

## THE SPORT OF ROWING

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

### *The Amateurs*

This is the second installment on *row2k* of my retelling of our American Iliad, the story of the U.S. men's scullers of 1984, first told by **David Halberstam** in his best-selling book, *The Amateurs*.

This draft chapter continues to introduce the characters that will figure in the Homeric tragedy that will follow. In the coming weeks, we will see the saga to its conclusion from the rowers' perspectives.

The following .pdf is in the format intended for the final printed book. It is from the fourth and final volume.

### **I need you!**

If you find any typos in this chapter, or if you have any questions, comments, sug

gestions, corrections, agreements, disagreements, additional sources and illustrations, etc. please email me at the address below. Your input will be an essential contribution to what has always been intended to be a joint project of the rowing community, so please contribute. If you and I end up finally disagreeing on some relevant point or another, I will be thrilled to present both alternatives so the readers can decide for themselves.

All my contact info is at my website. I will also be at the World Championships next month on **Lake Karapiro**, and I hope to be at the **World Rowing Coaches' Conference** in London in January.

Or you can email me anytime at:

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

Many thanks.



# The Sport of Rowing

## A Comprehensive History

by  
**Peter Mallory**

### Volume IV

# *Plus Ça Change*

draft manuscript    October 2010



# THE SPORT OF ROWING

## 140. The Back-Story Behind *The Amateurs*

*Tiff Wood – Joe Bouscaren – Charlie Altekruise –  
Pull Purdy – Brad Lewis*

### 1982 Post Mortem

*The New York Times*: “John Biglow of Bellevue, Wash., a former stroke for the Yale Varsity eight, won a Bronze Medal in the single sculls event at the World Rowing Championships, which concluded yesterday at Lucerne, Switzerland.

“After a slow beginning in the first 500 meters of the 2,000-meter course, Biglow finished third behind Rüdiger Reiche of East Germany and Vasily Yakusha of the Soviet Union.”<sup>6643</sup>

**Biglow**: “I was 1.41 seconds behind Reiche! What a great race . . . *I thought!*”

“Harry Parker’s reaction was this: ‘You were so close. Why couldn’t you win? It must be because you don’t want it enough.’”

“Those weren’t his *exact* words, but when we finally got back to Boston maybe a month later, he said, ‘Well, we have to have a talk . . . ’ and that’s basically what he said.”<sup>6644</sup>

The best-selling book, *The Amateurs*, which David Halberstam would eventually write about the American scullers preparing for the 1984 Olympics, is mostly a tragic tale, and perhaps the real back-story began with that fateful conversation between John Biglow and Harry Parker in the fall of 1982.

**Biglow**: “I remember thinking to myself, ‘Well, I have *great* respect for Harry. He’s made winning crews for decades now, and he’s made me a fast sculler, and here he is telling me I didn’t *want* it enough . . . ’”

“Now that I look back on it, I remember that I was having back trouble. I was rowing with a herniated disc, and he took me to a place where I believed that I hadn’t wanted it enough and I had to try *harder!* No matter what, I had to push myself *harder!*”<sup>6645</sup>

Harry wouldn’t be talking just to Biglow. He was turning the heat up all over.

**Altekruise**: “In the fall of 1983, I had just begun graduate school at Tuft’s Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy and was training for 1984. We had had a pretty unsatisfying quad finish at Duisburg a few months earlier, not making the final.”<sup>6646</sup> Harry pulled me aside and basically said I wasn’t being serious enough about the rowing. I challenged him, but I would end up postponing my next school semester to train in Switzerland.”<sup>6647</sup>

### 1983

**Biglow**: “Tiff Wood and I had an interesting rivalry at the Head of the

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<sup>6643</sup> Biglow Captures Rowing Bronze, *The New York Times*, August 30, 1982

<sup>6644</sup> Biglow, personal conversation, 2008

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<sup>6645</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6646</sup> to be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>6647</sup> Altekruise, personal correspondence, 2009

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Charles. In the fall of 1981, I had started thirteenth and caught a guy at the B.U. Bridge.<sup>6648</sup> I never thought I could catch someone that quickly. We overlapped oars. We had to totally stop and push ourselves apart, and then I had to get going again. I ended up losing to Tiff by two seconds.”<sup>6649</sup>

**Wood:** “After the Trials in ‘81, I *knew* that John was faster than I was. I remember finishing the Head that year and coming back to the boathouse and finding out that I had won, and it was probably one of the happiest rowing moments of my life. I felt like the gods had decided to give me a present. I felt like I had actually won a race I didn’t deserve to win.”<sup>6650</sup>

**Biglow:** “In 1982, before going home to Seattle, Tiff helped me set the course record at the Head of the Charles. Twenty-five years later, the record still stands.

“As a consequence of our 1981 placings, in ‘82 I started number two, and he started number one. He was like a rabbit in a greyhound race. He pushed me to row harder than I *ever* could have rowed alone.

“I didn’t catch him until the Riverside Boathouse,<sup>6651</sup> and then we rowed right next to each other *all* the way down the Powerhouse Stretch. It wasn’t until Newell Boathouse<sup>6652</sup> that I finally passed him and started to open up on him. Then he faded, and I lengthened my stroke, and that’s how I set my record with Tiff’s help.

“Then I went out to Seattle for winter training so I could row on ice-free water, and I happened to go out for a few workouts with my old high school coach, **Frank Cunningham**.

“I like to ask people’s input. I wasn’t going out there saying, ‘Frank, will you be my coach again?’ I was thinking to myself, ‘*Harry’s* my coach,’ but I was also wanting to share my successes with people who had helped me early on, like Frank and like **Charlie McIntyre**.<sup>6653</sup>

“Charlie was one of the first guys to look at me and say, ‘John, you are *really* moving that boat!’ I didn’t put any stock in what he said at the time, but look at what happened.

“Charlie was devoted to me and *so* proud. I just wanted to give something back, so I went out a couple of times with Frank and with Charlie.”<sup>6654</sup>

**Cunningham:** “When I picked him back up, he was quite a mess after his years back East. I told him: ‘You’re going to have to forget everything you know and start all over again.’

“He was very methodical. I only coached him once a week or so, and Charlie and **Stan Pocock**<sup>6655</sup> also contributed, but I remember after one session he told me, ‘Well, that’s twelve things I have to work on.’

“Every day he would work on one or two.”<sup>6656</sup>

**Biglow:** “Because Harry had told me I didn’t want it enough, I really pushed myself that winter. I did the workouts that Harry told me to do. They were long pieces, but because Harry had told me I didn’t want it enough and that’s why I had lost in Lucerne, I kept pushing even when my legs started to get numb.

“I remember one workout vividly. It was 5 x 12 minutes or something, which I *loved*, and then something really scary

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<sup>6648</sup> Boston University Bridge, about 300 meters after the start.

<sup>6649</sup> Biglow, op cit.

<sup>6650</sup> Wood, personal conversation, 2009

<sup>6651</sup> about 1,000 meters after the start.

<sup>6652</sup> about 2,900 meters after the start and 1,900 meters from the finish.

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<sup>6653</sup> See Chapter 87.

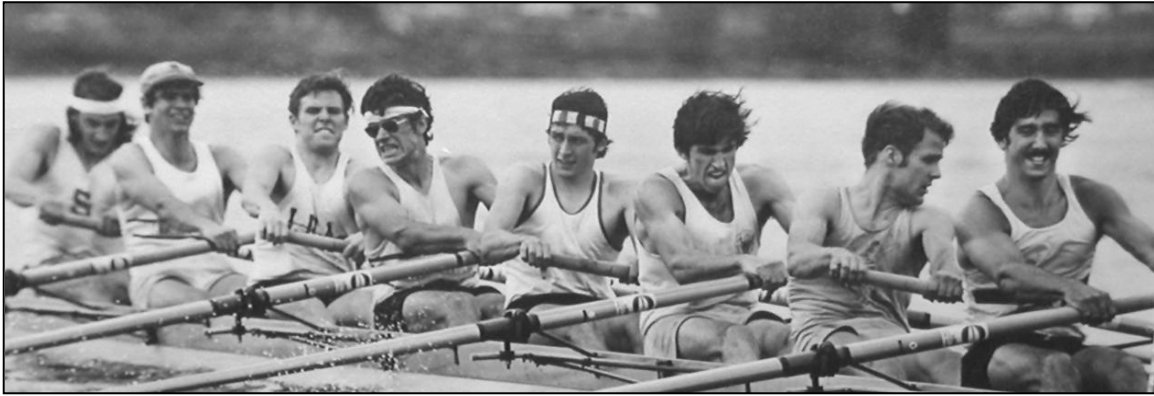
<sup>6654</sup> Biglow, op cit.

<sup>6655</sup> See Chapter 83.

