

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

139. The Next Generation of U.S. Scullers

*Jim Dietz – Gregg Stone – Larry Klecatsky – Bill Belden –
Scott Roop – John Biglow – Paul Enquist*

Consistent success for the most part eluded American men competing in international sculling in the post-Rosenberg era. Nevertheless, the U.S. produced several unforgettable individuals and enduring stories during the 1970s and '80s.

Jim Dietz

According to a 1972 feature article in *Life Magazine*, **James William Dietz** “was a gangling, uncoordinated 15-year-old when he took up rowing to get out of the shadow of an athletically successful older brother.”⁶⁸²⁸

“Dietz’s crew experience began in 1964, when he competed for the New York Athletic Club in all classes of rowing and sculling events. As a high school student, he won all United States and Canadian Scholastic Championships in single and double sculls from 1964 through 1967, and won the first Junior World Championship in single sculls at Ratzeburg, Germany in 1967.

“During his competitive years, Dietz won forty-five United States and thirty-seven Canadian National Championship titles. He was a member of almost every U.S. National Team from 1967 to 1983, including U.S. Olympic entries in 1972, 1976 and 1980.”⁶⁸²⁹

⁶⁸²⁸ Bill Bruns & Co Rentmeester, photographer, *The Single Sculler’s Search for Pain*, *Life Magazine*, April 14, 1972, p. 70

⁶⁸²⁹ www.umassathletics.cstv.com



Ted Nash Collection

In 1971, he set what was then a course record time of 7:02.43 at the Internationale Rotsee Regatta.⁶⁸³⁰

All his life, Jimmy Dietz has done everything to the max. He has rowed hard, trained hard, raced hard and talked hard.

⁶⁸³⁰ See Chapter 74.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Dominic Keller

Jim Dietz setting the new course record of 7:02.43 on the Rotsee in 1971

His description of all things rowing has always been *Kernschlag*.

Dietz: “The starter says, ‘Partez!’ and – bam! – you’re off. You explode. All the frustrations, all the time that you’ve put into training, it just comes out!

“The first 400 meters is like an all-out sprint. Then you settle into your stroke until you hit the last 500 meters, when you explode again. The 500-meters-to-go buoy is always a different color, and you just watch it moving away. Then you hit 250 meters, and you forget about everything. It’s all out, everything you have. If I’m ahead in the last quarter, nobody in the world’s going to beat me.”⁶⁸³¹

