

## THE SPORT OF ROWING

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

This is an interesting time to be looking back on the early coaching career of Harry Parker. He's in his 49<sup>th</sup> Season at Harvard and has become an institution. I once compared him to the Great Stone Face in New Hampshire . . . but the Great Stone Face collapsed in 2003 while Harry endures.

This week's excerpt recounts the complex story of the Crimson Varsity in Mexico City, the last time a college eight ever represented the United States at the Olympics.

This spring is a great time to follow Harvard crew. Harry's longtime friend and rival Steve Gladstone has taken over at Yale, so the juices will be flowing all the way to Harvard-Yale in New London on May 28. Someone remarked to me over the weekend that they had never seen Harry so motivated.

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. This excerpt is 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 steadily toward publication. The most recent drafts are now posted in the row2k.com archives.

As I write this, there are still a few collector editions left for sale at:

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

The paperback black-and-white standard edition will go on sale on row2k on Wednesday, April 13. The book itself will be published in October.

You can email me anytime at:

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

Many thanks.

# THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

## 102. Harvard Goes to the Olympics

*Toward '68 – Stop & Shop – Seat Racing – Olympic Trials – Xochimilco*



Ted Washburn, *Making of a Champion*

### *Tour de Stade*

Out of all of this came the widely-copied 1960s Harvard Style, often incorrectly referred to by others as the American version of the Ratzeburg Style.

After Ratzeburg became the first non-American crew to win the Olympics Eights

title since before the First World War<sup>4555</sup> in 1960, and after their tour of the United States in 1963,<sup>4556</sup> they and their coach, **Karl Adam**, came to be associated in the minds of U.S. rowers and coaches with

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<sup>4555</sup> See Chapter 90.

<sup>4556</sup> See Chapter 98.

## THE SPORT OF ROWING

anything new coming out of international rowing.

It wasn't entirely true.

Mid-century British historian **Paul Wilson** appreciated just how much Parker had diverged from the Adam model. "Much that is labeled 'Ratzeburg Style' in the United States would be rejected by Karl Adam (its originator) with alarm and disgust."<sup>4557</sup>

**Tiff Wood**, Harvard '75: "Wasn't Ratzeburg more upright than Harry's technique? I think Harry had people get a little more body angle at the catch and then open with the back more than Ratzeburg.

"I do remember Harry mentioned that one of his early influences was watching the Russian crews, and their greater emphasis on using the back.

"I think that Harry brought to U.S. rowing much more than the Ratzeburg Style.

"What Harry also brought was the interval training methods, higher cadences and bigger oars. He introduced European equipment, using a Stämpfli eight, if I remember."<sup>4558</sup>

**Parker**: "From '65 on through '67, we were using a modification of what Adam and the Soviets were doing.

"Vesper had its own version of the 'Ratzeburg' Style. I got a slightly different version."<sup>4559</sup>

Not for the first time, **Allen Rosenberg** vehemently disagrees today with Harry on this point: "It is very easy but grossly erroneous to say that my work copied what Ratzeburg did. The body angles are sharply in contrast, with virtually no forward lean at the catch for the Germans and no layback.

"No wonder. They rowed using eleven centimeters through the pin, prohibiting any body swing. The result was huge thrust at

the catch, and they repeated this over and over again at 40 strokes per minute and more.

"There is nothing in the body mechanics and rigging which I taught which can be confused with Adam's work."<sup>4560</sup>

This is true.

### Stop & Shop

Harry Parker's new approach to rowing was taught to Harvard crews by Freshman Coach **Ted Washburn**, the coxswain of Harry's 1964 Olympic four in Tokyo.

**Eric Sigward**: "Harry Parker and Ted Washburn, they were opposites, Ted always nervous and Harry omniscient. I remember early freshman pre-race talks where Ted would say, 'I've been throwing up all night, and I've only had two Saltines and a Dramamine today. If I see you again after the race, I hope you did well,'<sup>4561</sup> . . . whereas Harry would have the whole thing forecast:

"'They're going to take a half-length lead in the first half mile. Then you'll come back in the second half mile. Then you're going to have to push the second mile,' and it was all sort of prescient.

"But then of course with both of them there was this idea that you might have to *die* at the end of the race. But don't worry. You'll pass out before you're actually dead."<sup>4562</sup>

From Parker and Washburn, the technique spread around Boston and soon the rest of the country. **Charlie Hamlin**, Harvard '69: "My freshman coach, Ted

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<sup>4557</sup> Wilson, p. 12

<sup>4558</sup> Wood, personal correspondence, 2005

<sup>4559</sup> Parker, personal conversation, 2004

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<sup>4560</sup> Rosenberg, personal correspondence, 2007

<sup>4561</sup> **Ted Washburn**: "It may be true that I characteristically 'motivated' my crews by creating alarming scenarios in which they might lose to any crew, but Saltines and Dramamine? – not a chance!" – personal correspondence, 2008

<sup>4562</sup> Sigward, personal conversation, 2008

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

Washburn, taught us what became affectionately known in later years as ‘**Stop & Shop**’;<sup>4563</sup> a distinct pause at the finish (Stop), acceleration up the slide, sharp and punchy catch (Shop), and a power curve that accentuated the first third of the stroke.”<sup>4564</sup>

**Ted Washburn:** “One thing about the tag ‘Stop & Shop.’ As the frosh coach who began to teach the style when we returned from Tokyo, I want it known that I always called the style ‘**stop-and-chop**,’ which perfectly captured my intent. The later pun was related to the supermarket, but I never changed my spelling to match the store. I stayed with ‘chop.’

“Having taught linguistics, I fully understand how the ‘c’ and ‘s’ could have shifted, and as the history of language teaches us, there would be nothing odd about everyone but the coiner settling on a folk spelling, but ‘chop’ was the original and ‘shop’ the folk.”<sup>4565</sup>

**Parker:** “The reason you get the motion you get with those ‘60s crews is that I like dynamic movement of the body into the catch, rather than getting up there and freezing. I just like to have the body in motion.

“That’s a big difference from the standard Washington recovery,<sup>4566</sup> where you get out of bow fast. They talk about getting your body set, and it would stay set until you get up to the catch. Everything would stop, and then you would start again. The seat would actually stop.”<sup>4567</sup>

**Steve Brooks,** ‘70, stroke of the Harvard eight in the 1968 Olympic final: “In the summer of ‘65, I was still in the junior rowing program at the Union Boat Club, coached by Kim Bassett, the Boston

University frosh coach. We rowed a modified Stop & Shop that summer, which was a change from what my Noble and Greenough coach, Bob Warner, had taught.

“We rowed essentially that technique the following spring at Nobles, not with much success, alas, but in any case, the slow-hands-fast-catch was spreading fast by ‘65 and ‘66.”<sup>4568</sup>

**Hamlin:** “To make Stop & Shop work, you had to have massive legs, especially if you were relatively short like me, 6’1” [185 cm]. These we gained with countless hours charging up and down the Harvard Stadium.”<sup>4569</sup>

“The stroke worked because we were strong, well conditioned and synchronized in our execution. Indeed, mine and the crews that followed won a great many races employing this technique.

### *Tours de Stade*

**Hamlin:** “Interestingly, some attributed our winning ways to the amount of time we spent in the Harvard Stadium relative to the supposed efforts of other crews.

“I can remember distinctly numerous ‘*Tours de Stade*’ where the drill was to start up every forty seconds, unending relay races, and worst of all, the best time for all thirty-seven sections (well under a thirty second pace). The leg strength and aerobic conditioning the stadium produced made a big difference on the race course.”<sup>4570</sup>

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<sup>4563</sup> **Stop & Shop®** is a large chain of supermarkets in the American Northeast, including the Boston area.

<sup>4564</sup> Hamlin, personal correspondence, 2005

<sup>4565</sup> Washburn, personal correspondence, 2007

<sup>4566</sup> See Chapter 46.

<sup>4567</sup> Parker, op cit.

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<sup>4568</sup> S. Brooks, personal correspondence, 2005

<sup>4569</sup> “**Rob Lea** [1963 Pan Am Champion in the double for Vesper with Bill Knecht. See Chapter 107.] was the one who brought the dreaded stadium running to Harvard in ‘62 following a European trip.” – Tracy Lea, personal correspondence, 2011

<sup>4570</sup> Hamlin, op cit.

## THE SPORT OF ROWING

### The Harvard Catch

The Stop & Shop accelerating recovery would lead into what many Harvard men called “the flying catch.”<sup>4571</sup>

**Parker:** “The thing we were doing a little different from ‘65 on through ‘67 was we were rowing a *really, really* hard catch.”<sup>4572</sup>

Aggressiveness at the entry was where Harry seemed to side with the 1950s-era Soviets and part company with Karl Adam. Pounding the blade into the water from a height was reminiscent of the Klub Krasnoe Znamia “rocking windmill style”<sup>4573</sup> that Harry would have seen first at Henley in 1955.

A decade before GDR scientists had defined *Kernschlag* and *Schubschlag*, Harry chose *Kernschlag* while Adam was pursuing the opposite.

**Parker:** “We would get the blade up high and drop it and just *pound* it, and, boy, if you didn’t get it quite right, you were in trouble, but they were *good* . . . and we had these Karlisch oars, you know ten-pound oars, and we started with Pirschs, and they were eleven pounds, and they were so heavy they would just ‘krunk!’ I *loved* them, but they were *stiff*!”<sup>4574</sup>

### The Impact of Harry Parker

Harvard had the most profound effect on the direction of American rowing in the late 1960s. Within a year or two after Tokyo, virtually the entire American rowing community was attempting to reverse-engineer and copy the technique of Parker’s crews, which had not lost a race since the 1963 Sprints. What was most visible to outside observers was an almost theatrical

aggressiveness to the athletes’ bodies, and that is what they focused on.

### The Competitiveness of Harry Parker

**Harvard Magazine:** “**Ian Gardiner** ‘68, who stroked the 1967 Varsity, says, ‘[Harry]’d let us joust with each other – running stadiums, lifting weights. He created a very competitive environment and turned us loose in it.’

“‘Competitiveness reeked through the boathouse,’ says **Gregg Stone** ‘75, an undefeated oarsman of the early 1970s.

“‘Harry knew how to play on that and how to get the most out of it. He’s very, very intense,’ says **Ted Washburn**. ‘He is unstintingly invested in the rowers’ success at all times, all year long. Since this level of commitment is so rare, so unusual, you are moved by it.’

“**Clint Allen** ‘67, who stroked the undefeated 1966 Varsity, says that in the 1960s, ‘[Harry] could have lived in Newell. As far as I could tell, he did nothing else in his life but crew.’

“**Washburn** says, ‘The difference between Harry and other coaches is that those guys can live with losing. He is the most competitive human being I’ve ever met, period.’

“Parker, characteristically, smiles and underplays it, simply noting that ‘I vastly prefer winning to losing.’

“*Vastly prefer.*”<sup>4575</sup>

**David Halberstam:** “His crews pushed themselves because they were good, but also because Harry Parker pushed them. They were an extension of him and his ferocious desire to win. Harry did not just coach them, he competed with them. His competitiveness fed his team’s competitiveness, and their’s fed his. Madness begot madness.

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<sup>4571</sup> Tony Brooks, personal conversation, 2005

<sup>4572</sup> Parker, op cit.

<sup>4573</sup> See Chapter 79.

<sup>4574</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>4575</sup> Craig Lambert, *Upstream Warrior*, *Harvard Magazine*, May/June 1996

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

“Most of these young men, coming as they did from affluent homes of comfort and kindness, had never before encountered a set of rules and standards so demanding and a man who so embodied those standards. Praise was rare from him, and because it was rare, it was all the more valued. Thus the less he said, the more his credibility increased.

“His strength was in his distance, the fact that they had to reach for him as he could not reach for them, and by reaching for him, they met his standards.”<sup>4576</sup>

Yale graduate **Joe Bouscaren** rowed out of Harvard years later<sup>4577</sup> and found the difference between Harry and Yale Coach **Tony Johnson** to be stark.

**Halberstam**: “With Tony, he thought, if you were putting out a genuine effort, there was almost always some kind of verbal reward. But with Harry, whatever you did was never enough. The question that seemed to hang in the atmosphere of the Harvard boathouse, unstated but always there, Bouscaren thought, was: Are you really tough enough for this? The Harvard environment, he decided, was a colder one. If he never became entirely accustomed to it, it did push him to reach for still higher levels of excellence.”<sup>4578</sup>

**Harvard Magazine**: “After tripping and landing on the concrete while running up the steps of Harvard Stadium to train with his crew, Parker, blood streaming from his leg, not only sustained his pace but elbowed a slower oarsman impeding his progress.

“At an early age, Parker himself seemed to recognize the ferocity of his competitive instincts. Although he played high school baseball and basketball, Parker didn’t go out for ice hockey because ‘I didn’t think I should play anything where they would give me a stick.’

“He could, however, hold his own with a croquet mallet. At **Red Top**, the camp on the Thames River where Harvard crews train for the Harvard-Yale race, croquet games involving outrageous rule-bending and overt cheating are a tradition. Be it horseshoes or checkers, no contest is so casual that Parker won’t try his utmost to mow the opponent down.



Ted Washburn, *Making of a Champion*

### Red Top

“Another Red Top tradition is the board game *Risk*, whose goal is world domination. ‘It’s well known that Harry loved to cheat at *Risk*,’ says **Geoffrey Knauth** ‘83. ‘Somebody would get a phone call and leave the room, and Harry would rearrange the board.’

“Parker and his wife have a summer place in New Hampshire where one can drive golf balls into a lake. Since the lake is shallow, it’s also possible to retrieve the balls by diving. ‘Of course, even there,’ grins oarsman **Jake Fiechter** ‘67, ‘it’s, how many golf balls can you get?’<sup>4579</sup>

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<sup>4576</sup> Halberstam, pp. 88-9

<sup>4577</sup> See Chapter 140 ff.

<sup>4578</sup> Halberstam, p. 58

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<sup>4579</sup> Lambert, op cit.

