

THE SPORT OF ROWING

To the readers of *www.row2k.com*

This week's excerpt follows Harry Parker's career into the 1970s and describes some of his influence on other programs in the United States.

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

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

As I write this, the **collector edition** is sold out. Thanks so much to all of you who have showed such faith in the book.

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

www.row2k.com/rowingmall/

This edition has all the same content as the collector edition, but it lacks the color illustrations.

Both editions will be published in October.

You can always email me anytime at:

pmallory@rowingevolution.com

Many thanks.

THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

103. The Legend Grows

Harry Parker and the 1972 Olympics

“The victorious Harvards returned to the boathouse,
And the people were gathered,
And Harry walked amongst us,
And Harry said it was good, and it was good.
And we all asked . . .
‘Who is this man they call King of the Crews?’”

- Eric Sigward

As the ‘60s went by, Parker’s crews ruled the American collegiate scene, and the reputation of this young coach with the voice of God became the stuff of legend.

Don Spero⁴⁶⁸⁸ remembers training on the Charles before the 1964 Olympics: “I saw Harry go by the other way once or twice and didn’t think he even noticed me, and in the boathouse he said, ‘How do you feel, Don?’

“I said, ‘Not great. Not yet. I’ll get there.’

“He said, ‘Yeah, you looked a little uncomfortable, a little tight at the release, like maybe your oar handles are a little too close to your chest. If you have room on your slide, try moving you footboards one notch toward the bow tomorrow.’

“And bingo, that was it. I started to move.”⁴⁶⁸⁹

Rowing News: “Starting in 1963 with the Harvard-Yale Race, Harvard would not

lose another race against intercollegiate competition until 1969.”⁴⁶⁹⁰

Pre-Race Talks

Like his mentor, Joe Burk, Harry Parker has always been a man of few words.

Curt Canning ‘68: “Before our first race sophomore year, Harry gathered us around, and he folded his arms like he always did, and he turned his eyes up like he used to do . . . and he said, ‘You’re well trained. I think it’ll come down to whoever rows the best race.’

“Then he walked away.”⁴⁶⁹¹

Charlie Hamlin: “My one indelible memory about pre-race talks was the emotion we all felt when Harry stood before his hushed Varsity crew prior to the 1969 Eastern Sprints. This was the same crew that had lost two weeks earlier to Penn on the Schuylkill, the first loss for a Harvard crew in five years!

“It was also the first and only time that I can remember Harry ever giving us a race

⁴⁶⁸⁸ See Chapter 87.

⁴⁶⁸⁹ Spero, personal conversation, 2009

⁴⁶⁹⁰ Ed Winchester, *Deconstructing Harry*, *Rowing News*, December, 2004, p. 50

⁴⁶⁹¹ Canning, 1968 Harvard 40th Reunion, 2008

THE SPORT OF ROWING

plan. The norm was just his expectation that we would win if we put our all into every stroke.

“This time the race plan was simple, and in its execution, devastating. Sprint the first 500; then through the middle 1,000 meters, take three one-minute pieces; in the final 500, do what you have to do to win. This sermon was given quietly but with a determination that was infectious.

“At 500 gone, we were down a half-length. After the first one-minute piece we had drawn even; after the second, we had a half length; after the third, we had open water. We *broke* ‘em!

“Never was a victory so sweet or the smile so wide as we saw when Harry greeted us at the victory dock.”⁴⁶⁹²

Harry in 1972

“Partly because of the Harvard crew’s failure to medal in the [Mexico City] Games – which was attributed, variously, to the altitude, to the sickness of the stroke, as well as the political activities of several of the crew members during the Games which, it was alleged, distracted them from the task at hand – the USOC put together a National Camp system. Parker was named head coach [for 1972].”⁴⁶⁹³

In Munich, Harry Parker’s American composite eight squared off against Ratzeburg, New Zealand and GDR for the Olympic championship.

Harry’s eight had come out of a selection camp truly national in scope, but it still ended up with six Harvard grads, two sets of brothers, **Mike and Cleve Livingston, Bill and Fritz Hobbs**, coxswain **Paul Hoffman**, and former Harvard Lightweight **Monk Terry** at stroke.

In fact, both Livingstons, Fritz Hobbs and Hoffman had all been on the 1968 Harvard Olympic squad.

Only **Gene Clapp** from Penn, **Tim Mickelson** from Wisconsin and **Pete Raymond** from Princeton broke into the otherwise all-Crimson lineup.

Dietrich Rose:⁴⁶⁹⁴ “You only had a couple of months, such a short time to prepare a boat to go against the Europeans. We would try to have them relearn what we wanted them to do. That was one of the big, huge challenges. There were a lot of talented people who came along, but they could not adapt.

“That was the most difficult part. That’s why Harry always selected his own people that already knew what he wanted when he was the coach of the eight.”⁴⁶⁹⁵

Clapp: “I’d been on the National Team the year before in the four-with. It was a throw-together boat at Vesper. Three weeks together to go up against the World, and you know how *that* works . . . or doesn’t, so 1972 was a second chance for me, and I took it seriously.

“At the beginning of the camp it was really a huge cross-section of rowers from all over the country. It didn’t feel like a Harvard thing. It was at Dartmouth, a beautiful place to row and train, and I thought it was run pretty fairly.

“Clearly, this wasn’t a coaching session. It was a survival session. There was a fairly brutal process where you’d go through a week of seat racing, and then on Friday they posted a list on the wall of those who were to be there on Monday morning for the following week

“So you were either on the list or you weren’t. It was like going to work. Every day you had to go out there and win your seat races. We were all a bunch of

⁴⁶⁹² Hamlin, personal correspondence, 2005

⁴⁶⁹³ www.wikipedia.org

⁴⁶⁹⁴ See Chapters 107 and 122.

⁴⁶⁹⁵ Rose, personal conversation, 2010

THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

individuals working as hard as we could to survive each day.”⁴⁶⁹⁶

The experience was brutal.

Terry: “That month up in Hanover was probably the most intense rowing I’ve ever gone through. It was mostly in fours, and it was like the workout that never went away.

“Talk about plant and pull! Going through that month of seat racing was what got me in shape.”⁴⁶⁹⁷

Not everyone had a positive experience.

Cal Coffey, Northeastern: “In ‘72, I was the *last* guy cut from the Camp! It was the first year that Northeastern had won the Sprints, and our coach, Ernie Arlett, being from Henley, had vowed that if we won the Sprints, he’d take us there, and he lived up to that promise.

“The problem for me was that I was also participating in the various preliminaries for the Olympic Camp for the eight [and coxed-four]. When I went to a last pre-selection, I remember Harry telling me, ‘You’re the only Northeastern guy who’s made the cut,’ but when I told him that our crew was going to Henley, he said, ‘You should come up to Hanover and *not* go to Henley.’

“Ernie had already told me that if I didn’t go, they wouldn’t send the boat, so I told Harry, ‘I’m stroking the boat, and going to Henley is the culmination of my teammates’ rowing careers.

“I *have* to go.’

“So I made the decision to go to Henley, but I asked Ernie to do what he could to persuade Harry to take me when I got back. I don’t know what he did, but I believe he talked to Hart Perry and the people running the federation. I got the impression that they kind of coerced Harry into taking me, and that *must* have pissed him off.

“Anyway, I remember we raced at Henley, made it to the final of the Grand Challenge Cup, lost to the Russian Olympic Team and had a great time in England.

“I also remember getting back to the States. It was early afternoon, and I had no sooner walked into my apartment when the phone rang. It was Harry Parker up at the Camp in Hanover. He goes, ‘We have practice tonight on the water at 5:30, and I expect you to be there.’

“I said, ‘I haven’t slept all night, I just got in, and I don’t have a car. I don’t know how I’m going to make it.’

“He said, ‘Okay. Practice in the morning at 5:30. I expect you to be there,’ and hung up.

“I went to bed, got up early, hitch-hiked to Hanover and got there for the evening row. There were two eights, and they were already on the dock. I found out afterward that one of the eights was almost identical to the boat that eventually went to Munich. They had been out several nights rowing together with **Monk Terry** at stroke. This night, I went down the dock and *I* was put in as the stroke of that boat, and Monk was stroking all these other guys.

“I didn’t really know the guys. I’d never rowed with them. It felt a little different, but it felt strong (obviously!) and pretty smooth, and I was like, ‘Shit, this is *alright!*’

“We went upstream to the race course. Harry lined us up, and we did a 1,500 meter piece or something. We beat the other crew by about a seat and a half, and we were gliding out, just starting to paddle, when Harry says, ‘Okay, pull the boats together,’ and he had Monk and I switch across.

“This other boat was completely foreign to me. You could feel the individual power impulses throughout the boat, rushing slides and all kinds of stuff. I thought to myself, ‘Oh boy! This is a setup,’ but we did another piece, and we lost to the other crew

⁴⁶⁹⁶ Clapp, personal conversation, 2007

⁴⁶⁹⁷ Terry, personal conversation, 2005

THE SPORT OF ROWING

by *exactly* the same margin . . . and that was the end of that workout.

“The next couple of days I had twenty-five five-minute seat races where I would switch across with everybody I was racing against. As far as I could tell, I won all those races, but because of all of that hard racing, there wasn’t much style or technique to it. It was just pour-it-on survival, and I developed a ganglion in my wrist. The thing would squeak when I picked up a fork, and it was sore!

“Harry came to a deadline where he was putting up lists, and he cut a whole bunch of people. The eight had already been decided, and so far he had picked **Mike Vespoli** for one port seat in the four.

“There were a couple of guys who weren’t on any lists, and I was one of them. I said to Harry, ‘I’ve got this lump on my wrist, so if you’ve made a decision about me, why don’t you just let me know?’