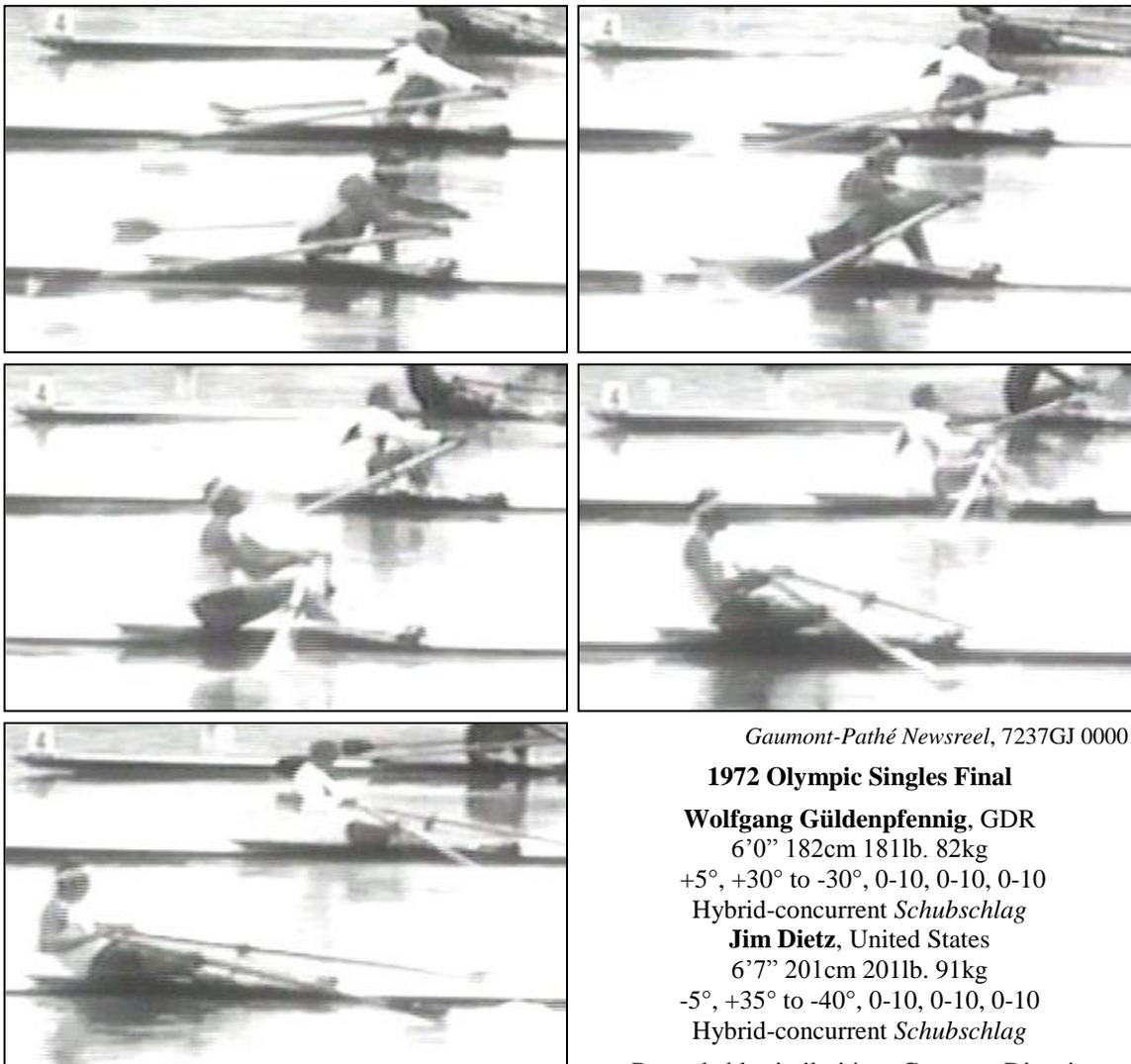
⁶⁸³¹ Bruns & Rentmeester, op cit, p. 73

Technique

In his competitive days, the most noticeable aspect of Dietz’s sculling technique was his exaggerated and violent head lift on top of his near-maximal 75° arc of body swing, but closer inspection of Jim Dietz’s technique surprisingly reveals the Classical concurrent *Schubschlag* force application associated with the German Democratic Republic. The aggressiveness and enthusiasm which marked everything Dietz said and did on and off the water was evenly and skillfully applied all the way to the end of each pullthrough.

In 1972 at Oberschleißheim, Dietz lined up in the Olympic final next to GDR sculler **Wolfgang Güldenpfennig**, 6’0” 182cm

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Gaumont-Pathé Newsreel, 7237GJ 00001

1972 Olympic Singles Final

Wolfgang Gülденpfennig, GDR

6'0" 182cm 181lb. 82kg

+5°, +30° to -30°, 0-10, 0-10, 0-10

Hybrid-concurrent *Schubschlag*

Jim Dietz, United States

6'7" 201cm 201lb. 91kg

-5°, +35° to -40°, 0-10, 0-10, 0-10

Hybrid-concurrent *Schubschlag*

Remarkable similarities. Compare Dietz in Frame 3 to Gülденpfennig in Frame 4.

181lb. 82kg, and the similarities were startling.

As is shown in the newsreel frames on this page, the very tall Dietz did not compress his long legs fully and instead relied on his long arms and extra body angle with a distinctive low head position to get his extraordinary length at the entry. In this, he closely resembled 6'5" 196cm, 227lb. 103kg **Stuart Mackenzie** from a decade

earlier,⁶⁸³² but whereas Mackenzie's pullthrough had been hybrid-concurrent with emphasis on initial leg drive, Dietz's pullthrough was fully concurrent with a balanced application of legs, back and arms.

