Dear Friends of Middlebury Crew,

The end of the spring season gives us the chance to look back at a challenging year, a year filled with dedication, hard work, beautiful days of practice on Lake Dunmore.....and some wonderful competitive successes to savor.

At Middlebury Crew, we strive to row each stroke in practice with the same effort and focus we would bring to a race----and this year that effort produced some of the strongest results we've had in many years. Early in April the team won all the varsity races at the "Big 3" regatta, our traditional contest with rivals Amherst and Bowdoin, from the first varsity four through the third varsity four. This result was particularly satisfying as it reflected the growing depth, dedication and skill of our team. As we moved into the New England Championships, this early promise was borne out, with bronze medals in the women's varsity and second varsity fours, and silver medals for the men's first and second varsity fours. With the growing quality and intensity of fours racing in New England--the men's varsity fours race had 17 schools entered, the largest event in the regatta---these results represent a tremendous achievement.

As we started the fall season, our financial future looked uncertain at best, as we faced the loss of our funding from the athletic department. However, the team rose to the challenge----as did our friends, alumni, and parents----and we were able to move forward during the year with no loss in the quality of our competitive effort on the water. We will need to raise funds each year to secure the future of the team, but we are endlessly grateful for the generosity which enabled the students to pursue this beautiful and challenging sport at Middlebury this year.

Thank you to all who help make rowing possible at Middlebury College. I am fortunate to coach this wonderful group, and I look forward to a strong future for the team.

Best wishes,

--Noel
The Varsity Women had one of the strongest seasons in Middlebury Crew history. The training trip in Georgia proved that the team had worked hard over the winter and was ready to hit the water with a purpose. Focusing on technique, the women prepared themselves for the racing season ahead.

The squad started out the season together racing an eight against Colby, Smith, Wesleyan, and WPI at Lake Quinsigamond before breaking down into fours for the majority of the racing season. At the Big Three, all three women's fours walked away from the day's racing with wins against Bowdoin and Amherst. From there the team traveled to Skidmore, racing UVM and Albany in the eight. The day started out with fair skies, but quickly got cold and started hailing as the women got into the fours to go out and race again. The conditions for the fours racing were not ideal, so the team went back to Lake Dunmore to get ready for Smith. In the last weekend of regular season competition, the two fours easily defeated both Smith boats.

From there it was on to the New England Championships, where there would finally be some competition for both fours. The second four (Meghan Blumstein ’11, Grady Ross ’12, Catherine Hayes ’12, Rachel Zakraskel ’10, and Elise Cohen ’11) had a straight final, which they came away from with a solid row and bronze medals. The first four (Cailin Ross ’12, Robin Sheasley ’12, Dale Freundlich ’10, Christina Azodi ’12 and Teresa Wolverton ’12) won their heat and moved on to the Grand Final that afternoon. In the finals they came in third behind Williams and rival Bowdoin and brought home some hardware. It was a fantastic day of racing, and a testament to the hours of work on and off the water by the entire team, including those who were not able to race at New Englands (Hallie Woods ’12 and BlakeLee Clay-McBee ’12).

The two fours combined in an eight for three short days of practice before heading to Philadelphia to compete in the Dad Vail Regatta. Racing in the Open Eight category, they knew they were up against stiff competition. After a frustrating race in the heats on Friday morning, the boat refocused and had a great race in the repechage. Although they did not advance to the next round of racing, it was quite an experience to race on the historic course and compete against top-level crews from all over the country.

The team will graduate two Seniors, Rachel and Dale. With a young team and many returning rowers, Middlebury Women's Crew is growing in both strength and numbers. The results this season show what intense winter training combined with focused time on the water can produce. Heading into the summer the squad is excited to continue improving and winning races!
The Middlebury Crew men's varsity enjoyed an incredibly successful season this spring, the team's best in many years. The men's eight opened the season at the John Hunter Regatta on Lake Lanier by making the final, and although they did not medal they put in a very strong performance against a number of very strong varsity crews from large southern schools. With a promising start to the spring racing season, the team headed back north to compete against some fast New England crews. The next weekend at Lake Quinsigamond, the men again put up a good showing against crews such as WPI and Colby that have traditionally been much stronger than Middlebury. After these races, the men's boats came together and for the rest of the season put together a nearly unbroken string of success.

At the Big 3 the next weekend, all three men's varsity fours won their races as part of a varsity sweep against traditional rivals Bowdoin and Amherst. The following weekend at a stormy Saratoga Springs, the first men's eight and the first men's four won their races, beating UVM boats in both.

