

THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

126. Women's Rowing Comes of Age

USSR – GDR – USA – 1976 Olympics

The Soviet⁵⁷³² Era

Women have been rowing since the 19th Century, but the first major international championship regatta for women was the 1954 European Championships on the Bosbaan in Amsterdam.

Prior to 1984, the international race distance for women was 1,000 meters, half that of the men. Many women's crews in the early decades tended to blast off the line at very high ratings and then try to hang on in the second 500, the “fly-and-die and hope your opponent cracks first” approach.

This had also been seen in men's rowing during its own early developmental stages: during the early 19th Century on the Cam and the Isis, during the Golden Age of English Orthodoxy and also during the emergence of the Italian men in the 1940s and the Soviet men in the 1950s.

Soviet 1960s Men's Coach **Evgenii Samsonov**: “We mostly open the race very fast. We try for a stroke so high that others cannot



FISA 1976 Video

Dynamo Kiev Ukraine Composite Women's Eight

1976 Olympic Silver Medal, Île Notre Dame

Bow **Lyubov Talalayeva** 5'11" 180cm 165lb. 75kg,

2 **Nadezhda Roshchina** 6'0" 184cm 196lb. 89kg,

3 **Klavdija Koženкова**, 5'11" 180cm 165lb. 75kg (est),

4 **Yelena Zubko** 6'0" 183cm 165lb. 75kg,

5 **Olga Kolkova** 6'0" 184cm 190lb. 86kg,

6 **Nelli Tarakanova** 6'0" 184cm 203lb. 92kg,

7 **Nadezhda Rozgon** 5'11" 181cm 203lb. 92kg,

Stroke **Olga Guzenko** 5'11" 180cm 190lb. 86kg,

coxswain **Olga Pugovskaya**

Soviet woman rowers were by far the biggest in early competitions.

Only three of this crew were not from Dynamo Kiev:

Talayeva was from Spartak Moskva Russia.

Roshchina was from Dynamo Saratov Russia.

Koženкова was from RK Žalgiris Vilnius Lithuania.

⁵⁷³² See Chapter 79.

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FISA 1976 Video

1976 Soviet Women's Eight

Bow **Lyubov Talalayeva** Spartak Moskva 5'11" 180cm 165lb. 75kg
 0°, +15° to -20°, 0-8, 0-8, 0-10 Moscow Style Classical Technique *Schubschlag*
 Body mechanics were reminiscent of the Ratzeburg Style.

overtake us. If this is possible, you control the remainder of the race, and then you can adjust.

"Rowing is all at the start."⁵⁷³³

Soviet 1962 men's coxswain **Alfonsas Mikishis** described their strategy for 2,000 meter races: "We try to start over 40, but this depends on the weather and the competition. In all races we try to ease off, but must be prepared to go back up to 38 if our opponents begin to gain. If they do, I

call for 30 higher beats to move away, and we usually do.

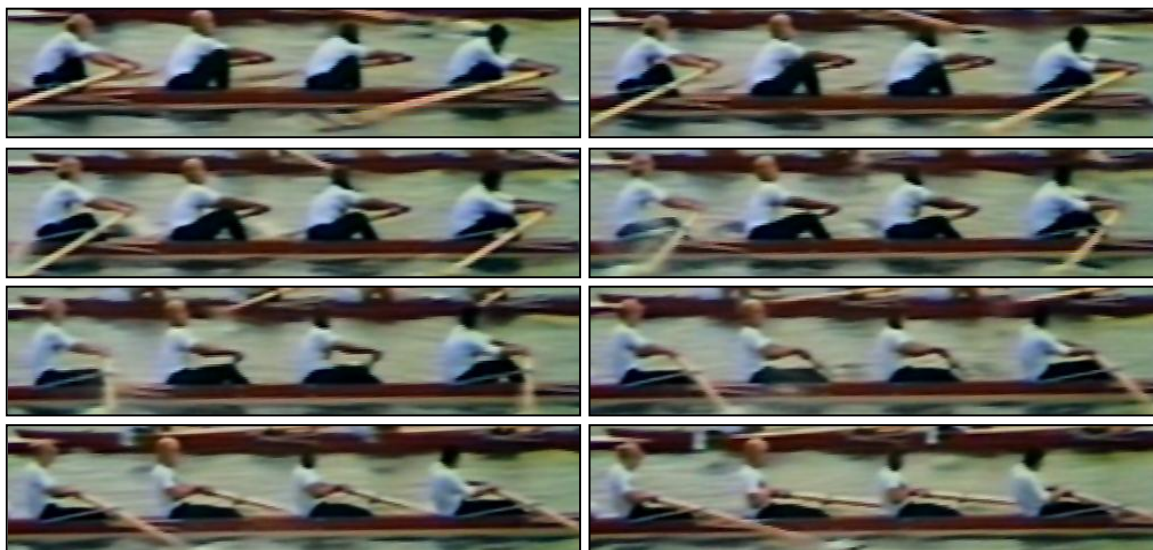
"With a strong crew, my job is simpler. Then I just call out the meters to the finish line."⁵⁷³⁴

The fly-and-die method is very effective . . . until an opponent calls your bluff, and when GDR women's crews came to the fore during the mid-1970s, that is precisely what they began doing to any Soviet boat that tried it.

⁵⁷³³ Qtd. by Lanouette, *Volga*, p. 126

⁵⁷³⁴ Qtd. by Lanouette, op cit.

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FISA 1976 Video

SC Einheit Dresden Women's Coxed-Four

1976 Olympic Champion, Île Notre Dame

Coxswain **Sabine Hess** (not shown),

Bow **Andrea Kurth** 5'10" 178cm 170lb. 77kg, 2 **Gabriele Lohs-Kühn** 6'0" 184cm 190lb. 86kg,

3 **Bianka Schwede** 5'9" 174cm 174lb. 79kg, Stroke **Karin Metze** 5'11" 180cm 181lb. 82kg

0°, +25° to -20°, 0-10, 0-10, 0-10 Classical Technique

Concurrent *Schubschlag*, ferryman's finish.

In 1,000 meter races, Soviet women could usually dispense with the mid-race "ease off," and they often used the fly-and-die strategy to devastating effect. In the first twenty years of international women's competition, they utterly dominated the world, medaling in an extraordinary ninety-two of the one hundred events held between 1954 and 1973, and taking the Gold in sixty-seven! This was a far greater domination than that later accomplished by the GDR men or women in the 1970s and '80s.

The Soviet women did it by rowing the Moscow Style⁵⁷³⁵ with very large athletes.

For the **Dynamo Kiev Composite Eight** that represented the Soviet Union at the 1976 Olympics, the recovery was typical Moscow-Ratzeburg accelerated slide, and leg compression at the entry was also

reminiscent of Ratzeburg. Pullthrough had legs, backs and arms working concurrently, but unlike the GDR eight next to them on the Île Notre Dame Olympic course, their effort seemed to be to maintain momentum rather than send the boat at the end of the pullthrough. Legs and backs finished early together, leaving the arms to finish the stroke by themselves.

The GDR⁵⁷³⁶ Era

In contrast to most Soviet crews, GDR crews tended to row their 1,000 meters by coming off the line high but settling quickly to a strong and steady pace, wearing down their opponents in the first 500, and then slowly pulling away in the last 250, often

⁵⁷³⁵ See Chapter 79.

⁵⁷³⁶ See Chapter 79.

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The Oarsman

United States Selection Camp Women's Eight

1975 World Silver Medal, Holme Pierrepont

Coxswain **Lynn Silliman**,

Stroke **Carie Graves** 6'1" 186cm 170lb. 77kg, , 7 **Gail Pierson** 5'10" 177cm 155lb. 70kg,
6 **Wiki Royden** 5'8" 172cm 150lb. 58kg, 5 **Claudia Schneider** 6'0" 183cm 152lb. 69kg,
4 **Ann Warner** 5'8" 173cm 150lb. 68kg, 3 **Nancie Storrs** 5'8" 173cm 165lb. 75kg,
2 **Carol Brown** 5'8" 172cm 148lb. 67kg, Bow **Chris Ernst** 5'7" 170cm 135lb. 61kg

without raising their ratings, as the others faltered, one by one.

The technique of the GDR women was identical to that of the GDR men.⁵⁷³⁷ Classical Technique. The load was very heavy, and legs, backs and arms were used concurrently to accelerate the boat organically and aggressively from entry to release.

The Soviet women also rowed with Classical body mechanics, but their GDR counterparts tended to choose a pace that allowed them to hold their form better and make the second 500 their killing field.

Women's Eights, Montréal

The inclusion of woman rowers in the Olympics starting in 1976 marked the true coming of age of women's rowing. By that time, GDR was the team to beat, the defending World Champions in every event but the double, the Soviets having won the only other Gold, one Silver and two Bronze in the previous year.