# THE SPORT OF ROWING

## Joe Burk and Harry Parker

Joe Burk had been Harry's coach at Penn and beyond,<sup>4580</sup> and Harry's respect for Joe was unbounded. Nevertheless, there was an intense competition between the two. That competition started in 1959 as they sculled side by side, Harry in his prime and Joe 45 years old. Day after day, Joe proved himself the faster sculler.<sup>4581</sup>

The competition between them continued when Harry became the Harvard coach.

**Dick Viall**, '66 Penn Captain: "I recall the Adams Cup was in Philadelphia my senior year. Harvard lost the frosh race to Penn, while the jayvee and varsity went to Harvard in close races. At the boathouse in front of me, Joe Burk went up to congratulate Harry. Harry's comment was, 'That settles a few old scores.'

"I was stunned. It has haunted me ever since. Harry could not put on a gentlemanly face even for his former coach and mentor. Beating Joe's crews was personal!

"In many respects, Joe's crews lacked the killer instinct because Joe never coached in those terms. If you were prepared and rowed a good race, you might win. Winning with Joe came from hard work, hopefully reaching but not exceeding your potential.

"BUT, Harry was ALL about winning. He had great material, but his objective was to WIN!"<sup>4582</sup>

On his deathbed in 2008, 93-year-old Joe Burk was reflecting on his life with his daughter, Kathy. Out of the blue, he said, "Harry won all his races . . . but I beat Harry."<sup>4583</sup>

The competition between these two proud men ran wide and deep on *both* sides, and it never ended!

## The Road to Mexico City

After so painfully losing the 1964 Olympic Trials to Allen Rosenberg's Vesper crew, the overriding priority around Newell Boathouse for the next four years became the next Olympics. "The Harvard crews won numerous international regattas during the mid-1960s, but only one goal really mattered to Harry: earning the right to represent the United States at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico."<sup>4584</sup>

A Mexico City Olympics travel poster was up in the boathouse for the entire quadrennial, and in retrospect, Harry Parker's four-year buildup to the Games appears incredibly focused and disciplined.

**Paul Hoffman**, 1968 Harvard coxswain: "I spent a year after prep school at Bryanston School in England (where I coxed the First VIII and coached after term) so that I could come to Harvard as a member of the Class of 1968 and thus be around for the Olympic Year (one of the few really good planning exercises of my life).

"My first day at Harvard I walked into the freshman locker room and put up that Mexico City poster. I thought there should be no doubt as to what we were aiming for. Everyone got the message."<sup>4585</sup>

The undefeated **1965** season and appearance at Henley<sup>4586</sup> formed the first step. In **1966**, Harvard oarsmen rowing as Union B.C. gained valuable international experience representing the United States in the eights at the World Championships in Bled, Yugoslavia. Three of the eventual

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<sup>4580</sup> See Chapters 65 and 66.

<sup>4581</sup> See Chapter 66.

<sup>4582</sup> Viall, personal correspondence, 2007

<sup>4583</sup> McCaffrey, personal conversation, 2008

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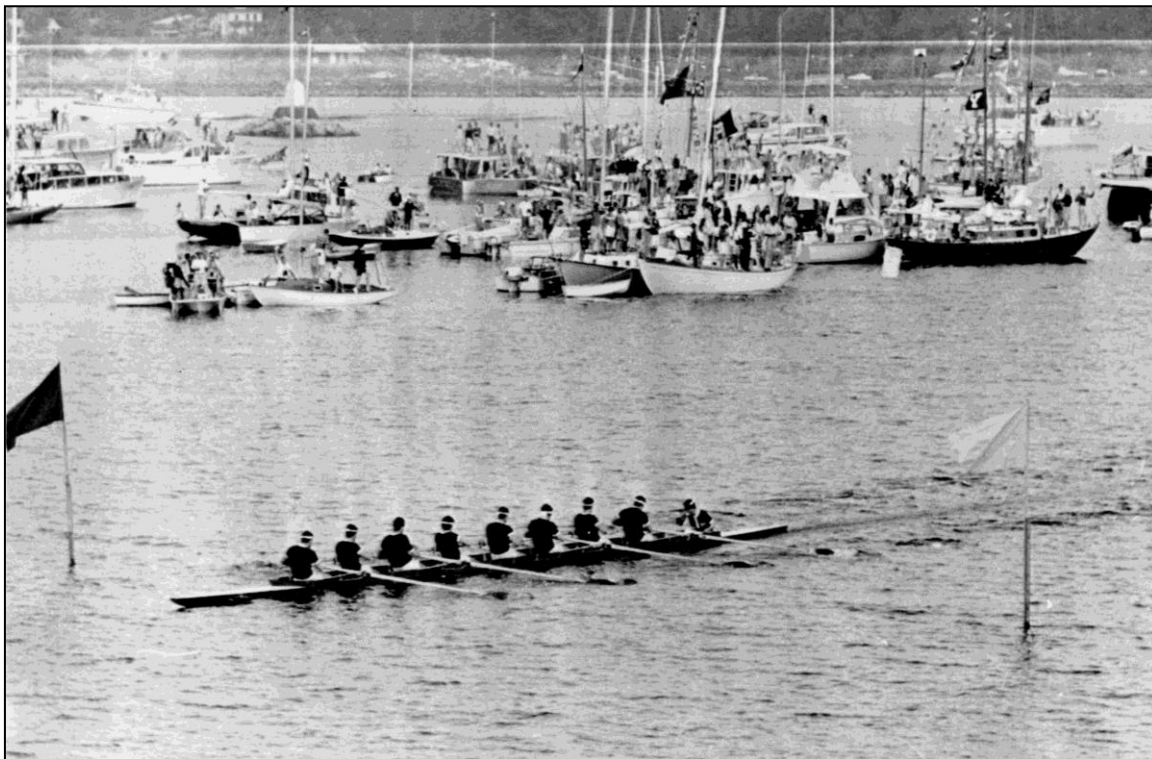
<sup>4584</sup> [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

<sup>4585</sup> Hoffman, personal correspondence, 2008

<sup>4586</sup> See Chapter 100.



## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



UPI Tele Photo, Thomas E. Weil Collection

### Harvard-Yale Varsity Race

1966 New London, Connecticut

1 **Harvard** 19:44 (course record), 2 **Yale** 20:06

Harvard: Bow **Jim Tew** 6'2" 188cm 190lb. 86kg, 2 **Ian Gardiner** 6'3" 191cm 184lb. 83kg,  
3 **Jake Fiechter** 6'4" 193cm 198lb. 90kg, 4 **Eric Sigward** 6'0" 183cm 184lb. 83kg,  
5 **Curt Canning** 6'3" 191cm 198lb. 90kg, 6 **Andy Larkin** 6'5" 196cm 196lb. 89kg,  
7 **Brian Clemow** 6'3" 191cm 190lb. 86kg, Stroke **Clint Allen** 6'2" 188cm 187lb. 85kg,  
Coxswain **Paul Hoffman**

**Harry Parker:** "No crew of mine ever has rowed as well as this varsity group did in the body of today's race. They were swinging from the start and pressed all the way." – *The New York Times*, June 19, 1966

1968 Olympic Crew were already on board as sophomores.<sup>4587</sup>

### The 1967 Northeastern Race

The closest that Harvard came to losing a collegiate varsity race in this entire era

came on the Charles River against the new program at Northeastern University.<sup>4588</sup>

**B Wolbach:** "It was a really windy day. We went under the Mass Ave Bridge, and we hit a lot of wind. The boat started wobbling, and a couple of half-crabs were caught on either side of the stern six of the boat. We slowed down, and Northeastern was already ahead of us at the time. They

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<sup>4587</sup> They did not advance beyond the repêchages

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<sup>4588</sup> See Chapter 116.



## THE SPORT OF ROWING

just kept going by and going by and going by. We got back control of the boat and started coming back on Northeastern, but it was getting closer and closer to the end, maybe the last 250 meters or something.

"All of a sudden, Northeastern just stopped in the water and came back by us. We couldn't see what was going on because we were in the boat just rowing, not paying attention except through our peripheral vision. They got it going again, but it was too late. They couldn't catch us.

"It was a tragedy for a couple of people in our boat because come Monday's practice we were out of the boat, **Eric Sigward** and I, and that ended our Olympic trajectory.

"**Fritz Hobbs** and **Cleve Livingston** went in at that time. They were there for Brown, which was the next race. The Varsity did better, and the Jayvee struggled, so Harry, I'm sure, thought he'd made the right decision.

"I know *I* didn't think so. I'm pretty sure Eric didn't think so either at the time. It was something that was never really explained to us. It was the way that Harry did things.

"The week before, we had been told that we were in the Varsity boat. It wasn't like, '*Maybe* you're in the Varsity boat.' It was, 'You're *in* the Varsity boat.'

"It was clear that the Varsity boat hadn't done well against Northeastern, but I certainly didn't think it was *my* fault. *I* didn't catch any crabs. *I* didn't slow the boat down. But I was out . . .

"Fortunately, it's now a long time ago."<sup>4589</sup>

### The Summer of 1967

By 1967, the Olympic build-up was on everybody's mind every week. By the end of Harry's fourth consecutive undefeated collegiate season, seven of the nine 1968

athletes were already in their seats, but proper preparation for the Olympics required challenging international experience for the squad in the year before.

Their first stop that summer was the Pan Am Trials, which they won comfortably with Penn second.<sup>4590</sup>

The next prize was the Gold Medal at the **Pan American Games** in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Seven-seat **Curt Canning**: "We had two good races with a tough University of British Columbia crew representing Canada, but we won both without any real trouble."<sup>4591</sup>

The summer's third challenge was the **North American Championships**, a FISA test regatta on the newly renovated course at St. Catharines, Ontario.

Harvard beat the British easily in what turned out to be the less competitive of the two heats. New Zealand won the other, upsetting the favorites, Ratzeburger Ruderclub of West Germany.

After the reps, the finalists turned out to be Harvard, New Zealand, Ratzeburg, Canada, Australia and Great Britain.

**Canning**: "In Sunday's finals, we lined up in Lane 5, between Ratzeburg and Great Britain. Harry had provided us his pre-race advice. Now it was up to us. I sat in the shell, my hands typically icy, insides taut, with a rather untypical realization that next to me was THE Ratzeburg crew.

"And then the red flag went up. '*États Unis, prêt? . . . Grande Bretagne prêt?*' A dreadful dip of silence, and then . . . '*Partez!*'

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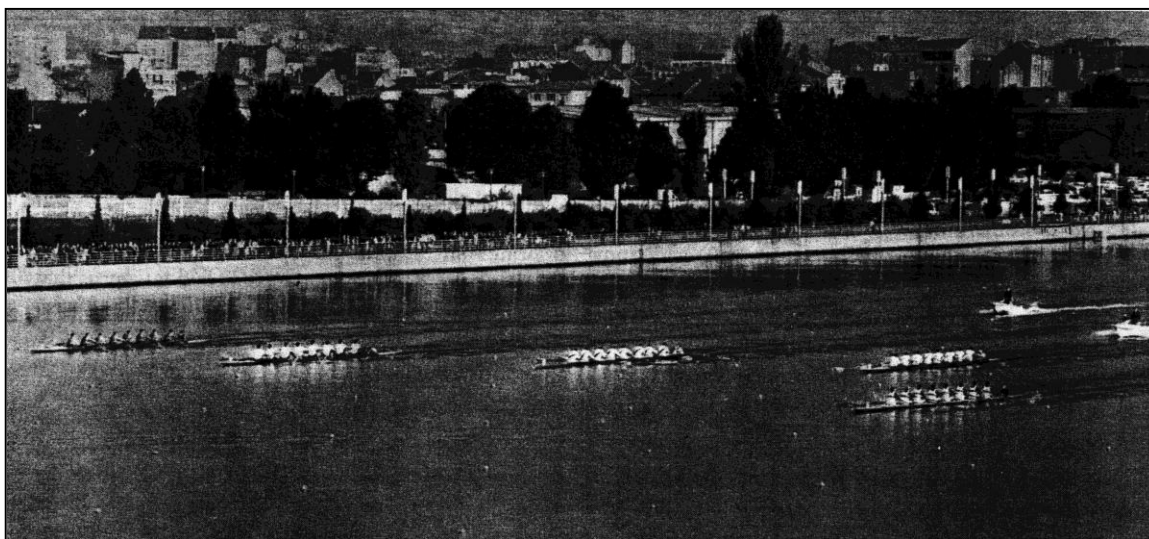
<sup>4590</sup> See Chapter 94.

<sup>4591</sup> Curt Canning, *The Longest Summer*, Dartmouth-Harvard Football Program, October 28, 1967, p. 68

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<sup>4589</sup> Wolbach, personal conversation, 2008

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



*Kirkland Photo*

### 1967 European Championships Men's Eights Final

Vichy, France

200 meters to go

From left: **URS, USA, GDR, AUS, FRG, NED** (not in photo)

1 **FRG** 6:04.89, 2 **USA** 6:06.46, 3 **URS** 6:06.49

**USA:** Bow 1 **Dave Higgins** 6'1" 188cm 194lb. 88kg, 2 **Cleve Livingston** 6'2" 191cm 180lb. 82kg,

3 **Jake Fiechter** 6'4" 193cm 198lb. 90kg, 4 **Fritz Hobbs** 6'3" 193cm 199lb. 90kg,

5 **Scott Steketee** 6'4" 196cm 214lb. 97kg, 6 **Andy Larkin** 6'5" 196cm 213lb. 97kg,

7 **Curt Canning** 6'3" 193cm 201lb. 91kg, Stroke **Ian Gardiner** 6'3" 191cm 184lb. 83kg,

Coxswain **Paul Hoffman**

"Five . . . up for 10 . . . down for 20 . . . and settle. Pause out of bow, let the boat run out, and fall into that life-giving groove. The rhythm was good we were into the body.

"Ratzeburg was right beside us.

"At 1,000 meters, New Zealand and Australia were several lanes to port, but our specific concern was Ratzeburg.

"We were within striking range going to the last 500, but from there, we fell off. Our rhythm suffered a little, and with it, the balance. But more than anything, the other boats began to move on us.