The following weekend at Tufts, the men did their part in the second varsity sweep of the season, with the first, second, and third men's fours winning their races. The wins the team earned in these last weeks of the normal racing season made them hungry for the final, and most competitive, of the season. Powered by the strength they had built and the goals they had set together, both the first and second men's fours won silver medals at the New England Championships. This was the first time a Middlebury men's crew had medaled at New Englands.

The team finished their season at the Dad Vail Regatta in Philadelphia, one of the most prestigious regattas in the country. The first men's four reached the final, ultimately finishing fifth in what was a field of 53 boats. Nearly the entire men's team will return in the fall; with two senior graduating, three juniors going abroad in the fall, and a strong crop of novice rowers moving up to varsity, the men's varsity looks to be in good position to record many future successes to go with the many they enjoyed this past spring.
With power in their legs and strength in their hearts, the novice girls pulled a phenomenal first season. Coming into the spring season, half of the girls drew upon their fall rowing experience but half had never been in a boat before. In their first race the, the novice girls displayed their enormous potential. Although a fleet of crabs attacked their oars, the novice girls emerged from the race with the experience of their first 2k and a hunger for more.

At Worcester, the novice and JV boats (which consisted of six novices), rowed a clean crab-free race against steep competitors Smith and Wesleyan. After a great JV race, the girls tirelessly sped through their novice race, and despite a magically vanishing skeg, almost caught Smith. Moving to fours for the Big Three, the girls finished in second and third place, triumphing over Bowdoin and following closely behind Amherst. Due to raging 20mph gusts of wind, the race was shortened to about 1.2k, but nonetheless the girls powered their drive through the tough race conditions.

At Saratoga, six of the novice girls jumped in to the Women's JV race against UVM. Though the JV UVM boat had more experience, the Middlebury squad matched UVM in both power and will and held onto their stern throughout the race. Towards the end of the day, two novice girls joined with two varsity girls to fly through an exhilarating race against the Midd WV second four (The UVM boats scratched). By rowing three clean races without any technical, natural, or equipment disasters, the novice girls finally put the Curse of the Novice Rowing behind their wake.

For the week of training before New England’s the girls focused on lengthening their strokes—reaching for their riggers and for the stars. With newfound length, the girls finished three seconds behind Wesleyan in a close heat. Supercharged by the success of their first race and sporting rainbow bandannas, the girls poured all of their hearts into the Petit Final. Finishing in fourth place, the girls edged out Wesleyan by 6 seconds and finished within .07 seconds of UVM and .5 seconds of Wellesley. Though Wellesley and Wesleyan had edged out the novice girls in other races, the Midd novice girls eight proved that with great dedication comes great improvement.

Through crabs, skeg disappearances, raging winds, and more, the novice girls triumphed over the adversities sent forth by the Rowing Gods. Instead of hindering the team’s tremendous progress, however, these challenges allowed the girls to strengthen their rowing technique and push themselves to their limits. Poised and ready for the fall season, the novice girls will continue to persist and learn together as one.
From the first day after the conclusion of a successful fall season, the novice men’s team pushed themselves towards even greater accomplishments in the spring season. The team’s first-ever transition from the fall head races to the intensity of the two-thousand meter spring races appeared daunting initially, but everybody adapted to the change well. Coach Scott Robinson pushed the team in winter training to build up both physical fitness and mental fortitude. After the difficult, dark months of winter training, the team embarked on the spring break training trip to Georgia motivated to transition their hard work in the sweatshop into speed on the water.

The spring trip to Georgia served multiple purposes for the team. On top of being a fun way of encouraging the novice and varsity teams to get to know each other before the start of the spring season, it allowed the team to complete a full month’s worth of training in nine days. The three-a-day practices tested both the physical fitness and determination that the team worked so hard to build over winter training. The trip culminated with an exciting bronze medal at the John Hunter regatta on the 1996 Olympic rowing course. With the completion of their first 2K race the boys looked forward to finding ways to improve their rowing and towards the rest of the spring season.

The results of the novices’ commitment and the hard work of their novice coach Scott Robinson were seen in each race of the season. After every race the boys came off the water feeling as if they had given their absolute best effort. As the New England Championships loomed closer and closer, the team was faced with a difficult decision.

Middlebury has predominantly raced fours at New England Championships, but was not allowed the option of racing a second novice four this year. With eight competitive rowers deserving of the opportunity of racing, the team opted to enter into the much more competitive eights category. This is a huge step for the program as a whole, as the ultimate goal is to race eights on novice and varsity alike. The boys achieved their fastest time of the season in the championship race and although they did not finish as high as they wanted to relative to the other competitors, all members of the team were pleased with their effort and performance. With this improvement the novice men look forward to adding their names to the varsity roster next fall.
Other News…

April 25…. Rowing in Middlebury, VT

Congratulations to our seniors.

Thank you for your leadership, encouragement and friendship- we will miss you all!