The eight race field in Montréal was a demonstration of the state of international women's rowing of the time. Eight crews were entered, half from the Eastern Bloc. **GDR** and the **Soviets** each won their heats. Qualifiers in the single repêchage were the **United States, Romania, West Germany** and **Canada** in that order.

⁵⁷³⁷ See Chapter 119.

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The Oarsman

United States Selection Camp Women's Eight

1976 Olympic Bronze Medal, Île Notre Dame

Coxswain **Lynn Silliman**,

Stroke **Jackie Zoch** 5'11" 180cm 168lb. 76kg, 7 **Anita DeFrantz** 5'11" 180cm 159lb. 72kg,
6 **Carie Graves** 6'1" 186cm 170lb. 77kg, , 5 **Marion Grieg** 5'11" 180cm 154lb. 70kg,
4 **Ann Warner** 5'8" 173cm 150lb. 68kg, 3 **Peggy McCarthy** 5'9" 175cm 141lb. 64kg,
2 **Carol Brown** 5'8" 172cm 148lb. 67kg, Bow **Gail Ricketson** 5'8" 173cm 141lb. 64kg

USA

The U.S. crew was the product of a National Selection Camp in its second year. The Camp Crew had won Silver in 1975, an achievement well chronicled by **Daniel Boyne** in *The Red Rose Crew*.

Their coach was **Harry Parker**, who had become available for the women after Allen Rosenberg's National Camp eight won Gold in 1974 and Rosenberg was appointed men's coach through 1976.⁵⁷³⁸ This marked the first time an established elite men's coach had devoted his efforts to American women, and the results were very rewarding.

Parker: "I had no idea what to expect, so I treated them just like another men's crew. I was right. They rowed as hard and are as enthusiastic."⁵⁷³⁹

The success of the 1975 eight and the instant credibility of having the great Harry Parker as coach meant that competition to make the eight in the Olympic year of 1976 was very high. Only four members of the 1975 eight retained their places.

Lynn Silliman, a 17-year-old from ZLAC Rowing Club in San Diego, California, repeated as coxswain after earning her seat in the 1975 World Silver Medal eight as a high school sophomore.⁵⁷⁴⁰

Carol Brown from Princeton remained in the 2-seat. In 1974, she and Janet Youngholm had finished fifth at the World Championships in the coxless-pair, only the second American woman's boat in history to

⁵⁷³⁸ See Chapters 111 through 114.

⁵⁷³⁹ Peter Wood, *Crew in Crisis*, *The New York Times Magazine*, July 11, 1976

⁵⁷⁴⁰ One of my proudest achievements as a coach is to have taught **Lynn Silliman** and her ZLAC teammate, **Kelly Rickon**, how to cox. They both went on to win Olympic medals. Add in **Irene Moreno** from my 1974 Cal State Long Beach Lightweight Men's Crew, and coxswains from my programs filled four of the first nine Olympic women's coxswain slots available.

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FISA 1976 Video

1976 United States Selection Camp Women's Eight

Coxswain **Lynn Silliman** watching the GDR crew in the next lane.

7 **Anita DeFrantz**, 0°, +20° to -20°, 0-7, 0-10, 0-10

Stroke **Jackie Zoch**, +5°, +20° to -20°, 0-5, 0-10, 6-10

Body mechanics were Modern Orthodox segmented-force *Kernschlag*.

make an international championship final.⁵⁷⁴¹

Yale undergrad **Anne Warner** remained in 4, and Wisconsin undergrad **Carie Graves** moved from stroke to 6.

Connecticut College and Penn Law School grad **Anita DeFrantz** moved into the 7-seat from the 1975 sixth-place coxed-four, and Long Beach sculler **Marion Grieg** moved into 5 from the fifth-place 1975 quad.

Gail Ricketson of the University of New Hampshire and **Jackie Zoch** of the University of Wisconsin, both spares in 1975, earned the bow and stroke seats respectively. A third Wisconsin undergrad, **Peggy McCarthy**, the only National Team newcomer, rounded out the boat in 3.

The technique of the crew reflected the disparate sources of the camp participants who made the final boating. Ricketson in bow rowed a beautiful *Schubschlag* 0-8, 0-10, 0-10 with -30° of layback, and Brown in 2 also rowed *Kernschlag* bordering on *Schubschlag*, but it was 0-7, 0-7, 7-10 with only -15° of layback, and she was connected to the boat only until her legs and back were flat at 70% of the pullthrough.

Graves and Zoch, the Wisconsin women in 6 and stroke, had the fastest legs in the boat, pure segmented-force *Kernschlag*, and it was their technique which set the tone for the boat as a whole.

Men's sculler **Chris Allsopp**:⁵⁷⁴² "When Harry set up camp at Dartmouth, he sought to liven up his crew's training with a scrimmage. The men's quad camp that year

⁵⁷⁴¹ after Joan Lind in 1973. See Chapter 128.

⁵⁷⁴² See Chapter 140.

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had designated two spares for all the men's Olympic scullers. I got moved out of the quad and into the spare double with Jim Castellan – a bitter pill that took me a long time to reconcile.

“Unlike Jim, I had little interest in making the most of my spare's role until Harry asked Jim and I to race 500s with the women's eight. Jim was excited by the challenge, but as the bitter heartbroken partner I wanted no part of it, especially since I knew a women's eight is faster than a men's double. Harry was persistent and cajoled me into it, and in retrospect I'm glad we did it.

“Jim and I agreed that the only way we could hang with them was to blast the beginning to jump a few seats ahead of them and then try to hold on as best we could. It went nearly as planned – we would grab a few seats so that they could ferociously mow us down. The more seats we took at the beginning of pieces, the more they would take by the end. Once they learned we were nothing more than jack rabbits, they set out to neutralize our initial speed, and we could barely move on them.

“Those pieces were some of the most aggressive I have ever rowed. When that crew medaled in Montreal, it was no surprise to me. I took a small bit of⁵⁷⁴³ satisfaction out of my summer of disappointment in knowing that perhaps we helped them on their way.”

Île Notre Dame

Force application for the women's eight was strong to the finish for the boat as a whole, but explosive leg drive had led to a segmented pullthrough and the appearance that they were hitting concrete at the catch as they blasted off the line at 42 into the headwind at Montréal.

⁵⁷⁴³ Allsopp, personal correspondence, 2011

They were still rowing at 38 when they took a power-10 and crossed the 500 meter mark even with GDR, who were following their own race plan by rowing steadily at 35.

These were determined women, America's very best, true trailblazers in their country. However, determination was not enough for the 1976 U.S. Olympic women's eight.

The Oarsman: “The wind had come up to its strongest of the entire regatta, 4.8 meters per second,⁵⁷⁴⁴ and it was quite rocky for the first 750 meters.”⁵⁷⁴⁵

GDR waited until they had crossed the 500 to take a 10 at 36, and soon their lead over the U.S. was a seat, then a deck, then a half length, and the race was over between these two fine boats.

“In the third 250, the U.S. seemed to have its most difficult time with the conditions and threw up a lot of white water. The U.S. rowed this split a full four seconds slower than the preceding one and dropped 2.4 seconds behind the leaders.”⁵⁷⁴⁶

The U.S. had rowed a fly-and-die race, and they had paid the price.

USSR

There was another crew in the medal hunt at Montréal. The Soviet entry from **Dynamo Kiev Ukraine** had been put together over the previous several years by Coach German Ushakov. To earn the right to represent the Soviet Union, they dethroned the long-time USSR and European Champion Eight from **Novgorod City** in Russia coached by Evgenii Morozov.

Dynamo Kiev crossed the 500 meter mark more than three-quarters of a length

⁵⁷⁴⁴ 10.7 mph.

⁵⁷⁴⁵ Peter Lippett, *Women's Rowing, The Oarsman*, July/August 1976, p. 23

⁵⁷⁴⁶ Peter Lippett, *op cit*.

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behind the two leaders, but they were rowing well within themselves at 34.

In the very rough headwind, they had abandoned the usual Soviet fly-and-die strategy. They were pacing themselves like a GDR crew. Unfortunately for them, they had let GDR get away from them in so doing.

In the second 500 of their Olympic final, the Soviet women actually made up around a second on the leading GDR, taking Silver as the Americans faded away to Bronze. In fact, the Americans were nearly caught by the Canadians.

In the thirty-three years between the first international women's championship in 1954 and 1986, every eight race except 1964 and 1984 was won by either by the Soviet Union or GDR.

In 1964, West Germany won its only eight-oared championship until 2003, and in 1984, most of the Eastern Bloc crews boycotted the Los Angeles Games.

During that period in history, American women occasionally medaled, but they were destined never to be the dominant crew. Even in 1984, when they had beaten both GDR and Romania both days in Lucerne, the Romanians were still considered the favorites at the Olympics on Lake Casitas.