“He said, ‘No. This whole series of races is *just* for you.’ Apparently, he had called back some guys that he’d cut, so he told me to go to the infirmary, get a cortisone shot and get right back down to the boathouse.

“I did, and when I returned, the other fours had already shoved off, and my boat was waiting for me at the dock. I jumped in and went out to race.

“That day we did *another* five five-minute pieces. There were two coxed-fours



British Movietonews, 98418B, 9/7/72

United States Men’s Eight

1972 Olympic Silver Medal, Oberschleißheim
Bow **Mike Livingston** 6’3” 191cm 190lb. 86kg,
2 **Cleve Livingston** 6’2” 188cm 181lb. 82kg,
3 **Bill Hobbs** 6’3” 191cm 205lb. 93kg,
4 **Gene Clapp** 6’3” 191cm 198lb. 90kg,
5 **Tim Mickelson** 6’3” 191cm 187lb. 85kg,
6 **Pete Raymond** 6’4” 193cm 190lb. 86kg,
7 **Fritz Hobbs** 6’3” 191cm 198lb. 90kg,
Stroke **Monk Terry** 6’0” 184cm 185lb. 84kg
Coxswain **Paul Hoffman**

involved in the seat racing. I raced the first piece, and then I switched across with the other stroke for the second piece, and then I switched back with the bow-man for the third, and then I switched across with the other bow for the fourth. My boat had won

THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

all four pieces, and so I had convincingly beaten each one of the other three port oarsmen in the two boats.

“We were all expecting one more piece, but Harry announced, ‘That’s it. Bring the boats in.’

“Vespoli was riding in the launch, and he later told me he said to Harry, ‘You’re taking Calvin, right?’

“Harry said, ‘Oh no. I’m taking [**Dave Sawyer**].’

“Mike asked, ‘How do you figure that? Cal won all these pieces.’ Harry explained that he was relying on races and combinations from several days earlier. So-and-so had beaten so-and-so by so much and that meant that somebody else was faster than . . . something like that.⁴⁶⁹⁸

“So that’s how I got cut. I was *pissed!*

“Before I left, Harry came up to me and said, ‘You know, you’re a good stroke, and had the crew had more time with you in the boat, had you come to this Camp directly instead of going to Henley, you might have ended up stroking that eight.’

“That’s all I needed to hear. I said something to him that probably included curse words and asked for my bus ticket back to Boston.”⁴⁶⁹⁹

After Selection

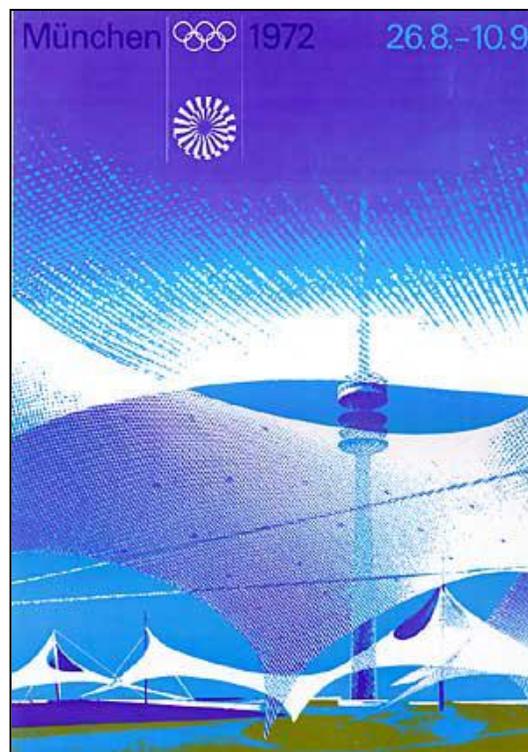
After the bruising camp in Hanover, New Hampshire, involving seemingly endless seat racing and ergometer testing, the selected crew’s first competition was the **Internationale Meisterschaften des Deutschen Ruderverbandes**⁴⁷⁰⁰ on the same Feldmoching-Oberschleißheim course

that would later that summer host the Olympic competitions.

The race favorite was “Dr. Adam’s Wunder-Achter” from **Ratzeburg**. The U.S. eight beat them in the heat and beat them again in the final, with **New Zealand**, “only five days off the plane,”⁴⁷⁰¹ an encouraging fourth.

The Kiwis won the next regatta in Hannover, grabbing the lead with a stunningly fast first 500 and then holding off a charge by the Americans toward the finish.

The 1972 Olympics



www.rudergott.de

1972 Olympic Games, Munich

In their preliminary heat with three to qualify for the semis, the U.S. drew, among others, Ratzeburg, which had skipped the Hannover regatta. They were rowing their

⁴⁶⁹⁸ The Transitive Law of Seat Racing, if you remember your arithmetic.

⁴⁶⁹⁹ Coffey, personal conversation, 2007

⁴⁷⁰⁰ International Championship of the German Rowing Clubs

⁴⁷⁰¹ Lippett, p. 8

THE SPORT OF ROWING

secret weapon, a revolutionary shell built of space age composite materials just for them by **Empacher Bootswerft** in Eberbach, West Germany and designed to last only through the end of the regatta. It was dubbed "*Der Schwarze Aal*," the Black Eel.

Peter Lippett, *The Oarsman*: "A great start immediately propelled us into first place. At the first marker, our lead was 2.46 seconds. The Germans continued to cut into the lead until, with about 200 meters to go they realized they could not win. Our margin of 4.27 seconds at the finish was about what it had been a month earlier on the same water."⁴⁷⁰²

After the repêchages, in one semi-final, West Germany, New Zealand and Poland qualified in that order. In the other, GDR, Russia and the U.S. also qualified easily, there being open water back to fourth-place Hungary.

The Final

Gene Clapp: "Here we were, about to go out for the Olympic final, the biggest race of our lives, the biggest event of our lives . . . and Harry gathers us and says, 'Well, you're going to have to go out there and really get on it,' and walks away. That was his pep talk.

"I remember Fritz saying, 'What? What was that? Is that all we get for this momentous occasion?'

"I think in hindsight it was probably a compliment that we pretty much knew what to do, and there was nothing more Harry felt he could say, but we still talk about that. It was kind of funny to think about."⁴⁷⁰³

There was a strong cross-headwind blowing on the race course.

Mickelson: "When we got out to the course, only one medal all day had been won in Lanes 4, 5 or 6. I think it was won in Lane 4, and we were out there in Lane 6."⁴⁷⁰⁴

The final turned out to be a terrific race . . . for second place. Taking the lead from the start and pushing out to nearly a length by the 1,000, New Zealand in Lane 3 was never seriously challenged.⁴⁷⁰⁵

But only 0.3 seconds separated second from fifth at the halfway point.

The U.S. entered the last 500 in third place, 0.66 behind GDR, but had the fastest last 500 of the field, snatching second at the line by 0.06 seconds.

The winning time for the Kiwi Eight was an extraordinary 6:08.94 into a 3mps or 6.7 mph headwind.

Olympic Final:

1 NZL	6:08.94
2 USA	6:11.61
3 GDR	6:11.67
4 URS	6:14.48
5 FRG	6:14.91 ⁴⁷⁰⁶
6 POL	6:29.35

The Success of the Camp

The only American crews to make a final in Munich were the eight and coxed-four, both from Harry's Camp. The coxed-four with Mike Vespoli, Charles Ruthford, Chad Rudolf, Dave Sawyier and coxswain Stewart MacDonald came in fifth.

On top of that, the camp spares, **Andy Roberts** and **Tony Brooks**, ended up considerably faster in the coxless-pair than the official Trials-winning American entry. Roberts and Brooks consistently beat the

⁴⁷⁰⁴ Mickelson, personal conversation, 2005

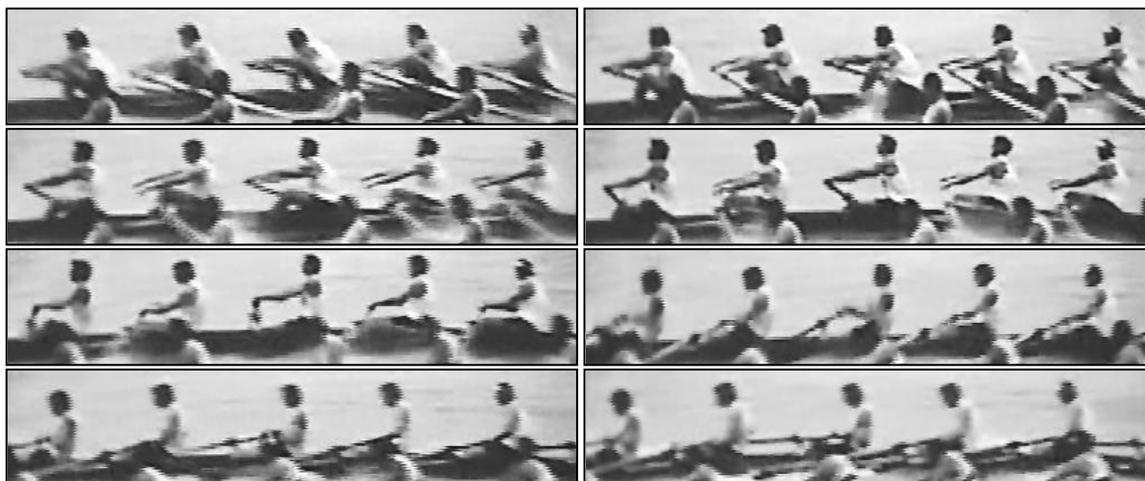
⁴⁷⁰⁵ For the New Zealand perspective, see Chapter 120.

⁴⁷⁰⁶ For the race outcome from the perspective of Ratzeburg Coach Karl Adam, see Chapter 99.

