

## THE SPORT OF ROWING

# To the readers of *www.row2k.com*

As I mentioned at the beginning of last month, this spring the excerpts on [www.row2k.com](http://www.row2k.com) are concentrating on the careers of two of recent American rowing history's most influential figures: **Harry Parker** and **Allen Rosenberg**. This excerpt continues with the stories of two legendary boats, the coxless-pair of Larry Hough and Tony Johnson and the 1974 U.S. Camp Men's Eight.

The following .pdf is in the format intended for the final printed book. The color you see will be duplicated in the limited collector edition. All these excerpts are from the third of the four volumes.

Incidentally, all the excerpts that have appeared on row2k during the last six months have since been revised as we work toward publication. The most recent drafts are now posted in the row2k archives.

The **limited collector edition** of my new book, *The Sport of Rowing*, from whence come all these excerpts, sold out in April in about a week. Thanks so much to all of you who have showed such faith in the book.

The paperback **standard edition** is now on sale at:

[www.row2k.com/rowingmall/](http://www.row2k.com/rowingmall/)

This edition has all the same content as the collector edition. The illustrations are in black and white, and the price is much more affordable.

Both editions will be published in October.

And remember, you can always email me anytime at:

[pmallory@rowingevolution.com](mailto:pmallory@rowingevolution.com)

Many thanks.

# THE SPORT OF ROWING

## 109. Rosenberg's 1964 Crew

### *Technique*

**Ted Nash:** "In '64, Allen definitely didn't want his guys to *pound* in. The only ones who did were the Amlongs, and he spent entire workouts trying to get them to be not exactly softer but more careful with their entry. They were *very* tough men.

"Even the young guys, Cwiklinski and Foley, were pretty good technicians, but you had Clark, Budd, Bill Knecht and Stowe. Those guys were *very* skillful, well-seasoned rowers.

"Though I myself was not a very meticulous oarsman, I always aspired to be one, but I'm afraid I mostly ran on endurance and strength.

"With Stowe's style of rowing, Al made it smoother, and I admired the detail of Allen's coaching.

"I admire very much what Allen accomplished in 1964.

### **Technique**

**Nash:** "I didn't see a huge gap between what we were doing at Lake Washington in the later years and what Vesper was doing in 1964 since we had both been influenced by Ratzeburg, even if we were not actually copying them. It was just a much stronger emphasis on back-opening by us, less by them. They probably had a little stronger finish than we had. We had a stronger beginning than they had."<sup>5039</sup>

Allen strongly disagrees:

**Rosenberg:** "I am somewhat confused by Nash's quote saying that Lake Washington and my Vesper crews were similar. I never saw that. They were, in fact, more of a bygone era in style,<sup>5040</sup> charging out of the bow and slamming the shit out of the catch. I believe that what they achieved, they did with super fitness and determination. But style and skill? Never!"<sup>5041</sup>

**Nash:** "I saw Al adapting Stowe's classic Cornell/Conibear catch to the boat. They didn't slide in. They didn't bang it in. They tried to roll it down and make a cleaner, more aggressive catch, with much more consideration for the front end to be clean and quiet. It was quite pretty."<sup>5042</sup>

Film analysis clearly reveals that while recovery rhythms diverged, Vesper and Lake Washington were actually much closer on the pullthrough than Allen realizes.

The 1964 Vesper eight used a steady recovery, the golden mean between the Courtney/Conibear/Lake Washington deceleration and the Soviet/Ratzeburg accelerated recoveries.

Bladework and body discipline was flawless, the result of Rosenberg's meticulous coaching. Boat moving skills of the individual athletes had been honed by endless practice in small boats. You rarely saw them take to the water in an eight.

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<sup>5039</sup> Nash, personal conversation, 2004

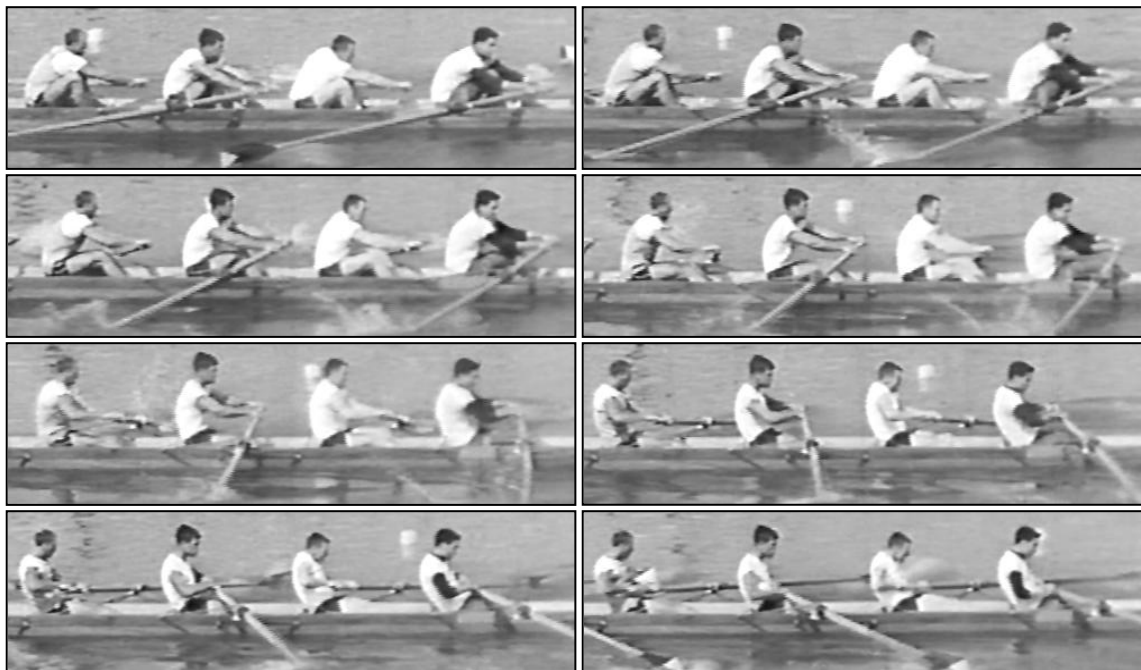
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<sup>5040</sup> See Chapter 84.

<sup>5041</sup> Rosenberg, personal conversation, 2007

<sup>5042</sup> Nash, op cit.

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



FISA 1964 Film

### Vesper Boat Club Men's Eight

1964 Olympic Champion, Toda Bashi

In practice at race pace on Toda course.

5 Emory Clark, 6 Boyce Budd, 7 Bill Knecht, stroke Bill Stowe

0°, +30° to -20°, 0-9, 0-10, 0-10

Force application was characterized by strong *Schubschlag* effort catch-to-release. Legs, backs and arms all began concurrently, but legs were strong enough to dominate early and complete their motion while the hands were still eight inches from the chest. The closest cousin to this approach was the Nash-led LWRC Technique.

When they rowed, the impression was one of *leverage*, enormous men levering the boat forward.

The personality of the boat was the creation of stroke **Bill Stowe**. Even a coach of the stature and skill of Allen Rosenberg must rely on a talented stroke to interpret and implement his vision.

Behind Stowe, the entire crew used their legs, backs and arms immediately from the entry, suspending their body weights on their handles and accelerating strongly

throughout the pullthrough.

Legs indeed dominated early on, a bit like the Cornell crews of the mid-'50s, more like the 1956 Yale Olympic crew. Backs and arms then dominated the middle of the pull and carried through all the way to the strong release.

The result was +30° to -20°, 0-9, 0-10, 0-10, similar to LWRC's +20° to -15°, 0-8, 0-10, 0-10. Lake Washington was another squad of mature American rowers responding in 1964 to the challenge of competing against Ratzeburg.

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## 110. Hough and Johnson

### *Technique – 1968 – GDR’s First Gold Medal*

After Vesper’s win at the 1964 Olympics and the emergence of Harvard at the top of American collegiate rowing, no American crew was left unaffected by the example of Parker or Rosenberg or both, and perhaps as a result, the era of American dominance in international rowing fast came to a close. In Klagenfurt, Austria in 1969, the American men’s coxless-pair of **Larry Hough** and **Tony Johnson** won their second straight European Championship, but it would be forty more years before a U.S. men’s or women’s coxless-pair won even a single FISA Gold Medal.

On one level, these two men, products of the 1960s, formed the last great boat of the Conibear Era.

Stanford University had produced the American coxed-pair entry in every Olympics between 1952 and 1964 and the coxless-pair in 1956, yielding one Bronze and three Gold Medals. **Larry Hough** rowed under Stanford Coach **Will Condon**. Stanford at that time reflected the influence of **Conn Findlay** and his mentor, **Stan Pocock** at **Lake Washington Rowing Club** during its glory days of the late 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>5043</sup>

**Tony Johnson** learned to row under legendary coach **Charlie Butt** at Washington-Lee High School in the Washington, DC suburbs. He then rowed under **Loren Schoel** at Syracuse University.

Schoel had been a member of the 1930 **University of Washington** Varsity that

placed a sixth in Poughkeepsie. It was that disappointing performance which had prompted UW coaches Al Ulbrickson and Tom Bolles to rethink the 1<sup>st</sup> Generation Conibear Stroke with the guidance of **George Pocock**.<sup>5044</sup> Schoel descended to the Jayvee in 1931 and rose back into the Varsity in 1932 as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation Conibear Stroke evolved around him.<sup>5045</sup>

Before moving to Syracuse, Schoel coached the 1954 Cornell Freshman crew stroked by **Phil Gravink** that formed the nucleus of Stork Sanford’s four-year run of Cornell IRA Championships from 1955 to 1958.

### **International Experience**

Tony Johnson graduated from Syracuse in 1962. Returning to the DC area, he and fellow Syracuse grad **Jim Edmonds** represented Potomac Boat Club in the coxless-pair at the **1964** Olympics. They were eliminated in the repêchages.

In **1965**, Johnson moved up to Philadelphia to row for the coach of the hour, **Allen Rosenberg**. Tony rowed 4-seat in Vesper’s European Championship Bronze Medal eight.<sup>5046</sup>

Larry Hough graduated from Stanford in **1966** and that summer was a member of **Kent Mitchell**’s Stanford coxed-four at the

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<sup>5043</sup> See Chapter 83 ff.