Postscript

After Olympic Bronze a number of American athletes set their sights on the Moscow Olympics in 1980. Unfortunately, politics intervened. American President Jimmy Carter organized a boycott in retaliation for Soviet aggression in Afghanistan.⁵⁷⁴⁷

⁵⁷⁴⁷ Unfortunately, the modern Olympics have a sad history of political interference. After both world wars, the losing countries were not invited. There were three separate boycotts in **1956** over the Suez Crisis, the Soviet invasion of

Anita de Frantz became the face of athlete protest for being dragged into international conflict.

Martin Cross: "Anita knew that 'serving her country' had nothing to do with boycotting the Games. American trade with the USSR remained unaffected."⁵⁷⁴⁸

Something about politics and sport stuck in de Frantz's craw. She accepted a position with the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. That led to her eventually becoming the president of the Los Angeles Amateur Athletic Foundation, which administers the profits left over after the 1984 Games. She holds that position to this day.

Anita de Frantz has also been elected to the International Olympic Committee and is arguably the world's most powerful woman in sport.

All the American women were genuine pioneers in their sport and in life. **Gail Pierson** of the '75 eight had been the first woman to row her single in the Head of the Charles and the first woman to teach in Harvard's Economics Department. She was married to **Sy Cromwell**,⁵⁷⁴⁹ and their daughter, Abigail, rowed on four national

Hungary and the participation of Taiwan. In **1976**, twenty-eight African nations boycotted due to the refusal of the IOC to ban New Zealand, whose All Blacks national rugby team had toured South Africa during apartheid. In **1980**, the United States led a widespread boycott of the Moscow Games to protest the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and in **1984** the Soviets and most of their allies returned the favor by boycotting the Los Angeles Games. In **1988**, North Korea and several of its allies boycotted in protest of the holding of the Olympics in South Korea. And those are just the highlights.

Are boycotts politically effective? **Thor Nilsen:** "No. They are quickly forgotten. It's a sad story, but that is the reality." – qtd. by Alison Korn, *No Borders*, *Rowing News*, August 2010, p. 49

⁵⁷⁴⁸ Cross, p. 70

⁵⁷⁴⁹ See Chapter 87.

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teams, twice winning World medals in the lightweight quad.

Nancy Storrs has moved to Canada and spent her life coaching and administering the sport. She has been the English-speaking announcer at many regattas around the world.

The Harvard Gazette: “**Anne Warner** and **Chris Ernst**, Yale students who helped stroke the [1975] American boat to its Silver Medal finish, found that when they returned to school, the athletic department still treated them like second-class citizens. The Yale boathouse was a 40-minute drive from campus, and, while male rowers were given facilities to shower after practice, the women had to drive back in their sweaty workout gear.

“To make their point, Ernst and Warner staged a ‘strip-in,’ reported by *The New York Times* and the *Associated Press*. Standing in the athletic director’s office and flanked by a small army of supporters, the two women calmly removed their sweatsuits to reveal the words ‘Title IX’ written in Magic Marker across their naked chests and backs. Following an outcry from Yale alumni, the University complied with the women’s demands.”⁵⁷⁵⁰

Carie Graves trained on for eight more years to get another shot at Olympic Gold. Her story will be continued in Chapter 148. Today she is Women’s Rowing Coach at the University of Texas.

After Montréal, Another Kiev Eight

Ukrainian rowing coach and historian **Gennadii Ochkalenko**: “Young Ukrainian coach **Victor Potabenko** had worked at

Dynamo Kiev under German Ushakov as a novice coach and assistant coach. In 1974, he decided to work independently and assemble a second female eight in Kiev. He began to search for the tall young girls. By the end of summer, he selected the girls’ group at **Lokomotiv Kiev**. They trained and strengthened and in 1975 won the Ukrainian Spartakiad. In the fall of 1976, they met for the first time Olympic Silver Medalist Dynamo Kiev eight and lost by 3 seconds.

“In 1977, Lokomotiv for the first time won USSR Championship and were second in World Championship. In 1978, they won their first World Championship, and they made it in a spoiled boat. As the Championship was carried out in New Zealand, boats were delivered there by ships. Because of high temperature inside of hold, their wooden boat’s skin was distorted by waves like ripples over boat’s full length. To repair quickly just before race it was impossible. Therefore crew started and won by such boat.

“In 1979, USSR Spartakiad and World Champion again.

“They were considered as the favorite to 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow, but the crew and Coach Potabenko did not handle psychological pressure. They were very nervous, and before the Olympic final coach suddenly decided to change crew’s stroke-oar.

“**Nina Antonyuk** had been first stroke of this crew in 1974 to 1976. Then **Natalya Gorogilova** (1976 Soviet Olympian, fourth in women’s pair) stroked crew in first USSR victory. Then **Olga Cryshevich** stroked in 1977 World Championship, second place.

“Then **Mariya Pazyun**, bow-side, up to 1980, but Potabenko decided that Pazyun could not sustain hard final pressure and changed her to the physically strongest girl, **Nadezhda Dergatchenko**. Yes, she was very strong. She could return, unwrap eight

⁵⁷⁵⁰ Ken Gewertz, Water power: Once American women rowers trailed the field. In 1975, that all changed. *The Harvard Gazette*, October 19, 2000

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Ukraine's Top Athletes, Kiev, 1980

Lokomotiv Kiev Composite Women's Eight

1979 World Champion, Bled

(shown at Crylatskoye Rowing Complex, Moscow)

Bow **Tatyana Bunyak** 6'2" 187cm 190lb. 86kg, 2 **Yelena Teryoshina** 5'11" 181cm 196lb. 89kg,
 3 **Valentina Yermakova** 5'9" 176cm 190lb. 86kg, 4 **Nadezhda Dergatchenko** 5'11" 181cm
 183 lb. 83kg, Coxswain **Nina Frolova**,
 5 **Nina Umanets** 5'10" 177 cm 174lb. 79kg, 6 **Olga Pivovarova** 5'11" 180 cm 170lb. 77kg,
 7 **Nina Antonyuk** 5'10" 177cm 159lb. 72kg, Stroke **Mariya Pazyun** 5'11" 180cm 179lb. 81kg,

Yermakova was from Trud Astrakhan and Frolova from Spartak Novgorod

boat alone, but she was not a stroke, did not feel her partners, was not skilful to lead those behind her. As a result, the crew under her leading spent all power before

finishing spurt. When GDR girls began to sprint (and they had prepared their tactic for the Soviet crew specially), the World Champions had not any energy to answer.

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“Then Lokomotiv won all the World Championships up to 1986. And always as the crew’s basis there were Ukrainian girls. **Yelena Teryoshina** was a member of all seven World Champion boats. **Nina Umanets** became a five-time World Champion and later served as Ukrainian

Olympic Committee Vice-President.

“Victor Potabenko, former USSR National Coach, coached some years in rowing club in USA. Now he has come back to Kiev and was Ukrainian National Coach of men’s eight in 2009 and 2010.”⁵⁷⁵¹

⁵⁷⁵¹ Ochkalenko, op. cit.

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127. Long Beach Rowing Assn., the Next Generation

Coach Tom McKibbon – Hills and Hansen



www.longbeachrowing.org

The first four woman members of Long Beach Rowing Association
on a reunion row

Stroke **Carol Simpson Sanoff**, 3 **Joan Lind Van Blom**,
2 **Karen McCloskey Keehn**, Bow **Melinda Collis Metcalf**

LBRA Women

The late 1960s was a special period in rowing history. Social culture was changing worldwide, and women were becoming more and more serious about all sport. At Long Beach State University, members of the “Shell and Oar” support group were setting aside cookie baking and beginning to row, and some of the best were moving on to Long Beach Rowing Association.

By then, **Tom McKibbon** had become professor of sheet metal arts at Long Beach City College and was still competing in the double with John Van Blom.

McKibbon: “After the 1970 college season, Bill Lockyer asked me to succeed him as coach of the state college. I talked to the athletic director and told him I would do the job for \$8,000 a year and keep my job teaching at City College.

“He told me he could get people to do it for a lot less than that. I said, ‘You can get people who will pay *you* to be in charge of thirty-five young men. You could make money on the deal!

““As for me, I don’t know that I could guarantee you a national champion the *first* year, but they’d be close to being in the finals because we have so much potential

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here in Long Beach with the academic situation, the proximity of the boathouse to the campus and all the students living down by the beach.

"He said, 'No. I'll pay you three years down the road.'

"I said, 'No, thanks. Here's the deal. I'm going to campus and find two coeds and teach them to row, and I'm going to take *them* to win the 1971 National Championship.'

"And that's what I did. I met with **Melinda Collis** and **Karen McCloskey**. They had been kind of in and out of the boathouse and had actually rowed a double that year, but with no specific direction. Every day we'd go out, and I'd be in the double with them, or we'd be in wherries, or we'd all be in singles.