"We finished fourth – more than nine seconds behind New Zealand, by lesser margins to Australia and Ratzeburg.

"Something I discovered on reaching the dock, we had not been clocked below 40 in

the first 500, nor below 39 in the next! This explained a world of things.

"We had trained to row 36 or 37. That was *our* racing cadence. Ratzeburg races at 40, not Harvard. In the pressure of a big one, we had been too tense, too ready to win on every stroke. That was, I thought, why our pace fell off so badly in the second 1,000.

"And New Zealand had won playing our game; they rowed at 36.

"At the boathouse, I began to discover the most awkward, uncomfortable part of rowing – accepting condolences."<sup>4592</sup>

Their next regatta was the **U.S. Nationals** in a very rainy Philadelphia against New Zealand, Australia and Vesper

<sup>4592</sup> Canning, op cit, pp. 68-9

## THE SPORT OF ROWING

Boat Club, with a trip to the European Championships waiting for the top American crew.

**Canning:** “New Zealand jumped us at the settle. They held a half length or a little more. The other boats dropped back steadily.

“And then we reached the bridge – 750 gone, and we were still holding on to New Zealand. In fact, we were moving on them.

“Suddenly we were right there, right beside them, it seemed.

“And then they were moving away.

“We were nearing the finish. Hoffer was calling us up . . . It was over. We had lost by 2.1 seconds. New Zealand had the trophies, and we had a trip to Vichy.

“We had learned. We had improved.”<sup>4593</sup>

**Hoffman:** “After losing at the North Americans in St. Catharines, the first time we had ever lost as a crew, Harry brought us together the next Monday and said that we now had the opportunity to make a choice between being a very good college crew or deciding to become a true international-caliber crew. That choice, he suggested, was ours, and the opportunity to make it would be at the Nationals. I think we answered it pretty clearly in Philadelphia where in a downpour we raced level with New Zealand for much of the race and to a very strong result.”<sup>4594</sup>

The final regatta in the season was the **European Rowing Championships** in Vichy, France. New Zealand had returned home, but all the other major contenders would be present.

**Canning:** “There were three heats in the eights. We drew France, Great Britain, Yugoslavia and Ratzeburg. We had had a second shot at New Zealand and almost

caught them. Now we wanted to succeed against the Germans.

[Ratzeburg false started and was called back.]

“‘*Êtes-vous prêts? . . . Partez!*’ The start was good. We went screaming off the line and left everyone – everyone – wallowing.

“After 500 meters I checked to my right, and Ratzeburg still sat back half a length.

“‘Perhaps,’ I thought, ‘it was that false start of theirs.’ But the second 500 convinced me. We were still half a length out on Ratzeburg, and the rest were well back.

“‘It’s our baby,’ I told myself, ‘just pack away this second 1,000.’

“Then Ratzeburg began to move, and with their challenge we felt the pressure. We lacked experience in beating back challenges.

“In the heat of competition, if a very few circumstances are strategically changed, the upper hand can shift. No, I wasn’t going to let it happen. Pull, dammit, pull, and keep those mothers behind us!

“But they passed us and stole our victory. Why? How? I wasn’t sure. I was pretty befuddled at the end of it.

“East Germany and Russia joined Ratzeburg in the finals on the basis of the first day’s heats. We were to face Czechoslovakia, Norway and Spain in the repêchage the next day. Only the winner would advance. The Czechs had led East Germany for 1,500 meters before losing in their heat. It figured to be a tough race, but we killed them. We knew we had to, and we did.

“On Sunday, the summer’s climax was at hand. I was on my way to a starting line for the ninth time since Red Top. The experience was an old one, but somehow those fellows in the other boats made it an eerie first.

“I was conscious of only brief segments of this all-important test. At the 500-meter

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<sup>4593</sup> Canning, op cit, p. 70

<sup>4594</sup> Hoffman, op cit.

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

mark, Hoffer told us we were ahead. 'Not quite,' I thought, but it was a very close pack.

"I caught a flash of light to our starboard, but it was too far in front to be a crew. I looked. It was Ratzeburg! Those rats! How could they get out there a length in front?"

"Suddenly East Germany made a move. They had dropped about three-quarters of a length behind us somewhere in the first 1,000, and now they wanted back.

"Power 20,' I heard Hoffman order. A power 20 it was. We held the East Germans off, and they did not challenge again.

"Then we were at the 500-to-go mark, and everything was taking on finality. The Russian coxswain went crazy. I was wrenched out of my concentration by his incredible yelling. The Russians were sprinting. They, too, were trying to catch us.

"Hoffer called. It was our turn to go up. Mind and body screamed for mercy, but the sprint was upon us. The next thing I remember was looking over at the Russian 7-man as we crossed the line. [Canning was also rowing in the 7-seat.] We took second in a photo finish by .03 seconds.

"We had closed on Ratzeburg! The winning margin was only 1.57 seconds."<sup>4595</sup>

**Sigward**, Varsity spare: "Andy Larkin, the 6-man, maintains that the final in Vichy was the best race our generation [at Harvard] ever rowed."<sup>4596</sup>

**Larkin**: "A quarter of the way through the race, there were three seconds first to last. Halfway through the race, there were seven seconds, and we were in last place. Nobody seems to remember this. We passed four crews in the next 500, and at that point we were three seconds behind Ratzeburg, and in the last 500 we closed another second

and a half on Ratzeburg, and we were trying to keep the Russians behind us."<sup>4597</sup>

After the extraordinary summer of 1967, the Harvard crew entered the Olympic year as seasoned internationals.

### The 1968 Harvard Crew

Freshman Coach **Ted Washburn**: "With few exceptions, the key athletes in all of Harry Parker's most famous crews of the 1960s started out totally inexperienced. Seven of the eight oarsmen in Harvard's 1968 Olympic Eight had been dragged down to the boathouse as novices [after having been recruited to campus by other Harvard coaches].

"**Art Evans** 6'0" 185cm 195lb. 89kg, **Curt Canning** 6'3" 193cm 201lb. 91kg, and **Scott Steketee** 6'4" 196cm 214lb. 97kg were high school football stars. **Fritz Hobbs** 6'3" 193cm 199lb. 90kg was a tennis, football and hockey letterman who also played on Harvard's national champion squash team. **Dave Higgins** 6'1" 188cm 194lb. 88kg had won two high school letters each in football, wrestling and track and had firm plans to wrestle for Harvard. **Cleve Livingston** 6'2" 191cm 180lb. 82kg had lettered in basketball, swimming and skiing in high school and turned out for crew just to get in shape for freshman basketball."<sup>4598</sup>

"Collectively, they had won nearly forty varsity high school letters in twelve sports."<sup>4599</sup>

**Scott Steketee**: "Somebody had tried to talk to me about rowing when I arrived at Harvard, but I was going out for freshman football so I didn't pay any attention. My career ended prematurely a week before the Yale game when I came in from football practice, and I was peeing blood. They put

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<sup>4595</sup> Canning, op cit, pp. 72-4

<sup>4596</sup> Sigward, p. 49

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<sup>4597</sup> Larkin, personal conversation, 2008

<sup>4598</sup> Washburn, op cit.

<sup>4599</sup> Zang, p. 117

## THE SPORT OF ROWING



Ted Washburn, *Making of a Champion*

Two-seat **Cleve Livingston** had the most stylized head motion.  
His every stroke looked exactly like this!

me in the infirmary for a week, and I never played a down of football again.

“One of my roommates in the freshman dorm had rowed in prep school and was in the first freshmen boat. By the time sophomore year came around and I wasn’t playing any more football, I said, ‘What the hell. I’ll see what this is like.’ I spent the fall rowing with the freshmen, and over the winter, workouts were together. I had no particular expectation as to where I was going to end up, but I was pretty happy to end up in such a good Jayvee as we had. [They were undefeated.]

“Junior year I was hoping I would make the Varsity, and I confess to being quite surprised that I never got seat raced. It seemed like Harry had already decided.”<sup>4600</sup>

**Washburn:** “Certainly not all the rowers came out of exceptional, undefeated freshman first boats. **Andy Larkin**, the 6’5” 196cm 213lb. 97kg 6-man of the 1968 Olympic crew, had been a schoolboy cross-country runner and rowed as a novice in a strong second boat as a freshman.”<sup>4601</sup>

**Larkin:** “My cross country coach at Taft School was John Small. His brother, Bruce Small, coached crew at South Kent. As I was finishing Taft, he told me that I was too big to run in college and that I should think about crew.

“I met Bruce once in Mystic [Connecticut]. He looked at me, walked around me, and then declared that I should row 6-seat.

“Later I had early acceptance at both Harvard and Princeton. I asked John who had the better crew, because I wanted to row in the Olympics.

“In retrospect, I have to say he gave me good advice.”<sup>4602</sup>

Only 6’3” 193cm 196lb. 88kg, sophomore **Steve Brooks** had rowed before arriving at Harvard.

Altogether, they were the heaviest crew in Harvard history, and by the end of the regular 1968 season, most had never lost a collegiate race in their careers.

<sup>4600</sup> Steketee, personal conversation, 2008

<sup>4601</sup> Washburn, op cit. and Washburn, *Making of a Champion*

<sup>4602</sup> Larkin, personal correspondence, 2007



## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



Ted Washburn, *Making of a Champion*

“All this played out in some pretty colorful ways in a crew that certainly aimed at focusing a *ferocious* amount of power immediately at the catch.” – **Ted Washburn**

## THE SPORT OF ROWING

### Technique

Words alone cannot adequately describe the impact of Harvard crews on American rowing in the four years after 1964 . . . and words alone also cannot do justice to their striking appearance.

The Stop & Shop accelerating recovery was executed by the 1968 Harvard crew with astonishing finesse. Harry Parker described their hesitation at the finish:

“They sat there longer than the crews before them or after them. We got away from that a couple of years later.”<sup>4603</sup>

But it was their distinctive head bobbing at the entry which made the biggest impression on outsiders.

In the 1968 crew, **Curt Canning** in 7 and **Dave Higgins** in bow would lift their chins at the catch, while **Cleve Livingston** would drop and lift his head in a stylized motion that almost looks like an old-fashioned American football drop-kick.

**Andy Larkin** had what seemed the most violent motion, his head seeming to shudder and his long hair rustle at mid-drive due to the apparent violence of his catch.

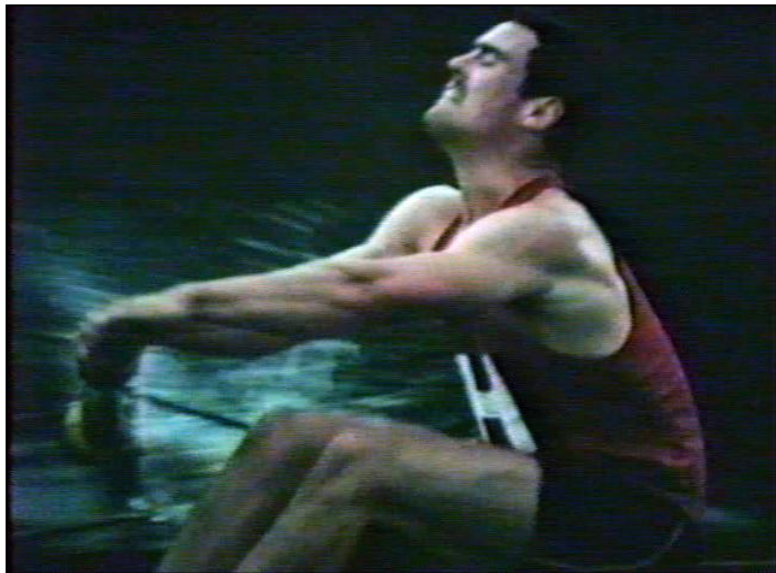
Freshman coach **Ted Washburn**, tongue firmly in cheek with characteristic Harvard humor: “Members of the 1968 crew were torn between their commitment to winning crew races and their interest in winning some of the traditional awards

given out at the annual crew banquet at Red Top.

“Relevant here is the intense competition between Dave Higgins and Harry Parker himself for the coveted ‘**Jutting Jaw Award**.’ Dave had mastered a jaw jut at the catch that was beginning to catch the attention of judges who in previous years had simply rubber-stamped the award to Harry.

“Also relevant is the fact that Cleve Livingston was trying to set a record for consecutive victories in the hotly-contested ‘**Bobbing Head Award**.’ He had perfected a bob so violently extreme as to literally intimidate the competition . . .

“But seriously, as for the odd head movements (especially Cleve’s), nobody was more surprised than the coaches. Our intent was to avoid allowing the chin to drop



Ted Washburn, *Making of a Champion*

### The Dave Higgins Jaw Jut

toward the chest as the rower extended to the catch in order to avoid upper body slump and lack of readiness to take and transmit the load at the catch. The bobbing heads were unintended consequences – absolutely not to be emulated!

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<sup>4603</sup> spoken during the crew’s 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion row in Cambridge in May, 1993.



## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



Ted Washburn, *Making of a Champion*

### Steve Brooks

Trials 3-seat, Olympic Stroke

Sophomores **Steve Brooks** and **Art Evans** were the only additions to the 1967 World Silver Medal Harvard Crew.

**Brooks** (above): 0°, +30° to -20°, 0-6, 0-9, 0-10, ferryman's finish. Even with obvious emphasis on leg drive, the *Schubschlag* force application was evident.

"I worked on this issue with the athletes as freshmen. Commands to effect this ranged from 'Keep your chin up as you reach out to take the water!' to 'Make sure your face stays perpendicular!' to 'Keep your eyes looking at the head of the guy in front of you as you extend to the catch!' etc.

"With some, obviously the message never quite penetrated, and all this played out in some pretty colorful ways in a crew that certainly aimed at focusing a *ferocious* amount of power immediately at the catch."<sup>4604</sup>

In 1968, Harry Parker was more interested in the end result out at the blade than what was going on inside the gunwales.

**Parker:** "We *really* rowed hard, a hard catch! I shudder thinking of it today. I watch these guys row off the dock now [in reunion rows at the Head of the Charles] and think, 'Oh, my God!'