At mid-drive, Dietz closely resembled Gülденpfennig in every way except for the slightly higher raising of the chin. Both were fully committed from fingers to toes.

⁶⁸³² See Chapter 86.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

Note Dietz in Frame 3 and Gldenpfennig in Frame 4.

These two scullers moved boats in the same manner, the same basic concurrent *Schubschlag* technique originated by **Ned Hanlan** and used by the great scullers of every era ever since, from **Kelly, Sr.** and **Beresford** to **Ivanov** and **Spero** to **Van Blom** and **McKibbon**.

Dietz: "I do remember 'everyone' telling me that I was way too violent in my sculling, but having read and studied **Fairbairn, Adam** and **Klavora** and having talked at length with **Rosenberg**, I always felt that I had good feel for the water.

"I could feel the acceleration and got excited by it."⁶⁸³³

Not surprisingly, Jim Dietz's force curve is a near-perfect parabola.



Author

Jim Dietz
Near-perfect parabola

Unlike the 1972 Vesper/Union Olympic coxless-four and their coach, Dietrich Rose,⁶⁸³⁴ who carefully analyzed and slavishly and self-consciously copied GDR technique, Jim Dietz seemed to row on pure talent and enthusiasm, but intellectually, intuitively and subconsciously as well, he

⁶⁸³³ Dietz, personal correspondence, 2006

⁶⁸³⁴ See Chapter 122.

came to basically the same boat-moving conclusions.

Despite his signature exaggerated head lift and macho talk of explosions, Jim Dietz was a very elegant and effective sculler, and his *Schubschlag* technique set him apart from many of his American sweep and sculling contemporaries who were increasingly embracing Rosenberg-inspired mutant *Kernschlag* Modern Orthodoxy.

In 1967, after he won the Junior World Championship in the single, Jim won the Pan Am Games in the double with **Jim Storm**.⁶⁸³⁵ He rowed four years for British *Schubschlag* Thames Waterman's coach **Ernie Arlett** at Northeastern University in Boston.⁶⁸³⁶ Back in the single, he came fifth at the 1972 Olympics, second at the 1974 World Championships, first in the 1975 Pan Ams and third in the 1979 Pan Ams. In 1983, he came second in the Pan Am double with Californian **Curtis Fleming**.⁶⁸³⁷

He was still competing in 1984, losing in the U.S. Single Trials and then in the Double and Quad Trials with **Tiff Wood**,⁶⁸³⁸ to be discussed shortly.

Gregg Stone

Gregg Stone along with Tiff Wood are remembered as exemplifying a significant segment of American rowing and sculling in the post-Parker/Rosenberg era. Both were converted New England prep school and Harry Parker-trained Harvard sweep rowers.

A quick look at Stone's technique seems to disclose Modern Orthodox hybrid-concurrent body mechanics and explosive segmented mutant *Kernschlag* force application, but the truth was much more nuanced.

⁶⁸³⁵ See Chapter 87.

⁶⁸³⁶ See Chapter 116.

⁶⁸³⁷ See Chapter 142.

⁶⁸³⁸ See Chapter 140.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

Robert Gregg Stone III is the son of Bob Stone, captain and 4-man of the Eastern and Western Sprint Champion 1947 Harvard crew.⁶⁸³⁹ Gregg had been bow-seat and Tiff had been 6 on the 1972 Thames Cup Champion Harvard Freshman crew that included four future National Team members,⁶⁸⁴⁰ but it seemed that all the attention in those days went to **Dick Cashin** and **Al Shealy**, who were destined to become World Champions just two years later as Harvard juniors.⁶⁸⁴¹ Perhaps that encouraged both Stone and Wood to try that much harder for their own share of rowing glory. In the years after graduation, both eventually turned to single sculling after frustrating experiences with National Sweep Selection Camps.