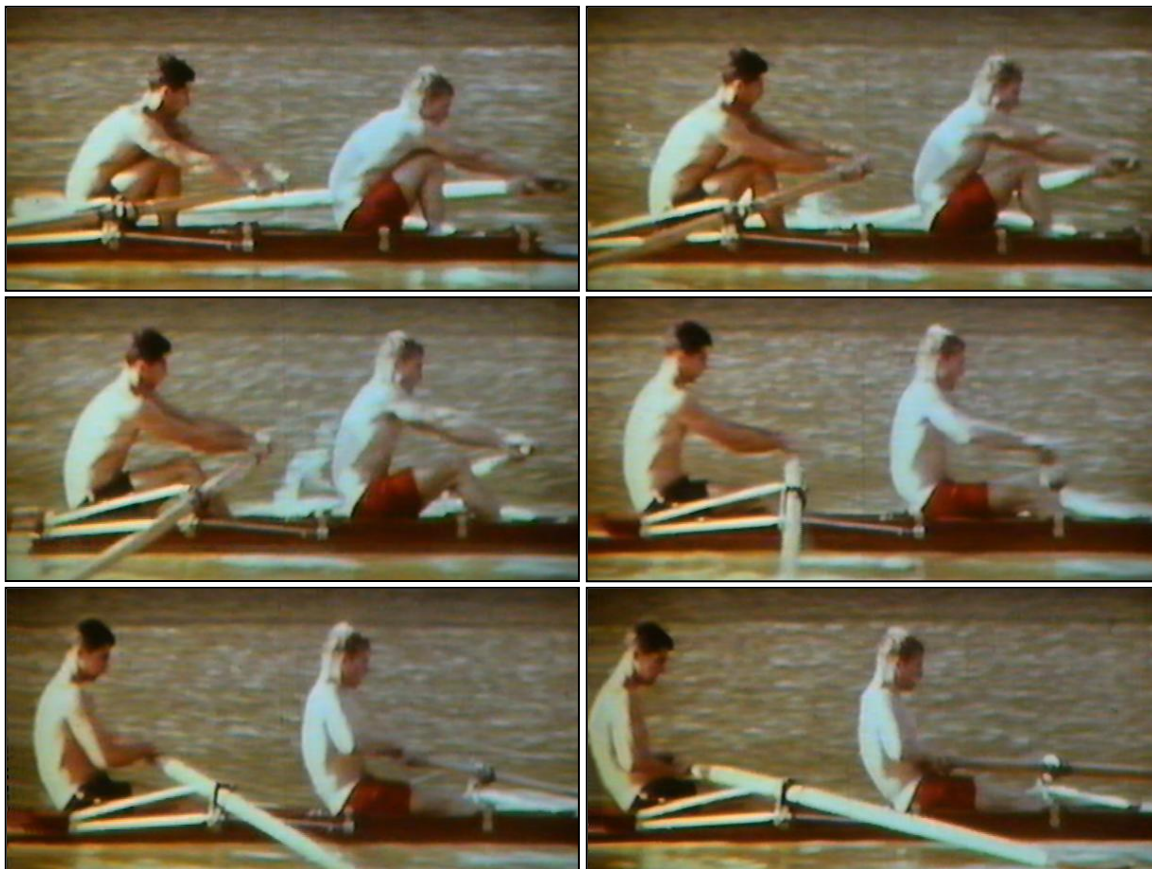
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<sup>5044</sup> See Chapter 45.

<sup>5045</sup> See Chapter 59.

<sup>5046</sup> See Chapter 112.

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



John Van Blom

### United States Men's Coxless-Pair

1967 and 1969 European Champion

Bow **Tony Johnson** 6'3" 191 cm 190 lb. 86 kg, Stroke **Larry Hough** 6'2" 188 cm 190 lb. 86 kg

0°, +35° to -15°, 0-10, 0-10, 0-10, Ratzeburg Style

Steady pressure, steady acceleration from catch to release.

U.S. Championships in Philadelphia. They finished fourth behind New Zealand, Australia and Union Boat Club, and then when Kent Mitchell formed a composite crew for the World Championships in Bled, Yugoslavia, Larry rowed bow. They won their semi-final but placed only sixth in the final.<sup>5047</sup>

In 1967, Hough and Johnson got together in a coxless-pair. They immediately won the Pan Am Games in

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada and the European Championships in Vichy, France.

**Larry Hough:** "For what it's worth, boat speed in a pair is achieved within a few workouts. If you don't have it, you have to get by on conditioning and a non-finals international expectation. With it, you can go a long ways."<sup>5048</sup>

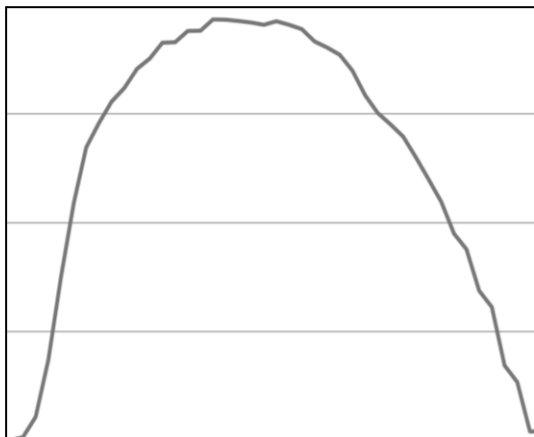
Training partner **Tom McKibbin** of Long Beach Rowing Association<sup>5049</sup>: "I don't think it was a very sensitive boat in

<sup>5047</sup> See Chapter 102.

<sup>5048</sup> Hough, personal correspondence, 2007

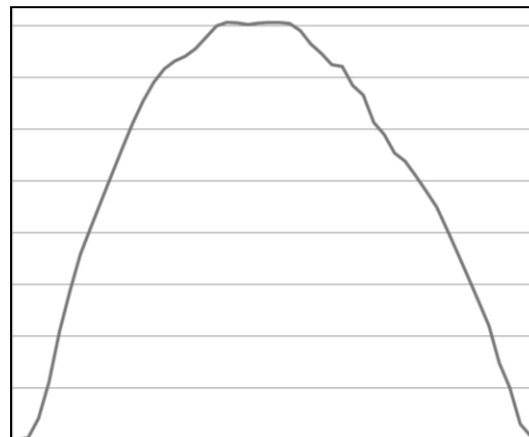
<sup>5049</sup> See Chapter 88.

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Author

**Larry Hough**



Author

**Tony Johnson**

### **Parabolas - *Schubschlag***

Slight emphasis on the front half by stroke-seat Hough is typical in coxless-pairs because the bow-seat has a leverage advantage at the entry.

terms of feeling the water and balance and everything. They were just very, very compatible and very strong, mentally and physically, powerful men. We couldn't have asked for a better set of circumstances to train, to prepare for that level.<sup>5050</sup>

### **Technique**

Both Hough and Johnson were firmly grounded in the Conibear Classical Technique tradition. Their technique had evolved beyond that of 1956 Olympic Champions **Fifer and Hecht**,<sup>5051</sup> who, like Hough, had also emerged from the Stanford/Lake Washington milieu. Whereas the earlier pair had a strong measure of verticality in their back swing, the later pair was a bit more horizontal, in the manner of Coach **Allen Rosenberg**, who had had a profound effect on Tony during 1965.

Rhythm, however, was neither Conibear nor Rosenberg. It was **Ratzeburg Style**. Hough and Johnson integrated 1960s

international innovation with their firm foundation in the American Conibear tradition and the attention to horizontality that Johnson had learned from Allen Rosenberg. Their recovery began with a slight hesitation and then picked up speed consistently to the entry. Tony had seen accelerated recoveries in Soviet, Italian and West German crews at the 1964 Olympics and in Harry Parker's Harvard crews beginning in 1965, but it was Karl Adam who combined slow-fast recoveries with ticking the boat along at high ratings without attempting to send the boat at the finish. This was this rhythm that Hough and Johnson followed.

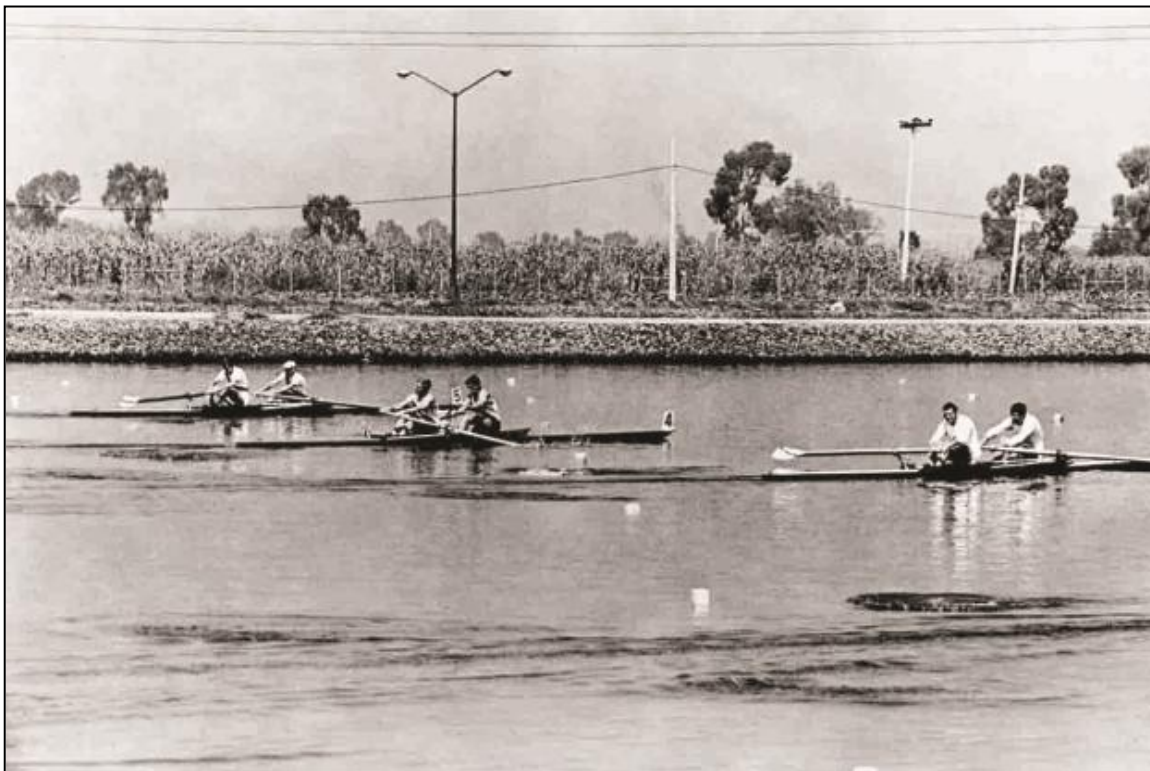
The pullthrough of Hough and Johnson was smooth, concurrent *Schubschlag* with minimal layback, no emphasis on the entry and no noticeable acceleration, again similar to that of Ratzeburg.