"We did that day after day, and then finally Melinda meets this guy, **Jake Fiechter**⁵⁷⁵² from Harvard, 1967 team captain, who was in the military out here. Jake didn't want Melinda to be in boats, and so she quit. Eventually they got married.

"So now I had a double with one sculler and just three months before the Nationals and team trials in Old Lyme, Connecticut, so I see this girl **Joan Lind** walking around the boathouse. She was wearing her Wilson High School outfit with these big old soccer socks, stripes, soccer shirt, and I think, 'Boy, *she* could be an athlete.'

"Joan was a freshman at Long Beach State and had begun rowing the previous November. She'd even gone out a few times with Melinda and **Carol Simpson**.

"I decided to see if she was interested. I watched her start around the island, and so I went the other way, met her, turned around and came rowing back with her, talking to her a little bit and asking her if she might want to train for the National

Championships. She was pretty excited about it, I thought, so we started.

"Three months later Karen and Joan were the best double in the country even though they actually finished in second place. We took a boat all the way back to Connecticut but weren't allowed to use it because we had to draw for boats. We drew this big old heavy pair/double combination, and you couldn't change the spread on it. I even changed the seating because the load. They raced well but didn't win. They would clearly have won in their own boat.

"That was the beginning. It just skyrocketed from there. My wife Jan was pregnant, and I was *so* nervous being a coach. It was *so* much harder than being an athlete. When you're an athlete and you're done rowing, you just go to bed, but when you're a coach, you never, ever rest. You're always thinking, 'What is the next thing? What is the next thing?'"⁵⁷⁵³

1972

In 1972, Joan and Karen won the Nationals in the double. They then combined with singles champ and original LBRA member **Carol Simpson**, **Gail Pierson** and coxswain **Jody McPhillips** from Cambridge Boat Club in a National Team quad put together by **Sy Cromwell**. They placed eighth at the 1972 European Championships in Brandenburg, GDR.

Lind: "It was so discouraging to come in eighth when it seemed that we'd worked so hard. We thought we were better than we ended up."⁵⁷⁵⁴

McKibbon: "Carol Simpson, the original LBRA woman sculler, was an incredible athlete. Joan Lind is one of the most amazing people I have met in her ability to achieve physical goals, but Carol

⁵⁷⁵² See Chapter 102.

⁵⁷⁵³ McKibbon, personal conversation, 2007

⁵⁷⁵⁴ Interview: Joan Lind, *The Oarsman*, March/April 1977, p. 16

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Joan Lind

United States Women's Coxed-Quad

1972 European Championship Eighth Place, Brandenburg
Bow **Gail Pierson** (Cambridge BC) 5'10" 177cm 155lb. 70kg,
2 **Karen McCloskey** (Long Beach RA) 5'9" 175cm 150lb. 68kg,
3 **Joan Lind** (Long Beach RA) 5'8¾" 175cm 141lb. 64kg,
Stroke **Carol Simpson** (Lake Washington RC) 5'10" 178cm 154lb. 70kg,
Coxswain **Jody McPhillips** (Cambridge BC)

was right dead even with Joan in terms of athletic gifts. In some cases, she could jump farther and longer and was such a strong person, but she ended up not competing for Long Beach.

"Before the quad in 1972, she had been in one of the first U.S. women's crews to

compete in Europe, a Lake Washington eight that competed at the European Championships in Klagenfurt in 1969.

"She was later a cofounder of the women's program at Cal."⁵⁷⁵⁵

⁵⁷⁵⁵ McKibbon, op cit.

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A First in 1973

In 1973, Joan again won the U.S. singles title, and in the heats at the European Championships in Moscow she made it through to the final.⁵⁷⁵⁶ This was the very first international championship final for which a U.S. women had ever qualified.

McCloskey teamed with Pierson in the double at the same regatta.

John Van Blom and Joan became a couple after Joan returned from the 1974 Worlds. As I write this, they have been married more than twenty years.

By 1976, the U.S. Olympic women's single, double and quad all came from amongst the athletes who had migrated to Long Beach to train under Tom and try out for the team. Long Beach continued to dominate the country through 1980, and this was American woman sculling's finest hour, fully competitive with the international powers of the era, Romania, Soviet Union and GDR.

Tom McKibbon, Coach

Van Blom: "Tom was the person who gave credibility to coaching women in the United States. He really got elite women's rowing going here.

"I think after Tom did so well with women, **Harry Parker** decided, 'Hey, this has some promise!' and that got him started. I never asked Harry about this, but I really feel that Tom was the first coach to allow women's rowing in the United States to be respected.

"Tom used to take people out individually in doubles in the afternoons and spend hours and hours with them on

technique, or just rowing with them in a wherry or something.

"He spent *so* much time on technique, a lot of time on the catch, talking to them in the boathouse. He really spent a lot of one-on-one time with people. He often coached by watching from a distance and then talking to them about what they were doing after they came in rather than being on top of them with the launch the whole time."⁵⁷⁵⁷

McKibbon: "As a coach, I kept doing everything I could to learn from others. I never went to a regatta without a tie because I remembered **George Pocock** saying, 'When you walk into a room, let them know you're somebody. Dress up.'

"What a great guy he was! Great speaker.

"**Dr. Henk van der Meer**, the Dutch coach that helped us rig our boat in 1969,⁵⁷⁵⁸ was a doctor and a great guy, and I learned a lot from him. After we became friends in Klagenfurt, we went to the Bosbaan a few times, and he took us to all these windmills and everything, and the whole time he was teaching me to be a coach, teaching me technical things.

"I can remember going to Europe in '74, and our first regatta was in Hamburg. We were right off the plane, and I see all the Kiwis at our hotel, so I ask if **Rusty Robertson**⁵⁷⁵⁹ was around.

"'Oh yeah, he's in the room right across from you. Knock on the door. He wants to see you right now.'

"I went in, and the room service beers started coming. My luggage was left sitting in front of my door. We never even opened the door until three o'clock, four o'clock the next morning.

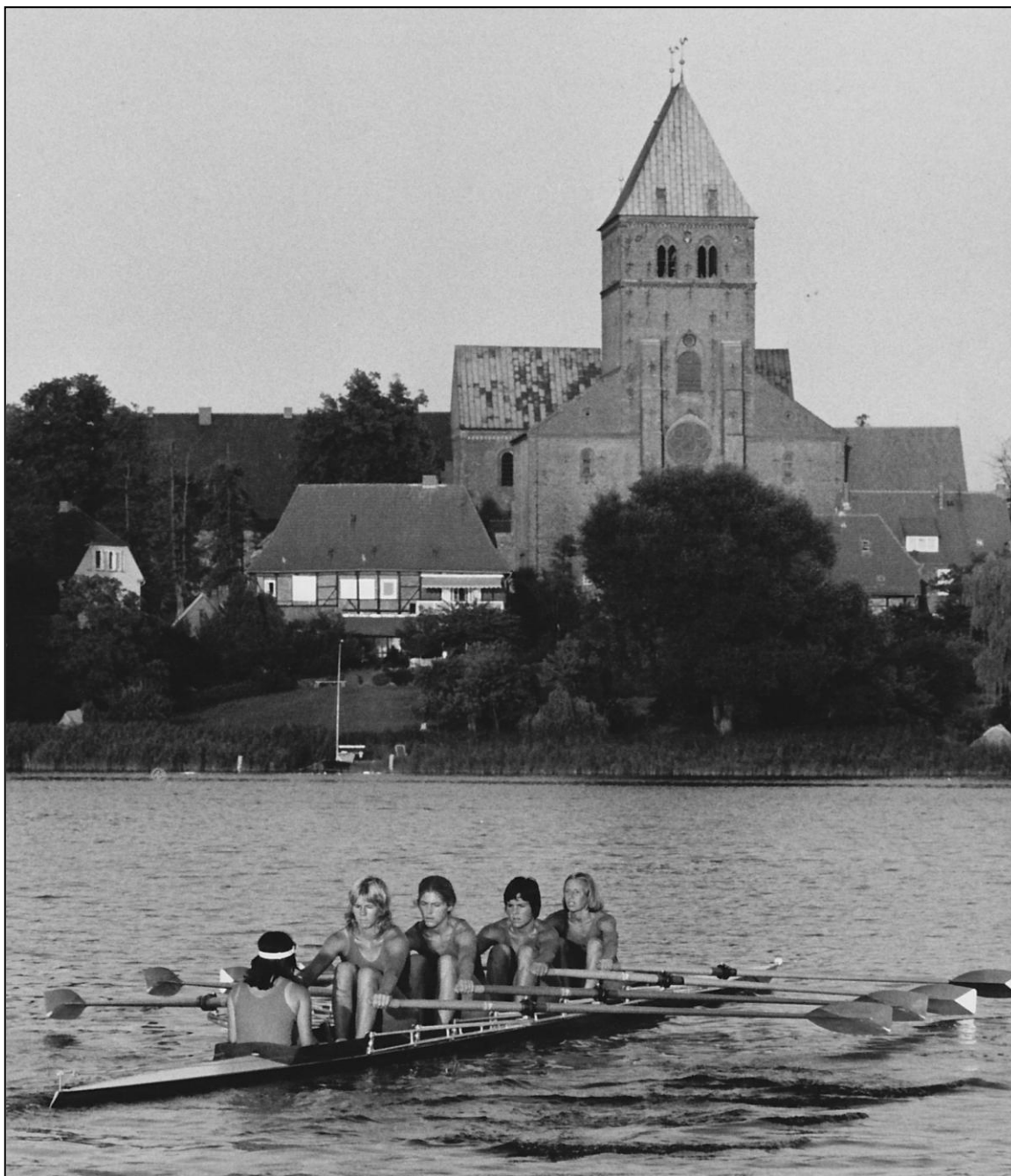
⁵⁷⁵⁶ See Chapter 128.