<sup>6656</sup> Cunningham, personal conversation, 2008



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Newell Boathouse, Harvard

### 1974 Harvard Varsity

“Rude and Smooth” on the boathouse wall

Bow **Blair Brooks** 6’5” 196 cm 190 lb. 86 kg, 2 **Oliver Scholle** 6’4” 193 cm 190 lb. 86 kg,  
3 **Ed Woodhouse** 6’2” 188 cm 185 lb. 84 kg, 4 **Tiff Wood** 6’1” 188 cm 185 lb. 84kg,  
5 **Dave Fellows** 6’3” 191 cm 190 lb. 86 kg, 6 **Dick Cashin** 6’4” 193 cm 195 lb. 88 kg,  
7 **Steve Row** 6’2” 188 cm 196 lb. 89 kg, Stroke **Al Shealy** 6’3” 191 cm 185 lb. 84 kg,  
Coxswain (not seen) **Dave Weinberg**

happened. It was a great workout, but the way my injury was, I think it damaged me and spoiled the rest of my year.

“My legs not only got numb, they got *weak*, and it was all I could do just to put my legs down flat at paddle pressure and get back to the boathouse. It wasn’t painful. It was just total weakness.

“So I called Harry, and I have to hand it to him. He likes to win *SO* much, but he is cautious about rowers getting injured. That was not something that Tony Johnson was good at. Tony could not deal with injuries. He just said you’re weak-minded if you’re injured.

“From then on Harry and I designed special workouts. We experimented, and it turned out that the maximum length piece I could do was five minutes, and it turned out the least amount of rest I needed was three minutes, so my endurance workouts became five on, three off.

“But when I went back to Boston, I was seven seconds behind Tiff at the 1983

Singles Trials. There was nothing I could do. I didn’t feel pain. I was just weak.”<sup>6657</sup>

### Tiff Wood

**Christopher R. Wood** got the nickname “Tiff” as a small child when that was the closest he could get to pronouncing his own first name.

As the smallest man in his Harvard Varsity, Tiff had been an overachieving teammate to Al Shealy, Dick Cashin and Gregg Stone during the Rude and Smooth years.<sup>6658</sup> He went through four years at Harvard without losing a collegiate race.

**Wood:** “We did lose to the British National Team in the final at Henley in 1975, and we had a Christmas trip to Egypt in 1974 where we won the first race, but a few days later had some people come down with Pharaoh’s Revenge. We raced again and lost to Oxford and Cambridge. Yale

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<sup>6657</sup> Biglow, op cit.

<sup>6658</sup> See Chapter 104.

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Carol McGowan

**Tiff**

was in that race, too, but I'm pretty sure we beat them."<sup>6659</sup>

**Sean Colgan:** "Tiff has more college shirts than Champion."<sup>6660, 6661</sup>

**Halberstam:** "If he had been one of the strongest men on those Harvard boats, he had also been one of the roughest, an oarsman who responded to pressure and challenge by beating his oar even harder into the water and by giving more of himself."<sup>6662</sup>

Since rowing has always been a competitive sport, what has counted throughout history has been moving boats.

**Halberstam:** "Steve Fairbairn"<sup>6663</sup> taught his oarsmen to think of the end product rather than a predetermined conscious pattern of movement. He asked them to concentrate on bladework and left them to work out how best to do it."<sup>6664</sup>

Harvard Coach **Harry Parker** in the 1960s and '70s was the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's best example of this "end justifies the means" mentality: moving the boat is your task, so let your subconscious guide you as to how to accomplish that task without interference from the coach.

**Halberstam:** "Early in Wood's college career, Parker had decided that any attempt to make him row with greater finesse would be counterproductive. He was impatient with technique. The best way to coach him, Parker decided, was not to coach him but to leave him to his furies."<sup>6665</sup>

Harry chose crews based not on appearance but on skill in moving boats as measured through **seat racing**. His crews have always been superbly effective at the end of the blade, even when their body mechanics were uneven and unorthodox, literally and figuratively.

**Halberstam:** "Tiff Wood was a violent seat racer.

"'He was absolutely savage,' [Dick] **Cashin**, his teammate, remembered. 'I don't think he ever lost a seat race. I was bigger and stronger, and I was better on the erg, and I made the National Team in my sophomore year,<sup>6666</sup> but I could never beat Tiff in seat racing. I once tied him – it was April 17, 1975. I remember because it was my birthday.

"'But I never beat him.'"<sup>6667</sup>

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<sup>6659</sup> Wood, personal correspondence, 2009

<sup>6660</sup> Champion® Sportswear, the maker of most of the racing shirts in the United States during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, now a division of Hanesbrands, Inc.

<sup>6661</sup> Colgan, personal correspondence, 2009

<sup>6662</sup> Halberstam, p. 19

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<sup>6663</sup> See Chapter 19.

<sup>6664</sup> Geoffrey Page, qtd. by Dodd, *World Rowing*, p. 162

<sup>6665</sup> Halberstam, p. 62

<sup>6666</sup> See Chapter 111.

<sup>6667</sup> Halberstam, pp. 74-5

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**Ted Nash:** “Tiff demonstrates what tough men Harry develops. Every race was to the last stroke. No games – just race. He radiated confidence. The modern term, ‘Bring it on!’ could have been invented for Tiff.”<sup>6668</sup>

### After Harvard

For his size, Wood was superbly gifted in strength and cardiovascular capacity, so some believed that he “was able to waste immense amounts of energy with poor technique and still succeed,”<sup>6669</sup> and he did nothing to disabuse anyone of such beliefs. After Gregg Stone founded the **Charles River Association of Sculling Has-Beens** (CRASH-B) in 1977, Tiff took over in 1982 and started the annual CRASH-B World Indoor Rowing Championships, for which the organization has become best known. Significantly, the prize for winning the CRASH-Bs is a hammer, a term often used to describe Tiff as a rower.

**Wood:** “My approach to rowing has been to throw caution to the wind and expend every ounce of energy.”<sup>6670</sup>

But the fact remains that he had to have been moving boats regardless of the expressions on his face and the provocative comments off the water.

After Tiff had had a less than satisfying experience as the Olympic sweep spare in



Bob Ernst/*The Oarsman*

**Hartford Barge Club / University of Washington**  
1980 Double Sculls Challenge Cup finalists, Henley  
Bow **Chris Allsopp**, Stroke **Tiff Wood**

Montreal, **Gregg Stone** suggested that they row a double together.

**Halberstam:** “In the fall of 1976, with only three days of practice together, they entered the Head of the Charles. They surprised themselves by taking second. The following year, in **1977**, they went to Henley and took second behind the British double [Baillieu and Hart<sup>6671</sup>] that had been second in the 1976 Olympics.”<sup>6672</sup>

University of Washington graduate **Chris Allsopp:** “As Tiff’s double partner in **1978**, I worked hard to join in Tiff’s vicious attack at the catch, but I worked equally hard to encourage him to carry his power farther into the drive. He loved the interval pieces and their intensity, while I loved to steady state and emphasize efficiency and blade work. We argued, compromised, blended and won the Trials.

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<sup>6668</sup> Nash, personal correspondence, 2009

<sup>6669</sup> Halberstam, p. 33

<sup>6670</sup> Qtd. by Xavier Macia, [Enter the Hammer](#), *Rowing News*, September, 2004, p. 49

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<sup>6671</sup> See Chapter 130.

<sup>6672</sup> Halberstam, p. 76



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Peter Klavora

### 1979 USA Men's Quad

World 5<sup>th</sup> Place

Bow **John Van Blom**, 2 **Tiff Wood**, 3 **Chris Allsopp**, Stroke **Al Shealy**

“At the World Championships on Lake Karapiro, we placed fifth – nearing true world class performance.”<sup>6673</sup>

**Wood:** “Chris made a comment to me that I thought was really interesting. He said, ‘You were in the stroke seat. We finally started moving the boat when I decided to stop trying to row anything other than exactly like *you*, that once I decided to stop worrying about is this right or is this wrong, and just do what you’re doing so we’re doing the same thing, then it worked.’

“That was the only way he could get us together.

“Oh, and he said that he used to *really* argue when he was rowing a double with Neil Halleen from Wisconsin.”<sup>6674</sup> He said with me it was much better. [laughing]”<sup>6675</sup>

**Allsopp:** “The next year, **1979**, Tiff thought that he and **Gregg Stone** would make a faster double. **Tom Howes** [Harvard ‘78] and I teamed up and beat them handily at the Pan Am Trials. Gregg was a bit of hammer, too, so all Tom and I had to do to beat them was to scull with reasonable aggressiveness and a long efficient stroke.