⁴⁷⁰² Lippett, p. 24

⁴⁷⁰³ Clapp, personal correspondence, 2007

THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



FISA 1972 Video

United States Men's Eight

1972 Olympic Silver Medal, Oberschleißheim

Stroke **Monk Terry**: -10° , $+30^\circ$ to -15° , 0-10, 0-10, 0-10

7 **Fritz Hobbs**: -10° , $+30^\circ$ to -15° , 0-10, 0-10, 0-10

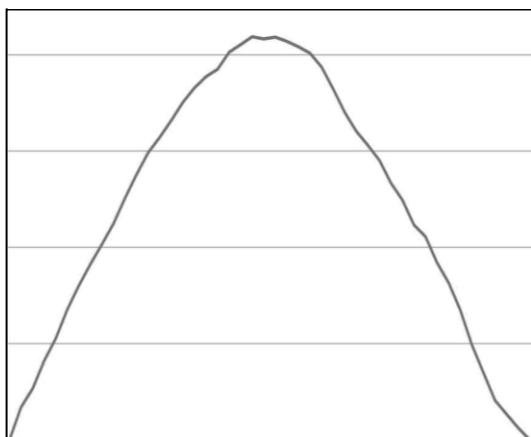
6 **Pete Raymond**: -10° , $+35^\circ$ to -20° , 0-6, 0-10, 5-10

5 **Tim Mickelson**: -10° , $+30^\circ$ to -15° , 0-9, 0-10, 0-10

4 **Gene Clapp**: -10° , $+30^\circ$ to -15° , 0-8, 0-10, 0-10

Catch was very aggressive, but surge to release was equally impressive.

Force application was concurrent *Schubschlag*.



Philip Mallory

Gene Clapp

Near perfect *Schubschlag*

eventual Olympic Silver Medalist Swiss pair, **Heinrich Fischer** and **Fredy Bachmann**,⁴⁷⁰⁷ while they both were

training at altitude in St. Moritz before the Games.

The Evolution of Harry Parker's Technique

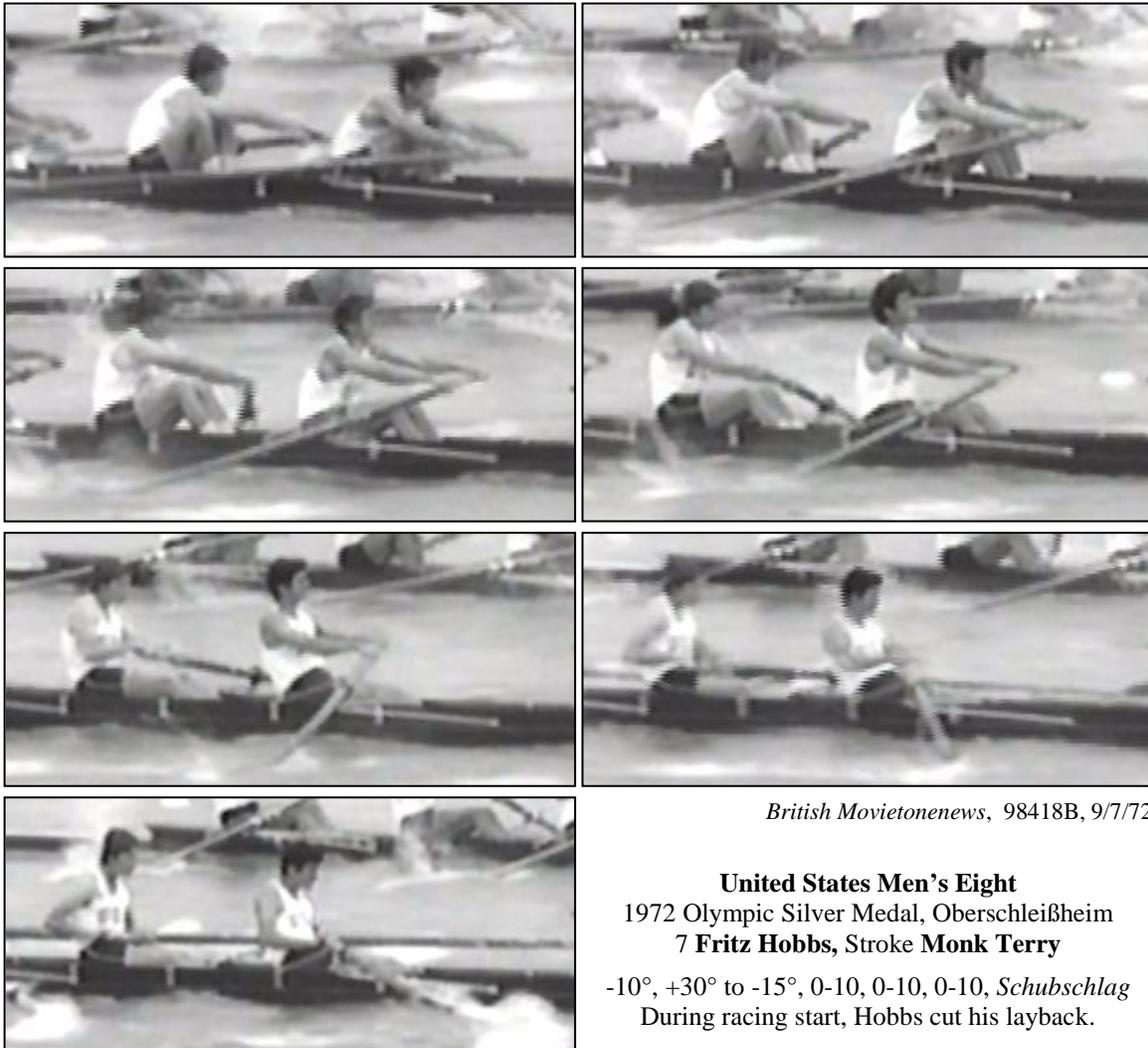
Most observers of the 1972 U.S. crew focused on the continuation of the Harvard Stop & Shop rhythm on the recovery. **Mike Staines**, a member of the 1972 U.S. coxed-pair: "After Munich, I rowed with **Pete Raymond** in a pair once up in Boston, and boy, the radical acceleration of the slide into the catch? That was *nasty* trying to follow."⁴⁷⁰⁸

Gene Clapp, Pennsylvania '72: "Back then, Penn still had the fast hands out of the bow, Lake Washington-style, and the Camp had Harvard's Stop & Shop. At 37-38, you

⁴⁷⁰⁷ See Chapter 142.

⁴⁷⁰⁸ Staines, personal conversation, 2007

THE SPORT OF ROWING



British Movietone news, 98418B, 9/7/72

United States Men's Eight

1972 Olympic Silver Medal, Oberschleißheim

7 **Fritz Hobbs**, Stroke **Monk Terry**

-10°, +30° to -15°, 0-10, 0-10, 0-10, *Schubschlag*
During racing start, Hobbs cut his layback.

can't see the difference with the naked eye, but you still feel it.

"To make the adjustment, Harry gave me a little honeymoon. He gave me the luxury of hopping out of the Penn IRA-winning boat, and allowed me three days in fours behind **Bill Hobbs** before he started seat racing me.

"He just said, 'Do what Bill does,' and Bill was like a metronome.

"I adapted. Actually, at the Brooks School,⁴⁷⁰⁹ where I had rowed before college, being in the proximity of Harvard, guess what style we rowed. Pause at the finish, and accelerate into the catch. The Camp was like going home.

"We actually resisted the urge to accelerate up the slide. You still had to have very good slide control on the recovery because if you felt like you were making up for lost time and you *accelerated* up to the

⁴⁷⁰⁹ located in North Andover, Massachusetts, thirty miles north of Boston.

THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

catch, well that's not good either. It was still pretty much the constant slide but with that hesitation at the finish. That pause was a great reference point.⁴⁷¹⁰

Tim Mickelson: "Before being coached by Harry in 1972,⁴⁷¹¹ I spent a year rowing in a coxless-pair on the Potomac with a former Wisconsin teammate. We were both in the Army. From there to seat racing in fours to the '72 eight, I never felt that I had to make a major transition. The pair work actually helped me prepare conditioning- and style-wise for what Harry was looking for in the boat.

"What I believe really set him apart in the '60s and '70s was the training program that he used to prepare us for our races. The types of workouts that he did and the focus on intensity is what made us a fast eight."⁴⁷¹²

Film analysis of the pullthrough of the 1972 Camp Eight during the Olympic final shows a very impressive and aggressive power application. Several chins lifted during the pullthrough, and arm bending at the catch was virtually undetectable in the face of the immediate and strong combined effort of the legs and backs.

The strength of the legs at the entry was complemented by back swing and arm effort, yielding an effective *Schubschlag* surge to the finish. Force discontinuity at mid-stroke was avoided because the strong back motion at the catch prevented the legs from finishing too early.

Harry had certainly seen this before: "**Ratzeburg** was really hard with the legs, but also prying with the backs so the legs couldn't go fast, but they went *hard!*"⁴⁷¹³

Monk Terry was the model rower of the 1972 crew, and the technique he

followed was the same one he had used throughout his Harvard career.

Terry: "Did Harry change? Not really."⁴⁷¹⁴

Mickelson: "Since Monk was the smallest guy in the boat, I do not think I ever felt his force application. He kept a good ratio between pullthrough and recovery, and he had the ability to stay long, even at the higher rates. But, the force application was eight men in unison which made us a fast eight with no monster guys."⁴⁷¹⁵

Terry's style in Munich was marked by the high classical arc of his back swing. "I always used my back more than my legs."⁴⁷¹⁶ He even made the inevitable settling of the lower back toward the finish look elegant.

Princeton-man **Pete Raymond** in the 6-seat was equally elegant, but he drove his legs flat much faster than his Harvard teammates.