"But we actually rowed like that . . ."<sup>4605</sup>

"For the record, I don't think you should pay too much attention to the head movements of the individual oarsmen in the 1968 crew. What was distinctive about the way the crew rowed was the rhythm out of bow . . . a slight hesitation after the release,

<sup>4604</sup> Washburn, personal correspondence, 2007

<sup>4605</sup> Parker, op cit.

## THE SPORT OF ROWING



Ted Washburn

**Jake Fiechter**

then a pronounced acceleration into the stern prior to the catch . . . and then a decided emphasis on a quick, vertical lift of the hands just prior to a strong engagement of both the legs and BACK . . . resulting in a VERY HARD CATCH . . . hence the exaggerated head motion of a few of them.

“I would argue that the timing of the blades entering the water and the motion of the bodies was very closely connected in order to avoid checking the boat.

“The hard catches were definitely coached into them . . . and we probably overdid it to a certain degree.”<sup>4606</sup>

**Larkin:** “My head motions back in 1968 were certainly not conscious. Perhaps with all the effort at the catch, the head was tossed around during the drive, like a loose weight.

“My head does not move as much anymore today [2007] because I no longer row as hard, but I have also deliberately changed my style of rowing because I have been doing lots of sculling, and I am working on a smoother, easier stroke, practiced particularly when I do long distance sculling.”<sup>4607</sup>

**Cleve Livingston** also went through an evolution over the years. Four years later, when he again rowed in the 1972 U.S. Olympic eight for Parker, his distinctive head drop was much diminished but still visible. By 1993, when the 1968 crew took to the water for their 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion, it had disappeared entirely. Harry’s response?

“Cleve, that head’s a little more stable.”<sup>4608</sup>

### Evolution in Force Application

Harry has never been an ideologue when it comes to rowing technique, so he did not stay long with his initial *Kernschlag* response to Tokyo. What has always guided him was what worked for his crews.

**Hamlin:** “Rowing techniques have come full circle. When I started rowing in the fall of 1966 as a Freshman, I remember seeing pictures of the Penn crews under **Joe Burk** rowing with pencil blades and a stroke characterized by quick hands away from the finish, slow slide, a deliberate placement of the blade at the catch, and an acceleration from catch to finish.”<sup>4609</sup>

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<sup>4607</sup> Larkin, op cit.

<sup>4608</sup> S. Brooks, 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion film

<sup>4609</sup> i.e. the Light Boat Squeeze. See Chapter 94.

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<sup>4606</sup> Parker, personal correspondence, 2007

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

“We rowed Stop & Shop, with a power curve that accentuated the first third of the stroke.

“At some point during my tenure at Harvard [through 1969], the pendulum began to swing away from this extreme to a more tempered stroke: a little faster out of bow, slower and more controlled up the slide, a quick but gentler and more deliberate catch, and an acceleration of the stroke from catch to finish: a rhythm not unlike that of a good golf swing or tennis forehand, the pitching of a ball, or the swing of a baseball bat.

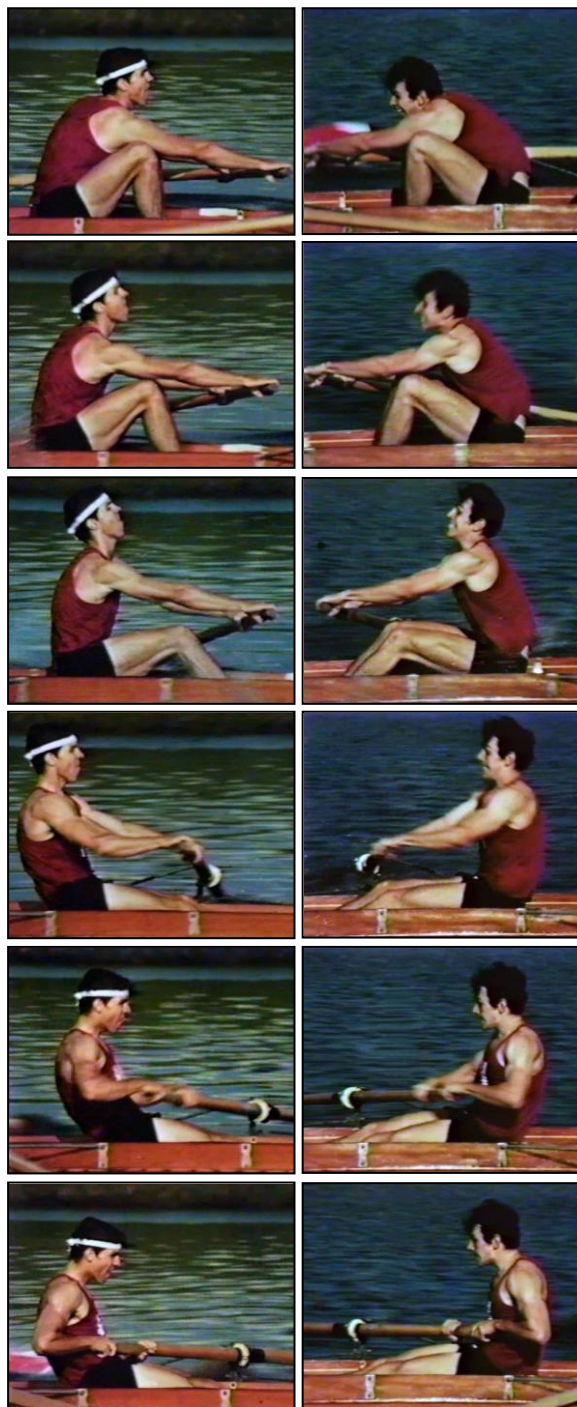
“Perhaps this evolution was the product of transferring sculling technique to sweep rowing or an effort to have the oarsmen move with more sympathy for the flow of the boat. I leave that rationale up to Harry.

“To my eye, many of the attributes of the technique I saw in Joe Burk’s boats, I see today in 2005’s fastest crews.”<sup>4610</sup>

The fascinating thing about the 1968 Harvard crew was that if you looked at the individuals close up, all you noticed was the head-bobbing and stroke-seat Art Evans watching his blade, but if you took the long view, what caught the eye was the elegant arc of the back swing.

The 1968 boat was a crew at the end of the first transition of Harvard Style under Harry Parker. The engine room had been led since the previous year by **Curt Canning** and **Andy Larkin**. At first glance, their technique appeared to be so different. Canning was smooth as butter, but if you looked at Larkin, all your eye could see was his head shake.

Look closer. While Canning’s posture was impeccable, Larkin hunched at the catch, but by Frame 3 on this page, their techniques had merged. Canning was like Larkin with the chin lift but without the head shake.



Ted Washburn, *Making of a Champion*

**Curt Canning**

+5°, +20° to -30°, 0-6, 0-9, 0-10

**Andy Larkin**

0°, +30° to -20°, 0-7, 0-9, 0-10

Their force application was similar, but their **appearance** at the catch was quite different.

<sup>4610</sup> Hamlin, op cit.



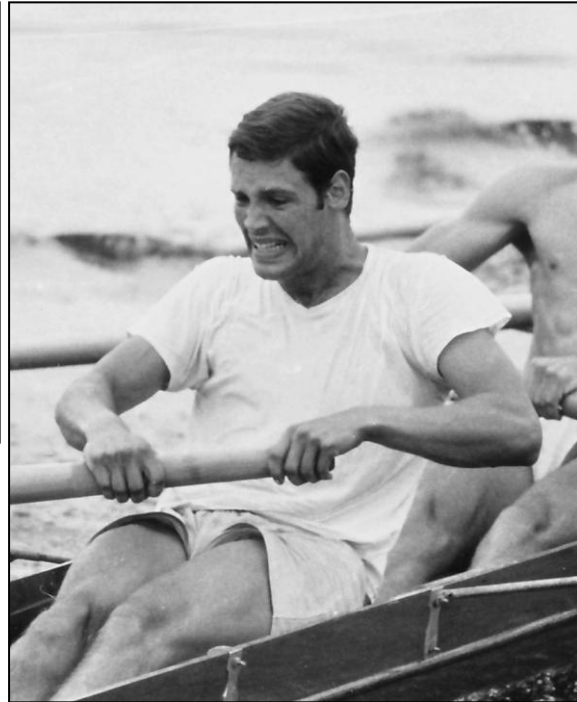
## THE SPORT OF ROWING



Ted Washburn

### Ian Gardiner

1967 Harvard Varsity Stroke  
European Championship Silver Medal  
Gardiner's visible aggressiveness at the catch  
blinded many observers to his  
equally aggressive effort to the release.



Philip Mallory

### Ian Gardiner

*Kernschlag or Schubschlag?*

In 1968, sophomore **Art Evans** replaced senior **Ian Gardiner** at stroke. **Ted Washburn**: "Harry wanted Ian in there, but his hands were tied. Seat races ruled."<sup>4611</sup>

**Gardiner**: "I fell in love with a Radcliffe girl and got mono. I spent January

in the hospital (including exams). I just could not go the distance in the seat races in March – too weak still.

"I got strong during the spring, but the boat had been chosen and no selection camp in '68. Bummer! I rowed on the Third Varsity that spring and learned another important lesson – You may even work harder in the Third, but will never catch the V!! Bummer again!!"<sup>4612</sup>

The only other change to the '67 boat was sophomore **Steve Brooks** replacing the graduated **Jake Fiechter** at 3-oar. Unlike some of their older teammates, the new men kept their heads level at the catch.

Following Evans, the effort by both Canning and Larkin to continue to accelerate the boat all the way through the stroke was evident on their faces throughout the drive, and that effort continued all the way to their hint of ferryman's finish.

<sup>4611</sup> Washburn, personal conversation, 2007

<sup>4612</sup> Gardiner, personal correspondence, 2007

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

The 1960s were a period of social and political upheaval in the United States and around the world, and Harvard seemed to be leading the counterculture charge. They were the first with European equipment, the first to grow their hair long, and since they never lost their shirts, they had the oldest, dirtiest uniforms around and were the first to make hippie grunge chic.

In an era of civil rights marches and antiwar protests, Harvard was also perceived to be the most politically active.

As a crew, Harvard quickly achieved icon status, and many other college crews attempted to copy their techniques, the accelerated recoveries and especially the “explosive” catches, which would shake the locks of their hair flowing from under their dirty bandannas.

But were they really explosive? Was their force application only about a *Kernschlag* catch, as most outsiders assumed and adopted? **Ian Gardiner**’s force graph shows a strong initial *Kernschlag* effort, but the rest of the stroke mirrors a *Schubschlag* parabola.

Lawrence Terry, Jr., class of 1968, was one of the great Harvard stroke-men of the era. He stroked the undefeated 1966 Eastern Sprints and Thames Challenge Cup Champion Harvard Lightweights, coached by M.I.T.-grad **Bill Weber**, and then switched to heavyweight.

Son of the coach of the 1936 Olympic coxed-four<sup>4613</sup> made up of Harvard grads rowing for Union Boat Club, **Monk Terry** would stroke the 1968 Olympic coxless-four and later the 1972 Silver Medal eight: “Harry always used to say that you’re not accelerating the slide on the recovery, so the slide’s moving at the same speed, but when you get up to the catch and before you go

the other way you’re going around the bend, and we did it *hard!* So we came up there, and it was *wham!* Everything happened at the same time. The catch was fast and hard, and the backsplash thing was a matter of how fast you could get it in the water. It was pretty intense. Our catches were *not* soft.

“But I never thought of hammering the catch. Instead, I thought of being *quick!*”<sup>4614</sup>

“Fast and hard.” Fast . . . or hard . . . or both? They are *not* the same thing.

**Steve Brooks**: “We certainly were encouraged to be quick at the catch, but it was a *speed* thing rather than a *power* thing. There was an effort to get on it as quickly as you could.

“The 1968 Olympic boat felt *great* up at race cadence. It was certainly the best thing I’d ever been in. We weren’t hammering. I think the whole thing was pretty smooth and uniform.”<sup>4615</sup>

This is a description of *Schubschlag*, not *Kernschlag*. The ‘68 crew may or may not have begun their Harvard careers faithfully following the GDR definition of *Kernschlag*: “solid stroke with a hard beginning,”<sup>4616</sup> but despite their continuing histrionics after the catch, force application by 1968 was **definitely** *Schubschlag*.

And it still is. As I got to know the members of the 1968 Harvard crew while writing this chapter, I was invited to join them in a short row in an eight at Red Top on the occasion of their 40<sup>th</sup> Reunion.

From inside the boat, the Stop & Shop recovery felt remarkably smooth and disciplined, but the gathering momentum into the catch was stunning. One had to give one’s self entirely over to the increasing rush into the stern, and at the end of it there was no sense of transition. One instant we

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<sup>4613</sup> See Chapter 59.