After my being rejected by Tiff, ours was sweet revenge.”<sup>6676</sup>

**Wood:** “Gregg finally wanted to get the heck out of the single and give the double a try. It seemed to go pretty well.

“But Chris deserves his satisfaction. He taught us a lesson.”<sup>6677</sup>

**Stone:** “Allsopp’s recollection of the 1979 Pan Am Trials is stunning. If he or they were so fast, what happened at the Nationals a month later?

“He and Howes did beat us at the Trials, of course, in some pretty rough water. Tiff and I chose to row a prototype Van Dusen double which we could not handle in the water. No question we would like that decision back again. In flat water they were not in our league.”<sup>6678</sup>

At the 1979 Pan Am Games, Allsopp and Howes won Silver in the double while Stone and Wood with Washington grad **Bruce Beall** and Harvard legend **Al Shealy**<sup>6679</sup> won Bronze in the quad.

**Allsopp:** “After the Pan Am Games, Gregg went back to his single while Tiff and I were reformed into a quad at 2 and 3 with

<sup>6673</sup> Allsopp, personal correspondence, 2009

<sup>6674</sup> See Chapter 106.

<sup>6675</sup> Wood, personal conversation, 2009

<sup>6676</sup> Allsopp, op cit.

<sup>6677</sup> Wood, op cit.

<sup>6678</sup> Stone, personal correspondence, 2009

<sup>6679</sup> See Chapters 104, 111 and 114.

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**Al Shealy** stroking and **John Van Blom**<sup>6680</sup> in the bow. Under Coach **Peter Raymond**<sup>6681</sup>'s gifted eye, within a couple of weeks of forming we placed fifth at the 1979 World Championships.

"Al was a *great* stroke, and Tiff with all his gusto was surrounded by long smooth scullers. The shell moved really well and was a joy to row, especially at steady state.

"At the 1979 Worlds, we rowed down the Soviet quad to make the finals. In 1980, that same quad tested positive for steroids before Luzern, so they withdrew to cleanse their systems before taking the Olympic Silver in Moscow.

"Who knows how we would have fared had the boycott<sup>6682</sup> not kept us home.

"At Henley the next year, **1980**, Tiff and I advanced to the Double Sculls Challenge Cup final. A little known fact is that in the heats, we beat a British double that included a young **Stephen Geoffrey Redgrave**.<sup>6683</sup> That might have been Redgrave's only Henley loss.<sup>6684</sup>

"The night before the final, Tiff ate some salmonella-tainted Indian food and got violently sick. Always game, Tiff and I raced anyway. **Harry Parker**, knowing our predicament, followed us on his bike.

At first, I felt totally ignored by Harry, who was cheering, 'Way to go, Tiff! Way to go, Tiff!' until I felt Tiff run completely out of gas. In that same instant, I heard Harry cheering 'Way to go, Chris! Way to go Chris!'

"We achieved our goal of not losing to an outstanding Canadian double [Victoria City R.C., **Pat Walter**, 6'3" 190 cm 192 lb. 87 kg, and **Bruce Ford**, 6'2" 187 cm 185 lb. 84 kg] by Henley's 'easily' verdict, but we

sure paid a price. Tiff passed out and had to be revived in the medical tent, and I was as spent as I had ever been.

"At Luzern in 1980, I stroked the Olympic quad with Tiff, Brad Lewis, and Tom Howes. It was okay. The first day we didn't make the finals, and the second day we made it and placed fourth."<sup>6685</sup>

### Tiff Wood, Single Sculler

Tiff had been a 1976 Olympic sweep spare who was never called upon in Montreal. He was team captain of the U.S. Olympic men's rowers in 1980 and a member of the U.S. quad that raced in Lucerne but missed the Olympics in Moscow because of the boycott. Even though most of his teammates retired after the disappointment of '80, Tiff couldn't stop there. He had unfinished business.

He would be 31 in 1984, a generation older and more experienced than most of the others trying out for the team, but the Los Angeles Games represented Tiff's last chance to row in an Olympics, and he decided his best chance would be in the single.

**Rowing USA:** "In 1981, when Tiff hoped to take over the single sculling slot, John Biglow emerged as the top sculler. In 1982, Tiff hoped to take that slot away from him, but flipped his boat in the Trials."<sup>6686</sup>

**Sean Colgan:** "In 1982, I was spending most of my time running as I was working two weeks on and two weeks off in Dubai. At the Trials I tied Tiff in the heat and was leading him by a length when he flipped in the final.

"Tiff was slow in his single in 1982. We *all* were, compared to Biglow. I was rowing in my first big single race, and I just

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<sup>6680</sup> See Chapter 88.

<sup>6681</sup> See Chapter 103.

<sup>6682</sup> See later in this chapter and Chapter 140.

<sup>6683</sup> See Chapter 130.

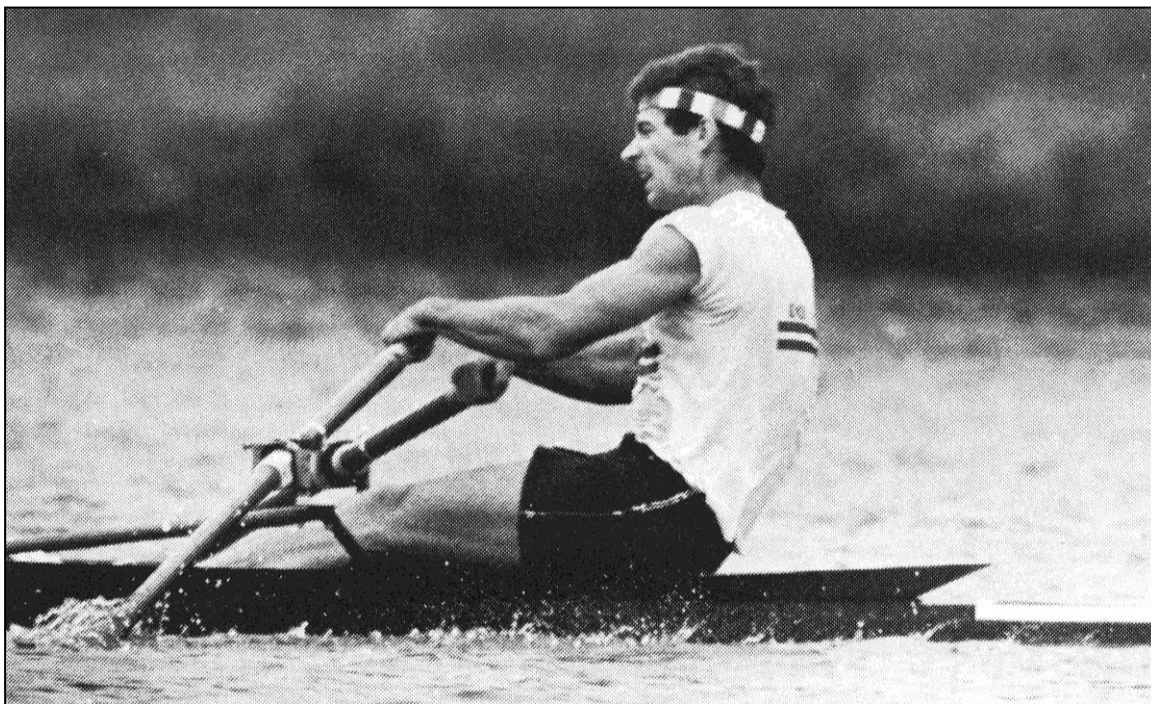
<sup>6684</sup> an exaggeration, but Steve did win the Diamond Sculls that year.

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<sup>6685</sup> Allsopp, op cit.

<sup>6686</sup> U.S. Athlete Profiles, *Rowing USA*, June/July 1984, p. 44

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Steve Fontanini/*Los Angeles Times*

### Tiff

assumed that the guy with open water in front was just ‘cruising’ and sitting on the field. I was just happy to finish second and be the spare.”<sup>6687</sup>

**Sean Colgan**, 6’2” 188 cm 185 lb. 84 kg, is a Ted Nash-trained Penn IRA winner and loyal member of Vesper Boat Club who has the unique distinction of making U.S. Teams on port, starboard and sculling and as a junior (‘72 and ‘73), lightweight (Silver in ‘75 and Bronze in ‘76 in the eight) and heavyweight (Bronze in the 1983 Pan Ams in the single).

**Colgan**: “I was just a Philly guy who loved to row fast. I had been working full-time since 1978 as a travelling mineral trader. Hell, when I won the 1983 Pan Am Singles Trials, I had just 200 miles in my single. I was spending most of the time running up hotel stairs in Dubai and building

a B-52 runway for the Air Force in Diego Garcia.”<sup>6688</sup>

**Tiff**: “Despite Sean’s memory, I don’t think I was slow in 1982. I think I was faster than in 1981, and to my mind had just started to figure something out about moving a single. I was trying to do a better job of connecting with the water at the catch, trying to make sure that I didn’t start the legs too soon.