Fritz Hobbs in the 7-seat sat slightly less erect than Terry or Raymond, did not lift his chin and was neither quite as assertive nor as elegant in his back swing.

All three non-Harvard oarsmen appeared to employ delayed arm draw.

As the American lightweight single sculler in 1972, your author competed in several pre-Olympic German regattas alongside the 1972 U.S. Eight. Not only were they genuinely nice guys, but the way they ripped through the water was proof positive that effective *Schubschlag* is no less aggressive than even two-part *Kernschlag*.

Like nothing I've ever heard or seen, before or since, you *experienced* their piston-like drive from entry to release, even from a distance. It was like a locomotive chugging by.

⁴⁷¹⁰ Clapp, personal conversation, 2007

⁴⁷¹¹ See Chapter 103.

⁴⁷¹² Mickelson, personal correspondence, 2010

⁴⁷¹³ Parker, op cit.

⁴⁷¹⁴ Terry, op cit.

⁴⁷¹⁵ Mickelson, op cit.

⁴⁷¹⁶ Terry, op cit.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

For the last three decades, the 1972 eight has returned to the Harvard boathouse each October and gotten back in a boat for the Head of the Charles. It's a big deal for them. Tim Mickelson's back prevents him from rowing, but still he was there in 2005 to cheer his teammates on.

Terry: "Since I've been rowing in this 'Alte Achter'⁴⁷¹⁷ all these years, you come back to this place, you remember, you go out and you sort of row like you used to, except that you don't have the power any more, but we keep coming back . . ."⁴⁷¹⁸

⁴⁷¹⁷ "Old Eight" in German.

⁴⁷¹⁸ Terry, op cit.

THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

104. The Rude and Smooth Years

Al Shealy – 1975 Grand Challenge Cup

wikipedia: “Throughout the 1970s, Parker continued to dominate American rowing. His Harvard crews had a few difficult years in the beginning of the decade⁴⁷¹⁹ – they did not win the Sprints in the years 1971 to 1973 – but they continued to win against Yale, and the victory of their Freshman Crew at Henley in 1972 heralded good things to come.”⁴⁷²⁰

That 1972 Freshman Crew was the start of something very special, as **Tiff Wood**, the young man who ended up in the 4-seat, remembers: “One of the keys to Harry’s greatest years was the skill of his Freshman Coach. He had great crews as long as **Ted Washburn** was there.

“When I started as a freshman, I was not one of those who Ted recruited heavily for the heavyweight crew. I weighed in at 155 or less, and the story I have heard is that my coach at St Paul’s had told Harry that I would make a good lightweight.

“Steve Gladstone was coaching the lightweights at the time, and in 1971 he had the ‘Super Boat’ that won at Henley and raced at Lucerne, so lightweights seemed a reasonable way to go.

“I joined the lightweight program, but as the fall progressed, it became clear that the freshman coach, Dick Prentke, had his eye on someone else for the stroke seat.

“Now you have to understand that I had always liked stroking, and one of the attractions of rowing lightweights was a hope that I could end up in the stroke seat, but **Rick Grogan** [destined to stroke the 1974 World Champion U.S. Lightweight Eight] was also in my class, and for some strange reason Prentke made it clear, without ever saying so directly, that he had Rick pegged for the stroke seat.

“So, as that thought began to sink in, I became less and less satisfied with the idea of rowing lights. I mean, as a senior at St. Paul’s, we had raced and beaten Harvard’s freshman lightweights, so here I was a year older trying to make a slower boat?

“And on top of that, when you give up so much for rowing anyway, why also give up eating?

“So a little before Thanksgiving I switched. No big deal was made of it, I don’t know if Dick particularly cared.

“That Freshman Heavyweight Crew of 1972 really was exceptional. If you look at some of the later success of the rowers, I’m not sure many can match us. All but Mark Moulton, who stopped rowing after freshman year, ultimately made the Varsity.

“Entire port side on the National Team, Ed Woodhouse within a hair of making a team, Blair Brooks could have if he had wanted to, I believe. Ronnie Shaw made a decent showing at the camp in 1975.

“We had no idea how fast we were, or even if we *were* fast. I wonder if our coach

⁴⁷¹⁹ a period of great Penn crews under coach Ted Nash.

⁴⁷²⁰ www.wikipedia.com

THE SPORT OF ROWING

had any idea of what he had at the start of the season.

“One of the most memorable things for me was the way Ted Washburn managed to have us convinced before each race that even though we had won the previous week’s race by miles, *this* week would be different, this next crew was for real, and we’d better be ready for a real contest.

“And then somewhere in the first 500, I would experience this wonderful flood of relief as I perceived that once again Ted had been wrong, and we were going to romp to victory.

“Not that we pulled any less hard – we had all been brought up by coaches who preached that regardless of the margin, you rowed your [genetic heritage] off nonetheless. Rowing just to win was un-American or un-manly.

“But I digress. The amazing thing was that each week Ted could manage to convince us that last week didn’t mean anything – now we were in for a *real* fight.

“At the Sprints, it was some tale about how incredibly strong Cornell was. I don’t remember where they finished, but it was the same as ever for us at the finish.

“And at Henley, of course, you have little idea about anyone. During the time before the racing, we raced anyone and everyone off the starting line, but still were clueless.

“Because of the race format, Ted talked to us about getting out a length or so and letting off a bit so we could save ourselves for later races.

“Heresy! In the first race, we get out to a length and our coxswain calls it down, and I start shouting, ‘No, NO, Not Yet!’ and Ted is bicycling along the tow path shouting ‘Confidence, Tiff! Confidence, Tiff!’

“Hilarious! We won all the races easily. I mean, the margins weren’t all ‘Easily,’ as they say at Henley, but we were *rowing*

easily. It felt so good to be able to finally open it up a bit in the final.”⁴⁷²¹

Al Shealy

That undefeated Freshman Crew was stroked by **Al Shealy**, a man Harry Parker has credited with single-handedly changing the Harvard Style.

Parker: “In the ‘60s we *really* rowed hard, but that changed when Shealy came along. We didn’t do that with the Shealy crews.

“In the ‘70s, it was still a quick catch, but we moved away from the really hard, powerful catches with the high blades to being more controlled at the front end, not a major change in the rhythm, but a little bit of change.

“I mean we still worked hard at the catch. Everybody knows that I work hard at the catches, to make sure that they are vertical and that they lock on right away, but we became a little less *violent* at the catch.”⁴⁷²²

Shealy: “At Harvard, I recall concentration on bladework and the catch. The catch was sharp and defined but not ‘explosive’, i.e., no hang, drop it right in, and get the work on.

“Pounding the catch probably has its benefits, but it seems a bit counterintuitive to me. Logic says that the catch is the point at which the boat is going its slowest, so applying maximum effort with a hyperkinetic pulse is the equivalent of trying to lift dead weight. A crisp catch with a forceful draw, followed by a strong pullthrough seems to make a better case for efficiency, but I ain’t no scientist.

“The emphasis at Harvard was on the strongest locus in the body, the juncture of the back and legs, where the leverage was generated. Lifting the back on the drive

⁴⁷²¹ Wood, personal correspondence, 2005

⁴⁷²² Parker, personal conversation, 2004

THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



Rowing, Symphony of Motion

1973 Harvard Varsity

Coxswain **Dave Weinberg**.

Stroke **Al Shealy**, 7 **Steve Row**

-10°, +25 to -2°, 0-9, 0-10, 0-10

Recovery rhythm was Stop & Shop.

After instantaneous catch, pullthrough was strong commitment to the release.

amplified this leverage. The arms are always the weakest link, and they were reserved for the final pullthrough, complimenting the dominant energy created at the mid-point of the stroke.⁴⁷²³

This represented another significant step in the maturity of Harry Parker and the Harvard Style. Not surprisingly, Al Shealy's force curve was a virtual parabola, although this might have come as quite a surprise to those outsiders who had been

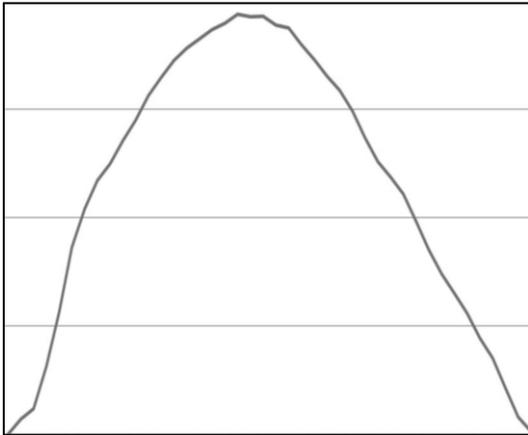
⁴⁷²³ Shealy, personal conversation, 2005

trying to reverse-engineer the Harvard Stroke since 1965.

Shealy: "In no small measure, I have to thank my father for my love of the sport. His rowing career at Yale, although not marked by great acquisition of hardware, inspired him to take up sculling after college and pass on the passion to me, his first-born son. My earliest recollection of being pushed out in a single shell at the age of 8 or 9 includes the memory of coming back wet and stifling a snuffle.

"So much for great beginnings.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Al Shealy

Al Shealy
A virtual parabola

“I won’t bore you with the prep school thing, other than to say that **Chuck Hamilton**,⁴⁷²⁴ our coach at Mount Hermon School, took a gamble on me at stroke and had it pay off with a schoolboy sprint championship my senior year. It was Mount Hermon’s first championship, and they’ve never come close to another one since.