**Hough:** "Tony and I received a good bit of coaching support from **Harry Parker**, **Stan Pocock** and **Charlie Butt**. Charlie was on hand at Potomac Boat Club and joined us for a workout every three or four

<sup>5050</sup> McKibbon, personal correspondence, 2007

<sup>5051</sup> See Chapter 81.

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



*Official Report XIX Olympiad*

### 1968 Olympic Men's Coxless-Pairs Semi-Final 2

Xochimilco

1 **USA** 7:21.50, 2 **DEN** 7:24.98, 3 **GDR** 7:32.16, 4 **FRA** 7:43.79, 5 **HUN** 7:45.73, 6 **FRG** 7:53.06

Photo shows Denmark, USA and GDR stroking easy during the first 1,000.

weeks in our first year. He also filmed us regularly – Super-8 was the medium of that era. These films were copied and sent to Harry and Stan for review. Every two or three months we would have a phone call with Harry and Stan (separately) and then talk over amongst ourselves what we had heard.

“It might sound like a somewhat self-serving comment, but notwithstanding, Tony and I adopted a training program and a rowing style of our own making, though to this day we would both be quick to credit what we learned or adopted from Stan, Harry, Conn Findlay, and Dietrich Rose.

“There was no third party guidance in the launch or on the shore directing daily

training or developing the style. In short, trial and error was the track, augmented by two individual personalities who greatly respected the insight and contribution of the other. That was little different than the self-directed approaches of others of that era, e.g. Conn Findlay, Don Spero, Cromwell and Storm, Von Blom and McKibbon, and perhaps Nash and his mates.<sup>5052,5053</sup>

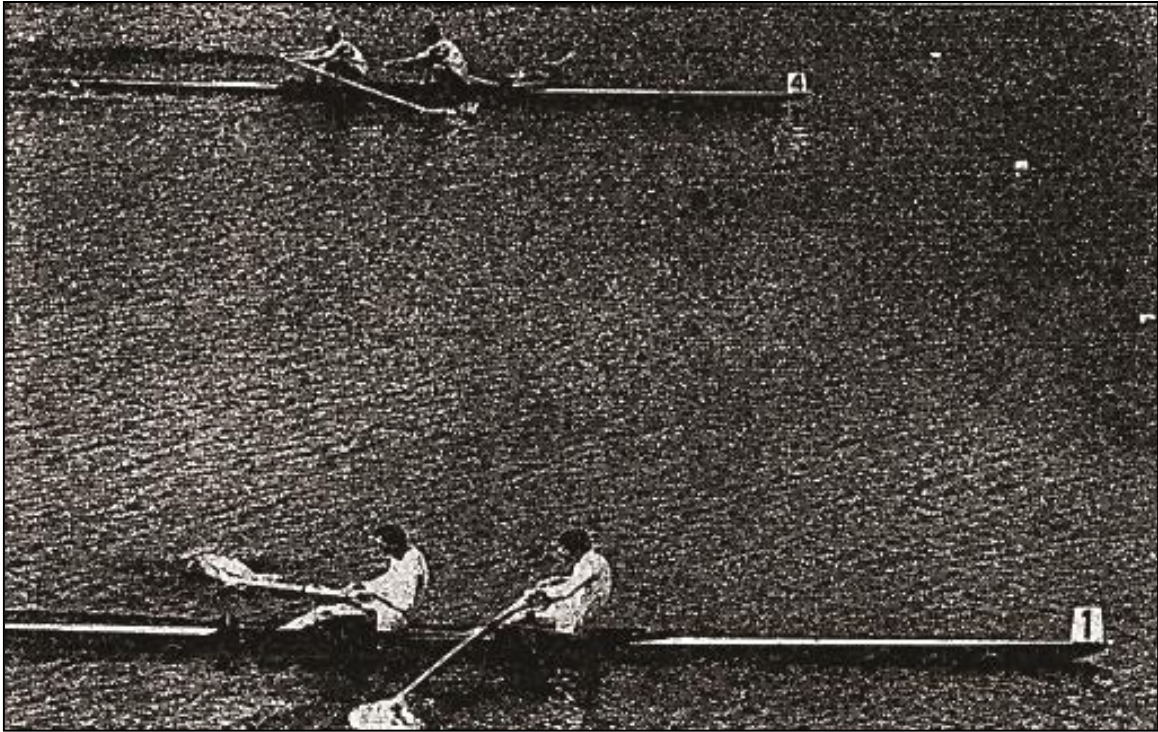
### Mexico City

In 1968, Hough and Johnson arrived at the high-altitude Xochimilco course as the

<sup>5052</sup> See Chapters 82, 84, 85, 87 and 88.

<sup>5053</sup> Hough, personal correspondence, 2011

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*United Press International*

### 1968 Olympic Men's Coxless-Pairs Final Xochimilco

With 11 meters to go (note 10m buoys, upper right), it appeared that the Americans were still ahead.

heavy favorites to add Olympic Gold to their 1967 European and Pan Am Championships.

In each of the three heats, there was open water between first and second, and more importantly between second, who advanced, and everybody else, who went to the repêchages. The Dutch won the first heat in 7:14.50, the Austrians the second in 7:31.29 and the Americans the third in 7:19.92.

**Hough:** “When we were training at altitude prior to the Olympics, we never did a 2,000 meter piece because we never *did* 2,000 meter pieces in practice. We never wanted to know what it felt like, so the qualifying heat in Mexico City was an

awakening because we finally had to figure out we had to pace ourselves.”<sup>5054</sup>

The talk of the regatta course was the potential impact of the high altitude on the athletes. Several crews had blacked out during the preliminaries, and the Americans intended to begin their remaining races conservatively in order to finish strong.

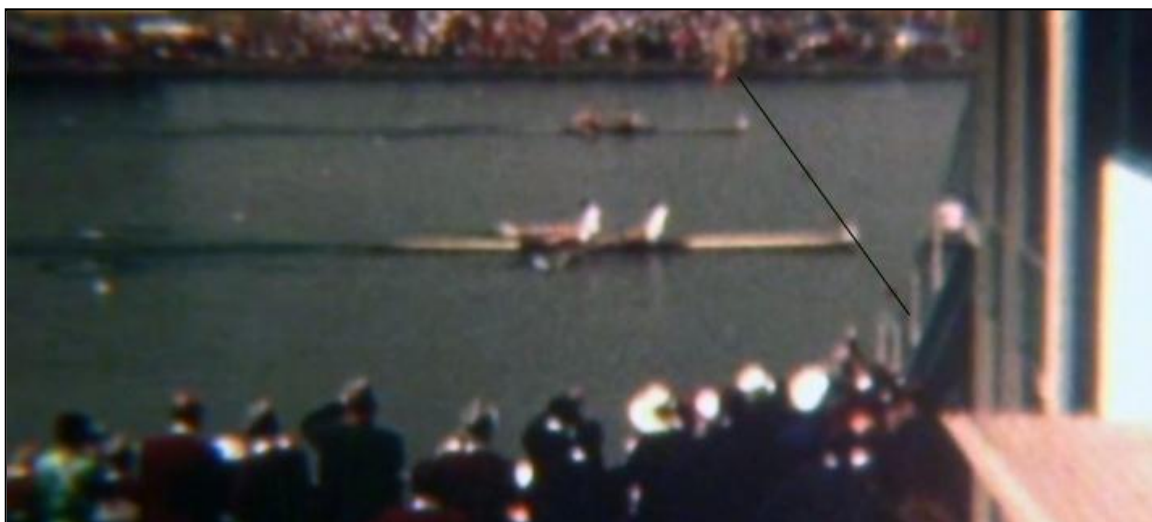
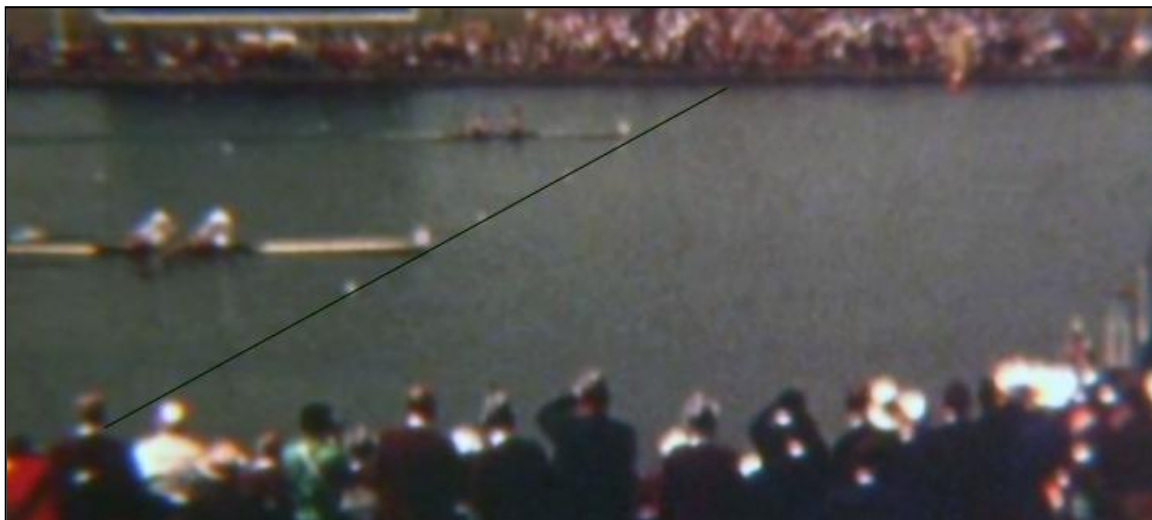
The first of the two semi-finals was the most competitive, with first through fourth overlapping and only three to qualify. The Dutch won, followed by Austria and Switzerland. Australia, second to the U.S. in the opening heat, failed to make the final by half a length.