“In the heat when Sean barely lost to me, I was ahead and rowing just hard enough to win, and even though they had to go to the video, I was pretty sure I had held him off. The officials, of course, had the video pointed such that all they could see was my head going across the line, so who knows how exactly they came to their decision. Screw the Penn guy, no doubt.

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<sup>6687</sup> Colgan, op cit.

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<sup>6688</sup> Ibid.

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“I was staying at Sean’s house for the Trials, and I think we have avoided the topic.”<sup>6689</sup>

**Sean:** “Tiff was a good guest. Always cleaned his plate.”<sup>6690</sup>

**Tiff:** “I don’t know if I could have beaten Biggie in the final that year, but at the time I felt I had a better chance than in 1981, and who knows all the what-ifs?”<sup>6691</sup>

Finally, things seemed to be falling into place for Tiff a year later when he beat the injured John Biglow to win the Singles Trials in 1983.

Like the Homeric hero **Odysseus**, Tiff Wood was on a long journey that would span two decades and three Olympics. Tied to a mast, driven half-mad by voices, Tiff will be remembered long after the rest of his era are forgotten and turned to dust. Thanks to **David Halberstam**, anyone who has read *The Amateurs* must be filled with a sense of foreboding whenever the events of Tiff’s rowing career are retold.

**Biglow:** “1983. That’s when Tiff went over and got his Bronze Medal, and I’m so glad that he did that. I’m glad I had that off year from the single because I still feel really sad for Tiff.”<sup>6692</sup>

### The Sliding-Rigger Single

In 1983, Tiff won the U.S. Singles Trials and placed third in the World Championships. It would turn out to be the summit of his rowing career.

It is ironic but probably not coincidental that rowing in a sliding-rigger single produced the best results in John Biglow’s entire career, before or after, in 1982,<sup>6693</sup> and

a year later the very same boat carried Tiff Wood to the best results in his entire career.

U.S. Teammate **Brad Lewis:** “Tiff’s success came with that sliding-rigger boat, and that was a huge asset for him because it absorbed the check so he could really reef on it. It was basically like a floating erg.”<sup>6694</sup>

Contrary to Brad’s assumption, Tiff’s boat was actually quite a handful to row. Built by American **Ted Van Dusen**<sup>6695</sup> in response to the Empacher sliding-rigger single rowed in 1981 by Gold Medalist Peter-Michael Kolbe,<sup>6696</sup> the boat in its final form was a standard Van Dusen hull with two-sided tracks in place of splash boards on either side of the athlete’s station. The seat deck was reduced to the space below the stationary seat, and the rest of the sculler’s station was a long cockpit open to the keelson to accommodate the heels of the rigger / footstretcher module, which slid just above the keelson as a unit during the stroke cycle.

There were four sets of three sealed aircraft-quality ball bearing units which allowed noisy but *nearly* frictionless sliding. However, the sliding unit weighed something close to half the total weight of the boat, so a recovery with the sliding-rigger configuration required noticeably more effort from the hamstrings to overcome inertia than a normal sliding-seat configuration.

**Van Dusen:** “I looked through all of our records and found that the boat for both John and Tiff was hull number 1163, completion date Sept-81.

“For the first sliding rigger, I used Harken traveler tracks and ball bearing cars.

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<sup>6689</sup> Wood, personal correspondence, 2009

<sup>6690</sup> Colgan, op cit.

<sup>6691</sup> Wood, op cit.

<sup>6692</sup> Biglow, op cit.

<sup>6693</sup> See Chapter 139.

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<sup>6694</sup> Lewis, personal conversation, 2009

<sup>6695</sup> a PhD graduate of MIT and a lightweight single sculler during the 1970s. Ted’s company is Van Dusen Racing Boats, a division of Composite Engineering of Concord, Massachusetts, outside of Boston.

<sup>6696</sup> See Chapter 139.

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Lucius Biglow

**Tiff Wood** in the Van Dusen sliding-rigger single  
Note the rigger/footstretcher unit on its side-mounted tracks.

Each one was rated at 1,000 pounds load capacity, but probably not at the speed of the slide. I barely got two months of use out of them because the balls would jam and slide, wearing flats on them.

“The next system, which is what Biglow used, had pairs of round bearings much like the usual seat wheels and UHMW<sup>6697</sup> polyethylene tracks to match. After a year of use, the tracks started to pit. I was surprised by this, since the weight of the

rigger and the rower’s legs is much less than the load on the seat.

“The third system that Tiff used had four sets of three flat bearings rolling on Nylon tracks. I remember that it was quite an ordeal getting everything machined and aligned accurately enough without the computer numerical controlled equipment that we have today.”<sup>6698</sup>

Because the hull and the rigger/footstretcher unit had to have structural integrity

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<sup>6697</sup> “ultra high molecular weight.”

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<sup>6698</sup> Van Dusen, personal correspondence, 2009



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Lucius Biglow

### 1983 World Championship Singles Final

On the first stroke, a very tentative Tiff Wood had already surrendered nearly half a length.

“After the first hundred meters, he could not even see them.” – **Halberstam**

**Wood:** “I was just *late!* That’s ridiculous! I think everybody just anticipated ‘*Parté*’ better than I did! Everyone is finishing their first stroke, and the stake boat person is still holding my stern. I had *no* idea that I did that. I look at that photo and go, ‘Jesus, maybe I could have done even better than third!’ If I hadn’t been so completely *out of it* 500 meters into that race, who knows?”

– personal conversation, 2009

All finalists were rowing sliding-rigger singles.

From the top, three Empachers, one Veb, Wood’s Van Dusen and one Stämpfli.

independent of one another, the weight of the boat as a whole was several pounds over the FISA minimum, and thanks to the height of the sliding unit above its tracks, the boat’s center of gravity was noticeably higher than usual, making the boat even harder to balance than a normal Van Dusen, which was already considerably less stable than a comparable Stämpfli or Empacher.

Add in that any effort to jam with the legs upon entry, especially at the start, would inevitably lift the athlete off his stationary seat and deposit him abruptly on the bow deck, and you had a boat that severely punished any inattention or any roughness at all in force application and

## THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Lucius Biglow

### 1983 World Championship Men's Single Final

Regattabahn Wedau, Duisburg, West Germany

1 FRG 6:49.88, 2 GDR 6:51.70, 3 **USA** 6:54.30, 4 URS 6:57.66, 5 CZE 7:03.09, 6 POL 7:07.39

Tiff in Lane 2 looks over at **Uwe Mund** from GDR in Lane 5 as the finish line approaches.

West German **Peter Michael Kolbe**'s wake is barely visible in Lane 3.

strongly encouraged and rewarded smooth *Schubschlag* rowing.<sup>6699</sup>

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<sup>6699</sup> Interestingly, a quarter century later neither athlete remembers any of this. **Wood**: "It looked weird more than felt weird, and there was very little issue in adapting. It did generate some wicked butt sores, which made me popular with the medical staff." - Qtd. by Andy Anderson, *Survival of the Fastest*, *Rowing News*, November 2007, p. 54.

Both remember the blisters, caused by rubbing against the awkward vertical lip that Van Dusen added to the bow edge of the seat to discourage one's butt from sliding off in that direction. It helped, but only a little bit, and it was very uncomfortable. A couple of months between the Trials and the Worlds were not nearly enough time to completely adjust to the boat's many idiosyncrasies.

### Tiff's Technique

Throughout his career, Tiff had employed a Modern Orthodox *Kernschlag* two-part pullthrough with his "vicious"<sup>6700</sup> initial leg drive followed sequentially by back swing, and his arms remaining straight until the second half of the pullthrough.