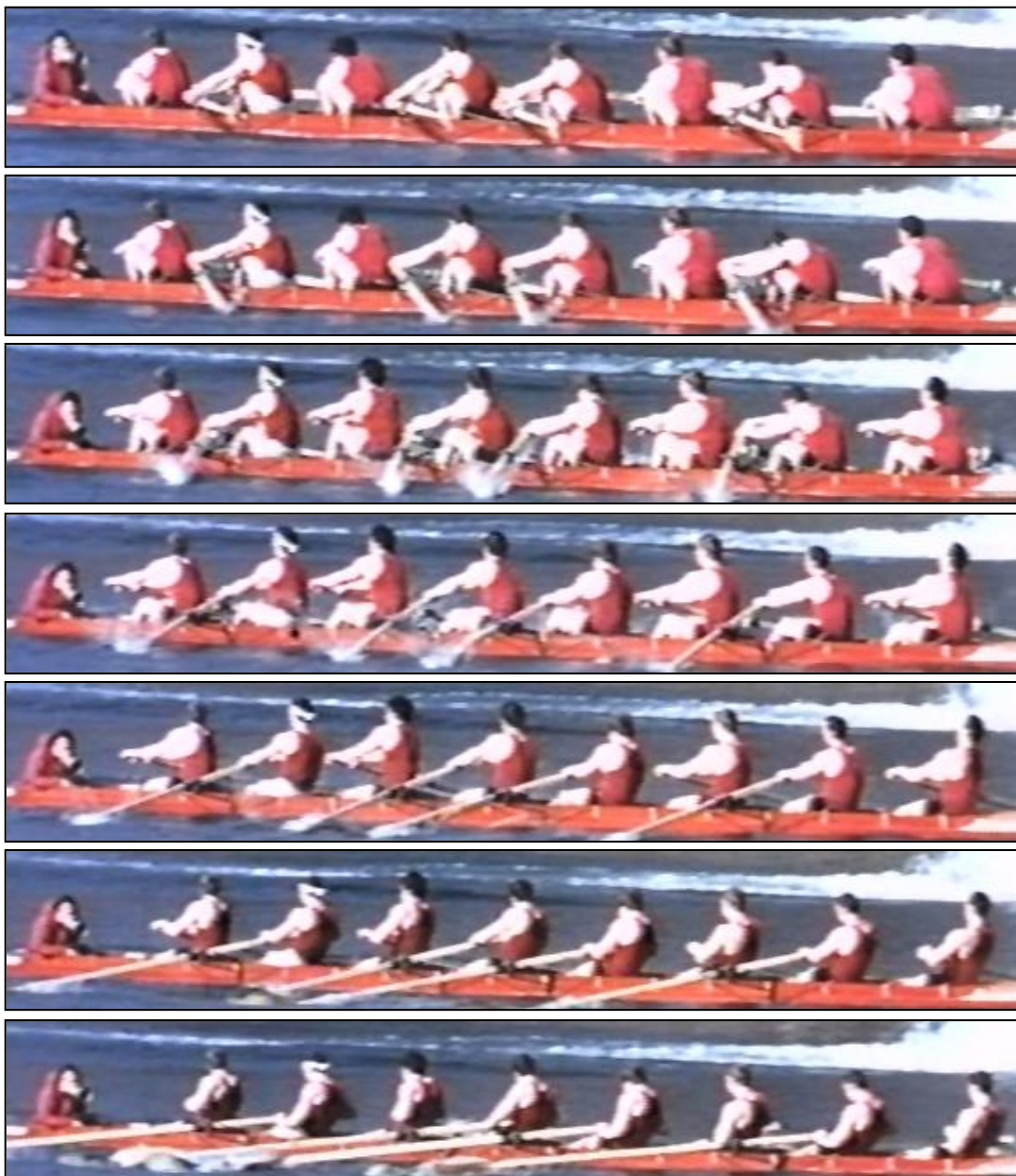
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<sup>4614</sup> Terry, personal conversation, 2005

<sup>4615</sup> S. Brooks, personal conversation, 2005

<sup>4616</sup> Herberger, p. 74

## THE SPORT OF ROWING



Ted Washburn, *Making of a Champion*

### 1968 Harvard Varsity Eight

Coxswain **Paul Hoffman**,

Stroke **Art Evans** 6'0" 185cm 195lb. 89kg, 7 **Curt Canning** 6'3" 193cm 201lb. 91kg,  
6 **Andy Larkin** 6'5" 196cm 213lb. 97kg, 5 **Scott Steketee** 6'4" 196cm 214lb. 97kg,  
4 **Fritz Hobbs** 6'3" 193cm 199lb. 90kg, 3 **Steve Brooks** 6'3" 191cm 198lb. 90kg,  
2 **Cleve Livingston** 6'2" 191cm 180lb. 82kg, Bow 1 **Dave Higgins** 6'1" 188cm 194lb. 88kg

Considerable variety in catch position (Frames 1, 2)

Strong attack at catch followed by great suspension at mid-drive (Frames 3-5)

**Evans:** +5°, +25° to -20°, **0-8**, 0-9, 0-10, ferryman's finish

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

were accelerating up the slide, the next instant the pullthrough had *already* begun.

From the entry to the release, force application was consistent and relentless. The boat smoothly accelerated all the way until the oars left the water, and the harder we pulled, the better the boat felt.

I was immediately reminded of the pullthrough of the 1956 Yale Olympic crew, which I had also been able to experience first-had two years earlier. As radical as the Stop & Shop recovery was perceived to be in its time, by 1968 the *pullthrough* of the Harvard crew was firmly in the center of the American collegiate mainstream *Schubschlag* tradition that had started with **Ellis Ward**<sup>4617</sup> and **Charles Courtney**.<sup>4618</sup>

Why had Harvard evolved from *Kernschlag* to *Schubschlag*? Harry gives credit to his athletes.

**Steve Brooks:** “I’ve had three sons who rowed for Harry, so I have been watching Harvard boats with great interest over the years, and year-to-year I get the impression that the boats were changing. I think that Harry tends to find the most competitive, able people, put them in a boat, make sure that they can row more-or-less together, row a lot of steady state, and then things kind of evolve into the best kind of stroke sequence that works for them.”<sup>4619</sup>

**Parker:** “The really good oarsmen figure out how to make the boat go no matter how they are coached. They have a feel for it, and it happens.

“More often than not, the coaches learn from *them*, rather than vice versa.”<sup>4620</sup>

### Seat Racing

Harry’s wife, 1984 Olympian **Kathy Keeler**.<sup>4621</sup> “The best thing he ever said to

me was that a good coach lets athletes be as good as they can be and doesn’t mess them up.”<sup>4622</sup>

This concept is not a new one. Nineteenth Century English Orthodox “oracle” **Edmond Warre:** “A real stroke, like a poet, *‘nascitur non fit.*”<sup>4623, 4624</sup>

The challenge for Harry came in how to reconcile his desire not to let his responsibilities as teacher interfere with his athletes’ natural tendencies.

Part of the answer for Harry became **seat racing**, which tests an oarsman’s ability to move boats without the intervention of the coach. The guys who instinctively knew or could figure out how to win seat races rose to the top and set the tone for the others, no matter what technique the coach might think he was coaching.

As a selection technique, seat racing was not new. Historian Tom Mendenhall credited Yale Coach **Ed Leader** with its invention in the 1920s,<sup>4625</sup> but if so, the practice had been long forgotten by the 1960s.

**Parker:** “We used one-on-one seat racing at Harvard starting with my very first year of coaching the freshmen, in eights up through 1963, but also in fours starting in 1964. We also used it prior to the Olympic Trials in fours in 1964.”<sup>4626</sup>

The concept matched Harry’s enormous respect for the inherent talent of great natural rowers to his desire not to interfere with its free expression.

**Harry:** “You can teach boat moving. That’s what I do for a living, but some are

<sup>4617</sup> See Chapters 36 and 37.

<sup>4618</sup> See Chapter 31 ff.

<sup>4619</sup> S. Brooks, op cit.

<sup>4620</sup> Parker, op cit, 2004

<sup>4621</sup> See Chapter 148.

<sup>4622</sup> Qtd. by Ed Winchester, *Deconstructing Harry, Rowing News*, December, 2004, p. 49

<sup>4623</sup> ‘is born, not made.’

<sup>4624</sup> Warre, p. 42

<sup>4625</sup> See Chapter 52

<sup>4626</sup> Parker, op cit, 2006



## THE SPORT OF ROWING

going to do it better than others, no matter how well I teach them.”<sup>4627</sup>

**Gregg Stone:** “It was bigger than seat racing. Harry established a Darwinian free-for-all which allowed the big, competitive athletes he had recruited to sort themselves out.

“We competed ALL the time. We raced eights every Friday afternoon in the fall, for blood. We ran the bridges for time, or in races. We competed on the erg, in the weight room, on the soccer field, cross country skiing, in pairs and singles.

“Occasionally, fists flew or food was dumped on someone during a dinner after practice, but those of us who stayed the course liked it.”<sup>4628</sup>

In 1966, it was actually **Kent Mitchell**<sup>4629</sup> who introduced seat racing to National Team Selection, and the story is a good one:

**Mitchell:** “I think I originally got the idea for seat racing from **Stan Pocock** at Lake Washington Rowing Club. In ‘64, we were a pair, Ed Ferry, Conn Findlay and myself, and Stan was trying to put together an eight for the Olympic Trials at Lake Washington.”<sup>4630</sup>

“Conn said to him, ‘If you put both Ed and me in the eight, and you can get below our self-qualifying time of 6:00 or something, then we’ll give some thought about being in the eight. Otherwise, we’re staying in the pair.’

“So Stan switched two out and two in. That’s probably where the idea began, but that was two-for-two, because Conn and Ed were a unit. All or none.

“Anyway, from there it sort of evolved in my mind.

“The first year the National Rowing Foundation funded a full team for the World Championships was 1966 in Bled, Yugoslavia, and the Nationals in Philadelphia became the open trials to qualify. There were a number of American entries in the coxed-four event, but also New Zealand and Australia, who were on their way to Europe.

“It turned out New Zealand first, Australia second, Union third and Stanford fourth.

“We had seven days before the plane was leaving for Europe, and the Foreign Regatta Committee decided our fours were not good enough. After all, we already had two foreign crews that came here and licked us!

“So they came to me and said, ‘Okay, Kent, you’re the coach of the Stanford four. We want you to take nine people, these two guys from your boat, all four guys and the coxswain from the Union boat, and three more guys, Billy Maher from Detroit among them, and go to Boston and figure out who ought to be in our four.

“‘We’re going to send all nine people, so everybody gets to make the trip, but you decide how you want to do it. You’re going to be the small boats coach, and your immediate job is to come up with a better combination.’

“So we went to Harvard. Harry had been coaching the Union crew, and we were rowing out of Harry’s boathouse, so I figured the politics of this one could get *really* thick *really* fast.

“Thank God I knew Harry extremely well.

“This was a Tuesday, and we were leaving the following Tuesday, so I sat down with the guys and said, ‘Here’s what I’m going to do. I’m going to have Harry continue coaching his crew, and I’m going to take the five strays. I’m going to pick a four out of my five.

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<sup>4627</sup> Ibid, 2004

<sup>4628</sup> Stone, personal correspondence, 2005

<sup>4629</sup> See Chapter 82.

<sup>4630</sup> See Chapter 85.

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

“‘Union, you go out and do your own thing because we’re going to have a 2,000 meter race on Saturday, and here’s the deal: If you guys win, you go intact, no changes, but if you *lose* the race, I want you to agree to abide by *anything* I say as to who goes in the boat and leave it up to me what I do in the following forty-eight hours.

“‘That’s the deal. If you all commit to that, I want it right now up front so everybody knows what’s going to happen.’

“‘So they all said, ‘Sure. Fine. Let’s go.’

“‘In the race, the guys that I was working with fell behind a length in the first 500, caught up at the 1,000, and won by two lengths. So then we had a little meeting, some downcast, some grins. I said, ‘You remember the deal, and here’s what we’re going to do. We’re going seat racing.’

“‘And they all said, ‘What’s that?’

“‘I explained: ‘During a series of three workouts, morning, evening and morning, we’re going to change the boats around, exchanging two guys at a time, and then based on the results, I’m going to pick a boat.

“‘I’m going with the boat of the people who win the seat races. Period.’

“‘I laid out a course, putting in two parallel pairs of stakes half a mile apart up by the Northeastern boathouse, and then we did it. I controlled the stroke rate, and I got a time for each one.

“‘One day into it, I was doing my math, and Harry came over to me and asked, ‘What are you doing?’ I explained it to him, how one guy had beaten another guy, and you know how Harry is . . . pretty taciturn.

“‘He walked away and didn’t say anything.

“‘So I kept doing it, and eventually I announced the boat.

“‘Coincidentally, the four guys, **Larry Hough** [Stanford], **Frank Watson** [Yale], **Bill Maher** [Detroit BC] and **Robert Sandel** [MIT] [with Harvard Coxswain

**Dick Grossman**] had never sat in a boat together in any of the switches that I did. So their first workout wasn’t until Bled.

“‘Now the U.S. had not made the four-with finals in any European, World or Olympic event since the Washington guys in 1948, and eighteen years later in 1966 there were twenty-five fours-with in Bled, including East Germany, which was far and away the favorite.

“‘Our boat got beaten up in their heat, but they made it through the repêchages into the semi-final. East Germany was in one semi-final, we were in the other, and our boat won, only maybe a half-second off East Germany’s time. This was a group that didn’t even *know* each other and had only been rowing together three or four *days* tops!

“‘So they got into the final, but they got in trouble with a bad stroke in the first 500. They didn’t know each other that well. They hadn’t taken enough strokes with each other over a period of years, and they couldn’t pull it back together and placed sixth.

“‘They didn’t have another race like their semi-final. The consistency was not there, but in the regatta we wiped out Australia and New Zealand. They were horizon shots. It was not even close.

“‘We came back, and all these articles got written saying, ‘Look what you can do with an all-star team. In just a couple of days, you can go from nowhere.’ The bottom line was that everybody got jumping on this concept.

“‘I wrote an article in 1966 and said, ‘Don’t believe it. This was largely dumb luck. Seat races *do* identify things, but you’ve got to have time. You can’t just throw people together and expect it to happen, and you’ve got to have *years* together to really compete at this level.’

“‘In 1967, they started a small boat camp at Laconia, New Hampshire. In ‘68, more Laconia, and then in ‘72 they closed off the

## THE SPORT OF ROWING

National Team to open challenge by clubs, and you could just see the club thing shrinking. The incentive to get involved in summer rowing disappeared, and we lived through that for more than twenty years.

"In 1966, I introduced seat racing to U.S. National Team rowing, so I feel partly responsible for all the National Camps that followed."<sup>4631</sup>

**Parker:** "I was very impressed by the thoroughness with which Kent Mitchell did his seat racing in 1966."<sup>4632</sup>

### The Impact of Seat Racing on the Harvard Technique

Seat racing in fours must have had a lot to do with determining the direction that the Harvard Style evolved because it rewarded moving boats, especially small boats.

**Monk Terry's** experience is a case in point. Monk's father had started him in the sport when he was still a small child.

**Terry:** "It was all about small boats. I grew up rowing in a single first of all and rowing in a four in high school. And of course we did seat races in fours at Harvard leading up to spring break

"In small boats, you quickly learn you've got to keep pushing it to the release. You can't just have a hard catch and make the boat go fast enough to stay up with everybody. In my mind, the so-called 'hard' catch was the setup for being able to finish the stroke, which meant accelerating through the drive."<sup>4633</sup>

This approach to force application is the essence of *Schubschlag* and quite the opposite of the approach to boat moving that most of those attempting to copy Harvard were adopting during the 1960s.

