and Cambridge Rowing Foundation are delighted to see The Boat Race Fund bringing rowing to so many young people. Warrington Youth Rowing's project has been hugely impactful, reaching participants from 30 schools in the area and giving opportunities to those who usually would never get the chance to try rowing. We are so pleased that The Boat Race Fund has been able to play a part in developing this fantastic programme."



As we celebrate these young rowers, we look forward to The Boat Race Fund continuing to drive the accessibility of this enriching sport to more and more young people across the country.

Participating Schools:

Warrington Youth Rowing

Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School – TCAT (The Challenge Academy Trust)
(Fastest Overall crew)

St Gregory's Catholic High School (Fastest Year 8 Open Crew in WYR)

Cardinal Newman Catholic High School (Fastest Year 8 Girls Crew in WYR)

Culcheth High School

Beamont Collegiate Academy - TCAT

Bridgewater High School - TCAT

Kings Leadership Academy Warrington – Kings Leadership

Penketh High School - TCAT

Northwich Youth Rowing

Knutsford Academy (Fastest Year 8 Open Crew in NYR)

Winsford Academy (Fastest Year 8 Girls Crew overall and NYR. Roger Chicken Trophy for School of the year!)

Weaverham High School

Rudheath Senior Academy

Mersey Youth Rowing

North Liverpool Academy – Northern Schools Trust

Academy St Francis of Assis

South Wirral Academy - Fastest Year 8 Girls Crew and Open for MYR

Dixons Broadgreen Academy – Dixons

Greater Manchester Youth Rowing

Lowry Academy - United Learning Trust (Fastest Year 8 Girls Crew and Open for GMYR)

Hyndburn Academy - United Learning Trust

Irlam and Cadishead - United Learning Trust

*****ENDS *****

Notes to Editors



Warrington Youth Rowing (WYR)

Opening empty rowing clubs across the UK for daytime access so that hundreds of school children can learn to row is the ambition of this initiative. Founded to offer rowing to young people who might otherwise might not have the opportunity to join a rowing club, Warrington YR now has two additional hubs in Liverpool and Northwich. In the space of five years, 28 secondary schools and 2 special schools now have over 300 students involved in rowing at local rowing clubs.

For more details about Warrington Youth Rowing - Richard Sinnott:
richard@warringtonyouthrowing.org.uk

For further information about the Boat Race and the Boat Race Fund please contact
mediaenquiries@theboatrace.org

Photography

High resolution photography of this event is available upon request.

About The Boat Race Fund

The Boat Race Fund is governed and managed by Trustees from the Oxford and Cambridge Rowing Foundation. It is the charitable outreach support of the world-famous Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race. The Fund was founded in 2021 with principal partner Gemini and the Boat Race is incredibly proud to work with Gemini to enable young people across the UK to have the opportunity to try rowing. The fund was established to break down barriers to participation in rowing and has given nearly 900 young people in programmes across the UK, the opportunity to learn life skills as well as to try rowing.

www.theboatrace.org

About

Gemini

Gemini is a platform that allows customers to buy, sell, and store cryptocurrencies like bitcoin, ether, and DeFi tokens. Gemini's simple, reliable, and secure products are built to unlock the next era of financial, creative & personal freedom. Gemini was founded in 2014 by twin brothers Cameron and Tyler Winklevoss.



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