However, his technique in 1983 was unique. After a poor result at the Internationale Rotsee Ruder-Regatta in Lucerne, Tiff was forced to make "adjustments to his style and his boat."<sup>6701</sup>

**Wood**: "I didn't have enough time, but I started experimenting with rowing really high. I was doing 500 meter pieces up in

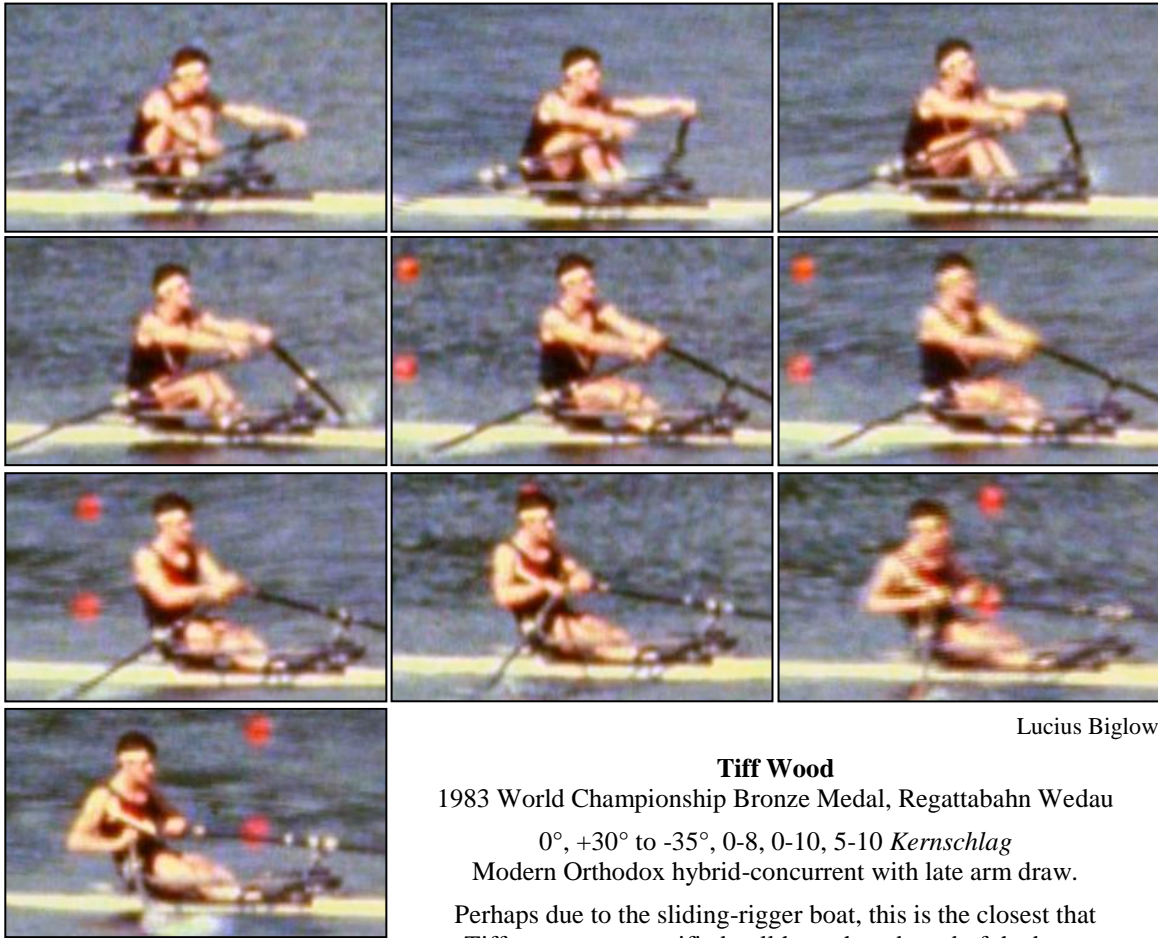
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<sup>6700</sup> Allsopp, op cit.

<sup>6701</sup> *U.S. Athlete Profiles*, *Rowing USA*, June/July 1984, p. 44



## THE SPORT OF ROWING



Lucius Biglow

### Tiff Wood

1983 World Championship Bronze Medal, Regattabahn Wedau

0°, +30° to -35°, 0-8, 0-10, 5-10 *Kernschlag*

Modern Orthodox hybrid-concurrent with late arm draw.

Perhaps due to the sliding-rigger boat, this is the closest that Tiff ever got to a unified pullthrough and send of the boat.

Hanover where I was rowing at 36 to 38, and it wasn't that tiring and I was getting really good times. I just wasn't sure that I could keep that up. I think that the rig potentially lent itself to possibly rowing a much higher stroke, maybe even a shorter stroke, which is technically more efficient. But I didn't have time, so I ended up rowing kind of the same cadence. I didn't have enough faith in the idea yet to go to the World Championships and try it out."<sup>6702</sup>

Thanks to the peculiarities of his sliding-rigger single, Tiff had to be much more careful with his leg drive and rely more on his back swing. This was the

approach that Chris Allsopp had been encouraging him to adopt in their double in 1977 and 1980.

Swinging to the finish allowed the conversion of more of Tiff's enormous work capacity into boat speed, and the result was a magnificent Bronze Medal behind West German **Peter-Michael Kolbe**<sup>6703</sup> and the GDR sculler **Uwe Mund**.

**Rowing U.S.A.:** "Setting a very hard pace, the USSR's **Vasily Yakusha** led for over a thousand meters. Kolbe was content to keep a slim lead over Mund as both went by the Soviet, then crept away for the Gold by a bit of open water.

<sup>6702</sup> Wood, personal conversation, 2009

<sup>6703</sup> See Chapter 125.

## THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



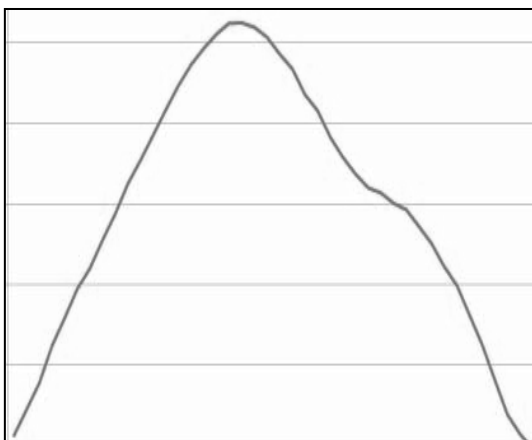
Andy Anderson

### Tiff Wood

1983 World Championship Bronze Medal, Regattabahn Wedau

0°, +30° to -35°, 0-9, 0-10, 5-10 Modern Orthodox  
Hybrid-concurrent *Kernschlag* with late arm draw.

Note how Tiff's seat stays in one place.



Author

**Tiff Wood** in 2009  
Mild *Kernschlag*  
Notch is arms joining late.

“Meanwhile, Tiff Wood was regaining contact with the tiring Russian. With 500 meters to go, he was still over a length behind but coming on strong, and kept the pressure on until he broke through for the

Bronze. The Czech and Polish scullers were well back.”<sup>6704</sup>

**Wood:** “After falling behind everybody in the first 500, I was relieved that pretty quickly I got ahead of the two who came in fifth and sixth. But the front three were just *gone!* It was only after the 1,000 that I began to think that maybe I was going to catch Yakusha. If only I hadn’t fallen so far behind . . . I mean I beat Mund by a ton at Lake Casitas.”<sup>6705</sup>

Indeed, a few weeks later, Tiff won the pre-Olympic test event over Ibarra, Mund, Biglow and Pat Walter of Canada on the new 1984 Olympic rowing course in Ojai, outside of Los Angeles, California. It would turn out to be Tiff’s only race on **Lake Casitas**.

<sup>6704</sup> Bob Jaugstetter, *The 1983 World Championships, Rowing U.S.A.*, October/November 1983, p. 23

<sup>6705</sup> Wood, op cit.

## THE SPORT OF ROWING



Carol McGowan

### 1983 U.S. Men's Quad training in Dartmouth

Stroke **John Biglow** 6'3" 190 cm 187 lb. 85 kg, 3 **Bill Purdy** 6'5" 196 cm 196 lb 89 kg,  
2 **Charlie Altekruise** 6'3" 191 cm 210 lb. 95 kg, Bow **Joe Bouscaren** 6'3" 191 cm 180 lb. 82 kg

In the ensuing decades, Ted Van Dusen has built on request a couple of sliding-rigger replicas. The original boat rowed by both Biglow in 1982 and Wood in 1983 is now part of the National Rowing Foundation collection of historic shells at Mystic Seaport in Connecticut, donated by the author.

### The 1983 Quad

**Biglow:** "After I lost to Tiff in the '83 Trials, I rowed in Harry's Sculling Camp, and it turned out that seat racing showed that I was as fast in a quad *as if* I were still the fastest sculler, and yet I couldn't row fast in a single.

"I rowed in the quad in 1983 in Duisburg, and it was a great experience for me. I was with **Joe Bouscaren** from Yale,

**Charlie Altekruise** from Harvard and **Bill Purdy** from Syracuse, and it was a really fun boat."<sup>6706</sup>

A year before the 1984 Olympics, and the protagonists of the coming drama were gathering, unaware of their coming fates.

### Joe Bouscaren

**Joseph G. Bouscaren** had not rowed before he entered Yale. He stroked his freshman crew and stroked the Varsity his sophomore year. The lightest man on the crew, he retained his Varsity seat the next two years as Biglow moved into the boat. Those two crews won the Eastern Sprints.

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<sup>6706</sup> Biglow, op cit.



## THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Steve Fontanini / *Los Angeles Times*

### Joe Bouscaren

After graduating in 1979, Joe rowed in the tenth-place 1981 U.S. men's double with **Scott Roop**, who also won the World Lightweight Singles Championship at the same regatta.<sup>6707</sup>

Joe graduated from Cornell Medical School in June, 1983 and in order to be able to focus all his energies on making the 1984 Olympic Team, he scheduled the start of his surgical internship for an entire year later, the week after the rowing finals in Los Angeles.

### Charlie Altekruise

**Charles Ernest Brenton Altekruise, Jr.**'s Harvard crews had lost twice at the Eastern Sprints to Yale crews containing Biglow and Bouscaren before they won the title back in his senior year of 1980. They never lost the Harvard-Yale Race during Charlie's four years.

**Charlie Altekruise:** "I had learned how to row in Ireland. That was my first exposure to rowing, but it got ingrained in the St. Paul's / Harvard environment. There

was some emphasis on technique, obviously timing and stuff, but I think there was more of an emphasis on aggressiveness and determination."<sup>6708</sup>

Prior to Harvard, Charlie was a member of three consecutive New England-Champion St. Paul's eights and the **1976** U.S. coxed-four that won Silver at the Junior World Championships in Villach, Austria.

While still a Harvard undergraduate, he made Harry Parker's **1979** U.S. Camp eight which also contained Biglow before he

got sick.<sup>6709</sup>

In **1980**, Charlie also rowed in the U.S. Olympic Eight which finished second to GDR both days in Lucerne, won both days at the Holland Beker and took the Grand Challenge Cup at Henley.



Carol McGowan

### Charlie Altekruise

<sup>6707</sup> See Chapter 139.

<sup>6708</sup> Altekruise, personal conversation, 2009

<sup>6709</sup> See Chapter 139.

## THE SPORT OF ROWING



Bob Ernst/*The Oarsman*

### 1980 U.S. Men's Olympic Eight

Grand Challenge Cup Winners

Bow Sean Colgan, 2 Dick Cashin 6'4" 193 cm 205 lb. 93 kg,  
3 Kurt Somerville, 4 **Charlie Altekruise** 6'3" 191 cm 210 lb. 95 kg,  
5 Tom Woodman, 6 Steve Christiansen 6'5" 196 cm 205 lb. 93 kg,  
7 John Everett 6'4" 193 cm 205 lb. 93 kg, Stroke Bruce Ibbetson 6'2" 188 cm 183 lb. 83 kg,  
Coxswain John Chatsky

With the Los Angeles Olympics on the horizon, Charlie rowed in the Bronze-Medal **1982 U.S.** coxed-four coached by Harry Parker, and as Harry turned his attentions to his coming role as 1984 Olympic Sculling Coach, Charlie made the transition to two oars for 1983.

### Bill Purdy

**Purdy:** "I began rowing at Liverpool High School, a public school in the Syracuse area. I needed a replacement for swimming, in which I had been competing year round for more than six years.

"I immediately fell in love with rowing. I competed every summer, qualifying for the U.S. Junior Team after my sophomore and senior years. I was recruited by many colleges and finally chose Syracuse over Cornell, and while at Syracuse, I was in the IRA freshman eight championship boat in 1976 and the IRA varsity eight champs in 1978.

"My experience in the U.S. Team began in 1977. I rowed 7-seat in the U.S. eight. We finished a disappointing sixth in Amsterdam. I did not attend the 1978 camp because it would have required that I take a semester off from school, since the Worlds were in New Zealand that year.

"In 1979, I was invited to the camp which would select the eight. Harry Parker was the coach. All of Harry's camps were intense. Every day was a seat race, either directly, or indirectly. I never felt safe. I never felt like one of Harry's favorites. The boat was chosen after weeks of training, testing, and seat racing.

"I rowed bow-seat in the 1979 U.S. Eight behind John Biglow at 2 and Charlie Altekruise at 3. They would later be my teammates in the 1983 quad. I admired John and became good friends with him that summer.

"We competed in the Worlds at Bled, Yugoslavia. We finished fifth, again to the disappointment of Harry and the rest of the crew.

## THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

In 1980, I moved to Boston and trained out of Newell Boathouse with a group of National Team oarsmen. Harry organized winter and spring workouts, coaching both the large National squad and his Harvard oarsmen. I always believed that I could compete with anyone and had proved it by making the eight in the two camps of 1977 and 1979, but I also felt that I had to prove myself again to Harry in 1980. During the camp and subsequent selection that summer, I had to race my way back onto the team. It became clear that Harry did not feel that I was worthy of the eight, even though I believed I was.

“During our European tour, the final line-up for the four-with was not completed until after Lucerne. The top four turned out to be a very fast boat. (Tom Darling, Phil Stekl, me, John Biglow, Bob Jaugstetter) We won the remainder of our races in Europe.”<sup>6710</sup>

“I can talk about the boycott, and how disappointed I was that we were not able to compete in the Olympics. It was a dream of mine, and it was taken away with a political maneuver, a pointless decision that would affect hundreds of athletes who had sacrificed by putting their lives on hold to achieve a lifelong dream of representing their country in the greatest spectacle of sport in the world.

“I had career plans of attending dental school, which I had delayed a year so that I could compete for a spot on the Olympic Rowing Team. I began school in September, 1980, but continued to train with no plans to attempt to make a team again. I applied for an Olympic Development single and began sculling in 1981. I trained primarily on my own, but during summer break I was able to train with **Scott Roop**”<sup>6711</sup>

and **Mike Totta**, who was a fast up-and-coming sculler in the central New York region.

“After successful racing in my single and a double during the summer of 1982, I decided to ask for a leave of absence from dental school and moved to Boston in December to row for Harry.

“As in 1979 and 1980, Harry had a group of oarsmen who were training for the U.S. Sculling Team out of the Harvard boathouse. In the early morning, we trained in doubles and quads under Harry’s guidance and rowed our singles on our own in the evenings. We had a cohesive group of men, including Joe Bouscaren, Tiff Wood, Charlie Alterkuse, Mike Totta, Scott Roop, Bruce Beall, and Ridgley Johnson, but every day was like a day at a selection camp, with the same intensity. Brad Lewis, John Biglow and Paul Enquist joined us later in the spring. Brad was aloof and kept to himself.

“I remember the camp that summer in Hanover as seemingly lasting forever. As with all of Harry’s camps, there was almost daily seat racing. He tore people down, and it was a matter of survival. No one really knew where they stood in Harry’s eyes.”<sup>6712</sup>

### 1983 Quad Technique

The 1983 quad had a lineup of formidable athletes and was a well-coached, smooth boat, as the photos on the following pages amply demonstrate.

However, Biglow believes that his back problem was definitely having an impact on his technique and the boat’s performance.

**Biglow:** “My herniated disc gave me sciatica, which is an aching in your leg. There’s nothing wrong with your leg. It’s all in your back. The nerve from your leg is getting compressed, so therefore it sends a

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<sup>6710</sup> See Chapter 139.

<sup>6711</sup> See Chapter 139.

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<sup>6712</sup> Purdy, personal correspondence, 2010

## THE SPORT OF ROWING



Lucius Biglow

### 1983 World Championship Men's Quad Semi-Final

1 GDR 5:46.46, 2 ITA 5:47.24, 3 CZE 5:48.41, 4 USA 5:51.21, 5 NOR 5:51.50, 6 HUN 5:57.61

From top: ITA, CZE, GDR's wake, USA

signal to your brain that feels the same as leg pain.

"In addition to the pain, a compressed nerve may also lead to a weaker muscle. The pain was not slowing me down, but I suspect the weakness was, and it was also forcing me to adopt a different technique.

"That's what I was wrestling with.

"I think *I* was the major reason why the quad didn't make the final in '83. Our other races felt light and quick, but the semi-final was a bad race for us. I was stroking, and I didn't even know I was doing it, but my oars were hanging up so badly at the catch. Watching the movies afterwards, it was really obvious.

"Harry looked at it and said, 'Yeah, I can't figure out why you were doing that.'"<sup>6713</sup>

Frank Cunningham and others had an explanation: a windup prior to explosive *Kernschlag* segmented force application.

**Brad Lewis:** "They had a lot of horsepower, but they were pretty rough under power.

"Biggie was a tough guy to row against but pretty good in the boat. He rowed okay in the quad, technically better than Tiff would have, but he basically treated it like a floating erg."<sup>6714</sup>

**Cunningham:** "I was with the team that year as a rigger, and that was some awful quad. They whacked at the catch so that there was an impact instead of picking the boat up. Those guys had erred a long way from what I think of as good sculling."<sup>6715</sup>

**Halberstam:** "West Coast coaches were traditionalists [who] considered those who

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<sup>6713</sup> Biglow, op cit.