⁵⁷⁵⁷ Van Blom, personal conversation, 2007

⁵⁷⁵⁸ See Chapter 88.

⁵⁷⁵⁹ See Chapter 120.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Jan Palchikoff

United States Women's Coxed-Quad

1975 World Championship Fifth Place, Holme Pierrepont
Coxswain **Irene Moreno** (Long Beach State Lightweight Men),
Stroke **Marion Grieg** (Cornell) 5'11" 180cm 154lb. 70kg,
3 **Lisa Hansen** (Long Beach State) 5'10" 178cm 150lb. 70kg,
2 **Jan Palchikoff** (UCLA) 5'8" 173cm 157lb. 71kg,
Bow **Diane Braceland** (Vesper) 5'4" 163cm 137lb. 62kg

Prior to selection, all these women joined Long Beach Rowing Association to row for Tom McKibbin

THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT



Tom McKibbin

United States Women's Double

1977 World Bronze Medal, Bosbaan

Stroke **Lisa Hansen** (Stone) 5'10" 178cm 154lb. 70kg,
Bow **Elizabeth Hills** (O'Leary) 5'10" 178cm 161lb. 73kg

+10°, +30° to -25°, 0-10, 0-10, 4-10 Classical Technique

"Rusty taught me about putting glycerin on your throat. You know that after the heat your first day, you're coughing all night because you have no saliva in your throat when you're afraid or sometimes you forget to swallow. Your throat dries out.

"When we'd travel, I'd have a little eyedropper, and right before they got in the boat I'd give everyone a shot of glycerine, and that would keep their throat moist and they wouldn't cough at night.

"**Allen Rosenberg**. What a guy. 'The Bird.' In so many physical ways so unremarkable, and in exceptional genius ways, so superior.

"It was at the Worlds in Lucerne in '74. The regatta was over, and of course we were all tired after the yodeling and dancing and everything. The boats were packed, and we had to fly out the next morning. Allen comes up and knocks on my door. It was three in the morning, and he had to leave at six. I'm in bed, and he sits on the edge of the bed like a little bird, and he says, 'Tom,

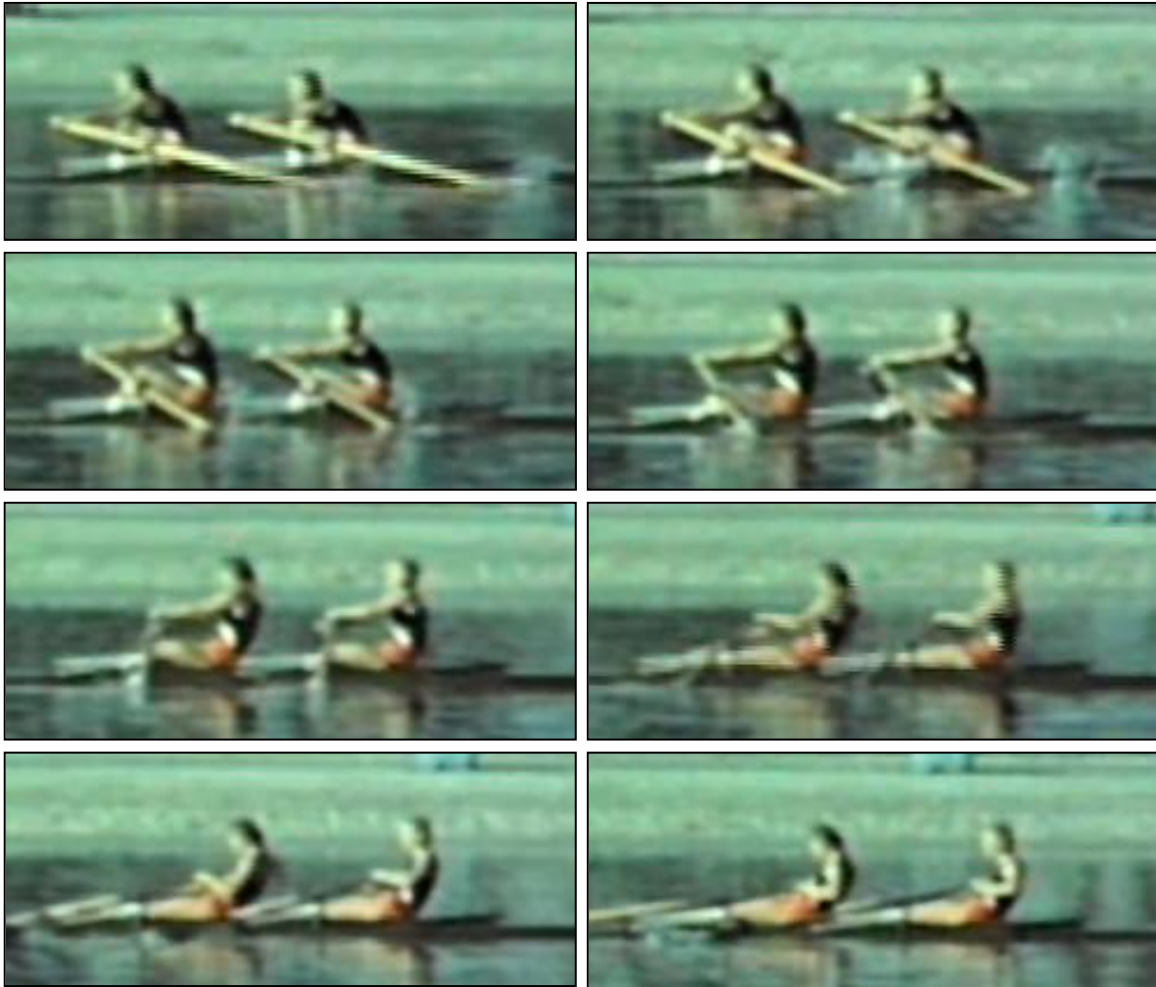
we never had our talk.' He stayed there 'til five, and we just talked. I asked him all about how he had won with his eight.⁵⁷⁶⁰

"**Howard Croker** and I would sit down and analyze what the pitch should be, whether it should be changing throughout the stroke. We'd be talking at night or talking at noon or looking at a pitch meter over and over, and we finally figured out together and agreed philosophically that each person should be rigged differently based on their body structure. Like **Jan Palchikoff**,⁵⁷⁶¹ long legs but real short body, not much clearance from those big, strong legs and the shoulder height, so we would run a different pitch on her and change it differently from the others.

⁵⁷⁶⁰ See Chapter 111.

⁵⁷⁶¹ 5'8" 173 cm 157 lb. 71 kg, 1975 quad, 5th place, 1976 double, 5th place, 1977 quad, 8th place, 1979 double, 5th place, 1980 quad.

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Author

United States Women's Double

1978 World Bronze Medal, Lake Karapiro

Stroke **Lisa Hansen** (Stone), Bow **Elizabeth Hills** (O'Leary)

-10°, +35° to -25°, 0-8, 0-9, 4-10, *Schubschlag*

By 1978, the crew had become a bit more assertive with their squeeze to the release, resulting in a ferryman's finish.

"Whenever people would come into Los Angeles from out of town, we would take the whole team, and everyone of course plays some sort of musical instrument, so we would have violins and trumpets and base horns and squeeze boxes and we would meet the person and sing 'Happy Birthday,' we met Howard this way, at LAX.

"Didn't we do *you* one time, Peter?"⁵⁷⁶²

"Howard came, and he stayed with us. He used to travel with only three to five pieces of clothing. He was a simple guy.

⁵⁷⁶² Yes, they did.

THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

He could barely read. His wife used to write his letters.⁵⁷⁶³

Hills and Hansen

Long Beach State graduate **Lisa Hansen** and 1976 University of New Hampshire graduate **Liz Hills** well represent the LBRA scullers of the era. After rowing in Tom's camp quad at the 1976 Olympics in Montréal, Liz and Lisa won World Bronze in the double in both 1977 and 1978.