As **Steve Gladstone** has said, "That's the danger of copying. You look at a crew and ask, 'What is it that's making them fast?' and you're not understanding exactly what they're trying to do."<sup>4634</sup>

**Terry:** "A four is like the next stage up from a pair-with, and rowing in a pair-with is the ultimate in pushing a boat because you get it in there, and then you've got to accelerate or it just dies.

"I rowed with **Larry Hough**<sup>4635</sup> in a pair-with at the Nationals in 1970, and then we rowed the straight-pair in the Worlds. I loved rowing with him. Talk about strong. What a beast!

"Larry and I were fast, but we just didn't train enough that year. When I think about how much we trained, it was pathetic, but we were fourth fastest in the world that year.

"We didn't make the finals. The three medalists qualified ahead of us in our semi-final. We won the petites.

"The four racing and the pair racing with Larry had a lot to do with me keeping in touch with the fact that you've got to work to the finish no matter what you're doing at the catch."<sup>4636</sup>

Besides the explosive entry that others imagined they saw in Harvard crews, the other attribute of the Harvard Style copied by outsiders, often with disastrous consequences, was the recovery rhythm.

**Terry:** "As for Stop & Shop, it was the idea that once you're moving into the catch, you don't stop. That was the key. No hesitation at the catch."<sup>4637</sup>

**Brooks:** "When we were at low cadence just warming up or something, it looked embarrassing, stopping at the finish and then

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<sup>4631</sup> Mitchell, personal conversation, 2005

<sup>4632</sup> Parker, op cit, 2006

<sup>4633</sup> Terry, op cit.

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<sup>4634</sup> Gladstone, personal conversation, 2005

<sup>4635</sup> 1967 and 1969 European Champion in the coxless-pair. See Chapter 110.

<sup>4636</sup> Terry, op cit.

<sup>4637</sup> Ibid.

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

flying up to the catch, but at race cadence, it didn't feel all that 'different.'<sup>4638</sup>

Outsiders were often less subtle and less successful in applying their interpretations of Stop & Shop.

### 1968 Olympic Trials

Harvard graduate and noted sports journalist **Roger Angell** interviewed Parker at the site of the 1968 Olympic Trials for *The New Yorker*.

**Angell:** "Here in Long Beach, he was on the eve of a regatta that would test the value of two years of nearly unceasing work: his Varsity might become the first Harvard crew ever to be selected as Olympic representatives. He knew that a similarly accomplished and admired crew of his had failed in the 1964 Trials, yet he discussed the coming races without a trace of tension or excitement.

"Last summer, almost the same Harvard crew won at the Pan American Games and then came in a disastrous fourth in an international race<sup>4639</sup> at St. Catharines, Ontario behind New Zealand, Australia and Ratzeburg.

"Later in Philadelphia, it improved its margin while losing again to New Zealand, and traveled to the European Championships in Vichy, where it lost to Ratzeburg but beat everyone else, winning second place over an excellent Russian crew.

"'Last summer is hard to assess,' Parker went on, 'but I think the total experience made this crew realize that it was equal to the best of the world. If we go to Mexico, we at least have real hopes of coming out on top. This crew is faster and stronger than our crews of '64 and '65, and they're a lot

more relaxed off the water. They have more fun.'<sup>4640</sup>

Only one member of the 1967 crew, Jake Fiechter, had graduated. The rest returned to train for Mexico in 1968.

Meanwhile, Parker's nemesis, Allen Rosenberg, had left Philadelphia for Upstate New York, but a new rival had arisen to challenge Harvard at the 1968 Trials, Vesper's next door neighbor on Boathouse Row, the **University of Pennsylvania**. Thanks to successive groups of champion freshmen recruited and coached by Ted Nash, Joe Burk had a formidable crew that had been getting closer and closer to Harry's eight as the collegiate season progressed.<sup>4641</sup>

**Angell** described the 1968 Harvard crew: "The members of this group were considered exceptional in Cambridge, and not just as athletes but also for their intelligence and maturity. Of the four graduating seniors, two were headed for the Peace Corps, one was planning a career teaching, and the fourth was entering the Harvard Medical School.

"None of them, apparently, had wasted any time at the barber's in the previous months. I counted three separate mustache styles.

"Five of the Harvard crewmen [later] circulated a letter among other white athletes on the United States Olympic Team urging support of the **Olympic Project for Human Rights**, a group of black athletes that may undertake a boycott or some other form of protest at the Games as a means of dramatizing racial inequalities.

"This action was discussed by the Harvard crewmen before the Trials, and one of them told me that it was 'another reason Harvard had to win.'<sup>4642</sup>

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<sup>4638</sup> S. Brooks, op cit.

<sup>4639</sup> The North American Championships

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<sup>4640</sup> Roger Angell, 00:00.05, *The New Yorker*, August 10, 1968, p. 72

<sup>4641</sup> See Chapter 95.

<sup>4642</sup> Angell, op cit, p. 75

## THE SPORT OF ROWING

Harvard felt they had to win because they assumed that Penn was not going to support the black protest. Penn was on the other side of the cultural chasm that was dividing the country as a whole.

**Angell:** “The Penn rowers looked a little younger to me, but this might have been an illusory contrast in life-style suggested by the Penns’ neater haircuts and firmly set jaws.

“I asked **Gardner Cadwalader** about this difference, and he answered with considerable heat. ‘I don’t *understand* Harvard’s attitude.’<sup>4643,4644</sup>

### The Heats

According to **Angell**, the night before the heats, the Harvard men were “encouraging one another with their light-hearted disparagement of the Penn crew’s intensity and generally gung-ho attitude toward the sport.

“They told me that at an earlier race they had heard the Penns roaring like storm troopers as they carried out their shell. [Andy] Larkin jumped up on his bed and shouted, ‘Beat Harvard! Win the Sprints! Win the Sprints!’ and they all laughed.

“‘No kidding,’ said [Scott] Steketee. ‘I think it’s getting like Big Ten football down there at Penn.’”<sup>4645</sup>

**Dietrich Rose**<sup>4646</sup> had taken over from Rosenberg at Vesper, and his crew had drawn Penn and three others in the **first heat**. Penn started slow, took the lead before the 1,000 and had two lengths with 500 meters to go.

Vesper sprinted at 43 and closed back a length, but Penn crossed the line unchallenged.

In the **second heat**, “Harvard surprised itself with a flashy start and won unextended by nearly two lengths.

“The times were more interesting than the races; Harvard in an unfavorable outside lane had rowed 6:03.3 while Penn had broken the course record, coming in at 5:56.1, and Vesper was clocked at 5:59.6. Only two of the Harvards had bothered to wear their official crimson jerseys for the race, but hair and cool had clearly been challenged.”<sup>4647</sup>

### The Finals

**The New Yorker:** “Race day morning, and a stiff, surprising tailwind was up, snapping the pennants over the boathouse. All the lanes would be equal today and the times remarkable.

“Now it was time, and from upcourse the loudspeakers brought us the starting instructions and lanes – Washington on the inside, then Vesper, Harvard and Penn. A long silence, then the odd, international cry of the starter: ‘Êtes-vous prêts? Partez!’

“Andy Larkin had told me that Penn would go off like a machine, while Harvard, not famous for its starts . . . ‘Somewhere, we’ll get it together.’

“But here it was Vesper that jumped away first at 45 with Penn and Harvard just a hair back.

“Within 100 metres, the Penn machine was in gear and had pulled away by a seat or two, with Harvard and Vesper even.

“At the 500 mark, Penn had a one second margin over Vesper and almost a second and a half over Harvard. Penn was rowing a beat or two higher than the others. Now, half-way down the course, Vesper

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<sup>4643</sup> Truth be told, forty years later, he still doesn’t.

<sup>4644</sup> Ibid.

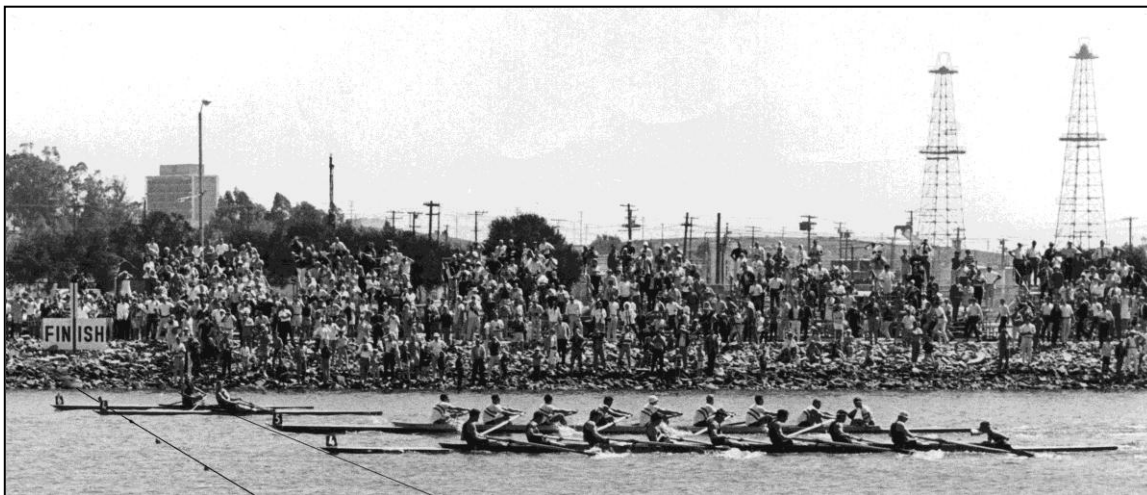
<sup>4645</sup> Ibid, p. 76

<sup>4646</sup> See Chapter 107.

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<sup>4647</sup> Angell, op cit, p. 82

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



Steve Brooks

### 1968 Olympic Eights Trials Final

Alamitos Bay

The crews virtually tied 11 feet or 3.4 meters before the finish (the left of the two lines above).

Penn was at the catch, the slowest part of its stroke cycle.

Harvard was at the release, beginning the fastest part of its stroke cycle.

faltered, and it became a two-boat race with Penn still a few seats up.

“Parker had told me that he had hoped to keep Penn within reach during the first two quarters and to move on them in the third, but the Penn margin was still a second and a half at 1,500 metres. The boats were in full sight with the red-and-white striped Penn jerseys plainly in front.

“The shells surged toward us up the bright water, quicker and larger, bending and reaching together, and we were all on our feet and shouting.

“Harvard’s stroke of 39 was holding Penn’s 41, and now the Harvard sprint began. The beat rose and then, incredibly, rose again, with Penn roughening and splashing a bit now and Harvard, the nearer shell, eating up the margin.

“Each slim bow, with its white rubber ball on the stem, surged ahead by turns as each double bank of oars dipped and drove, but Harvard was gaining visible inches at each exchange.

“They went across the finish line together to a sustained, incredulous roar from the banks, and there was no way – absolutely no way – to tell which had won.”<sup>4648</sup>

From within the boats, the problem of judging who had won was complicated by the fact that Harvard’s Stämpfli shell had shorter bow and stern decks than Penn’s Pocock.

*News and Views of Harvard Sports:* “‘Seat-ways we were there,’ said **Curt Canning**, Harvard’s senior captain, ‘but there was that matter of the length of the bow.’

“When the two eights crossed the line, the naked eye could not separate one from the other. ‘All I knew,’ Parker said, ‘is that we were with them. I thought there was a

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<sup>4648</sup> Ibid, pp. 82-4

## THE SPORT OF ROWING

good chance we had won, but I was prepared to have it go the other way.<sup>4649</sup>

*The New Yorker*: “We waited. For a full seven minutes we waited for the verdict from the photo-finish camera, while the shells lay dead in the water at the end of the course, the spent oarsmen doubled over their oars and exchanging murmured speculations. The huddled judges broke up at last, and the news spread, first by word of mouth and then officially: Harvard would go to Mexico. The winning margin was four inches.

“The picture showed Harvard clearly ahead with Penn coming off the drive at the finish. The times were unbelievable – 5:40.55 to 5:40.60. The difference, by Longines, was five one-hundredths of a second.

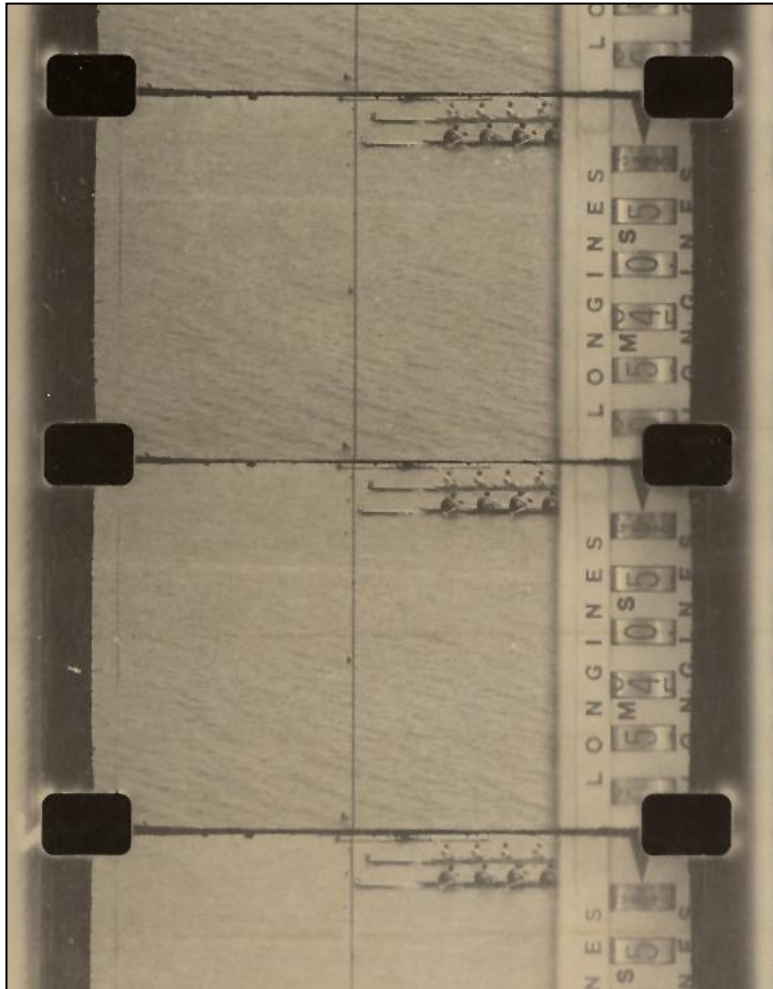
“The rowers exchanged grave handshakes, and the Penn giants gathered miserably around a print of the unalterable photo.<sup>4650</sup>

A year earlier, 7-seat **Curt Canning** had written: “We lacked experience in beating back challenges.”<sup>4651</sup> Harvard had gained that experience at the Pan American Games, North American Championships, U.S. Championships and European Championships during the summer of 1967.