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<sup>6714</sup> Lewis, op cit.

<sup>6715</sup> Cunningham, op cit.



## THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

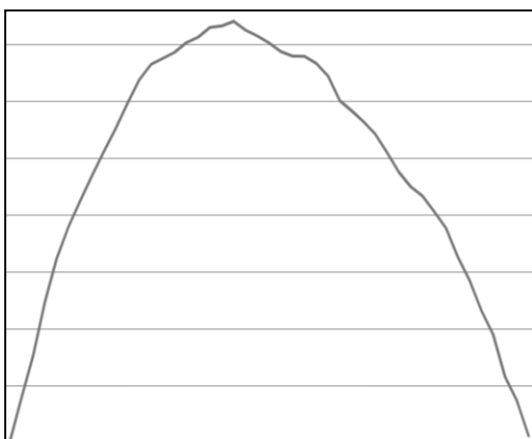


Andy Anderson

**1983 U.S. Men's Quad**  
1983 World 7<sup>th</sup> Place, Regattabahn Wedau  
(Shown winning the petite final)

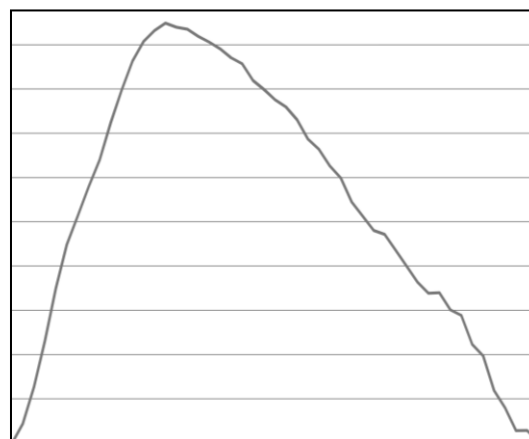
Bow **Joe Bouscaren** 6'3" 191 cm 180 lb. 82 kg, 2 **Charlie Altekruze** 6'3" 191 cm 210 lb. 95 kg,  
3 **Bill Purdy** 6'5" 196 cm 196 lb 89 kg, Stroke **John Biglow** 6'3" 190 cm 187 lb. 85 kg

Biglow: 0°, +25° to -45°, 0-7, 0-10, 0-10 Classical Technique, *Schubschlag*  
Which turned to segmented *Kernschlag* under stress.



Paul Smith

**John Biglow** at steady state  
*Schubschlag*, very close to a parabola.  
Slight left-hand bias.



Paul Smith

**John Biglow** at full pressure  
*Kernschlag*, two-part pullthrough.  
Second half remains convex.

avored power over technique the Philistines of sculling.

"To Cunningham and McIntyre, Biglow, more than any other American sculler, was

*their* sculler and *their* hope. After going East to college, he had strayed from the true course and been seduced by the theory of power and endurance. He had gone over to



## THE SPORT OF ROWING

the Easterners and sacrificed style for strength.

"McIntyre was particularly outspoken on the subject. As far as he was concerned, it was Biglow's particular skill to be able to apply his power smoothly without lurching and jerking on the slide. He hated it when Biglow went for power and abandoned his technique.

"He's chopping wood again," McIntyre would say."<sup>6716</sup>

**Biglow:** "The quad is a stable boat, and you can go up there and feel like you really want to wind up and feel really powerful."<sup>6717</sup>

This is a good description of segmented-effort *Kernschlag*. Biglow's force curve at steady state on the previous page shows a smooth *Schubschlag* barely left-leaning near-parabola, but under stress his curve immediately degenerates into a two-part *Kernschlag* segmented pullthrough with a noticeable kink in it.

**Biglow:** "We were fast in '83, but I kind of spoiled it for us in the semis. Unfortunately, when I really hit it hard, it slowed the boat down. The guys behind me were great, really strong and rowing better than I was.

"We won the petit final, so we were seventh. We wouldn't have medaled, but we probably could have beaten some of the crews in the final."<sup>6718</sup>

1 FRG	5:45.97
2 GDR	5:47.87
3 ITA	5:49.79
4 CAN	5:51.33
5 CZE	5:52.77
6 FRA	5:54.46

7 USA	5:57.93
8 HOL	6:01.15
9 NOR	6:02.01
10 URS	6:05.03
11 BUL	6:10.28
12 HUN	6:11.19

**Charlie Altekruise**, 1983 quad 2-seat: "That was a missed opportunity. For me, that was my first year of sculling.

"The quad was reasonably good. We won the petites, but we should have been in the final. I just think we didn't have confidence or racing experience in a quad. I think if you had given us another two months and three or four races on the international scene, I think we *could* have been a medalist contender, but we just didn't quite click.

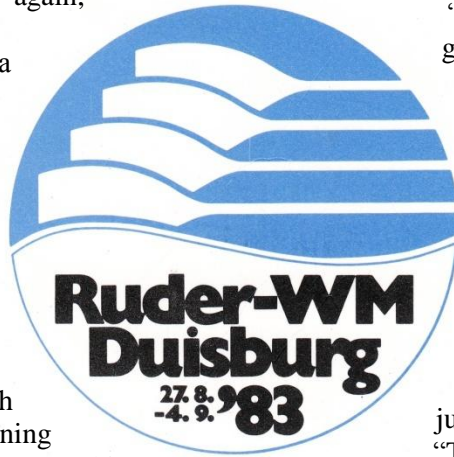
"The American way of showing up for the World Championships and having your first race . . . That's *no* way to go for a serious boat!"<sup>6719</sup>

**Purdy:** "It was a bittersweet year, and I remember wishing that we had more opportunity to race together. I seemed like a long year and a long process for a limited racing experience."<sup>6720</sup>

### 1983 U.S. Double

The cast of major characters for Halberstam's Homeric epic, *The Amateurs*, is nearing completion. In 1983, the U.S. Double was **Brad Lewis** and **Paul Enquist**.

**Lewis:** "I was on the team in '83 with all the good scullers. Harry Parker was the coach. We all got along great. We had a



<sup>6716</sup> Halberstam, p. 143

<sup>6717</sup> Biglow, op cit.

<sup>6718</sup> Biglow, op cit.

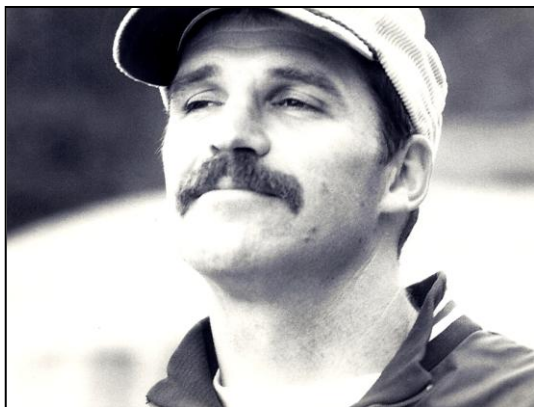
<sup>6719</sup> Altekruise, personal conversation, 2009

<sup>6720</sup> Purdy, op cit.

## THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

great time, all of us, really having a lot of fun.”<sup>6721</sup>

### Brad Alan Lewis



Carol McGowan

Brad

**Halberstam**, describing Brad: “When he had made the National Team in a double, his partner, Paul Enquist, had found sustaining the friendship required for a double to be one of the hardest things he had ever done. There had been long periods when Lewis barely spoke to Enquist, and sometimes Brad treated him as if he were an opponent, not a teammate.”<sup>6722</sup>

**Enquist**: “Well, Brad *is* different.”<sup>6723</sup>

In *The Amateurs*, David Halberstam cast **Brad Alan Lewis**, 6’4” 193cm 196 lb. 89 kg., as the ultimate outsider, the brooding, angry loner from California in ‘84, crashing the party at the Harvard boathouse.

Brad would be our **Achilles**.

**Lewis**: “Was I an outsider? At that point, I’d been in rowing for thirteen years, a long time, and I’d been on the team since ‘77, so to be honest, I really didn’t think of myself that much as the outsider. I think

that was more of a Halberstam creation. I just happened to train on the West Coast. It made sense to train there if you want to get a lot of miles, and I don’t like erging. I don’t think it translates that well to sculling.

“That’s one of the things I took umbrage with in Halberstam’s book. It was all these pigeon-holed things. You’re the *outsider*. You’re the *Harvard* guy. You’re the *Yale* guy. It was much more complex, much more subtle than that, and we were actually pretty good friends.”<sup>6724</sup>

Another actor in Halberstam’s drama agrees.