The LBRA women's technique had evolved a bit from that of McKibbon and Van Blom. Entry position showed a bit more leg compression with shins at vertical. Legs were emphasized a bit more and early arm draw a bit less.

Pullthrough was a strong Classical Technique *Schubschlag*, and layback had increased from -10° to -25°. The result was very elegant.

Lisa Hansen Stone is married to former Harvard and U.S. Team rower **Greg Stone**.⁵⁷⁶⁴ She coached the Radcliffe crew from 1980 to 1986 and now coaches Winsor School in Boston, Massachusetts.

Their daughter, **Gevvie**, came in second

in the U.S. Singles Trials in 2010 while in medical school.

After coaching at her alma mater, UNH, and at Brooks School in North Andover, Massachusetts, **Liz Hills O'Leary** succeeded Lisa at Radcliffe and still coaches there.

Lisa and Liz reunite to row their double every fall at the Head of the Charles.

McKibbon: "I'm proud to say that virtually every one of these Long Beach women from the 1970s went on to become a coach. **Sue Ela** went on to coach at the University of Wisconsin.⁵⁷⁶⁵ **Marla Wong** started women's crew at Santa Clara. **Carol Simpson** helped start women's crew at Cal Berkeley. **Joan Lind** coached a Pan Am team and is now in charge of all physical education K-12 for the Long Beach Public Schools. **Betsy Hochberg** went to Dartmouth. **Lisa Hansen** and **Liz Hills** went to Radcliffe. **Debbie Rozowski Nowinski** went to Loyola. **Jan Palchikoff** went to Syracuse and UC Santa Barbara. They were the charter class of international woman rowers."⁵⁷⁶⁶

⁵⁷⁶³ McKibbon, op cit.

⁵⁷⁶⁴ See Chapter 139.

⁵⁷⁶⁵ See Chapter 106.

⁵⁷⁶⁶ McKibbon, op cit.

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128. The First Olympic Women's Singles Race

Christine Scheiblich – Joan Lind

The 1976 Montréal Games were the first Olympics to include women, and the women's single final was a truly great race, improbably pitting two-time defending World Champion **Christine Scheiblich**, the 22-year-old from GDR National Training Center SC Einheit Dresden, against **Joan Lind**, the 23-year-old school teacher from Long Beach, California.

Joan's journey in her single to Île Notre Dame actually began three years earlier.

Moscow 1973

Long Beach Coach **Tom McKibbon**: "Moscow in 1973! In the semi-final she clearly qualified to make the grand final, but I had put her bow number farther back on the boat than right on the bow so the wind wouldn't tend to catch it as much. I was always thinking about physics and what could be a little bit of wind drag or whatever.

"Looking at her lane marker instead of her bow ball, an American judge decided that she had not placed in the top three and put the French girl ahead. I wasn't on the line and didn't know for sure. I was at the 250 to go, but an English lady came up to me and said, 'You know, your sculler



John Van Blom

Joan Lind and LBRA Coach **Tom McKibbon**

qualified for the grand final, but they have it up on the board that she was fourth place.'

"We had to fight until late that night just to get her into the final, so the emotional emphasis was not on winning a medal. It was on making the final.

"Of course, she still was the first American woman ever to qualify for a FISA Championship final."⁵⁷⁶⁷

⁵⁷⁶⁷ A Philadelphia Girls' Rowing Club eight rowed to sixth place at the 1967 European

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Joan placed sixth in the final.

Lucerne 1974

Lind drew four of the eventual six finalists, including international newcomer **Christine Scheiblich** 5'8" 172cm 150lb. 68kg, in her opening heat at the 1974 World Championships. She beat one of them, 1973 defending European Champion **Genovaitė Ramoškienė**, 5'7" 170cm 159lb. 72kg from RK Žalgiris in Kaunas, Lithuania in the Soviet Union, but finished fourth in the heat and failed to qualify directly for the semi-finals.

Scheiblich won the heat.

Ramoškienė and Lind finished one-two in their repêchage and then met again in the second of the two semi-finals. Here, Joan's bad fortune continued. She lined up against the three eventual medalists, finished fourth and had to settle for winning the petite final at the end of the regatta.

McKibbon: "Joan just had the *worst* luck in the world!

"We had this plan. You know the Rotsee in Lucerne. Big trains go by, and it's *so loud* when you're on the water, it can't help but consume your attention and your energy. Every time for the couple of weeks we were there before the regatta, no matter what Joan and the quad were doing, when the train went by they had to take ten hard strokes. We were sure that during the race there would be that time when everyone's attention went into the train, and we would be pedal to the metal.

"During the races that year, the train never came.

"The whole time we were there, the wind didn't blow, or it blew tailwind. The

day they had the race to get into the finals, it was solid headwind, and we had 138-pound athletes. They were very tough and strong and rowed beautifully, but neither boat made the final."⁵⁷⁶⁸

Scheiblich won that semi-final and then the final, with Ramoškienė winning Silver.

Holme Pierrepont 1975

In Nottingham in 1975, Joan *again* drew Christine in her preliminary heat. This time she placed second to her and qualified directly for the semis.

Scheiblich won one semi, and Lind placed second behind **Mariann Ambrus**, 5'10" 178cm 159lb. 72kg of Budapest, Hungary, in the other, qualifying for her second singles grand final.

In that final, Christine won her second World Championship, Ambrus was second and Joan finished fifth.

McKibbon: "In the year that we were in Nottingham, I didn't even want to go. It was a place where they were going to put an airport, but they couldn't because it was too windy! Go figure it. That was the year we were going to boycott. I just wanted to take my whole team to Europe and hit every major regatta.

"Anyway, in all the races in Nottingham in 1975, first place was in Lane 1, last place was in Lane 6, straight down the course. In the quad, we got fifth place. We were in Lane 5. The double? Same thing. Every race. Joan also finished in her appropriate Lane 5, and then they stopped the regatta after the single to wait for better conditions."⁵⁷⁶⁹

Christine Scheiblich

When she arrived in Montréal in 1976 as the two-time defending World Champion,

Championships in Vichy, France, but it was a six-boat final only with no qualifying heats. The Philadelphia club rowers were the first American women to represent the United States at a FISA championship.

⁵⁷⁶⁸ McKibbon, op cit.

⁵⁷⁶⁹ Ibid.

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Peter Klavora

Christine Scheiblich
pulling in high in her Veb single

Christine Scheiblich was a formidable presence, but unlike most other GDR and Soviet oarswomen, Scheiblich at 5'8" 172cm 150lb. 68kg was not a large athlete. She was basically the same size as Joan Lind, perhaps nine pounds or 4kg heavier.

Tom McKibbon has called her the best looking and most effective sculler he had ever seen.⁵⁷⁷⁰

McKibbon: "Christine Scheiblich? Great kid! I got to know her through Uli Schmidt, and if it hadn't been for Uli, she probably never would have spoken to us.

"First of all she saw me as a foreign coach. It took a long time to have her be kind of casual while we were on the bus, say from the Olympic Village or whatever year it was.

"I respected her first of all for her *incredible* record. Joan doesn't have the record that Christine has, but Joan's career was just *that* far off [gesturing with his fingers a very small distance] year after year!"⁵⁷⁷¹

⁵⁷⁷⁰ Qtd. by Klavora, *Rowing* 2, p. 48

⁵⁷⁷¹ McKibbon, op cit.

Equipment

GDR rowers used shells built by **VEB Yachtwerft Berlin**. In the 1970s, while West German manufacturer Empacher was developing super-light boats made of honeycomb material, the more conservative VEB boats featured epoxy/glass fiber skins over traditional wooden frames, similar in construction to the American **Schoenbrod** racing shells made in Maine during that era. VEBs were reliable and required less maintenance than wooden-hulled or composite shells. Their hulls were designed by **Klaus Filter**, history's most successful shell designer.

Riggers were traditional steel and not adjustable. They were built high off the water by Western standards, and Christine's single was no exception. This required her to maintain unusually high shoulders throughout the drive and made her look awkward to some.

Also, VEB rigger spreads were not adjustable and quite narrow, yielding the very heavy load the GDR coaches prescribed.

VEB also manufactured Christine's traditional wooden oars, light, well

THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT



FISA 1976 Video

Christine Scheiblich, SC Einheit Dresden
 1976 Olympic Singles Champion, Île Notre Dame
 0°, +20° to -35°, 0-10, 0-10, 5-10
 Concurrent Classical Technique, late arm draw
 Scheiblich tended to bunch her shoulders.
 She rowed low ratings and very hard, surging to
 a strong *Schubschlag* send at the finish.

balanced, the equal to wooden Stämpfli oars of the era.