Stone: “Tiff never made much headway at the National Camps despite being a great seat racer, and I wasn’t even invited in 1974. Small wonder! I was in the Harvard Jayvee.

“After that summer, Al Rosenberg had pretty much made up his mind on the program to build to Montréal [in 1976], and it didn’t include Tiff.”⁶⁸⁴²

The **Rude and Smooth** Harvard crews of this era⁶⁸⁴³ were known for incredible aggressiveness when it came to technique, training and racing, and no one had a more competitive attitude than Gregg Stone.

Stone: “I was not an extraordinary athlete. I love athletics and competition, but that is as far as it goes.

“I remember in 1979 one of the National Team coaches commenting after some erg test that I had them stumped – I didn’t row well, my ergs were poor, the physiological data wasn’t great, and yet I won.

“I guess there still is some mystery to rowing.”⁶⁸⁴⁴

After he graduated from Harvard in 1975, Stone’s determination and strength of will helped him become America’s top single sculler from 1977 through 1979.

Stone: “In regards to rowing style, I consider myself practical as opposed to doctrinaire. Obviously I was influenced by the rowing at Harvard. As you have noted, some elements of the Harvard Style in our era reflected Al Shealy’s rowing style and later that of Rosenberg, who reinforced what Al’s father had taught him.”⁶⁸⁴⁵

“After graduation, I was loosely coached by **Ernie Arlett**, the first U.S. Men’s Sculling Coach. Ernie was less interested in angles and application – at Northeastern he had coached Jim Dietz and Cal Coffey,⁶⁸⁴⁶ two contrasting styles – and more in watermanship. This meant a clean finish, blades square until well out, moderately fast away, control of the slide and a catch with fingers, not with arms or shoulders (or back).

Larry Klecatsky

Stone: “In the fall of ‘76, I was beginning law school and needed rowing for an outlet. **Sy Cromwell**⁶⁸⁴⁷ encouraged me to emulate **Larry Klecatsky**, the champion lightweight single sculler. He noted that Larry, like me, had no visible muscle and went pretty fast with an ultra long stroke. With my three-inch and twenty-pound advantage over Larry, he thought I could beat him and therefore beat most of the U.S. scullers of the time.”⁶⁸⁴⁸

⁶⁸³⁹ See Chapter 63.

⁶⁸⁴⁰ See Chapter 104.

⁶⁸⁴¹ See Chapter 111.

⁶⁸⁴² Stone, personal correspondence, 2008

⁶⁸⁴³ See Chapter 114.

⁶⁸⁴⁴ Stone, op cit.