“Though my grades were good, I think that this was certainly more than a puny factor in my having been accepted to Harvard. No doubt I disappointed my father, but back then, if you wanted to row, you went to Harvard, period.”⁴⁷²⁵

Verticality

Harry also encouraged his ‘70s crews to be more horizontal on the pullthrough. Six-seat **Dick Cashin**: “You’re much stronger drawing *back* as opposed to lifting and opening *up* at the catch. The whole thing for me was draw, not lift. ‘Move the handle with your hips!’ Harry would say. ‘Don’t let them shoot out from underneath you, and

don’t let your shoulders rise up at the front end,’ which means you’re moving the handle and not the hips.”⁴⁷²⁶

Rude

The undefeated 1974 and ‘75 Harvard Varsities came to be known as the “**Rude and Smooth**” crews, and “although the nickname is oft attributed to a 1974 *Sports Illustrated* article entitled ‘Rude and Smooth and Fast,’ **Peter Lowe** ‘74 recalls an earlier origin.

Lowe: “Certain things are either rude, or they’re smooth. This very simplistic outlook on life really derived from some hockey players that I knew in Eliot House in 1973. That was their view of the world.

“Coxswain Dave Weinberg and I kind of introduced it into the lexicon of the boathouse.”

“When a *Sports Illustrated* reporter tailed the team at a race in Seattle, the writer picked up on the slang and the uncensored attitude of the oarsmen.

“At the time when this guy was writing the article, the phrase, ‘How rude is that?’ had already become very current within our group,” said Tiff Wood. ‘I’m not sure that ‘How smooth is that?’ ever . . . We were more inclined to talk about how rude something was.’

“**Ronald Shaw** ‘75 said. ‘We were smooth because we were smooth on the water, but off the water, there were some antics. Even on the water, our stroke, Al Shealy, was pretty rude. When we went by a boat, he’d be yelling, ‘So long, suckers!’”⁴⁷²⁷

Shealy: “Bloody shins and pukefests during the *Tours de Stade*,’ broken teeth during pickup soccer games with the Boston University crews, or matching wits with Harry during his infamously contrived

⁴⁷²⁴ Kent ‘61, learned his rowing under Tote Walker.

⁴⁷²⁵ Shealy, personal correspondence, 2005

⁴⁷²⁶ Cashin, personal correspondence, 2005

⁴⁷²⁷ Lee, *www.thecrimson.com*, Halberstam p. 71

THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



Ted Washburn, *Making of a Champion*

Tour de Stade

croquet games all bespoke a uniquely Harvard rowing approach to life itself.

“As for my personal contribution to the Harvard crews of my day, I guess it boils down to a few things: a fierce competitive streak, a desire to play a leadership role, and an explosive determination to get out in front and stay there.

“‘Shealy, your consistent reaction under pressure is to raise the stroke rate!’ screamed my Freshman Coach, Ted Washburn, when he was trying to orchestrate a long, steady-state intramural row at Red Top.

“‘Guilty as charged!’ was my reply.

“The son of a gun actually seat raced me in the 2-seat to punish me for my impertinence!

“My *modus operandi* was simply to bury the other crew, right from the ‘*Partez!*’ It was my intent, and the mark of our crews, to decimate the competition by breaking

their will in the first thirty strokes and building from there to a decisive victory.

“It was a scenario we rarely deviated from, and it became expected practice, though some of our shenanigans clearly slopped over the washboard. I’m sure that my yelling ‘So long, baby!’ after the first settle didn’t exactly endear us to our foes, but it certainly got us pumped up!”⁴⁷²⁸

“I look over at the various strokes and glare, as if to say, ‘I’ve already made reservations at the awards dock, and you’re not going to see my back in the next six minutes, sweetheart.’”⁴⁷²⁹

“It got to the point that people wondered if we could ever win by rowing from behind. We settled that question in 1975 during a very tough race at Hunter Island Lagoon against a crew from Vesper Boat Club that was comprised of National Team aspirants. We were down by half a length at 1,000 meters and ended up winning the race.”⁴⁷³⁰

Gregg Stone ‘75: “We were racing for the right to use the 1972 U.S. Silver Medal Stämpfli eight at Henley that year, and it was a good Vesper boat.

“This took place on a Saturday between our four-miler versus Yale and a four-miler versus Washington the week after. We had the oars and boat rigged for four miles and had done no speed work since the Sprints. After the race I asked Harry if he purposely choked us down, being confident of

⁴⁷²⁸ Shealy, op cit.

⁴⁷²⁹ Shealy, p. 37

⁴⁷³⁰ Shealy, personal correspondence, 2005

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Alan Shealy

Stroke **Al Shealy**, 1973-1975 Harvard Varsity Eights

“My own personal style was highlighted by a right arm that appeared to dislocate at every catch.”
(These film frames of a single catch are in chronological order.)

winning. I can’t remember the response, if any, but he did not deny it.”⁴⁷³¹

Smooth?

Shealy: “To put it mildly, kinesiology didn’t rate too highly among most coaches in the ‘60s and ‘70s. If you had a firm catch, a big puddle, and won seat races, it didn’t matter much what went on inside the boat. As evidence, if you look at films of the Harvard crews during that era, body movement looked like a dog’s lunch. My own personal style was highlighted by a right arm that appeared to dislocate at every catch. To this day, I can’t figure out how or why this happened, but it didn’t seem to slow us down much.”⁴⁷³²

Stone: “Take a look at some shots of our freshman boat. It looks like we were strafed by machine gun fire. In the BBC commentary during our Henley final – verdict easily – the announcer says to Jack Kelly, who was doing color, ‘They’re not a very pretty crew, are they, Jack?’⁴⁷³³

Shealy: “There is a giant picture in the entry to Harvard’s Newell Boathouse that shows our 1974 crew caught at mid-stroke.

It pretty much epitomizes the dynamic I’m talking about. Heads and bodies are jerked and contorted, but the sinews and faces tell the real story. The onlooker imagines big puddles, created by a very fast crew of extremely competitive oarsmen who would not allow the demise of the Harvard legend to fall on their shoulders.

“This zeal, this pride, this hell-bent determination not to be outdone formed the touchstone of the time.”⁴⁷³⁴

Peter Lowe ‘74: “A lot of guys in the boat, particularly **Dick Cashin**, would say, ‘Come on Harry, are we as good as the ‘68 boat?’⁴⁷³⁵ How do we compare to that ‘68 boat that was on the cover of *Sports Illustrated*?’⁴⁷³⁶

“ . . . and he’d never say anything.”⁴⁷³⁷

Over the years, Harvard has not often attended the IRA Regatta. However, in 1974, after Harvard won the Eastern Sprints, Western Sprints Champion Washington invited the Crimson to an East-meets-West duel to determine the true national champion.

⁴⁷³¹ Stone, personal conversation, 2005

⁴⁷³² Shealy, op cit.

⁴⁷³³ Stone, personal correspondence, 2005

⁴⁷³⁴ Shealy, op cit.

⁴⁷³⁵ See Chapter 102.

⁴⁷³⁶ See Chapter 100.

⁴⁷³⁷ Qtd. by Lee, www.thecrimson.com

THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



Author

1974 Harvard Heavyweight Varsity Crew “Rude and Smooth”

The picture that has now inspired generations of Harvard oarsmen.

Lowe: “People complain that the Harvard oarsmen live in the boathouse, but the members of Washington *really do* live in their boathouse.”⁴⁷³⁸

www.thecrimson.com: “On the way to Washington, the Crimson’s two boats stopped to race IRA Champion Wisconsin on their home turf, defeating the Badgers and silencing any talk of IRA superiority.”⁴⁷³⁹

Stone: “These were epic races. Wind kept us off the official course, and there were no spectators, but there we were, doing six minute pieces, dead even for much of it.

“Thanks to our starts, both the Varsity and Jayvee won by a foot, about the same as the Sprints margins. These were the four fastest collegiate eights in the country that year.

“Harvard then went on to beat the Huskies and seal the unofficial national title, with the Crimson Junior Varsity boat setting a Washington course record, only to watch it broken twenty minutes later by the Harvard Varsity Crew.”⁴⁷⁴⁰

Shealy: “I think they probably saw us as a bunch of extremely arrogant upper-class

⁴⁷³⁸ Qtd. by Ibid.

⁴⁷³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴⁰ Stone, op cit.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Newell Boathouse, Harvard

1974 Harvard Varsity

“Rude and Smooth” on the boathouse wall

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

prep school Harvard kids, and I think that they were probably right.”⁴⁷⁴¹

Henley 1975

Stone: “The 1975 boat was again the self-crowned national champion. We won the Eastern Sprints handily and then beat IRA-winner Washington over four miles.”⁴⁷⁴²

The crew then flew across the Atlantic to compete in the Grand Challenge Cup at Henley.

Stone: “We had won the right to row the 1972 U.S. Stämpfli, in which I remembered winning the Ladies Plate as part of the 1973 Harvard Jayvee, but in 1975 we found it unrowable. Maybe it had warped. Right before our race Harry moved us into Orange Coast College’s Karlisch, the finest boat I had rowed in up to that point.”⁴⁷⁴³

www.thecrimson.com: “Although Harvard fell to the British National Team in the final, its semi-final win over the Union Boat Club provided victory in itself.

“There was a little bit of history,” Parker said. “We were racing against basically the makings of the U.S. National Crew. In 1974, they had been World Champions.”⁴⁷⁴⁴ Two of the members of that crew were in our crew, Shealy and Cashin, and when we decided to go to Henley in ‘75, [National Coach Allen Rosenberg] also decided to take the remainder of the National Team.

“There was a natural rivalry there.”⁴⁷⁴⁵

This was a major, major Harry Parker understatement! Any time that crews representing Parker and Rosenberg, the two great American coaches of the era, met, it was indeed a *very* big deal for both of them.

⁴⁷⁴¹ Qtd. by Halberstam, p. 71

⁴⁷⁴² Stone, op cit.