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<sup>5054</sup> Hough, personal conversation, 2009



## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



Santiago García González

### 1968 Olympic Men's Coxless-Pairs Final Xochimilco

Film of the last few strokes taken by FISA President Thomi Keller reveals that when the U.S. pair crossed the buoy line 10 meters from the finish, the GDR crew had already taken the lead by centimeters.

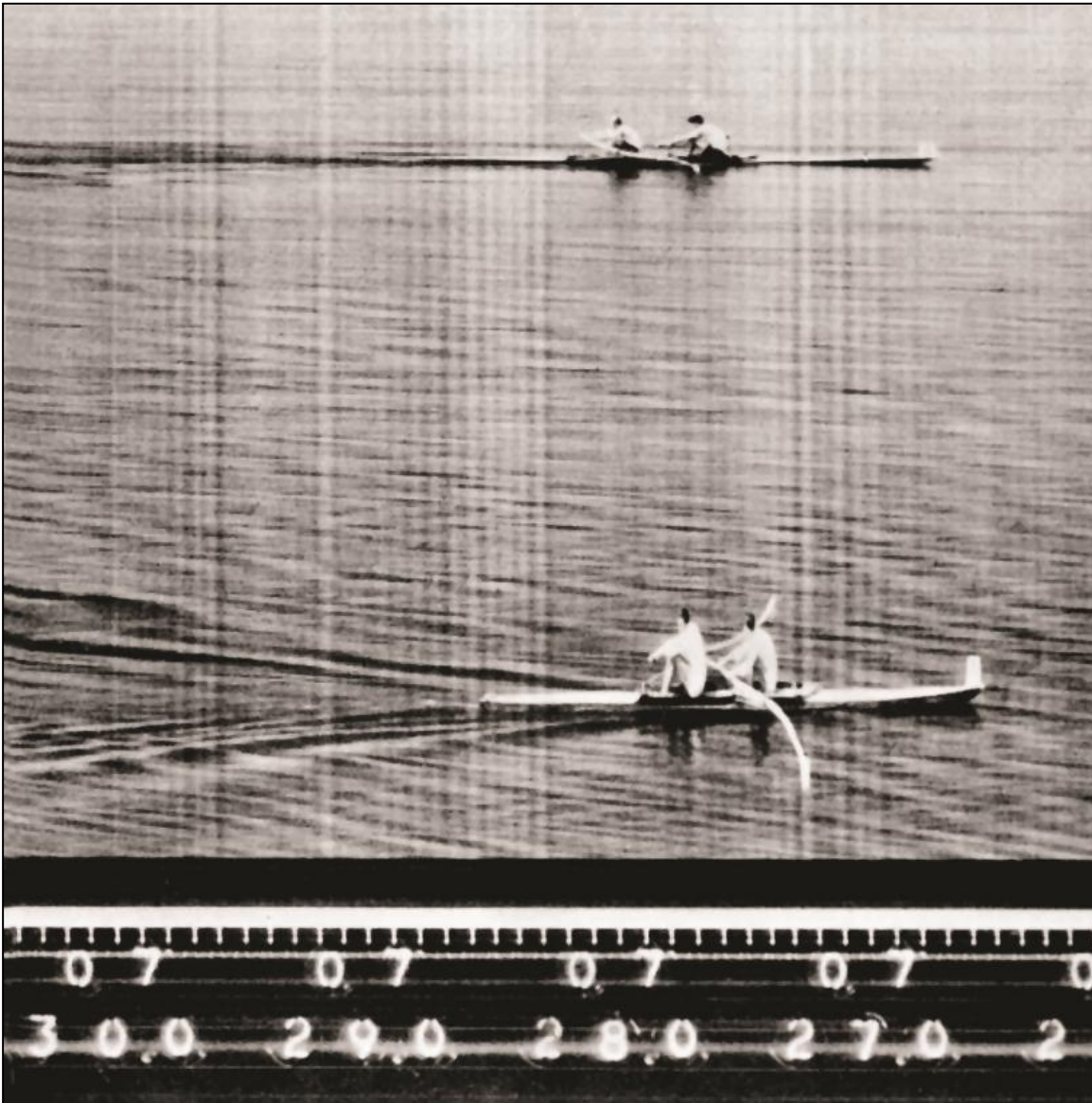
In the second semi-final, the eventual qualifiers were never pressed. Hough and Johnson won by open water over Denmark with GDR cruising open water astern, guaranteed of a place in the final since the French ended up a further eleven seconds adrift.

**Hough:** "In the semi-final, we paced ourselves rather effectively.

"The night before the final, Harry Parker came by our room and asked if we were worried about East Germany, and we said, 'No. We beat them twice in Holland,' [earlier in the summer] and we had beaten them decisively.

"We were actually worried about the Dutch because they had beaten us at Lucerne on a day in which we flew in on

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*Official Report XIX Olympiad*

### 1968 Olympic Men's Coxless-Pairs Final

finish line photo

1 GDR 7:26.56, 2 USA 7:26.71, 3 DEN 7:31.84, 4 AUT 7:41.80, 5 SUI 7:49.79, 6 NED DNF

Friday afternoon and raced on Saturday. We got beat by a couple of seconds, I think. We were second.

“They were a big crew [Stroke **Roelof Luynenberg**, Laga Delft, 6’8” 203cm 190lb. 86kg, Bow **Rudolf Stokvis**, Aegir Groningen, 6’3” 190cm 192lb. 87kg], and

after Lucerne when we went to the Holland Beker Regatta and beat the East Germans on back-to-back days, the Dutch didn’t show up to race.”<sup>5055</sup>

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<sup>5055</sup> Hough, op cit.

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In the 1968 Olympic final, the Swiss *really* jumped the start, followed by the Dutch and then the rest of the field. The U.S. was last off the line, nearly half a length down by the end of the second stroke.

**Hough:** “We had a good race, a typical Hough/Johnson race. We had a good first 500, and the last three 500s were probably dead even with each other. We moved on everybody in the middle 1,000.

“We were in Lane 4, and we were really focused on Austria in Lane 5 and the Dutch in Lane 3. The East Germans were in Lane 1, pretty much out of visual sight.”<sup>5056</sup>

Heading towards the 1,000, the Austrians in Lane 5 led narrowly over the GDR crew in Lane 1 with the Danes in Lane 2 a third of a length, the Americans half a length and the Dutch a full length adrift. All were rowing between 30 and 32.

**Rowing News:** “Although slow off the start, [the Americans] were fourth at the halfway mark, and moved into the lead at the 1,500-meter mark.”<sup>5057</sup>

**Hough:** “With about 250 to go, the Dutch literally collapsed and didn’t finish the race, and I think there were probably two or three strokes where, with a big sigh of relief and comfortably ahead of the Austrians, I said, ‘My God, we won the Gold Medal!’ That might have made the difference.

“And then Tony said, ‘The East Germans are in Lane 1.’



[www.rrk-online.de](http://www.rrk-online.de)

### TSC Berlin Men’s Coxless-Pair

1968 Olympic Champion, Xochimilco

Stroke **Heinz-Jürgen Bothe** 6’5” 195cm 201lb. 91kg,

Bow **Jörg Lucke** 6’4” 193cm 201lb. 91kg

“I hadn’t paid any attention to them. I’ve been told since that they were sort of even with us all the way down the course. Didn’t know it.”<sup>5058</sup>

**Rowing News:** “The American pair poured it on and had open water with 150 meters to go. Somehow, in the last strokes of the race, the pair of **Jörg Lucke** and **Heinz Jürgen Bothe** [from TSC Berlin] of the German Democratic Republic put on a desperate sprint.

“In the rarified high-altitude air of Mexico City, it took remarkable effort. Lucke and Bothe’s finishing kick closed the open water with the Americans and then some. With ten meters to go the two boats were even, but the East Germans had the momentum. At the finish line they nipped the Americans by 0.15 seconds.”<sup>5059</sup>

**Hough:** “We sprinted and pretty much went stroke for stroke, and it may have been just the situation of whose oar was at the strong point of the stroke when we crossed the line.”<sup>5060</sup>

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<sup>5056</sup> Hough, op cit.

<sup>5057</sup> Xavier Macia, [The Continuing Legacy of East Germany’s Rowing Machine](#), *Rowing News*, October 2005, p. 48

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<sup>5058</sup> Hough, op cit.

<sup>5059</sup> Macia, op cit.

<sup>5060</sup> Hough, op cit.

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Carol Simpson Sanoff

### 1969 European Championship Men's Coxless-Pairs Final

Wörthersee, Klagenfurt, Austria

1 **USA** 7:03.32, 2 **GDR** 7:05.15, 3 **POL** 7:07.40, 4 **ITA** 7:11.26, 5 **AUT** 7:12.47, 6 **SUI** 7:12.74

Recently discovered film taken by Thomi Keller and never developed shows that the Americans made a real race of it to the very end. Between eleven and ten meters to go they lost the lead, but the margin had grown to only perhaps two feet or half a meter by the finish. In their final strokes, they had nearly equaled the ending speed of their opponents.

At the high altitude of Xochimilco, it was an extraordinary effort on the part of both crews. The Danes captured Bronze, more than two lengths back, while the Austrians and Swiss could only limp over the line and the Dutch were forced to abandon.

**John Van Blom**, the 1968 U.S. Single sculler: "Hough and Johnson had won the Europeans in 1967 by a huge amount of open water. In Mexico City, I think they

went too hard too early for the altitude. The East Germans knew how to train for altitude, but there wasn't anybody in the United States who knew how to do it right.

"Larry Hough had gone to prep school with one of the Coors kids, so they and I went and stayed at a little Coors family fishing cabin on Williams Fork Reservoir<sup>5061</sup> after my Trials but before theirs. Later we also trained in Gunnison, Colorado with the rest of the American team, so I think we were at altitude too long. You plateau off after a couple of weeks, and then you're losing conditioning, because you can't work as hard.

"Looking back on it, the whole U.S. Team didn't train properly for altitude. We kept doing lots of sprint work like you do at sea level, and it was just agonizing. Now

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<sup>5061</sup> Near Parshall, Colorado.