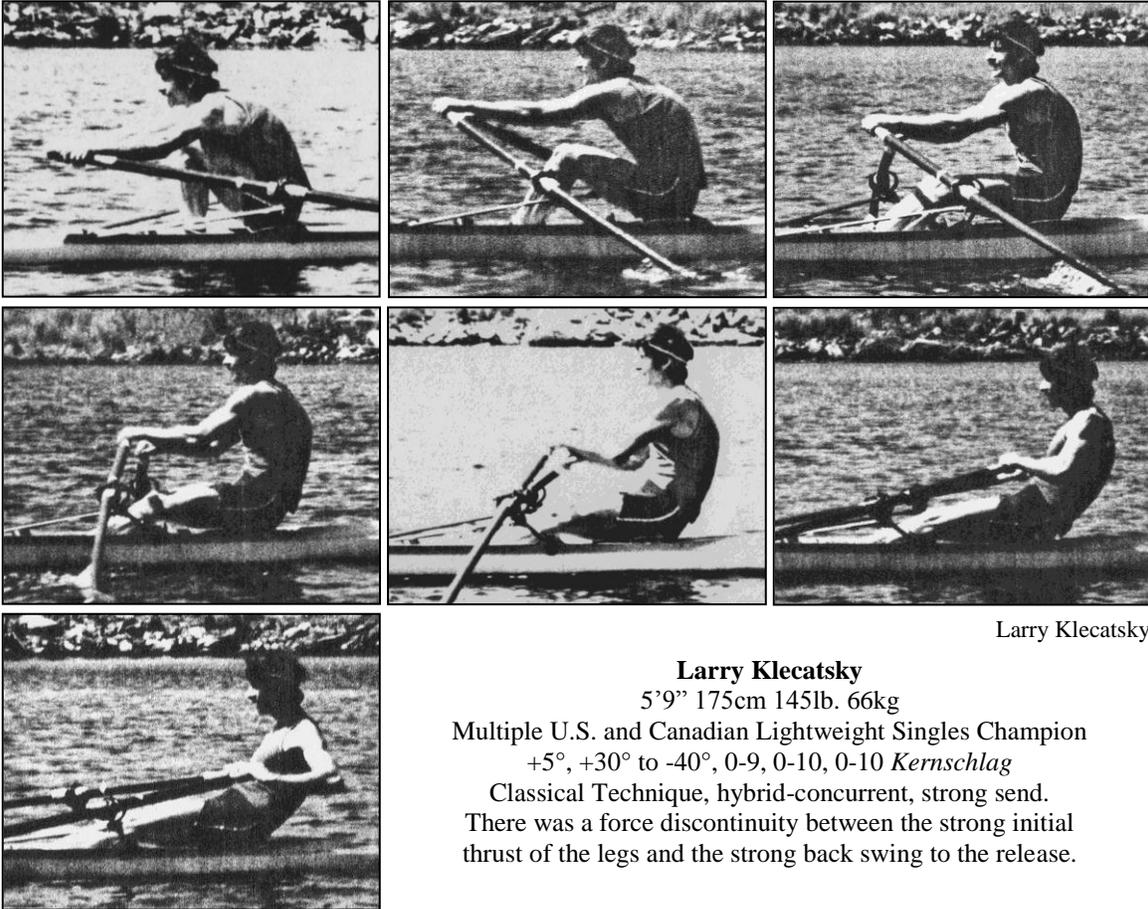
⁶⁸⁴⁵ See Chapter 104.

⁶⁸⁴⁶ See Chapter 116.

⁶⁸⁴⁷ See Chapter 87.

⁶⁸⁴⁸ Stone, op cit.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Larry Klecatsky

Larry Klecatsky

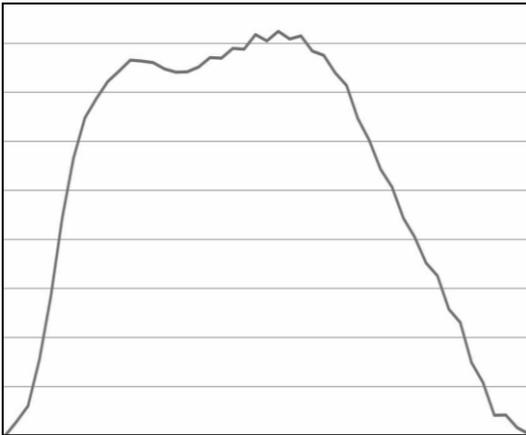
5'9" 175cm 145lb. 66kg

Multiple U.S. and Canadian Lightweight Singles Champion

+5°, +30° to -40°, 0-9, 0-10, 0-10 *Kernschlag*

Classical Technique, hybrid-concurrent, strong send.

There was a force discontinuity between the strong initial thrust of the legs and the strong back swing to the release.



Author

Larry Klecatsky

Near-parabola with a notch

Dr. Larry Klecatsky, an emergency room physician, member of the New York

Athletic Club and many-times National Lightweight Singles Champion, was a teammate and frequent double partner of Jim Dietz. The two rowed very much the same, with a 70+° back arc.

Larry began his rowing at South St. Paul High School in Minnesota in a double with his brother, Tom. He began winning the U.S. and Canadian lightweight singles titles in 1968 at the age of 27 after completing medical school and internship. Despite his late start, he would go on to set the record for the most career victories in the history of the U.S. Nationals and Canadian Henley.