⁴⁷⁴³ Stone, op cit, 2007

⁴⁷⁴⁴ See Chapter 111.

⁴⁷⁴⁵ Qtd by Lee, op cit.

THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

Cashin: “When we raced Union at Henley in 1975, it was such a shock. Rosenberg was supposed to be racing two fours, but he saw a chance to spoil Harry’s and our Grand Challenge Cup run, and so he combined the fours to race us.

“It was the entire 1974 World Champion National Eight without Mark Norelius, who was in the Air Force, and without Al Shealy and me.

“It was tense, a lot of friends not talking, and it had the feel of Vesper-Harvard at Henley in ‘65.

“We got out early and beat them by over a length.

When we rowed down beyond the boat tents and through the bridge where it was quiet, we heard this whooping and yelling and saw Harry riding a bike waving his blue sear-sucker jacket around above his head like a wild man.

“Everyone just sat there slack-jawed for a moment. It was like seeing the Pope doing the can-can down the aisle at St Peter’s. Then we started yelling back at him, yelling when people almost never even *talked* to him!

“It didn’t have much to do with rowing or winning. It was more about the joy of being part of a perfect thing, even for a moment.”⁴⁷⁴⁶

Harry: ““It was pretty satisfying to win that race. We actually set a course record on



Ted Washburn

Harry Parker

that day as well.”⁴⁷⁴⁷

According to www.thecrimson.com, the memory of Rude and Smooth and that unforgettable picture of them in Newell Boathouse “still drives crews to meet that standard of excellence.

“‘It was such a great era of Harvard rowing,’ said **Jim Crick** ‘88. ‘It was certainly something that we in the ‘80s wanted to emulate. ‘Are we as good as the Rude and Smooth?’

“‘And that’s what keeps the whole thing going, that we’re all striving to be as good as those who came before us. Harry never sets the bar where it is – you have to guess where it is, and everyone jumps over, and that’s what keeps the ball rolling.”⁴⁷⁴⁸

⁴⁷⁴⁶ Cashin, personal correspondence, 2005

⁴⁷⁴⁷ Qtd. by Lee, op cit.

⁴⁷⁴⁸ Qtd. by Ibid.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

105. Parker's Progeny

1967 Cornell Lightweights – 1971 Harvard Lightweights – Steve Gladstone

The immediate success of Harry Parker's Harvard heavyweight crews had a huge impact on the American rowing community from 1965 on. No one was unmoved, and the result was often a hybrid of established techniques with perceived aspects of Harvard grafted on.

The 1967 Cornell Lightweights



Chris Williams

Todd Jesdale

One of the most interesting and successful hybrids was the Cornell lightweight program. Their coach was **Todd Jesdale**, a former Cornell heavyweight, class of '61. Only the 1966

Harvard Lightweight Crew stroked by Monk Terry⁴⁷⁴⁹ prevented his Big Red lightweights from going undefeated from 1965 through 1967.

Their 1967 Varsity was the great American lightweight crew of the era. They won every race that year by open water.

Their technique was based on the rowing fundamentals Jesdale had learned from his mentor, Stork Sanford. In fact, his lightweights seemed to hold fast to the 3rd Generation Conibear technique of the Phil Gravink era even more than the 1960s Cornell heavyweights still being coached by Stork.

Cornell lightweight crews were renowned for rowing their regular season races (1 5/16 miles) at 30 strokes per minute, often understroking the competition by five to seven beats. In order to generate speed at that rating, their *Schubschlag* acceleration from entry to finish was indeed impressive.

Stroke of the undefeated 1967 Varsity was **Chris Williams**, who learned his rowing at Kent School under Tote Walker.⁴⁷⁵⁰ His pullthrough was 0-10, 0-10, 0-10, with a back swing similar to Ratzeburg's: +30° to only -10° layback, but instead of ticking the boat along like Ratzeburg did, each pullthrough smoothly but aggressively thrust the boat on to long run on the recovery.

⁴⁷⁴⁹ See Chapters 102 and 103.

⁴⁷⁵⁰ See Chapter 98.

THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



British Movietone news, 92528, 7/3/67

Cornell Lightweight Men's Crew
 1967 Eastern Sprints Champion
 Thames Challenge Cup Champion
 7 **Bill Cromwell**, Stroke **Chris Williams**
 0°, +30° to -10°, 0-10, 0-10, 0-10
 Strong squeeze to ferryman's finish
 Classical Technique, Ratzeburg flavor



Author

Chris Williams
 Near perfect *Schubschlag*

Recovery rhythm was Stop & Shop, but at such low ratings, the slide acceleration looked quite deliberate compared to

BMA

Harvard's, and the catch was almost quiet, with hardly any splash.

Williams: "As you well remember, Ratzeburg coming to the Eastern Sprints in 1963 had changed all the 'rules' and had a profound effect on the rowing community. Also, the traditional three-mile race distance was disappearing, replaced by a more aggressive 2,000 meter sprint.

"Obviously everything we were doing we considered 'normal,' but we did de-emphasize the layback and had a strong

THE SPORT OF ROWING



George Bushell & Son

Cornell Lightweight Men's Eight

Undeclared, 1967 Eastern Sprints Champion, Lake Quinsigamond

Thames Challenge Cup Champion, Henley

Coxswain **Ron Kay**, Stroke **Chris Williams** 6'0" 183 cm, 7 **Bill Cromwell** 6'0" 183 cm,
6 **Dave Stout** 6'0" 183cm, 5 **Dennis Koza** 6'0" 183 cm, 4 **Larry Dean** 6'1" 185 cm,
3 **Al Hoyt** 6'2" 188 cm, 2 **Bob DeRoo** 6'2" 188 cm, Bow **Frank Rose** 6'1" 185 cm

concentration on the slow release of the hands at the finish – slow down and around and over the legs. This was a big change from the fast-hands style of the Cornell heavies of the '50s Stork's era.

"The net effect was that when we reached the catch, the boat's natural deceleration was not abruptly altered but was rather smoothly changed into acceleration."⁴⁷⁵¹

Like many coaches in the Conibear tradition, Jesdale put his crews through long distance low-stroke practices with greater layback, as much as -30°, in order to

emphasize swing and surge to the release. With six seniors in the boat in 1967, bladework and boatmanship of the crew was impeccable.

Williams: "In the spring, we primarily did intervals – either 500 or 1,000 meters.

"Again, this was the impact of Ratzeburg. The heavies would still do their long rows on Cayuga Lake, but we did not. We stayed primarily in the inlet, which we pretty much had to ourselves."⁴⁷⁵²

In 1966, the author stroked a solid Penn Lightweight Varsity against Cornell. They rowed the race at 31, and they beat us handily.

⁴⁷⁵¹ Williams, personal correspondence, 2005

⁴⁷⁵² Ibid.

THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

Williams: “By 1967, our race cadence had risen to a start in the high 40s, with a body at a 35 or 36.”⁴⁷⁵³

Chris had rowed 4-seat in the undefeated 1963 Kent School Jayvee, but he always stroked in college, starting with the 1964 Cornell Freshman Lightweight Crew that lost only to Columbia.

Williams: “In 1965, I was the Jayvee stroke. We lost to Harvard at the Sprints, but that emphasized the old Bob Dylan line: ‘There ain’t no success like failure, and failure ain’t no success at all.’ I vowed to work harder than anyone thereafter.

“And I didn’t lose again.”⁴⁷⁵⁴

Williams stroked the undefeated Jayvee in 1966, the year the Varsity lost the Sprints to Monk Terry’s Harvard boat. Chris then came back to stroke the Varsity his senior year. They disposed of Penn by just over a length in the Matthews Cup on the Schuylkill River, their first race of the season, and that was the closest anybody got to them all year. Their margin over Penn at the Eastern Sprints was again just over a length.

Prior to Henley, the crew accepted an invitation to visit Ratzeburger Ruderclub and compete in the Gillette Cup. They got to train with Karl Adam’s crews.

Williams: “No, we didn’t beat them – except at the start. They were doing 1,000s, and we did our racing start at about a 46 and then ‘settled’ around a 40, as opposed to our normal 35 to 36. We did the first 500 with them, and we could stay even over that distance.”⁴⁷⁵⁵

At Henley, the Cornell crew put to good use the starts they had practiced at Ratzeburg. They would come off the line flawlessly in the upper-40s, establish a lead

and deliberately work the rating down, first to 36, then to 30 or below.

Through four preliminary rounds, they were never threatened after their settle. In the final, they defeated Nottingham & Union Rowing Club by two and one-half lengths while understroking them by 10 beats in the second half of the course.

The 1971 Harvard Lightweights

After 1967, the lightweight category at the Eastern Sprints was completely dominated by Harvard University. Their new coach was **Steve Gladstone**, who had already spent several years successfully coaching the Princeton Freshman Heavies when Harry Parker hired him at Harvard. Harry asked that he coach a technique compatible with that of the Harvard Heavyweights.

The zenith of Harvard Lightweight rowing under Gladstone came in 1971 with a crew that has been known ever since as the **Super Boat**.

As the 1967 Cornell crew had before them, they rolled through their regular season undefeated, won the Eastern Sprints and then the Thames Challenge Cup.

They had a similar approach to boat moving but a different personality. The arc of their back swing was the same: +30° to -10°. The pullthrough was structurally also the same: 0-10, 0-10, 0-10 *Schubschlag*. They, too, employed Stop & Shop on the recovery, but the effect was not nearly so deliberate, and the entry was *not* always so precise.

Whereas Cornell exuded discipline and quiet confidence, the Harvard crew was energetic and exuberant, on and off the water.