<sup>4649</sup> *Crimson Oarsmen Win Olympic Berth, News and Views of Harvard Sports*, July 31, 1968, pp. 1-4

<sup>4650</sup> Angell, op cit, pp. 82-4

<sup>4651</sup> Canning, op cit, pp. 72-4



Luther Jones

### 1968 Olympic Eights Trials Official Finish Photo

One might surmise that they would not have won in Long Beach were it not for the previous summer.

*The New Yorker*: “Parker told me that his rowers would have a week off before resuming daily practice on the Charles, and that they would get a month of high-altitude training at Gunnison, Colorado before departing for the Games.



## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

“Waiting for them in Mexico would be Russia, New Zealand and, very probably, Ratzeburg.”<sup>4652</sup>

Long Beach turned out to be Harvard’s supreme effort of the year.

**The Oarsman:** “The crew was forced to reach its maximum physical and psychological potential for the Olympic Trials in July and had a great deal of difficulty returning to that peak for the Olympic Games in October.

“Moreover, it experienced a great deal of illness, minor and not so minor, that hindered the effort. If they had been healthy and able to recover fully from the post-Trials letdown and did not have the altitude to contend with, they might well have won over the West Germans in 1968.”<sup>4653</sup>

### Altitude Camp

The fact that Xochimilco was 7,316 feet or 2,230m above sea level was on the minds of all athletes headed for the 1968 Games.

**Zang:** “The Harvard crew’s firsthand test of altitude’s effects came in September at their training camp in Gunnison, Colorado. **Art Evans**, whom teammates regarded as a ‘great sprinting stroke’ and the rower responsible for pulling the Crimson past Penn in the Trials, could not row a full practice in Gunnison. Others also began to experience distress. For those not adapting, the boat never felt as good as it once had.

“Parker had a dilemma. He was dedicated to the oarsmen who’d come this far, a fact that caused him to make what **Fritz Hobbs** deems ‘a rare mistake.’ It was clear that Evans could not adapt to altitude. ‘He’d be in the boat, out of the boat, in the boat,’ Hobbs recalls. ‘Harry was in a tough spot emotionally.’”<sup>4654</sup>

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<sup>4652</sup> Angell, op cit.

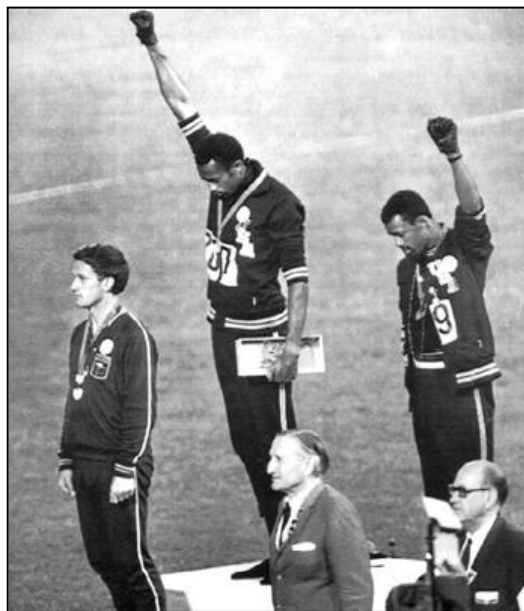
<sup>4653</sup> *The Oarsman*, Nov/Dec, 1972, p. 38

<sup>4654</sup> Zang, p. 125

### 1968 Olympics

The Mexico City Olympics were marked by unprecedented turmoil. A student demonstration in downtown before the Games was ended by armed troops gunning down more than three hundred participants, a massacre which was not reported by the press, but many U.S. athletes had actually witnessed it.

In addition, the entire U.S. Team became embroiled in the “Black Power” demonstration of Tommie Smith and John Carlos, some supporting, others not.



[www.e-dazibao.com](http://www.e-dazibao.com)

**Tommie Smith and John Carlos**  
Black Power Salute  
1968 Olympics, Mexico City

Six of the Harvard crew had signed a letter supporting Professor Harry Edwards and his **Olympic Project for Human Rights**. Several had appeared with him at a press conference in Cambridge before the Games.

## THE SPORT OF ROWING

**Larkin:** “We believed that we should support the blacks, to give them voice to their issues.”<sup>4655</sup>

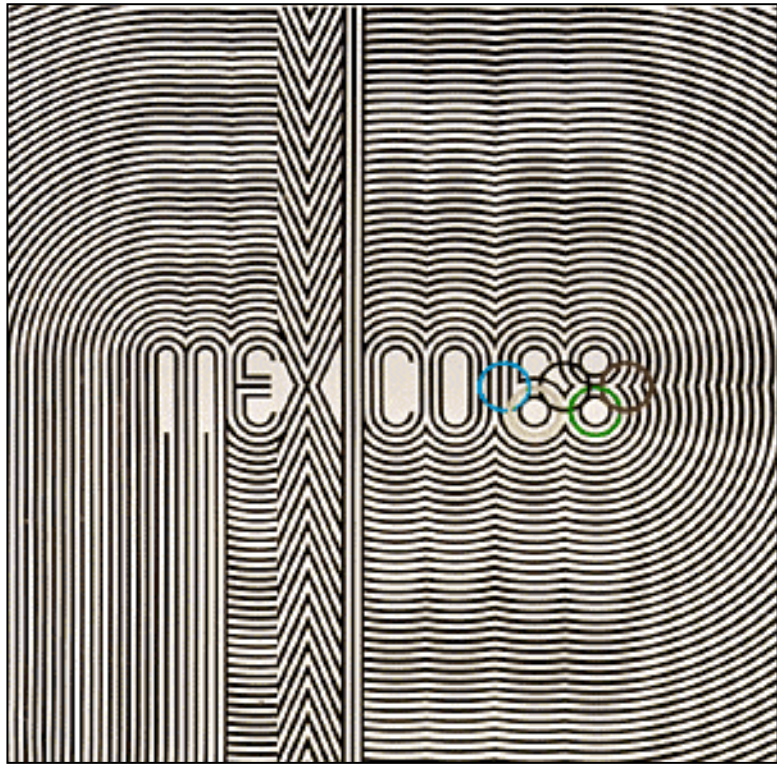
In Mexico City, the Olympic Team became a microcosm of a very troubled and divided United States of America that year.

**Steve Brooks:** “There was so much tension and anxiety that was going on during that time. I don’t think the political stuff helped, but I don’t think it really hurt our rowing. I do recall hearing gunfire off in the distance the night we arrived on the plane. Army guys in full uniform with weapons were always hanging around close by.

“I think it was the night before the heats that [coxswain Paul] Hoffman was pulled before the USOC Board and threatened with expulsion for agitating with the Project for Human Rights, and so there was just a level of noise, and I suppose it added to the pressure.”<sup>4656</sup>

### The Heats

**Zang:** “The team did not march in the opening ceremonies held on October 12, husbanding their strength for the next day’s opening race. Unfortunately, Art Evans’ struggle with altitude had followed him from Gunnison. He collapsed partway through the race. Then a bolt broke on the rigging, robbing the boat of power from two oars. It was a hopeless situation, and the team sank from second to fifth.”<sup>4657</sup>



[www.rudergott.de](http://www.rudergott.de)

### 1968 Olympic Games, Mexico City

**Steve Brooks:** “After a disastrous heat (including the shearing of the bolt shared by the four and five seat bucket) I replaced the ailing Art at stroke, with **Mike Livingston** in my old seat at 3.”<sup>4658</sup>

The heats were indeed disastrous, with a total of seven crews recording faster times than the crippled Harvard. They would have to improve substantially just to make the six-boat final.

#### Heat 1:

1 FRG	6:04.22
2 AUS	6:06.87
3 CZE	6:13.30
4 CAN	6:21.22
5 MEX	6:32.66
6 JAP	6:34.79

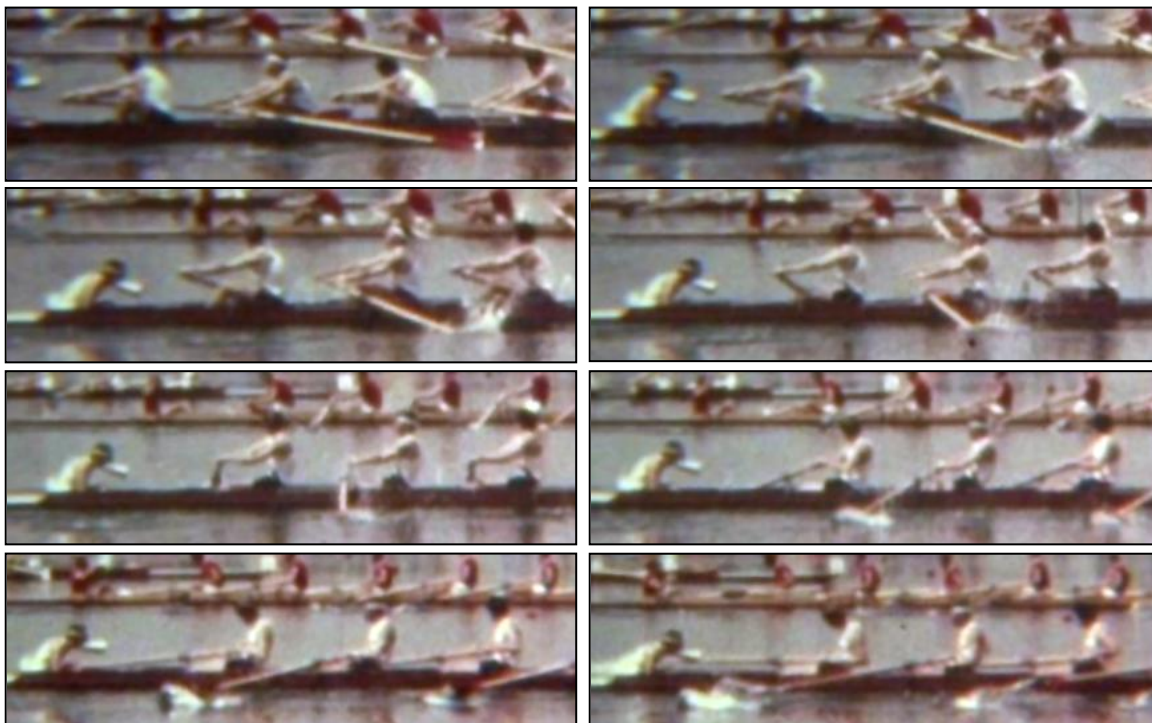
<sup>4655</sup> Larkin, op cit.

<sup>4656</sup> S. Brooks, personal correspondence, 2005

<sup>4657</sup> Zang, p. 127

<sup>4658</sup> S. Brooks, op cit.

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



Santiago García González

### 1968 U.S. Men's Eight (final boating)

Coxswain **Paul Hoffman**,

Stroke **Steve Brooks** 6'3" 191cm 198lb. 90kg, 7 **Curt Canning** 6'3" 193cm 201lb. 91kg,  
 6 **Andy Larkin** 6'5" 196cm 213lb. 97kg, 5 **Scott Steketee** 6'4" 196cm 214lb. 97kg,  
 4 **Fritz Hobbs** 6'3" 193cm 199lb. 90kg, 3 **Jake Fiechter** 6'4" 193cm 198lb. 90kg,  
 2 **Cleve Livingston** 6'2" 191cm 180lb. 82kg, Bow 1 **Dave Higgins** 6'1" 188cm 194lb. 88kg  
 Brooks: +10°, +20° to -25°, 0-6, 0-9, 0-10, ferryman's finish  
 Brooks' assertive leg drive was picked up by those behind him.

#### Heat 2:

1 NZL	6:05.62
2 GDR	6:09.48
3 URS	6:09.65
4 NED	6:12.23
<b>5 USA</b>	<b>6:15.42</b>
6 GBR	6:22.20

To finally lose original stroke-seat **Art Evans** was a severe blow to the crew, though everyone tried to remain positive.

**Brooks**: "Art had been having trouble with altitude for some time. I had stroked the eight – frequently, occasionally? I can't recall how often now – during the altitude training in Gunnison, Colorado with Mike

Livingston in my seat. So that particular boating was not really that unusual."<sup>4659</sup>

**Monk Terry**, who had stroked the Harvard Jayvee that spring, was also in Mexico City rowing bow-seat in the U.S. coxless-four.

**Terry**: "When Art got sick, there was a lot of talk and consternation about what to do about the stroke-seat. Apparently, they considered putting me in there – I only heard about this last year [2004]."<sup>4660</sup>

<sup>4659</sup> S. Brooks, op cit.

<sup>4660</sup> Terry, personal correspondence, 2005

## THE SPORT OF ROWING

**Charlie Hamlin** was rowing 3-seat in the Eastern Development Camp coxless-four with Monk: “My understanding is that Art was unfortunately unable to acclimatize to the altitude; he suffered greatly in Colorado. Harry had to make a tough decision: should he replace Art with Steve Brooks or let his trials-winning crew stand.