Klecatsky: "An article counted sixty-four U.S. Gold Medals. I have sixty-one in a shoe box. They said I also won sixty-six

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Larry Klecatsky

1969 United States Lightweight Singles Final

Schuylkill River, Philadelphia

Larry Klecatsky (Lane 6) on the way to his second consecutive national title.

On the dogleg course, he is being pressed by 20-year-old newcomer **Bill Belden** in Lane 3.

Golds in St. Catharines. I found sixty-four in the shoe box.”⁶⁸⁴⁹

He would also represent the U.S. at the 1976 Olympics in the heavyweight double with his closest lightweight competitor, **Bill Belden**.

Belden: “Larry has won more Nationals than anyone ever! He is amazing. I don’t think that with today’s structured programs, you will ever again see the numbers of National Championships by individuals

from the ‘60s, ‘70s and ‘80s. Club rowing was such a blast. Grab your oars, get in the boat and pull hard. How much better could it get?

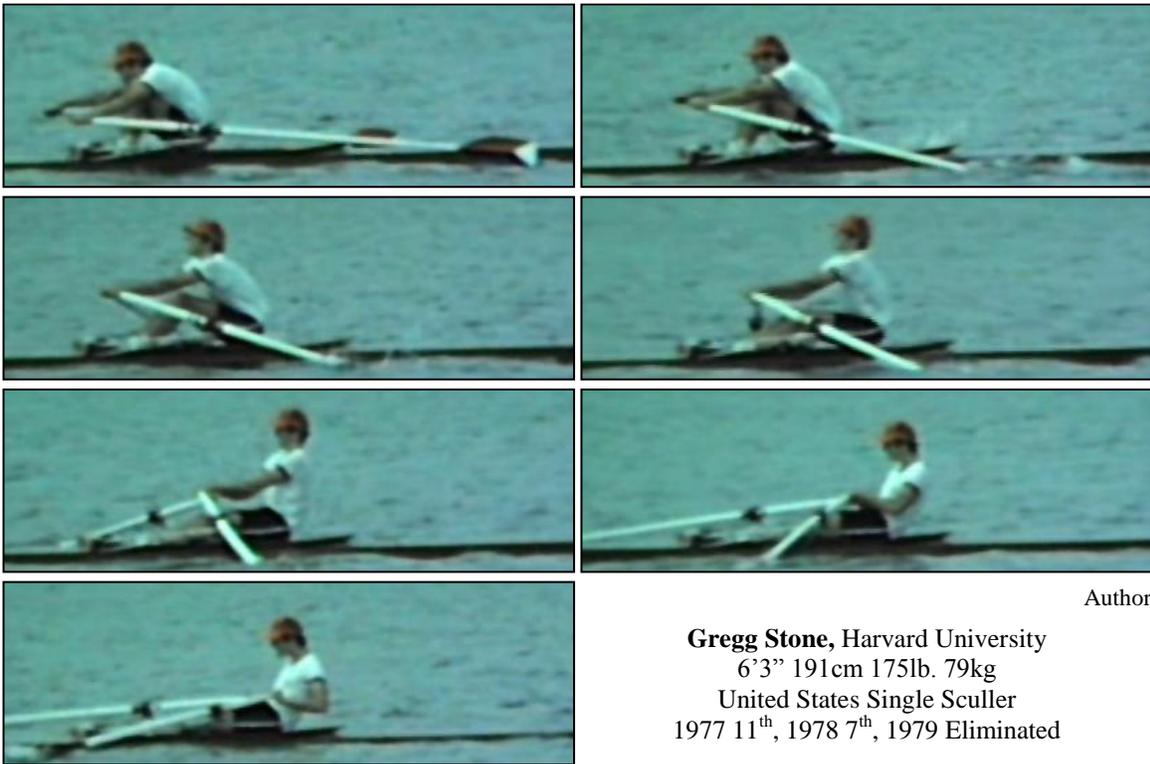
“And Larry was the best of all!”⁶⁸⁵⁰

Klecatsky: “International rowing gave an aging late bloomer a chance to extend his career. I made fourteen U.S. teams, won twelve international medals, including a Pan