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when people train at altitude, they do a lot of steady state.”<sup>5062</sup>

**Hough:** “One humorous memory. I got pulled in for the drug test, and so did the Austrian kid I knew pretty well. We were sitting in the tent together, and he couldn’t pee. Somebody brought us a six-pack of beer, so we sat around drinking beer, and I didn’t have any trouble performing after that. Early days of drug testing.”<sup>5063</sup>

### Revolutionary Boundary

The pairs race on Xochimilco represented a crossing of a revolutionary boundary<sup>5064</sup> in world rowing, the first Olympic Gold Medal for the German Democratic Republic. As we shall soon see, GDR in 1968 was on the threshold of a new era in rowing and a new era in sport. Larry Hough and Tony Johnson were the last champion American crew to row some version of the Ratzeburg Style.

In 1969, they rebounded from their heartbreaking loss in Mexico City to win their second European Championship on the Wörthersee in Klagenfurt, Austria.

**Hough:** “The following year, the Mexico City Gold Medal [Einheit Dresden] straight-four, the premier East German boat of that era which would go undefeated from 1966 to 1972, one of the guys in that crew got injured, so two of them [Stroke **Frank Forberger** 6’3” 190cm 192lb. 87kg, Bow **Dieter Grahn** 6’2” 189cm 190lb. 86kg] raced us in the straight-pair in 1969.

“In the Klagenfurt race, which was our last race together, we were five seconds ahead at the 1,000 meter mark, and beat them by a half length without any sprint. I think that was sort of a redeeming sea level

race for us. I had my four-month-old baby with me, and it was a really nice end to the relationship I had with Tony for those three years.

“I’m glad we stayed at it one more year. It was pretty disappointing after Mexico City.”<sup>5065</sup>

The 1969 regatta was especially satisfying for Hough and Johnson because they shared the top of the podium with **Tom McKibbon** and **John Van Blom**, winners there of the men’s double.<sup>5066</sup>

**McKibbon:** “In 1967, I think that they were the greatest pair ever, when you think about winning the Pan Ams by twenty-some seconds and winning the Europeans by like eleven seconds. *Nobody* wins the Europeans by eleven seconds!”<sup>5067</sup>

**Hough:** “That was probably about as big a margin as they ever had in the Europeans, which is now the Worlds. I think it was because there was a fierce headwind. If I recall, that race was about a 7:45 headwind race, which back then the pair was about a 7:00 race. I think now it’s in the 6:40s.”<sup>5068</sup>

**Van Blom:** “I had first met Tony when we raced them at the ‘64 Trials on Hunter Island Lagoon,<sup>5069</sup> and he helped us out. He was our competitor, but he was a great guy. He lent us his car to pick up our boat at the airport.”<sup>5070</sup>

**Tony Johnson:** “John Van Blom and I competed and trained together a lot through those years, and we became great friends while we were at it. That was easy to do. John is a really great guy.”<sup>5071</sup>

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<sup>5062</sup> John Van Blom, personal conversation, 2008

<sup>5063</sup> Hough, op cit.

<sup>5064</sup> See Introduction.

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<sup>5065</sup> Hough, op cit.

<sup>5066</sup> See Chapter 88.

<sup>5067</sup> McKibbon, personal conversation, 2007

<sup>5068</sup> Hough, op cit.

<sup>5069</sup> See Chapter 88.

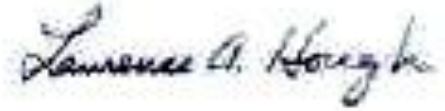
<sup>5070</sup> John Van Blom, op cit.

<sup>5071</sup> Johnson, personal correspondence, 2007

## THE SPORT OF ROWING

Tony Johnson served as head coach at Yale from 1969 to 1989, and has been head coach at Georgetown University since 1990.

Larry Hough still competes in masters' regattas.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lawrence A. Hough".A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tony Johnson".

# THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

## 111. Rosenberg's 1974 Crew

*1973 Predecessor – Technique – 1974*



*Oarsman Magazine*

### 1974 World Championship Heavyweight Men's Eights Final Rotsee

United States Heavyweight Men's Eight (background)  
6 Dick Cashin, 5 Mark Norelius, 4 Mike Vespoli

Allen Rosenberg: "Cashin shows near perfect rowing."

Allen Rosenberg's 1964 crew had accomplished an extraordinary thing. Between 1959 and 1968, **Ratzeburg** was only beaten twice in a FISA Championship

eights final, once by Italy in 1961 and then by Vesper in 1964.<sup>5072</sup>

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<sup>5072</sup> Allen Rosenberg: "I believe that Ratzeburg was beaten in Lucerne in 1962 in an opening heat for the European Championships and came back to win. Adam was quoted as saying he

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Allen's 1974 crew also accomplished an extraordinary thing. By the 1970s, world rowing was completely dominated by the **German Democratic Republic**,<sup>5073</sup> indeed far more than it had been by Karl Adam. Between 1969 and the 1980 Olympics, the GDR men's eight was only beaten three times in world competition, twice by New Zealand in 1971 and 1972, and once by the U.S. in Lucerne in 1974.

*The Oarsman*: "[That year,] after an elimination heat described by Thomi Keller as 'the greatest eight race I've ever seen,' **Mike Vespoli**, number 4, in great exultation exclaimed, 'After all these years, for the first time I've beaten the East Germans!'

"MIT sophomore **John Everett**, number 3, having just finished his first international race, quietly replied, 'I've never lost to them.'"<sup>5074</sup>

### 1973

However, the story of this 1974 crew actually began in Moscow in 1973, when the U.S. Camp crew was coached by **Steve Gladstone**, then Lightweight Varsity Coach at Harvard University.<sup>5075</sup>

**Larry Gluckman**, 2-seat: "I think that we were a reasonably fast crew. There were three Northeastern guys in the boat: me, **Bill Miller** and **Calvin Coffey**. And then **Al Shealy** [Harvard] and **Mike Vespoli** [Georgetown grad, Vesper] and **Hugh Stevenson** [Penn, Vesper] and **Ken Brown** [Cornell] and **Timmy Mickelson** [Wisconsin] and **Paul Hoffman** [Harvard grad] as coxswain. They were *great* guys, and we seemed to get along.

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wanted them to find themselves." – personal correspondence, 2007

<sup>5073</sup> See Chapter 119.

<sup>5074</sup> *Lucerne Odyssey Oddities*, *The Oarsman*, November/December 1974

<sup>5075</sup> See Chapter 105.

"Shealy<sup>5076</sup> was at Shealy's very *best* in both his stroking and his leadership and his off-the-water humor. His quips and jokes covered a wide range of people and actions, but when it came to practice or racing, he was always on task and demanding of himself and the crew.

"It was a very interesting period, and Gladstone was *young!* There wasn't much age difference between the oldest guys, and I was one of the oldest at twenty-seven, and Steve at thirty-one."<sup>5077</sup>

Stroke-seat **Al Shealy**: "Rowing for Steve Gladstone was an opportunity to learn first-hand the vicissitudes that can frustrate the melding of different coaching and rowing techniques, as well as the problems of assimilating off-the-wall personalities.

"Steve's famous line, 'I hate to see a good crew paddle,' proved to be the send-up for a wacky but ultimately disappointing summer. We were never allowed to paddle away from the dock or rest easy after a twenty-mile row. We always had to be at least at quarter pressure. As a wet-behind-the-ears nineteen-year-old, I was mainly amused by this, but it was the more wizened vets like Mike Vespoli who continually cut us up with their derisive take-offs of this command.

"We never came together as a cohesive unit, and it proved to be disastrous in the finals in Moscow, when Thomi Keller and the big wigs at FISA decided to hold the races in a 20-knot crosswind. Every final was won by a crew in the leeward lanes, whereas we were caught out in the fiercest of windborne waves and fell apart under the stress and unfairness of it all."<sup>5078</sup>

**Gluckman**: "We shared a changing room with the New Zealand pair [Noell Mills and Wybo Veldman. See Chapter 120.] who had led at the 1,000 and ended up

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<sup>5076</sup> See Chapter 104.

<sup>5077</sup> Gluckman, personal conversation, 2007

<sup>5078</sup> Shealy, personal correspondence, 2005



## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

losing by open water, and they came in and just were aghast.”<sup>5079</sup>

**Bill Miller**, 4-seat: “We were all sitting there, and the New Zealand pair comes in very, *very* upset at how terribly unfair the course was, how much the course favored the Lane 1 side. Meanwhile, we’re thinking, ‘We’ve got Lane 5 . . .’”<sup>5080</sup>

**Tim Mickelson**, 7-seat: “It was a screamer in ‘73, but quite honestly, the wind was no different than the wind we had in ‘72. I just don’t think the team handled it as well psychologically.”<sup>5081</sup>

**Cal Coffey**, bow-seat: “The East Germans were all the way over to our left [Lane 1], and it was a strong quartering headwind, but we got beat by the Russians, too, and they were on our right [Lane 6], as I remember.”<sup>5082</sup>

**Miller**: “I have to give all the credit in the world to the Russians for medaling from the worst lane.”<sup>5083</sup>

**Gluckman**: “There were two things about that year that were just *hard!* Number one, I think it was the longest length of time that an American crew had spent in Europe. We stayed in Ratzeburg for six weeks or something. It was a *very* hard trip. Each of us gave up a hell of a lot, and expectations were high.

“Second, with **Al Shealy** and **Calvin Coffey**, we had two very strong personalities in that boat. Coffey beat Shealy twice [in seat racing], but Steve never, *ever* gave Calvin the opportunity to stroke.

“Not once, not in a four, not in an eight. Never! Calvin rowed behind me, either in 2 or bow depending on how the boat was rigged. It was *very* interesting.”<sup>5084</sup>

**Coffey**: “After what happened in 1972, Harry still wasn’t a big fan of mine, and he still had a lot of influence because Gladstone was still coaching at Harvard. Steve was given all the data from ‘72, and Harry visited Hanover more than once. The two of them worked pretty close together even though Harry was officially at arm’s length.

“Gladstone would often tell us, ‘You know, you guys are doing the same workouts, the same time trials, the same pieces as they did last year, and you guys are *faster!*’

“And I believe we were. That was an extremely fast boat. We just didn’t put it all together in that final.”<sup>5085</sup>

**Mickelson**: “The ‘73 boat was probably one of the faster boats I’ve ever been in, but it wasn’t a racer.”<sup>5086</sup>

**Miller**: “The boat was bloody *fast*, and it was fast *in Moscow!* The Russians didn’t know what hit them in the heats. There were no mistakes in coaching or training. There may have been strong personalities in the boat, but we were very cohesive and got along well.”<sup>5087</sup>

“The final was a disaster. The first stroke was poor, and it never came together. I didn’t take one good stroke in the entire race.”<sup>5088</sup>

**Coffey**: “That final was into a *strong* headwind, and I remember being up in the bow of that boat. We took that start, and it was high, and it was hard, and I took forty of the hardest strokes I had ever taken in my life. I make it a point not to look out of the boat, but my peripheral vision didn’t even pick up the East German crew, and I was in the *bow*. I had to crank around, and those bastards already had a length lead on us. I don’t know what the hell they did in that

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<sup>5079</sup> Gluckman, op cit.