GDR women's crews tended to row a very physical low-stroke pullthrough to a very strong send.

By contrast, Joan Lind rowed a baby-blue custom American **Van Dusen** single that weighed twenty-seven pounds.

Its hull was designed to accelerate easily, but that meant that it also decelerated easily, so it encouraged short-duration recoveries and high ratings.

Spread was adjustable within a limited range, all of which was wider than Scheiblich's VEB. The load on Lind's Stämpfli sculls was much lighter than that on Christine's sculls.

Scheiblich's Technique

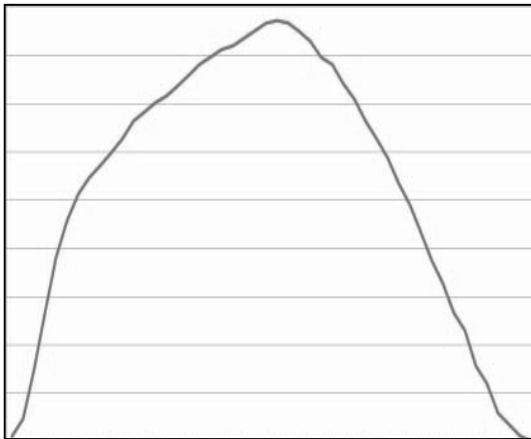
Much of Christine's height was in her legs, and her pullthrough began from a

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Author

Joan Lind, Long Beach Rowing Association
 1976 Olympic Singles Silver Medal, Île Notre Dame
 (Shown during Can-Am Regatta, Long Beach, 1977)
 0°, +30° to -30°, 0-9, 0-9, 0-10 Classic Technique, concurrent *Schubschlag*
 Pullthrough highlighted by back swing to ferryman's finish.



Author

Joan Lind

position of considerable leg compression,
 similar to that of Peter-Michael Kolbe.⁵⁷⁷²

What followed was a strong initial drive complemented by prominent vertical back arc and typical GDR relatively late arm draw ending in long -35° layback. The result was a physical, concurrent *Schubschlag* pullthrough with a very strong send.

Her technique seemed especially well suited to headwinds, where her extreme length and low ratings would work to good effect.

GDR training relied on high mileage at low stroke to build an aerobic base, an approach first developed in the sports of running, swimming and cycling and today called LSD or “long slow distance.” Accordingly, Christine was prepared to row the 1,000 meter race at a relatively steady but formidable pace.

⁵⁷⁷² See Chapter 125.

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Lind's Technique

Joan Lind had a different approach to technique. She was 5'8¾" 175 cm and weighed between 141 and 145 pounds, 64 to 66kg, during competitions, with less massive legs than Scheiblich.

Lind: "We have an island here that we row around, about two and a half miles, and we race three of them in all different ways. Almost everything we did was racing.

"In the fall we'd just go three islands at a time. When I raced with John Van Blom, he went way outside, and I took the inside.

"As the racing season neared, we'd do just one island at a time, maybe one for warmup and then race two separately, one for time, then rest, then go again, trying to get our island times down.

"Then we began doing sprints, a lot of 500s and 750s – a *lot* of 750s, maybe four to six a day, back-to-back, or six to eight 500s the same way.⁵⁷⁷³ But we'd mix it up at other times, 250s, 500s, 750s, 1,000s. Tom would ride his bike along the course taking times for us when we did the sprint work.

"Until January, I ran long distance – up to six miles every other day, alternating with weight workouts. We rowed every day.

"Diane Braceland⁵⁷⁷⁴ brought the East German workout, which was one of the programs we did: four exercises, forty-five seconds on, one minute rest. Six sets of those. You did as many as you could in each exercise:

- sit-down row
- leg press
- sit-ups
- bench press

"In January we started running hills. We had two hills, the longer one about a

minute and a half part way up or about six minutes to the top. The shorter hill, which we ran a lot, maybe ten trips, was about a minute up and down again.⁵⁷⁷⁵ We ran hills twice a week."⁵⁷⁷⁶

The result was that Joan was ready to attack the headwind at 35+ all the way down the course during their final at Montréal. This compared to Christine's 31 to 32.

Like Scheiblich, Joan's pullthrough was characterized by the prominent vertical arc of her back. Both athletes bent their arms late in the pullthrough, and Joan's body matched Christine's in its fingers-to-toes commitment to propelling the boat.

Legs for both athletes worked all the way to the release or nearly so, but Christine's *legs* dominated the first half while the *back* led the way for Joan, and that's a significant stylistic difference. Joan's back passed vertical before her oars reached perpendicular to the boat, and Christine's back passed vertical after.

Both athletes terminated their pullthroughs with their oar handles "almost at the side of the body"⁵⁷⁷⁷ and pointing toward their spines, but while Christine completed her pullthrough with concurrent back and arm pull, Joan performed a ferryman's finish. This allowed her to transition quickly to the recovery and on to the next stroke.

Joan's force curve is *Schubschlag*, but it is not completely smooth. The initial effort is very strong and the heave of the back reaches a crescendo at mid-drive.

Rowing a double with Joan Lind is an unforgettable experience. The rhythm is

⁵⁷⁷³ Under coach Tom McKibbon, she rowed her intervals at ratings in the mid- to upper-30s with the goal that her last piece be as fast as her first.

⁵⁷⁷⁴ from Vesper Boat Club. See Chapter 127.

⁵⁷⁷⁵ Long, torturous repeat sprint runs up nearby Signal Hill had been pioneered by **John Nunn** and **Bill Maher** before their Olympic Bronze Medal performance in 1968. See Chapter 88.

⁵⁷⁷⁶ Interview: Joan Lind, *The Oarsman*, March/April 1977, pp. 17-8

⁵⁷⁷⁷ Klavora, *Rowing* 2, p. 51

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high and hard. No paddles. No ratio. Strokes come in a flurry, like an egg-beater that never lets up down the course.

And what a motor!

Montréal

Lind: “In the heat I had the East German girl [again!], who the year before had beaten me by fifteen seconds. I knew I was faster than that, but I didn’t think I was faster than her. I was four seconds back in the heat. I really pushed the first 500, but when I saw she was ahead, I don’t think I really went after it. It was one to qualify for the final, so maybe I should have.

1 GDR	3:36.09
2 USA	3:40.67
3 NED	3:49.29
4 FRG	3:50.42
5 NOR	3:59.99

“I can’t remember everyone who was in the repêchage, but I won it pretty easily in a headwind. I rowed pretty hard, but I didn’t kill myself – I wanted to build up my confidence.

1 USA	4:03.87
2 HUN	4:10.20
3 FRA	4:14.00
4 NOR	4:26.19

“Then I had two days before the finals.”⁵⁷⁷⁸

The 1976 Olympic Final

A cross-headwind was blowing hard (3.1 mps, 6.9 mph) from Lane 1 as the starting judge gave the command, “*Partez!*” The Soviet **Elena Antonova**, representing Trud Moskva, and Scheiblich had drawn the protected Lanes 1 and 2. Joan was on the rough side of the course in Lane 6.

Again the Lind luck.

⁵⁷⁷⁸ Interview: Joan Lind, op cit, p. 20

Ingrid Munneke of Aegir Gronigen, Netherlands, jumped the start and moved out to a half length lead after 30 strokes rowing at 37. At the 250, Scheiblich and Antonova were tied for second, with Lind and the Hungarian, **Mariann Ambrus**, three feet further back.

Lind: “It was a strong headwind, and I was in back for the beginning of the race – I think I was probably fifth until about the 500 when things were getting more spread out.”⁵⁷⁷⁹

During the second 250 meters, the leader Munneke remained at 36, while both Scheiblich and Antonova settled to 32 and started moving up. Lind at 36 moved with Scheiblich, but half a length down, as Ambrus faded out of contention.

Scheiblich and Antonova soon caught the Dutch leader, but Christine kept going with Joan still keeping pace half a length down.

Lind: “The East German girl and I were out ahead. I think she had about a length then. I really didn’t realize that I was well in contact with her. I was going as hard as I could, but I really wasn’t looking for her that much. It was weird.”⁵⁷⁸⁰

Soon the race was between just the two of them. Later Joan said that she was having trouble clearing her blades in the choppy water and had no real awareness of her relative position in the race.⁵⁷⁸¹

Lind: “I was trying to get ahead of as many people as I could. I thought she was out there, but I had no idea . . .”⁵⁷⁸²

As she and Christine crossed the 500 meter mark, Joan took a power-10 at 35 and closed to within .47 seconds, around two meters. Scheiblich then took a 10 of her

⁵⁷⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁸¹ Peter Lippett, Women’s Rowing, *The Oarsman*, July/August 1976, p. 22

⁵⁷⁸² Interview: Joan Lind, op cit.

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own at 32 and pulled back out to half a length, and then dropped the rating to 29.

The push to the finish was on.