⁶⁸⁴⁹ Klecatsky, personal correspondence, 2010

⁶⁸⁵⁰ Belden, personal correspondence, 2010

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Author

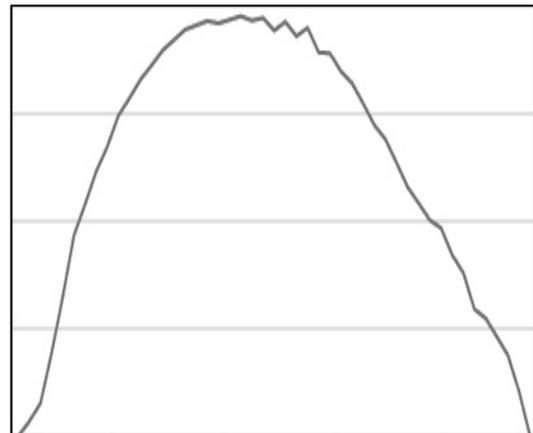
Gregg Stone, Harvard University
 6'3" 191cm 175lb. 79kg
 United States Single Sculler
 1977 11th, 1978 7th, 1979 Eliminated

Force application was *Schubchlag*, mutating to borderline *Kernschlag* under intense pressure.
 -10°, +40° to -20°, 0-6, 0-9, 0-10 Classical Technique, similar to Jim Dietz
 Catch dominated by legs, then back aggressively heaving over to a ferryman's finish.
 Technique seems to have been an amalgam of Classical Technique and Harvard aggressiveness.



Philip Mallory

Greg Stone, steady state
Schubschlag, close to a parabola.



Philip Mallory

Greg Stone, full pressure
 Mild *Kernschlag*, still close to a parabola.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

Am Silver and a World Silver and Bronze.”⁶⁸⁵¹

Your author had the privilege of rowing against Larry Klecatsky several times, though I never saw him after the first few strokes of any of our 2,000 meter races. I am pleased to have reconnected with him during the writing of this book.

Larry and his wife now live in South Carolina.



Igor Belakovsky

Stone: “I tried to follow Sy Cromwell’s advice about Klecatsky’s technique, and Larry was pretty helpful, too, allowing me to go down to NYAC that Thanksgiving and train with him.”⁶⁸⁵²

“I really didn’t find my speed until the summer of 1977. Tiff and I were training in a double, in theory for the Worlds, but we went to Henley and were smoked in the final by **Baillieu and Hart**.”⁶⁸⁵³

“Back in the U.S., we each returned to singles, just for the experience. As soon as I got in my single, about a week before the Trials, I knew something was different and better. A few 500s confirmed that I had the speed to beat Jim Dietz. I didn’t know why it happened – I still don’t – and I was very afraid the magic would leave before the Trials . . . but it didn’t. I throttled way back in the heats and semis before opening up in the finals and walking by Jim in the third 500. Obviously, the work in the double had tightened my style.

“If we had been in a national system, maybe I could have done all my training in a double and not slowed by the time of the Worlds each year, like I seemed to.

Stone père et fille

“But we were not, and in a national system, some higher performer on the erg would have been selected ahead of me anyway.”⁶⁸⁵⁴

Stone’s Technique

Looking at Gregg Stone row, the impression was similar to that of Dietz and Klecatsky, explosive catches that represented a rejection of the tradition of American scullers from Ned Ten Eyck to Don Spero in favor of what the Rosenberg Style had mutated into. But like with Jim Dietz, appearances were deceiving.

Stone’s force curve was and still is a near parabola to the release, *Schubschlag* at steady state, fading barely into borderline *Kernschlag* during power-10s.