<sup>5080</sup> Miller, personal conversation, 2007

<sup>5081</sup> Mickelson, personal conversation, 2005

<sup>5082</sup> Coffey, personal conversation, 2007

<sup>5083</sup> Miller, op cit.

<sup>5084</sup> Gluckman, op cit.

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<sup>5085</sup> Coffey, op cit.

<sup>5086</sup> Mickelson, op cit.

<sup>5087</sup> Miller, op cit.

<sup>5088</sup> Miller, personal correspondence, 2010

## THE SPORT OF ROWING



Larry Gluckman

### 1973 Heidelberg Internationale Regatta

United States, Winner of the Martini Achter Race

Bow **Larry Gluckman** 6'1" 185cm 200lb. 91 kg, 2 **Calvin Coffey** 6'2" 188cm 201lb. 91kg,  
3 **Hugh Matheson** (GBR) 6'5" 196cm 198lb. 90kg, 4 **Mike Vespoli** 6'5" 196cm 198lb. 90kg,  
5 **Hugh Stevenson** 6'4" 193cm 201lb. 91kg, 6 **Terry Adams**,  
7 **Tim Mickelson** 6'3" 191cm 187lb. 85kg, Stroke **Ken Brown** 6'2" 188cm 195lb. 88kg,  
Coxswain **Paul Hoffman**

first forty, but whatever it was, we sure *didn't!*"<sup>5089</sup>

The wind was raking the stake boats at the start, and there is some indication that the U.S. bow had been blown toward Lane 6 and coxswain **Paul Hoffman**'s hand was up when the starting command was given. If so, the first several strokes would have been negotiated at full rudder to avoid collision with the Soviet crew beside them.

**Coffey**: "It was a struggle all the way down, and I *did* have the feeling that we got off on the wrong foot and were just kind of spinning, you know, a very high rating that wasn't very effective into a headwind.

"That's one of those things that once you start down that road, you can't change it. You can't change gears in the middle,

and they don't make those races best out of three."<sup>5090</sup>

**Mickelson**: "Obviously, the biggest difference in '73 was that in '72 and '74 we had good team chemistry. It wasn't that guys didn't pull hard, but it helps in the tough times to have a group that knows each other and trusts each other.

"That later evolved in '74. Of the two Harvard guys, **Al Shealy** was in his second year, but he still wanted to prove himself, and **Dick Cashin** had been a spare in '73, although he and his partner were actually faster than the pair that raced in Moscow, so *he* wanted to prove that he should have been in the boat all along, which he probably should have."<sup>5091</sup>

**Hugh Stevenson**, 5-seat: "Cashin definitely should have been in the Moscow

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<sup>5089</sup> Coffey, op cit.

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<sup>5090</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5091</sup> Mickelson, op cit.

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

eight. We would have had a more powerful flow and probably would have won some color of medal. The **Russians** won Bronze from Lane 6, and we hammered them in the opening heats – so much so that the Russian crowd whistled at their losing eight as we finished. The **Czechs** took Silver, and we beat them up in a pickup eight stroked by **Kenny Brown** in Heidelberg not even ten days later.<sup>5092</sup>

### The Martini Achter

**Mickelson**: “A bunch of us of us went on and won the ‘Martini Achter’ race in Heidelberg and got a new boat out of it, and that certainly helped us the following year.

“Shealy didn’t go, and he regretted it later. **Kenny Brown** stroked it, and I ended up in 7. We had *such* a good time.”<sup>5093</sup>

**Gluckman**: “Dietrich Rose said, ‘Let’s put a boat together and go to Heidelberg and race for the Martini Achter.’

“He grabbed a whole bunch of different guys. We borrowed a boat that looked like a piece of crap, yet the boatman said, ‘This boat is fast!’

“It was a banana hull, but the boat *was* fast.”<sup>5094</sup>

**Coffey**: “The boat we raced in there was borrowed from one of the clubs on the river, and it had a *lot* of camber to it. Back in those days when I raced I was 205-210 [93-95kg], but I think I was out of the water in the bow of that thing.

“And because of all that camber, it was like riding a hobby horse up there, but obviously we made it work.”<sup>5095</sup>

**Gluckman**: “Everybody wanted to win this beautiful Empacher wooden boat. It was like a piece of furniture. The Norwegians entered with all their scullers,

and we ended up winning. We crossed the line, and the Norwegians said, ‘Good row, America . . . and God Bless the Queen’ because they knew one of our borrowed rowers, **Hugh Matheson**, was a Brit.

**Stevenson**: “Hugh Matheson, a lowland Scot from Hawick, is a longtime friend of mine. We had both lived at St. Elmo’s Club along Locust Walk while he was studying at the University of Pennsylvania

“He had been World Champion in the junior eight from Eton in 1967 or 1968, I think. He was an Oxford Blue, multiple winner at Henley and multiple member of Britain’s National and Olympic crews. He later rowed 5 in GB’s ‘76 Silver Medal Olympic Eight and won the Diamond Sculls in 1979.”<sup>5096</sup>

“We had all been in Moscow together, and the Dietrich trip to Heidelberg promised too much fun to resist. This transpired ‘cause we were all so very frustrated by the mendacity of the FISA officials officiating in Crylatskoye, the Moscow Olympic course.”<sup>5097,5098</sup>

**Gluckman**: “After the race, we rowed the new boat off the dock about a hundred meters upstream and two hundred meters downstream, and it was rock solid. **Rock** solid!

“We gave the Empacher oars to Dietrich. We gave the boat to the National Rowing Federation, and the next year the U.S. rowed that same boat to the World Championship.”<sup>5099</sup>

### 1974

**Mickelson**: “Allen Rosenberg came along in ‘74. Here was a new coach, and

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<sup>5092</sup> Stevenson, personal correspondence, 2006

<sup>5093</sup> Mickelson, op cit.

<sup>5094</sup> Gluckman, op cit.

<sup>5095</sup> Coffey, op cit.

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<sup>5096</sup> He also beat Peter-Michael Kolbe at Henley in 1978 and would later finish sixth in the 1980 Olympic singles in Moscow.

<sup>5097</sup> See Chapter 79.

<sup>5098</sup> Stevenson, op cit, 2007

<sup>5099</sup> Gluckman, op cit.

## THE SPORT OF ROWING

everybody was trying to prove themselves. We had a later camp, he had organizational help, and there were a lot of people trying out.”<sup>5100</sup>

**Vespoli:** “Rosenberg, clever little guy, he knew exactly how to push all the right buttons. And the way he pushed the buttons was by being totally opposite – in a lot of ways outrageously opposite – to the traditional training method. He focused on trying to teach us to row, and the fact is he developed a uniformity of the style. But he also was the beneficiary of two years of National Team- level athletes that were very strong. So he could focus on making us move a boat.”<sup>5101</sup>

Rosenberg inherited five members of that 1973 crew, **Ken Brown** 6’1” 186cm 184lb. 83kg, of Cornell, Georgetown’s **Mike Vespoli** 6’5” 196cm 198lb. 90kg, who had been rowing for Vesper for several years, 1972 Olympic Silver Medalist **Tim Mickelson** 6’3” 191cm 187lb. 85kg from Wisconsin, **Hugh Stevenson** 6’4” 193cm 201lb. 91kg, a Penn grad rowing for Vesper, and **Al Shealy** 6’3” 191cm 198lb. 90kg, still a Harvard undergraduate.

To this core he added 6’4” 193cm 205lb. 93kg **John Everett** from MIT, 6’5” 196cm 205lb. 93kg **Mark Norelius** from the University of Washington and Shealy’s undergraduate Harvard teammates, 6’4” 193cm 205lb. 93kg **Dick Cashin** and coxswain **Dave Weinberg**.

Competition at the camp was very intense. According to *Rowing News*, **Tiff Wood**, 6’1” 188cm 185lb. 84kg, one of Shealy’s Harvard Rude and Smooth teammates,<sup>5102</sup> “felt he had something to

prove. He excelled at seat racing and was determined to show that he was exceptional.

“He stood out wailing away on the oar,” recalls **Rosenberg**, ‘but he was too rough to be much good in the eight.’

“Wood was bitterly disappointed. ‘It was a beauty contest to get in that boat,’ Wood recalls. ‘Getting selected on style was different from Harry Parker’s seat racing at Harvard.’”<sup>5103</sup>

**Vespoli:** “There was none of this so-called objectivity of coaching through seat racing, and he didn’t focus so much on the best ergs, although he ended up getting most of them in the boat anyway.”<sup>5104</sup>

In fact, Rosenberg prided himself for having over the years trained his eye to evaluate boat movers to the point that he could eschew quantitative measures. When Hugh Stevenson declared that he would not submit to be tested on the ergometer, a relatively new innovation in 1974, because it dehumanized a person, Allen gave him a pass and, quite rightly in retrospect, selected him on sight alone.

But by the same token, Wood was rejected on sight.

**Stevenson:** “To set the record straight, I believe research is critical – I want to be clear about that – but not when it comes into a system which is grounded in the ‘art’ of rowing. Erging is not and never will be racing boats.

“What was to be next? Score a high erg score, and claim your seat?”<sup>5105</sup>

“**Fritz Hagerman** was in charge of physiological testing for the U.S. National Team during the 1970s. I submitted to his testing at the ‘73 Gladstone camp in

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<sup>5100</sup> Mickelson, op cit.

<sup>5101</sup> Qtd. by Jeff Moag, *The Rowing News Q&A: Mike Vespoli*, *Rowing News*, December 2009, p.

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<sup>5102</sup> See Chapter 104.

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<sup>5103</sup> Xavier Macia, *Enter the Hammer*, *Rowing News*, September, 2004, p. 46

<sup>5104</sup> Qtd. by Moag, op cit.