With 350 meters to go, Joan at 37 again moved to within two meters, so Christine took another ten at 34 to pull back out to her largest margin, seven meters at the 750, before again dropping her rating.

Never in her career had Christine been so tested.

There was no question that both athletes were giving it their all by now. As they approached the finish line, Joan had gone to 36 and was moving yet again. Scheiblich was at 32, and it was clear that her best was behind her.

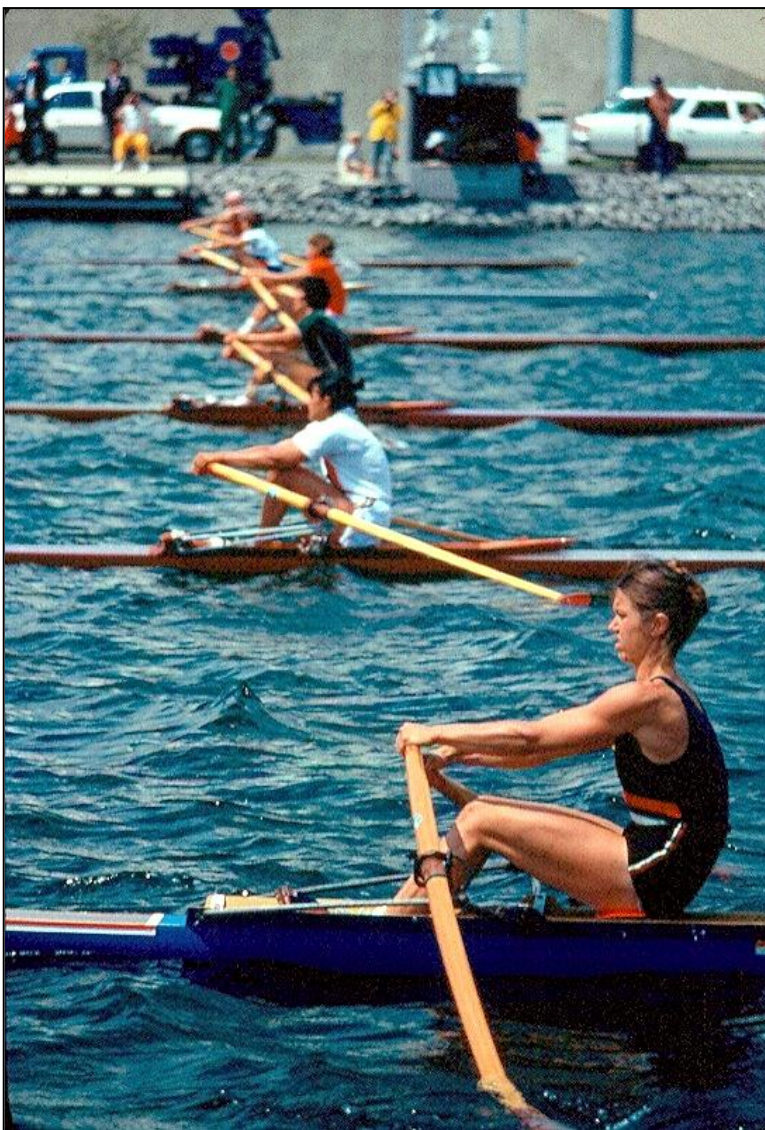
Joan pulled back an impressive .77 seconds in the last 250, but the finish line came too soon, and she crossed the line still .65 seconds or three meters behind.

Lind: "I really didn't know how close she was until I saw it on the time board after the race."⁵⁷⁸³

1 GDR	4:05.56
2 USA	4:06.21
3 URS	4:10.24
4 BUL	4:10.86
5 NED	4:18.71
6 HUN	4:22.59

Post Mortem

⁵⁷⁸³ Ibid.



John Van Blom

1976 Olympic Women's Singles Final

Île Notre Dame

Lane 1	Elena Antonova	URS, 5'11"	180cm	172lb.	78kg
Lane 2	Christine Scheiblich	GDR, 5'8"	172cm	150lb.	68kg
Lane 3	Ingrid Munneke	NED, 6'0"	182cm	165lb.	64kg
Lane 4	Mariann Ambrus	HUN, 5'10"	178cm	159lb.	72kg
Lane 5	Rositza Spasova	BUL, 5'7"	171cm	152lb.	69kg
Lane 6	Joan Lind	USA, 5'8¾"	175cm	145lb.	66kg

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FISA 1976 Video

Joan Lind (background) half a length down on **Christine Scheiblich** with 200 meters to go in the Olympic final.

McKibbon: “If it had been flat water or *even* water, it was whomever’s race to take. I’m not going to say that trading lanes the next day, Joan would have beaten her, but it was up for grabs, and everybody knew it, and of all the people who knew it, probably Christine did, too.

“As a coach, I pretty much know where my team’s going to end up, and if they’re going to lose, I’m there at the dock, and if they’re going to win, I’m a couple of fields over.⁵⁷⁸⁴ I had Joan to win, and I didn’t go to the ceremony. I stayed way back. It’s just a quirk I have, so I didn’t see.”⁵⁷⁸⁵

Emory Clark, 1964 Olympic Eights Gold Medalist.⁵⁷⁸⁶ “America’s first woman to win a Silver Medal in rowing was the U.S. rowing world’s brightest moment. If Joan was beautiful off the water as her face in repose radiated happiness and pride, her race, sculling all alone in Lane 6 against the wind and chop, was the sort that brought a

lump to the throat and made it hard to cheer when one wanted to most in that heartbreaking last 250 meters.

“Only .65 second separated her from the Gold. What if she had been in the relatively calm Lane 2 where the East German rowed? What if . . . ?”⁵⁷⁸⁷

McKibbon: “Emory Clark *used* to say, ‘Never hold hands with a hand that holds an oar.’ I thought it was funny that he later wrote what he wrote about Joan, how much attitudes had changed, not just Emory, who was so

hard core, but how Joan had pretty much changed the whole respect for women in rowing in America.

“There was a time there when our National Women’s Team was *so* much better than our National Men’s Team . . .”⁵⁷⁸⁸

Lind: “I hardly got to speak to Christine, who I really wanted to speak with. I exchanged shirts with her, and that was it. She really didn’t show any desire to talk to me at all. And I don’t know [if] she was being watched and couldn’t talk to me or didn’t think she could. But I didn’t speak to her or the Russian girl. The Dutch girl didn’t show much desire to talk either and wasn’t very friendly to me . . . but the Hungarian girl did come up to me and talk to me about the medal. *I* didn’t talk very much, so I don’t know.”⁵⁷⁸⁹

McKibbon: “I guess when you think back on those days, Christine lived in Dresden, and Joan lived in Long Beach, but when sport can put you together within a

⁵⁷⁸⁴ McKibbon learned this from Rusty Robertson. See Chapter 120.

⁵⁷⁸⁵ McKibbon, op cit.

⁵⁷⁸⁶ See Chapter 107.

⁵⁷⁸⁷ Clark, *Olympic Notebook, The Oarsman*, September/October 1976, p. 22

⁵⁷⁸⁸ McKibbon, op cit.

⁵⁷⁸⁹ Interview: Joan Lind, op cit.

THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT



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Christine Scheiblich

few centimeters, there's a bond there that no one else in the world knows or has, there's a certain closeness to people you really respect because they either beat you or almost beat you, and I'm imagining this, I'm thinking that that's probably the relationship that they had."⁵⁷⁹⁰

⁵⁷⁹⁰ McKibbon, op cit.

After Montréal, Christine Scheiblich won her third World Championship on the Bosbaan in Amsterdam in 1977 and then her fourth at the 1978 World Championships on Lake Karapiro in New Zealand. In her entire international career, no one came closer to beating her than Joan Lind in Montréal.

Sy Cromwell: "The East German who won is so highly regarded that Joan may now be ranked as the second-best female rower of all time. It was certainly the best American Olympic single sculling performance in over fifty years."^{5791, 5792}

By 1979, when Christine Hahn-Scheiblich retired from competition, she had become the wife of former luge World Champion Ulrich Hahn and was awaiting the arrival of their first child. She was training to become a physiotherapist in her home town of Dresden in the German Democratic Republic.⁵⁷⁹³

Joan Lind Van Blom, would win another Olympic Silver as a member of the women's quad in 1984.⁵⁷⁹⁴ In 2011, she and her husband and teammate, John Van Blom, are still competing and winning in masters' rowing events on the water and on the ergometer.

Joan Lind Van Blom

⁵⁷⁹¹ actually 44 years, since William Miller, Silver Medalist in 1932. See Chapters 57 and 131.

⁵⁷⁹² Sy Cromwell, *Divide and Be Conquered*, *The Oarsman*, September/October 1976, p. 24

⁵⁷⁹³ *Olympic Review*, July-August 1979

⁵⁷⁹⁴ See Chapter 148.