Stroke **Dave Harman** was not nearly as elegant a rower as Chris Williams. He would look at his oar and really heave his back coming off the line, but once he got his

⁴⁷⁵³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵⁵ Ibid.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



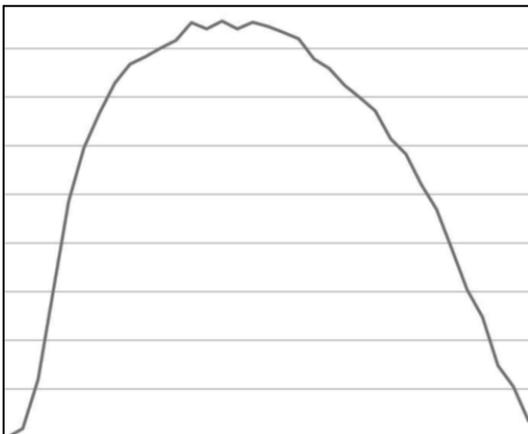
Author

Harvard Lightweight Men's Varsity "The Super Boat"

Undefeated, 1971 Eastern Sprints Champion, Lake Quinsigamond
Thames Challenge Cup Champion, Henley

Bow **Phin Sprague** 6'0" 183cm 150lb. 68kg, 2 **Andy Narva** 6'0" 183cm 155lb. 70kg,
3 **Eph King** 6'0" 183cm 155lb. 70kg, 4 **Tony Brooks** 6'2" 188cm 154lb. 70kg,
5 **Jim Richardson** 6'2" 188cm 150lb. 68kg, 6 **Chuck Hewitt** 6'1" 185cm 165lb. 75kg,
7 **Dick Moore** 6'1" 185cm 160lb. 73kg, Stroke **Dave Harman** 6'1" 185cm 165lb. 75kg,
Coxswain **Fred Yalouris**

Brooks and Hewitt would make the Olympic Team in 1972 as heavyweights!



Author

Tony Brooks

Near perfect *Schubschlag*
Quite similar to the curve of
Cornell's Chris Williams.
Slightly more aggressive front end.

boat moving, his commitment to accelerating the boat from entry to release was certainly the equal of anyone at Cornell.

The 1971 Harvard Lightweights would come off the line with a lot of spray, and their Stop & Shop acceleration was more pronounced than Cornell's. Entries seemed more aggressive, perhaps reflecting the fact that while Cornell still rowed with traditional pencil blades, Harvard had moved on to Mâcon blades.⁴⁷⁵⁶

⁴⁷⁵⁶ also called shovels or spoons, named for the city north of Lyon, France, site of the 1959 European Championships, where they first appeared.

THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

However, force application was basically the same, *Schubschlag* in both cases, with the Cantabs perhaps a bit more aggressive on the front end.

Harvard rowed the body of their races higher than Cornell, at 33 to 35, often matching the ratings of their competitors.

In the final of the Thames Challenge Cup against Kingston Rowing Club, Harvard powered to a length lead at the half-way point only to see Kingston drive back in the last 500. Raising the rating to 40, Harman held them off to win by one-third of a length.

Members of the Harvard Jayvee Lightweights also came to Henley, winning the Wyfold Challenge Cup for coxless-fours, defeating Marlow Rowing Club in the final by two lengths.

After Henley, Steve Gladstone took the crew on to Lucerne, Switzerland to compete in the annual Rotsee-Regatta. There they raced European Olympic crews and became the first lightweight eight ever to row 2,000 meters below six minutes in flat water.

Who was Better?

Chris Williams, 1967 Cornell stroke: "They only won the Thames Cup final by a third of a length? Hmmm . . ."⁴⁷⁵⁷

⁴⁷⁵⁷ Williams, op cit.



Dick Moore

Harvard Lightweight Men's Crew

1971 Eastern Sprints Champion
Thames Challenge Cup Champion
+5°, +30° to -10°, 0-10, 0-10, 0-10

Lew Evans, Cornell Freshman Lightweight coach during the mid-1960s: "The Cornell Lightweights hadn't lost to Harvard since the '61 Sprints, beating them in '62 in the Penn Race by a hair and then beating them by a large margin in the '62 Sprints triple-tie with MIT and Navy.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

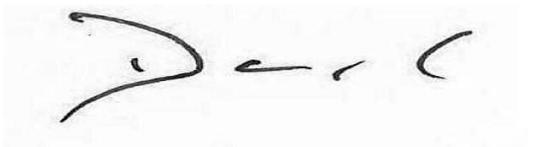
“After a Geiger Cup loss to MIT in 1963, the Cornell Lightweights were undefeated against American lightweights for more than two years. In ‘63, we avenged our loss to MIT, won the 1963 Sprints and competed in the Thames Cup at Henley.

“We followed that with an undefeated regular season and a win at the ‘64 Sprints by over ten seconds, the largest margin of victory ever [up to that time. See Below.]. The next year was another undefeated season and another Sprints victory.

“In preparation for another trip to Henley, we placed second to the Vesper Olympic Champion Eight at the 1965 American Henley.

“After losing to the fine 1966 Harvard Lightweight crew, 1967 was the Cornell 150s’ finest year.

“The significance of all this is that HARVARD SHIRTS were collected by Big Red Varsity Lightweight oarsman from ‘62 through ‘65 and then again in ‘67. I think that that this is relevant in view of all this emphasis on the Harvard Super Boat.”⁴⁷⁵⁸



Dave Harman, 1971 Harvard stroke: “I don’t need to tout our crew’s success, but two things stand out for me from that year.

“First, we won the Sprints by *thirteen*—plus seconds against a very fast Princeton boat. That record still stands and may well stand for some time to come.

“Secondly, the stern four of the crew we barely beat in the finals at Henley was in fact the stern four of the British National Team eight. The whole British boat was heavyweight . . . of course.

⁴⁷⁵⁸ L. Evans, personal correspondence, 2006

“Ah, the glories of the past . . .”⁴⁷⁵⁹

The 1971 Harvard Lightweight Crew is also remembered for what the members accomplished later in their rowing careers. The very next year, 4-seat **Tony Brooks** and 6-seat **Chuck Hewitt** made the 1972 U.S. Olympic Team *as heavyweights*.⁴⁷⁶⁰ **Scott Baker**, stroke of the Henley-winning Wyfold four, and **Dave Harman**, stroke of the eight, were members of the 1974 World Champion U.S. Lightweight Eight.

The exuberance of the Harvard 1971 Super Boat has not dulled with age. Each fall they return to their hallowed Newell Boathouse to compete in the Head of the Charles.

Steve Gladstone



Dick Moore

Steve Gladstone in 1971

Harry’s Harvard Lightweight Coach, **Steve Gladstone**, soon developed a career reputation to rival that of Harry himself. Even with the benefit of hindsight, it is difficult to compare their records because Steve’s collegiate successes came largely at the Intercollegiate Rowing Association

⁴⁷⁵⁹ Harman, personal correspondence, 2007

⁴⁷⁶⁰ See Chapters 103 and 122.

THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING



San Diego Crew Classic

2003 University of California Men's Crew

+10°, +30° to -15°, 0-8, 0-9, 0-10 Classical Technique *Schubschlag*

5 **Jake Wetzel** (bald, in center) 6'5" 195cm 207lb. 94kg,
1999 USA Coxed-Four World Champion,
2000 USA Quad Olympic 7th Place
2003 CAN Coxless-Four World Champion
2004 CAN Coxless-Four Olympic Silver
2007 CAN Eights World Champion
2008 CAN Eights Olympic Gold

regatta, in which for years Harry's Harvard crews did not participate. There was a National Collegiate Rowing Championship Regatta in Cincinnati, Ohio during the 1980s and '90s. If you count those and IRAs in the years when the Cincinnati regatta didn't exist, Harry has nine wins and Steve has eight.⁴⁷⁶¹

Even after forty years, the two remain *very* competitive with each other in all things. *All* things. These two men are perhaps the two most intense personalities in U.S. rowing.

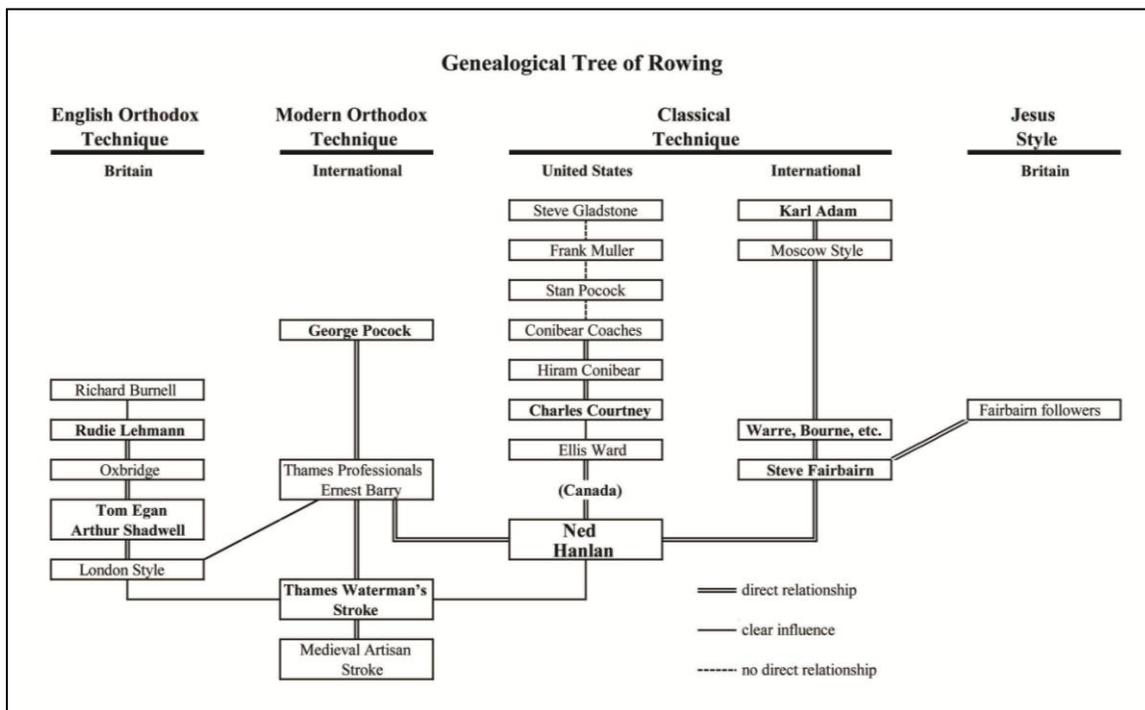
ROW Magazine: "Steve Gladstone has a darkly sensual presence, outwardly illuminated by brown hair [in 1989], brown eyes and his trademark moustache, but inside he's churning. His soul is somewhere else, in some tormented coach's purgatory where only the grace of a dedicated crew can save him."⁴⁷⁶²

After Harvard, Steve went to Cal, then Brown, then Cal again, with brief retirements in between. During his second stint in Berkeley, he also served as Athletic Director.