**Sean Colgan**: “I put Halberstam in the ‘fiction writer’ category.”<sup>6725</sup>

Nevertheless, if you read Brad’s own passionate memoir of the events of 1984, *Assault on Lake Casitas*, he carefully describes how he intentionally built a wall between himself and “Harry’s Boys” as “an artificial device that I had constructed in the past year.”<sup>6726</sup>

Indeed, for as long as he has had oars in his hands, Brad Lewis, in normal life a genuinely nice person, has seemed to go out of his way to antagonize other rowers whenever it has suited him.

Brad’s dad had rowed briefly at UCLA, and his older brother was rowing in college when Brad’s own rowing career began in his home town in Orange County, California.

**Lewis**: “There was a flyer posted around campus at Corona del Mar High School for tryouts for this new thing called a rowing team. No one had ever heard of it, but it had the magic words: ‘Everyone welcome! No experience needed.’ When you’re in high school, you’ve got so much baggage by the time you’re a junior, so it’s great to get a fresh start.

“A bunch of us tried out, showed up at this guy’s classroom to talk about it. Two of

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<sup>6721</sup> Lewis, op cit.

<sup>6722</sup> Halberstam, p. 102

<sup>6723</sup> Qtd. by Halberstam, p. 175

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<sup>6724</sup> Lewis, op cit.

<sup>6725</sup> Colgan, op cit.

<sup>6726</sup> Lewis, *Assault*, p. 14

## THE SPORT OF ROWING



Carol McGowan

**1983 United States Men's Double** training in Dartmouth  
Bow **Brad Alan Lewis**, Stroke **Paul Enquist**

us who were in that classroom went on to make the Olympic Team in 1984, myself and **Curtis Fleming**.<sup>6727</sup> That was the only year it existed. A student teacher named **Mark Sandusky** had organized it. He left the next year.

"We used UC Irvine's equipment. I loved it. We didn't have a clue about what we were doing, but back then men's rowing was really big, and we'd go around and race the second freshman of college crews. It was so much fun. Great guys. Fresh start. Whole new thing.

"There was this guy, **Duvall Hecht**,<sup>6728</sup> who let me use his wooden Pocock single, and I would go putting around in the afternoons. UC Irvine Coach **Bob Ernst**<sup>6729</sup>

saw me training, and he asked me to come row for him.

"'I'd love to, but my grades are atrocious.' (I was smart enough. I just hadn't applied myself in school.)

"Bob said, 'Don't worry. I'll get you in on an athletic deferment.'

"Once I got there, I was fine.

"Ernst was a student of rowing, never much of a rower himself, but he studied it, and my hat's off to him because a lot of coaches never do. They just go on gut instinct, and that will get you just so far. To make the really big improvements, you've got to have some theoretical background."<sup>6730</sup>

The University of California at Irvine had a wonderful Varsity in 1974. Brad ended up in the Jayvee, but Ernst had trained

<sup>6727</sup> See Chapters 141 and 142.

<sup>6728</sup> the founder of rowing at UCI. See Chapter

81.

<sup>6729</sup> See Chapter 148.

<sup>6730</sup> Lewis, personal conversation, 2009



## THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Lucius Biglow

### 1983 United States Men's Double

Stroke **Paul Enquist** 6'6" 198 cm 205 lb. 93 kg, Bow **Brad Alan Lewis** 6'4" 193cm 196 lb. 89 kg

everyone in singles, doubles and pairs. Brad continued to scull on the side in Duvall Hecht's single.

**Lewis:** "Duvall gave me a steady stream of low-key advice that I greatly needed."<sup>6731</sup>

Brad quit crew his senior year, but witnessing in person the battle between Kolbe and Karppinen at the 1976 Olympics in Montréal<sup>6732</sup> had a life-changing impact on him.

**Lewis:** "Within a few days, I had acquired a racing shell, and before a year had passed, this obscure antiquated sport had become my passion."<sup>6733</sup>

Lewis first made the U.S. Team in **1977**, stroking the quad with Ted Van Dusen,<sup>6734</sup> John Bannen and Casey Baker. They came in ninth.

After an injury in **1978**, Brad dedicated himself to the single in **1979**, competing in Europe and studying the GDR version of Classical Technique.

**Lewis:** "I found my way to Zurich, and **Melch Bürgin**<sup>6735</sup> and we hit it off. I trained at the club there and went with them to regattas."<sup>6736</sup>

After a stint in the 1980 Olympic Quad with Chris Allsopp, Tiff and Tom Howes, Brad would next appear on a U.S. Team

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<sup>6731</sup> Lewis, *Assault*, p. 10

<sup>6732</sup> See Chapter 125.

<sup>6733</sup> Lewis, *op cit*, p. 4

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<sup>6734</sup> the builder of the U.S. sliding-rigger single in 1982 and 1983.

<sup>6735</sup> See Chapter 87.

<sup>6736</sup> Lewis, personal conversation, 2009

## THE SPORT OF ROWING

roster in the 1983 National Sculling Camp double with Paul Enquist. They had both failed to make Coach Harry Parker's priority boat, the quad.

**Altekruse:** "Brad was incredibly strong, but you could feel the boat jerk through the power application."<sup>6737</sup> It just didn't work, and that's why nobody could row with him."<sup>6738</sup>

**Lewis:** "At some point in the camp in '83, **Paul Enquist** and I were put in a double. We had immediate success, enough that Coach Parker kept us together.

"We had some epic workouts. I remember early on the guys who had been in the Canadian double in '82 came down to do a workout with us, like a couple of 2,000 meter pieces. We were a half a boat down with 300 meters to go in one of the pieces, and Enquist and I just ground out a monster sprint and caught up. I looked over, and Harry Parker's jaw just dropped. He couldn't believe it!

"You can tell when a boat's going to go well five strokes in. I'd be interested in our power curves. I bet they are very similar because we worked very well together.

"Power curves are really hard to change, but if the power matches up, then it's just a matter of matching up catch timing, stroke length and hands away speed."<sup>6739</sup>

Recent testing reveals similar but not identical *Schubschlag* force curves for Lewis and Enquist.<sup>6740</sup> The tests were separately conducted twenty-five years after their competitive careers, and unfortunately, Lewis was pulling much less hard than Enquist.

However, as we shall discover, film and feedback from his 1983 and '84 campmates strongly suggest that Brad may have been at

least as susceptible as Biglow to mutation towards segmented *Kernschlag* at full pressure.

### 1983 Worlds

**Lewis:** "With 500 meters to go in the semi-final, Paul and I rumbled past the Soviets, and then, on the last stroke, we nudged ahead of the Canadians. Dramatic, gutsy rowing."<sup>6741</sup>

1 GDR	6:14.47
2 USA	6:17.66
3 CAN	6:17.89
4 URS	6:21.17
5 YUG	6:26.03
6 ITA	6:32.85

"We rowed a 6:17 and finished second, only a couple of seconds off the East Germans. That's pretty fast in a double . . .

" . . . but then we had a really bad final. I was sick, and we raced poorly and got sixth."<sup>6742</sup>

1 GDR	6:20.17
2 NOR	6:23.43
3 FRG	6:23.63
4 FIN	6:26.52
5 CAN	6:30.37
6 USA	6:36.99

**Enquist:** "Racing at the Worlds went well until the last 750 meters of the final when we picked up the wake from the East Germans and couldn't steer the shell anymore."<sup>6743</sup>

**Lewis:** "The fact that we'd done really well in that semi-final gave us a little confidence.

"I thought I'd do the single the next year, but of course that ended up not working out."<sup>6744</sup>

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<sup>6737</sup> It may have been that Brad's sculler-oriented *Schubschlag* conflicted with the Harvard/Yale sweep-oriented *Kernschlag*.

<sup>6738</sup> Altekruse, personal conversation, 2009

<sup>6739</sup> Lewis, op cit.

<sup>6740</sup> See Chapter 141.

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<sup>6741</sup> Lewis, *Assault*, p. 56

<sup>6742</sup> Lewis, personal conversation, 2009

<sup>6743</sup> Enquist, personal correspondence, 2009

<sup>6744</sup> Lewis, op cit.



## THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

Fateful words.

U.S. Camp sculler **Mike Totta**: “If you look at the collective performance of the three heavyweight sculling boats at the Worlds in 1983, I’m not sure that any U.S. team has placed as well since – third in the single, sixth in the double and seventh in the quad.

“Harry had gone out with us five to six days a week in the spring of 1983. We did a lot of hard work – essentially racing all the time – at controlled stroke rates. Although

we didn’t get the kind of technique focus that came with Korzo later, we spent a lot of time just rowing together in different combinations – which may have made us more the ‘same,’ even though maybe not ideal.

“As Charlie has said about the Olympic year, the group was very deep – there were only a few single scullers who were outstanding, but there were another six to ten people around who could also move team boats well, and that made for a very competitive environment.”<sup>6745</sup>

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<sup>6745</sup> Totta, personal correspondence, 2010