<sup>5105</sup> Actually yes. This is not uncommon 30 years later. See Lewis, Brad Alan, with Eric Hamilton, *A Fine Balance, The story of a team on the edge of making history*, [www.bradalanlewis.com](http://www.bradalanlewis.com), 1999

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



Alan Shealy

**United States Heavyweight Men's Eight**  
1974 World Champion, Rotsee  
Stroke **Al Shealy**, 7 **Hugh Stevenson**, 6 **Dick Cashin**, 5 **Mark Norelius**  
*Schubschlag* pullthrough rhythm set by Shealy  
Recovery was Stop & Shop

Hanover, and in fact performed a piece on the erg in '74 at South Kent School for Rosenberg, but I refused to allow Hagerman to apply his machines to my body during the piece.

"Hagerman's testing was repugnant to me. I was completely infused with the spirit of the 'true' amateur and was horrified at the historical human outrage of Communism and the openly state-supported professionalism of the Eastern/Soviet Bloc athletes.

"It was 1973/74, after all."<sup>5106</sup>

The look of **Mike Vespoli**'s rowing also troubled Allen, "but he gradually changed his technique to Rosenberg's satisfaction. 'He was the last to acquire a skillful style,' Rosenberg says of Vespoli."<sup>5107</sup>

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<sup>5106</sup> Stevenson, op cit.

<sup>5107</sup> Macia, op cit, p. 49

# THE SPORT OF ROWING

## Technique

Assistant Coach **Ted Nash**: “Both Al and I had a strong belief that pairs and fours make for better water skills and that when joined, can quite quickly create substantial harmony in eights. Al’s pre-1964 experiences and leading up to 1974 demonstrated that clearly. My own time under Walter Hoover<sup>5108</sup> in Detroit [1950s] and then in Stan Pocock’s Lake Washington crews<sup>5109</sup> [1958-1964] proved it constantly. Vesper B.C. and the Penn Elite Center<sup>5110</sup> continued these beliefs.

“When Al picked me as an assistant in ‘74, I brought some pairs. We were training out of Kent School, but we decided to use Hatch Pond at South Kent School (just down the road) to do extra midday work in pairs to work on feel and see what we could do to advance harmony.

“Each day, various athletes would join me, and I’d row in whatever spot was needed. We would use the very calm pond to do turns alone to discover ideas to help in the eight and the four-with-cox.

“Al would daily ask me who looked good or who needed more help. His idea provided the easy break in the daily tedium but also developed previously unknown skills and talents. For him, it was an added touch. For a few candidates, it was their first experience in pairs, and they learned the true differences in styles between themselves and their former rivals. As a result, they more readily understood what Al wanted.”<sup>5111</sup>

The rhythm of the 1974 boat was set by stroke-oar **Al Shealy**. Along with 6-seat Dick Cashin and coxswain Dave Weinberg,

the personality of the National boat was dominated by Parker-trained Harvard men.

Rosenberg allowed Shealy to retain just a hint of his Stop & Shop rhythm on the recovery. The hands came away at a deliberate speed, and as the body came over and the slide began, there was a subtle but unmistakable acceleration of the shaft during its arc toward the entry.

This was accomplished with all eight oars and all eight oarsmen in perfect unison. The 1974 boat had been as meticulously coached by Rosenberg as the 1964 boat had been.

Shealy also stamped his mark firmly on the pullthrough with the same subtle departure from Rosenberg’s preferred overlapping sequentiality that had been used by Bill Stowe ten years earlier. Careful study of the stern-pair frame-by-frame well illustrates Shealy’s contribution.

**Hugh Stevenson** in the 7-seat was a splendid oarsman, three-time IRA winner and 1972 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania under **Ted Nash**. Hugh had made his first National Team in 1971 while still an undergraduate. His interpretation of the Rosenberg Technique showed elegant posture and discipline, superb suspension, a strong front half with an idiosyncratic chin lift. He used concurrent legs, back and arms and an emphasis on back swing, and then the arms taking over when the legs and back ended simultaneously with about six inches to go. The pullthrough ended with a hint of a ferryman’s finish.<sup>5112</sup>

Interestingly, with its emphasis on the front end, the strong use of the back and the chin lift, Stevenson’s pullthrough echoed Penn coach Ted Nash’s own 1964 Lake Washington Technique.

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<sup>5108</sup> See Chapter 55.

<sup>5109</sup> See Chapter 83 ff.

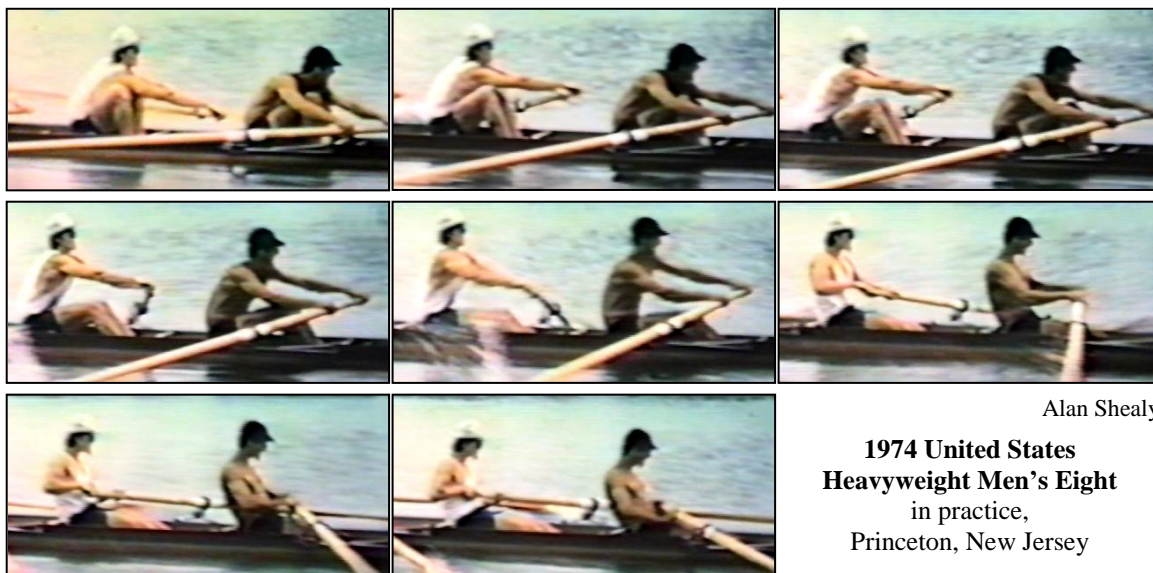
<sup>5110</sup> See Chapter 129.

<sup>5111</sup> Nash, personal correspondence, 2009

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<sup>5112</sup> Stevenson was not the only member of the 1974 crew to row this way. Mike Vespoli in the 4-seat, a member of Vesper Boat Club and National Team member since 1969, rowed an identical style.

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



Alan Shealy

**1974 United States  
Heavyweight Men's Eight**  
in practice,  
Princeton, New Jersey

7 **Hugh Stevenson**, +30° to -25°, 0-9, 0-9, 0-10

Stroke **Al Shealy**, +30° to -25°, 0-9, 0-10, 0-10

Stevenson appears to lead Shealy in the first half of the pullthrough.

By combining back and arms, Shealy catches up in second half.

**Stevenson:** “About my ‘strong front half,’ it was my opinion and practice – I rowed at 6 or 7 my entire racing career – to help the stroke transmit the rhythm into the crew as well as set the standard of aggressive race pursuit.

“Al! My stroke!

“He will forever be my *schlagmann!*<sup>5113</sup> Huge talent and a brilliant oar! I felt it extraordinarily critical to anticipate Al’s catch and to subtly ‘lift the hull’s weight’ for Al, to allow him to focus on the racing dynamic and not be bothered by the distraction of attacking the course. That was *my job!*”<sup>5114</sup>

Shealy’s approach was different from Stevenson’s in subtle but significant aspects. His force application did not emphasize the front half but rather the pullthrough as a whole, and his back swing and arm draw ended concurrently at the release. This

extended his *Schubschlag* acceleration of the boat to the very end of each pullthrough.

Stevenson and Shealy worked serendipitously well as a stern-pair, each compensating for the other’s potential shortcomings. Stevenson’s initial drive appeared to be the more aggressive and effective. In Frames 2, 3 and 4 on this page, his leg and back motions were slightly ahead of Shealy’s. By Frame 6, Stevenson’s handle had virtually reached his body while Shealy still had nearly a foot to go. It is at this point in the stroke, Stevenson employed a ferryman’s finish with arms alone while Shealy continued to carry through the acceleration and send of the boat, and the crew as a whole followed Shealy.

The result was remarkably similar to the pullthrough of the 1964 Olympic eight: acceleration from entry to release.

**Mickelson:** “I don’t think that any one of us in that boat could have felt more proud of the fact that we rowed very, very well. It

<sup>5113</sup> “stroke-man” in German.

<sup>5114</sup> Stevenson, op cit, 2006

## THE SPORT OF ROWING

was a joy to row. Technically we felt good about it. Psychologically we felt good.

“We *knew* we were fast.”<sup>5115</sup>

**Shealy:** “1974 was the Year of Milk and Honey for us on the U.S. Team. Allen Rosenberg rode into town as the experienced and successful gunslinger and set the foundation in six short weeks for a bunch of true amateurs to beat a gaggle of state-supported, drug-infused Iron Curtain automatons.

“Allen was money good, due to his success with the 1964 Olympic Eight, and he arrived like a miniature George Patton in Morocco, expected to turn a ragtag outfit into fearsome razors.

“For me, it was the acme of a long struggle to gain the summit, but it was not without its drama.”<sup>5116</sup>

What Allen achieved in six weeks was nothing short of remarkable. Watching film of the crew, the impression is one of incredible focus and discipline, of flawless timing and bladework.

**Shealy:** “For the life of me, I couldn’t understand Allen’s determination to break down each of our rowing techniques, chuck out the parts, and rebuild from scratch.”<sup>5117</sup> He claimed that this would work, and who were we not to believe him?

“Actually doing it, however, was an order I almost couldn’t fill.

“I never really gave technique much thought until Rosenberg forced the issue. I remember comments from onlookers about the Harvard ‘style,’ referring to the pause at the finish and an acceleration toward the stern. I think this was the chief elemental difference in technique between us and other crews, and I recall this being problematic at

the National Team Camps until Rosenberg had us all dancing the same jig.”<sup>5118</sup>

“I recall weeks of work at the camp trying to get his technique down; exaggerated lean at the finish, arms out first, and then upper body with legs locked down, then full extension, followed by an ever-so-slight shooting of the slide.