⁴⁷⁶¹ www.wikipedia.org

⁴⁷⁶² Forde, p. 18

THE SPORT OF ROWING



In 2006, when Steve Gladstone won his eleventh IRA varsity championship, he set the modern record by a factor of more than three.⁴⁷⁶³ Since his first for Cal in 1976, teams coached by Steve have won a third of all IRAs despite the fact that he wasn't coaching for a number of those years.

Gladstone's Role in History

Gladstone's many successes, however, never led to true appreciation and respect from the American rowing community as a whole. Instead, over the years there have been many theories as to how Steve Gladstone could have been so "lucky" in his career.

Few understood that in the years after Harvard, he matured into a superb coach of **Classical Technique**. His approach evolved

into a virtual throwback to the rowing fundamentals of the pre-Parker, pre-Rosenberg Conibear Era in a time when we shall discover the United States had completely turned its back on its heritage and was completely dominated by a new technique being spread by Harry Parker's nemesis, Allen Rosenberg.⁴⁷⁶⁴

The Last Conibear Coach

In fact, Steve Gladstone was for many years the *only* major American collegiate coach of his era to wholeheartedly embrace Classical Technique, aka the Conibear Stroke, in all its important aspects. He was nothing less than a solitary beacon in the midst of what **Stan Pocock** called "a long eclipse of the bright sun of American rowing victories."⁴⁷⁶⁵

⁴⁷⁶³ This compares to fourteen for Cornell's Charles Courtney at the beginning of the 20th Century. See Chapter 31 ff.

⁴⁷⁶⁴ See Chapter 108.

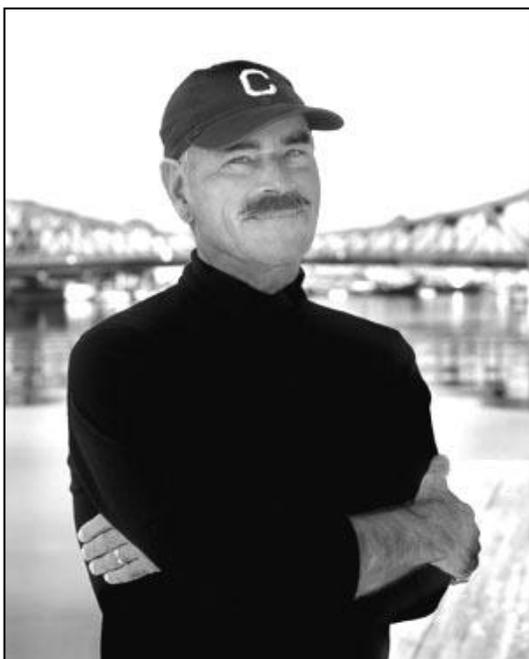
⁴⁷⁶⁵ S. Pocock, qtd. by Newell, p. 79

THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

Steve Gladstone is the only individual American collegiate coach since Hiram Conibear a century ago who has earned a place on my expanding **Genealogical Tree of Rowing**.

But, if you ask others, they can't imagine that technique could have anything to do with why he has been so successful!! It *has* to be something else.

John Riley,⁴⁷⁶⁶ Penn A.C.: "When Cal wins with their bladework, they think that's freakish. Instead of going, 'Oh, there's something there,' they actually dismiss it like it was a fluke. It's so funny how the brain is."⁴⁷⁶⁷



University of California

Steve Gladstone in 2005

When Steve first coached at the **University of California** (1973-80), his 1976 IRA victory was attributed to Cal's rich winning tradition of three Olympic

victories and the fact that he did not have to deal with Ivy League admission standards.

But then he moved on to **Brown University** (1982-94), an Ivy League school with Ivy League admissions standards and no great winning tradition in rowing, and he won five more IRAs in 1983, 1986, 1987, 1993 and 1994.

This time, skeptics said it was because he had recruited foreign ringers.

Indeed, when he established a relationship with **Nebojsa Ilic**, the coach of VK Partizan in Belgrade, and started recruiting Yugoslavian and other European athletes, Steve was even accused of single-handedly ruining American collegiate rowing.

Rowing News: "[Xeno] Müller, who was recruited by Gladstone to row for Brown in the early 1990s, is one of the posterboys of international recruiting. Brimming with talent and overflowing with *panache*, Müller went on to win a Gold Medal in the 1996 Olympics. In the 2000 Games, he added a Silver Medal to cement his legacy as one of the world's finest scullers.

"I don't think [Steve] was afraid about shopping around and seeing who wanted to come from other countries,' Müller said. 'Whether people at one point agree with him or not, the team was unified under him. What Steve showed me as an athlete is how to be a leader. He can take credit for making me tougher.'

"Although Gladstone wasn't the first to recruit oarsmen from overseas, he was successful at integrating foreign talent into a diverse, championship-caliber crew. Müller and Croatia's **Igor Boraska**⁴⁷⁶⁸ are two high-profile examples."⁴⁷⁶⁹

⁴⁷⁶⁶ See Chapter 132.

⁴⁷⁶⁷ Riley, personal conversation, 2009

⁴⁷⁶⁸ 6'3" 190cm 207lb. 94kg, 1994 World Champion coxed-pair, 1998 Silver coxed-four, 2000 Bronze eight, 2001 Silver eight, 2002

THE SPORT OF ROWING

You can add **Dorde Višacki**, 6'6" 198cm 205lb. 93kg, member of Serbia and Montenegro's 2000 Olympic fifth-place coxless-pair,⁴⁷⁷⁰ and **Jake Wetzel**, 6'5" 195cm 207lb. 94kg, Olympic Champion and three times World Champion while representing the U.S. and Canada.⁴⁷⁷¹

Soon absolutely everybody had ringers, but still Steve kept winning.

Riley: "Steve Gladstone's success isn't just because he can coach a beautiful catch. It's because he's really good at actually picking up stuff from everybody else. When you have a very good Serbian or Croatian rowing in your Brown program, you learn from him. You don't teach him. And that's what Steve did."⁴⁷⁷²

During his second tenure at the **University of California** (1997-2008), his 1999 and 2000 IRA wins were attributed to the fact that PAC 10 athletic conference rules allowed freshmen to row on varsity teams. The IRA closed that loophole, but his Cal crew still won the 2001, 2002 and 2006 IRAs.

Steve received a fine education at Kent School and Syracuse University, but I know of no major current American coach who is not also a college graduate.

Steve was coached by Tote Walker at Kent and Loren Schoel at Syracuse, and he coached at Harvard alongside Harry Parker, but the American coaching ranks have always been full of protégés of such legendary coaches as Charles Courtney, Ned Ten Eyck, Hiram Conibear and his many followers, of Richard Glendon, Joe Burk and Allen Rosenberg.

Bronze coxed-four, 2003 Bronze eight, member of 2002 Croatian 4-man bobsled team.

⁴⁷⁶⁹ Neil Wu Becker, *Born Again*, *Rowing News*, February, 2005, pp. 47-8

⁴⁷⁷⁰ See Chapter 137.

⁴⁷⁷¹ See Chapters 151 and 159.

⁴⁷⁷² Riley, op cit.

Steve Gladstone is a coach who has had decades to learn and grow, but there certainly are a number of other experienced coaches in America.

Steve Gladstone has been deeply respected by his teams, but there certainly are plenty of other charismatic coaches respected by their teams.

Steve's crews have been manned by fine athletes, but his competitors also have had fine athletes.

Despite all this, few have ever looked to rowing technique or force application for even a partial explanation for the inordinate success of Steve Gladstone. Accordingly, there is no large cohort of successful major coaches following a Gladstone technique template. He remains largely a riddle to his contemporaries.

Rowing News: "While some coaches have scoffed in the past at Gladstone's willingness to extend beyond traditional approaches to coaching and recruiting, it is that very vision that sets him apart as a perennial winner."⁴⁷⁷³

In fact, it has actually been Steve Gladstone's willingness to *return* to the traditional approaches to rowing technique that were abandoned a half-century ago by most Americans that truly set him apart from late-20th Century American coaches and continues to make him unique today.

Steve's role models are men like Ky Ebright. He still reads and learns from Steve Fairbairn. Gladstone is an historian of rowing, a man with *perspective*, a true traditionalist whose vision goes forward while he looks back a century and more.

How much his Classical Technique has contributed to making him the perennial winner that he has always been is for the readers to decide.

⁴⁷⁷³ Becker, op cit, p. 48

THE LONG ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN ROWING

Steve Gladstone and I have been good friends since we roomed on the same hallway in prep school more than half a century ago. As I write this, Steve has just

taken over as head coach at **Yale University**, where he will go head to head with his old boss, Harvard's Harry Parker.