“I learned only a few years ago that some even argued that he should have broken apart the straight-four (my boat) and pulled Monk Terry into the stroke seat of the eight. At the time, we in the four knew nothing of this.”<sup>4661</sup>

**Terry:** “Harry ultimately decided to leave my boat alone. Who knows what might have happened if I had been put in there?

“Part of his decision might have related back to the whole spring seat racing thing between the two of us. Art and I were built the same, same weight,<sup>4662</sup> had very close erg scores, etc. and were basically dead even in seat races in fours all spring.

“But when we got into the eights, he made the Varsity go faster, and I made the Jayvees go faster. That obviously had to do with our individual styles of swing.”<sup>4663</sup>

**Larkin:** “I remember the seat races between Art and Monk. Although the speeds may have been the same, I remember how effortlessly the boat moved with Monk. He had a style of less bang at the catch, and I told Paul Hoffman that they should pick him.”<sup>4664</sup>

The films which illustrate this chapter document that Evans completed his leg drive at 80% of the pullthrough while films in Chapter 103 show Terry only flattening his

legs at 100% of the pullthrough. In the stroke-seat, this would have made a noticeable difference in the personality of the boat.

**Terry:** “The real story from a stroke/style/crew point of view was: what do you do when you have to substitute?

“To make a crew go, oarsmen are *not* interchangeable. There are hidden aspects which are not definable and which elude objective measurement that will forever make those who do not get in the seat unhappy, especially if the crew that they do not make does badly.

“Especially for an eight, you have to give a crew time to make it work. There are always drivers in the boat, guys like Art Evans, who simply are not replaceable at that specific moment.”<sup>4665</sup>

Interestingly, putting Brooks in the stroke seat represented a change in the opposite direction. He applied his legs much more assertively, flattening them at 60% of the pullthrough.

### Repêchages

**Steve Brooks:** “Then the evening before the rep, **Mike Livingston** took sick, vomiting, etc. Thus **Jake Fiechter** replaced him and remained in the boat for the final.

“As I recall, the repêchage was actually the first time we had ever rowed that particular line-up, though Jake had rowed at 3 with the ‘67 Varsity all the prior year.”<sup>4666</sup>

Penn’s **Gardner Cadwalader**, 1968 U.S. coxed-four: “That summer, **Jacques Fiechter** had been training at Vesper searching for a way to get to the Olympics, while next door Penn was putting together its four for the Trials. Jake was a man mountain and boat mover who had the

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<sup>4661</sup> Hamlin, op cit.

<sup>4662</sup> **Greg Stone:** “They may have been even in seat racing, but Monk was a former lightweight, lightly built, 175 [79 kg] max. Art was 190 [86 kg] and really solid, much more core strength.” – personal correspondence, 2005

<sup>4663</sup> Terry, op cit.

<sup>4664</sup> Larkin, op cit.

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<sup>4665</sup> Terry, op cit.

<sup>4666</sup> S. Brooks, op cit.



## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

unfortunate timing of graduating from Harvard a year before the Games.

“Curiously and ironically, it was Penn’s invitation for him to be the spare for our boat that had Jake raring to go in the wings in Mexico City, ready to slip into his old Harvard boat to help them recover from their various maladies when they needed a spare.

“And Jake was *more* than ready. He had done more of every exercise than any of us all through altitude camp.

“I know! I was his roommate.”<sup>4667</sup>

**Ted Nash:** “Jake Fiechter had joined Penn Elite Center that summer and was a wonderful guy to coach. Even in such a short time, he proved that high class always shows up in stress time. After he came in second in the coxed-four Trials and then second in the coxed-pair Trials with Joe Amlong, he was picked for our spare. He went by chance into his own Harvard eight when they needed him.

“As in 1964, it shows that an excellent alternate is critical and can save an entire team.<sup>4668</sup> That is why it is so important to select alternates carefully and try often to row them in the crews that they may later assist.<sup>4669</sup>

**Steve Brooks:** “Jake adds the following anecdote concerning his precipitous entry into the boat: He was standing in the breakfast line on the morning of the rep, piling his plate with scrambled eggs and a heavy load of pancakes when Harry came up and said, ‘Eat light. You may be racing today.’

“As for me, I wasn’t freaked out by being put in the stroke seat at the last minute. When it was clear it was going to happen, and Mike was out and Jake was in the boat, it was kind of like, ‘Well, let’s just



Luther Jones

**Jake Fiechter** training at Gunnison, Colorado.  
(Note the Harvard oar.)

go do it. It’s not ideal. It’s not exactly what we’d hoped for, but let’s just go *do* it.”<sup>4670</sup>

The first repêchage included five boats with two to qualify, and it looked bad for the United States. They had to beat either the Czechs, who had come in an easy, uncontested third in the first heat, or GDR, who had already beaten the U.S. by six seconds in Heat 2.

**Zang:** “Cleve Livingston in the 2-seat had gastrointestinal problems. Despite that, the crew rowed an iron-hearted race. Down by more than a length to an East German team that had beaten them badly in the heats, the team moved from last to second, securing the last spot in the final.”<sup>4671</sup>

It was a terrific finish. Czechoslovakia indeed showed they deserved a place in the final by winning, but the Americans were only a couple of feet, less than a meter, behind as they crossed the line. GDR never gave up and finished about half a length out

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<sup>4667</sup> Cadwalader, personal correspondence, 2007

<sup>4668</sup> See Chapter 85.

<sup>4669</sup> Nash, personal correspondence, 2007

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<sup>4670</sup> S. Brooks, op cit.

<sup>4671</sup> Zang, p. 128



## THE SPORT OF ROWING



Santiago García González

### 1968 Olympic Men's Eights, Repêchage 1

Finish Line, Xochimilco

Czechoslovakia crossing the line less than two feet or 0.6m ahead of Harvard in foreground.

The bow of the GDR boat is barely visible in the upper left.

of first. They went on to win the petite-final.

#### Repêchage 1:

1 CZE	6:19.34
2 USA	6:19.81
3 GDR	6:21.71
4 CAN	6:31.14
5 GBR	6:43.55

#### Repêchage 2:

1 AUS	6:10.80
2 URS	6:12.12
3 NED	6:12.90
4 MEX	6:43.13
5 JAP	6:44.37

**Steketee:** “ I remember Harry talking to us about strategy for the repêchage and saying, ‘Based on what’s happening with the other crews, you guys are going to have to hold yourselves back for the first half.’”<sup>4672</sup>

**Larkin:** “You know, in that repêchage, our second half was slower than our first half, even though we had held ourselves back, but we didn’t slow down as much as the rest of the people.

“The repêchage. That was *my* race. Boom! I was done. I had nothing left to give for the final.”<sup>4673</sup>

### The Final

**Zang:** “In the final, the team was again quick off the line against a field that included strong crews from West Germany, Russia, Australia and New Zealand. Harvard, drained by the effort of the repêchage and compromised by the changes in their boat’s alignment, raced on even

<sup>4672</sup> Steketee, op cit.

<sup>4673</sup> Larkin, personal conversation, 2008

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



Alain Guierre

### 1968 Olympic Men's Eights Final

Xochimilco

Top to bottom: **NZL, CZE, AUS, FRG, USA, URS**

The U.S. crossed the 1,500 in fifth place, open water behind the Kiwis and West Germans.

terms for the first 1,250 meters before fading to last among a field of fading crews.”<sup>4674</sup>

**Steketee:** “I also remember a discussion about the final, that if we wanted any hope of medaling, we really couldn’t do any of this ‘hold back at the beginning’ business.

“I wonder if we might not have done considerably better in the final had we used the same strategy that we used in the repêchage.”<sup>4675</sup>

**Larkin:** “I don’t know. We’d beaten the Czechs by like seven or nine seconds in Vichy, but even with our best race in the repêchage, we had lost to the Czechs, and they came in fifth in the final.”<sup>4676</sup>

The New Zealand crew quickly gained a deck in the early going. Russia, Czechoslovakia and the U.S. were closely bunched behind the Kiwis. Interestingly, the eventual two top crews, West Germany and

Australia, brought up the rear, a couple of seats down.

**Canning:** “I remember how our strong finish in the repêchage changed how the New Zealanders rowed the final. They decided to push hard early in the final to make sure they were well ahead of the fast-finishing crews. They got a length on everybody but paid the price later, fading out of the medals to fourth.

“In 1972, they went out hard again and got a length, but they held it to win the Gold.”<sup>4677</sup> <sup>4678</sup>

**Dave Higgins:** “We busted our asses, but we were spent. Halfway through there was just nothing there.”<sup>4679</sup>

**Steve Brooks:** “The final really felt flat from the start, I thought. We were in decent position in the middle of the race, but we just didn’t have it in the last part.

“Everyone had the altitude problem, and there was no question that the way you felt

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<sup>4674</sup> Zang, p. 129

<sup>4675</sup> Steketee, op cit.

<sup>4676</sup> Larkin, op cit.

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<sup>4677</sup> See Chapter 120.

<sup>4678</sup> Canning, personal conversation, 2008

<sup>4679</sup> Higgins, qtd. by Zang, p. 129

## THE SPORT OF ROWING



Santiago García González

### 1968 Olympic Men's Eights Final

Xochimilco

The U.S. approaching the finish line. The other crews have already crossed.

**Steve Brooks:** "We were in decent position in the middle of the race, but we just didn't have it in the last part."

From top: **NZL** 4<sup>th</sup>, **CZE** 5<sup>th</sup>, **AUS** 2<sup>nd</sup>, **FRG** 1<sup>st</sup>, **USA** 6<sup>th</sup>, **URS** 3<sup>rd</sup>

after the race was not like anything else I had ever experienced . . . to the point that it was difficult to lift my legs out of the boat.

"I think it was sort of a cumulative thing, and we were just not as fast as the other guys that day."<sup>4680</sup>

As the field crossed the 1,500 meter mark, New Zealand were about to surrender the lead to Ratzeburg. The Aussies and Soviets were four and seven seats down

respectively, locked in a struggle that would last the rest of the race.

The U.S. was next across the 1,500, a length-plus down on Ratzeburg, and half a length up on the Czechs. In the last 500, the Kiwis lost half a length and the Americans lost a length and a half on the leader as the other crews more or less maintained their relative positions.

**www.rowinghistory-aus.info:** "The Australians planned to settle down for the first 800 metres to conserve energy for the final sprint. The New Zealanders led for the

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<sup>4680</sup> S. Brooks, op cit.

## THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

first 1,200 metres. Then the Germans, coached by the great Karl Adam, drew level and then passed them. The Soviets, after a slow start, reached third placing by the 1,500 metre mark.<sup>4681</sup> The Australians, after having kept a low profile, made their move and moved up to the leading crews 100 metres from the line. In the final sprint, the Germans held on by less than a second in front of the Australians.<sup>4682</sup>

### Olympic Final:

1 GER	6:07.00
2 AUS	6:07.98
3 URS	6:08.11
4 NZL	6:10.43
5 CZE	6:12.17
6 USA	6:14.31

### Post Mortem

**Canning:** “People have asked me to explain our ‘miserable’ sixth place finish, and I have done my best to essentially say I don’t feel right making excuses. We did our best under the circumstances. I don’t think we need to apologize for anything. This was a solid program. We were among the five or six best crews in the world for two years, and on any given day, two or three different crews might have won.

“What I would like to say is that the *depth* of this program is what made us great. It wasn’t just the first eight men. It was the Jayvee. It was the Third Varsity, and I want to give tribute to all of those members who stayed around and worked their butts off and did not get that top-eight spot.”<sup>4683</sup>

**Larkin:** “There has been some discussion that we got the technique wrong. **John Ferris**, Penn ‘68, who rowed in the Vesper Eight in Long Beach and now is down at the National Rowing Center in

Georgia, believed that our success was due to our strength. He thought if we had learned to row better we would have been unbeatable.

“My recollection is that Penn put in far more miles rowing. Perhaps our success indeed came from what we did off of the water in the fall and winter. We competed in weekly races in the fall. No boat was picked until the spring to keep the competition going. We lifted weights three times a week and raced up the Harvard Stadium. Harry set a standard for competition in conditioning and training, and we rose to meet it.

“We worked on intensity of effort. A hard workout in the spring would be six 500 meter pieces.”<sup>4684</sup>

**Steketee:** “You all know that you can’t describe what it feels like when the boat swings to somebody who hasn’t actually been in the boat experiencing that. That almost mystical feeling of swing together with the intensity of the training that we did was in some ways the most involving, serious and demanding experience that I had ever had up to that point in my life.

“Then to add being involved with such an extraordinary coach and such extraordinary teammates, and to have a political awakening about the Olympic Project for Human Rights, supporting the efforts of the black athletes, getting the extraordinary support that we got from our coach, to have been part of that piece of history . . .

“I chanced into *all* of that. What a wonderful thing!”<sup>4685</sup>

**Steve Brooks:** “I’ve never asked Harry this, but had we rowed the race that we rowed at Long Beach in Mexico City a

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<sup>4681</sup> See the film frame on this page for all the relative placings at 1500 meters.

<sup>4682</sup> [www.rowinghistory-aus.info](http://www.rowinghistory-aus.info)

<sup>4683</sup> Canning, 1968 Harvard 40<sup>th</sup> Reunion, 2008

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<sup>4684</sup> Larkin, personal correspondence, 2007

<sup>4685</sup> Steketee, 1968 Harvard 40<sup>th</sup> Reunion, 2008

## THE SPORT OF ROWING

couple of months later, I'm pretty confident that we would have medaled.

"Even the rep, the kind of race we rowed in the rep. If we had been able to do that again in the final, we might have done a lot better. I definitely felt that we seemed flat that day, for whatever reason. It might have just been cumulative."<sup>4686</sup>

Penn's **Cadwalader**: "We have always wondered, and these conversations still go

on:

"What if Harvard had not had so much illness at altitude camp and at the Games?

"What if they had stayed focused on their racing?

"What if that powerful line-up that doggedly stuck to mission to beat us at the Trials had been the one to race in the Olympic final?

"Had Harvard already peaked at the Trials in Long Beach?"<sup>4687</sup>

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<sup>4686</sup> S. Brooks, op cit.

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<sup>4687</sup> Cadwalader, op cit.