“The emphasis on sequence which Al put on his technique was at first quite baffling and awkward, but I managed to see that it was a natural movement: legs first, backs opening from the hips and then arms, all in a sequential drive. At Harvard we tended to open with the back more and with more emphasis on continuous leg drive.

“All this seemed elegantly simple, and easy to do in drills, but it proved almost impossibly difficult for many while at full pressure. I finally got the picture, but it wasn’t until I was seat raced against [6’2” 188cm 190lb. 86kg] **Jim Moroney**<sup>5119</sup> in the final days of the camp that a fire was lit under my can, and I figured it all out.”<sup>5120</sup>

“To this day, I believe that I came very close to losing my seat at the camp.

“The result of Allen’s effort and insistence was pure and highly effective. I never rowed in a crew before or since that was more cohesive and efficient in its application of power.”<sup>5121</sup>

**Nash:** “An unusual proof of the 1974 crew’s later coolness and Rosey’s ability to calmly adjust under fire: In 1974, I had purchased a new Donoratico eight which Al had wanted to race, and it was delivered to us in Lucerne. The problem was that the beautiful chestnut-colored violin of a boat was hull-perfect but seemed to be too small

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<sup>5115</sup> Mickelson, op cit.

<sup>5116</sup> Shealy, op cit.

<sup>5117</sup> the essence of the Modern Orthodox approach.

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<sup>5118</sup> Shealy, op cit.

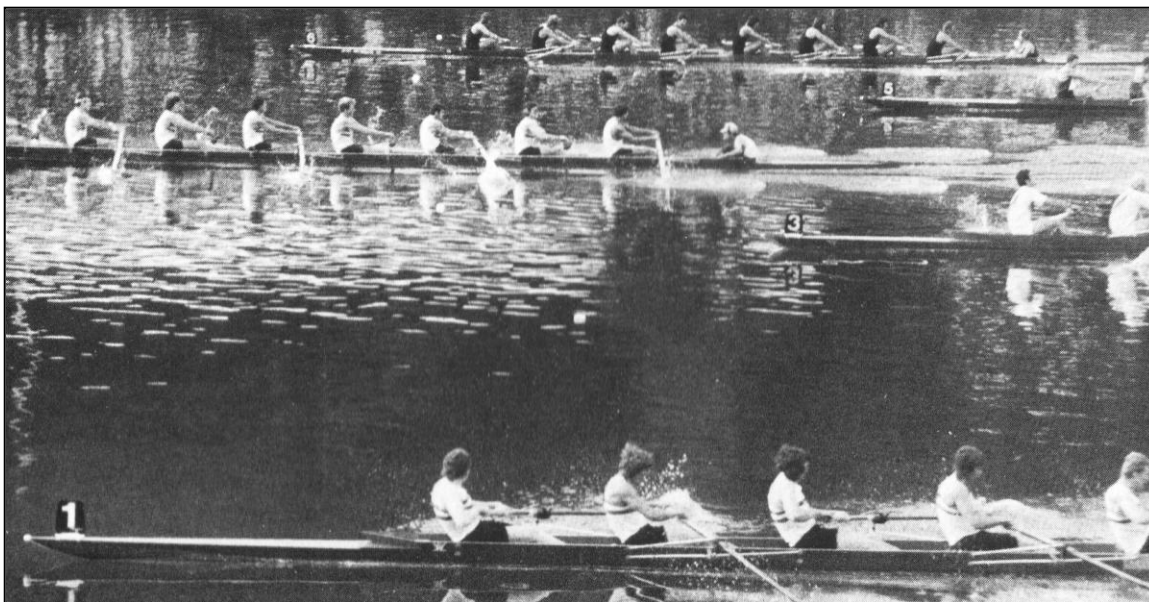
<sup>5119</sup> University of Pennsylvania undergrad, stroke of the 1972 U.S. Olympic Coxless-Four coached by Dietrich Rose at Vesper Boat Club. See Chapter 122.

<sup>5120</sup> Shealy, p. 38

<sup>5121</sup> Shealy, personal correspondence, 2005



## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



*Oarsman Magazine*

### 1974 World Championship Heavyweight Men's Eights Final

Rotsee

100 meters to go. **GBR** (Lane 1) moving as **NZL** (Lane 6) was fading.

**GDR** (Lane 3) and **URS** (Lane 5) remained close.

inside for Stevenson, Cashin, Norelius and Vespoli, the long-legged trees in the boat.

“Stevenson wasn’t 6’5” but had almost 96° compression, and all of them could not keep from hitting the stops. They loved the boat, but . . .

“For three or four days our noble boatman and six-plus volunteers on the team tried to adjust it. Nothing worked for two major reasons. 1) Most Europeans rowed trunk up and toes high, and 2) not many were over 6’5” or 6’6” [198 to 201 cm].

“We chiseled, ground and pounded, and epoxy flowed. No matter what we did, we ran into the shoulders and had nowhere to go with the feet. Although frustrating, Al and the crew realized after three days that the distance between shoulders in the boat would not allow the big men to compress, *regardless* of all shoe channel adjustments.

“Finally, Al decided to go to another boat with only five days to go – I saw the guys patting the Donoratico’s smooth

surfaces with a final ‘goodbye,’ . . . and they moved on. *No* panic, *no* questioning of the coaches, *no* wasted emotion – That was the first time I ever said, ‘Cool!’ We sent the chestnut shell back to Italy with love, and the crew took up the pace. Al’s personal self-control had spilled over onto the crew, and in Lucerne all was right in the world once again.”<sup>5122</sup>

**Shealy:** “When we moved into the **Martini Achter** a week before our races began, the exhilaration was palpable. The greasiness of that boat, combined with the almost absolute symmetry of body movement within the crew, made for an unforgettable experience, one that dreams are made of.”<sup>5123</sup>

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<sup>5122</sup> Nash, personal correspondence, 2009

<sup>5123</sup> Shealy, op cit.

## THE SPORT OF ROWING



Mike Vespoli

### United States Heavyweight Men's Eight

1974 World Champion, Rotsee

Coxswain Dave Weinberg

Stroke **Al Shealy** 6'3" 191cm 198lb. 90kg, 7 **Hugh Stevenson** 6'4" 193cm 201lb. 91kg,  
6 **Dick Cashin** 6'4" 193cm 205lb. 93kg, 5 **Mark Norelius** 6'5" 196cm 205lb. 93kg,  
4 **Mike Vespoli** 6'5" 196cm 198lb. 90kg, 3 **John Everett** 6'4" 193cm 205lb. 93kg,  
2 **Ken Brown** 6'1" 186cm 184lb. 83kg, Bow **Tim Mickelson** 6'3" 191cm 187lb. 85kg

### The Racing

**Vespoli:** "Next to us [in the heat] were the East Germans, on the other side the Russians. So we take off and, oh my God, about 20 strokes in, we punch out about three or four seats."<sup>5124</sup>

**Shealy:** "We rowed a series of faultless races, beating the East Germans in the semi-

final and going into the final with an almost sublime determination to win."<sup>5125</sup>

**Nash:** "To tell you the truth, I felt the crew could have won in a wheelbarrow, they were so confident in their ability to race – and they were correct. Beating East Germany was frosting on the cake."<sup>5126</sup>

**Shealy:** "Our final was executed almost without flaw, and we felt a unit in our

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<sup>5124</sup> Qtd. by Moag, op cit.

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<sup>5125</sup> Shealy, op cit.

<sup>5126</sup> Nash, personal correspondence, 2009

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rowing, thoughts and reactions while in the boat. It was a unique feeling, a near total command of bodily movement and mental concentration. We felt a part of the boat itself, each reacting and moving in a rhythm and fluidity that I have never before experienced. These were moments we felt on the verge of technical perfection, a feeling very few oarsmen know.”<sup>5127</sup>

“On a picturesque afternoon in Lucerne, Switzerland, with cowbells ringing in the distance and only the faintest hint of a breeze, we beat the best in the world at their own game. I don’t recall our crew taking a bad stroke the entire race. We went off the line at 52 spm, settled at 48, and never went below 44 spm. We rowed through Russia first, New Zealand at 1,250 meters, and held off a frantic sprint by the British in the last 500 meters to take home the Gold.”<sup>5128</sup>

**Ted Nash:** “I watched the entire race from a bike. Al Shealy was understandably busy during the race. He recalls the start well, but they did *not* row 44 all the way. I clocked them at 38½ -39 at their lowest, 41 in the last 400 and 44 at the end. My log shows their brilliant race had sharp catches and unusual run and flow.”<sup>5129</sup>

**Stevenson:** “We had a very rocky start. I don’t know why Al glosses over that bit. We were much socked down to starboard – I remember it *so* well, as my frustration was

high during those ten or so racing-start strokes.

“I was breathing fire to get at the field with our aggressive, silky, tactical power, just champing at the bit to blast into the middle 1,000 that, I was convinced, was our killing ground, and we hunted New Zealand down in that stretch.

“It was magnificent! We literally took that Kiwi boat apart seat by seat . . . The acceleration seemed to flow on and on and on . . .

“‘Poetry in motion’ is inadequate to describe that moment in time, and time did indeed seem to stop during that mid-race run . . .”<sup>5130</sup>

**Vespoli:** “By the 1,000 we poke our nose [into the lead], and then over in Lane 1 the British are sort of lying in wait. They go hell-bent for leather, and because of the view it looks like they are gaining on us and they’re going to beat us. Well, from our position in the boat, there was not a way in hell they were going to catch us.”<sup>5131</sup>

**Stevenson:** “A V-8 we were indeed, and like a big V-8, we had bottomless torque. Whatever that race required, we delivered. It was not an effort to humiliate any crew – simply to win. I saw this ‘cause I will forever know we had a lot more speed in that crew than was shown on that afternoon!”<sup>5132</sup>

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<sup>5127</sup> Shealy, p. 38

<sup>5128</sup> Shealy, *op cit.*

<sup>5129</sup> Nash, personal correspondence, 2007

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<sup>5130</sup> Stevenson, *op cit.*, 2007

<sup>5131</sup> Qtd. by Moag, *op cit.*

<sup>5132</sup> Stevenson, personal correspondence, 2007