Stone: “The success of the CRASH-B eights,⁶⁸⁵⁵ which I have organized, and general comments throughout those years were that I had a nice rhythm and was easy to follow as a stroke.”⁶⁸⁵⁶

⁶⁸⁵¹ Klecatsky, op cit.

⁶⁸⁵² Stone, op cit.

⁶⁸⁵³ See Chapter 130.

⁶⁸⁵⁴ Stone, op cit.

⁶⁸⁵⁵ Boston-based all-star crews.

⁶⁸⁵⁶ Stone, op cit.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

Stone's record in the single at the World Championships was eleventh in 1977 and ninth in 1978. He failed to advance in 1979. With Tiff Wood, Bruce Beall and Al Shealy, Gregg won a Bronze Medal in the quad at the 1979 Pan Am Games.

Here the plot thickens as we look forward to the 1984 Olympics on Lake Casitas in Southern California:

Stone: "In 1977 or '78, I received a letter from **Joe Bouscaren**⁶⁸⁵⁷ on the Yale crew. I had never met Joe. Essentially, the letter noted that [Yale Coach] **Tony Johnson**⁶⁸⁵⁸ had told Joe and his teammate, **John Biglow**, that if *I* could win in sculling, so could they. I encouraged them both, as well as a number of others, to convert.

"I like to think that by example, direct encouragement, and by organizing the CRASH-B eights, I helped lead a number of sweep oarsmen, including Tiff, Biggie and Suds,⁶⁸⁵⁹ to discover the joys of moving boats alone."⁶⁸⁶⁰

Today Gregg is married to the former World-Medalist double sculler **Lisa Hansen** of Long Beach Rowing Association.⁶⁸⁶¹

He still competes worldwide in masters' singles competitions, while she coaches crew at the Winsor School in Boston. They have a son, **Robbie**, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather by rowing for Harvard, and a daughter, **Gevvie**,



www.boston.com

Robbie, Gevvie, Gregg and Lisa Stone

NCAA Champion for Princeton, stroke of the 2006 World Champion U-23 eight, and climbing the ranks of American single scullers while attending medical school.

Bill Belden

Tiff Wood: "In 1980, there was a realization that nobody was going to do particularly well in the single,⁶⁸⁶² so everybody starting in the fall of '79 was focused on the team boats, and we had Camp Quad get-togethers in October and November. Everyone was there."⁶⁸⁶³

With many U.S. heavyweight scullers pointing toward other events, the way was left open at the 1980 Olympic Singles Trials for Larry Klecatsky's great rival, 1974 and 1979 World *Lightweight* Singles Champion **Bill Belden**, who beginning in high school in the late 1960s had rowed for several clubs and for LaSalle College along Boathouse Row in Philadelphia.

As his opponents discovered when he won the 1980 Heavyweight Olympic Singles

⁶⁸⁵⁷ See Chapter 140.

⁶⁸⁵⁸ See Chapter 110.

⁶⁸⁵⁹ **Andy Sudduth**, Harvard '86, would win Silver in the single at the 1985 World Championships. See Chapter 142.

⁶⁸⁶⁰ Stone, op cit.

⁶⁸⁶¹ See Chapter 127.

⁶⁸⁶² This was the era of Karppinen and Kolbe. See Chapter 125.

⁶⁸⁶³ Wood, personal conversation, 2009

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

Trials, Belden was a formidable competitor. He and Klecatsky had had epic battles in the lightweight single at the U.S. Nationals each year during the '70s.

Belden and Klecatsky

Klecatsky: "I raced Bill for the first time in 1968 during one of the Schuylkill Navy match race regattas. It was the best and worst kind of race for scullers, a 'rat race,' stroke for stroke, no letting up. Bill became my nemesis. I won that first race in my hardest row of the year.

"The Navy had stationed me in New York, and I was rowing for NYAC. Every day I had thoughts of Bill down on the Schuylkill River, what he was doing, what I needed to do. Workouts with others or races with others were 'days off' for me. I worked hardest with myself, i.e. against Belden in abstraction.

"Our personal interactions were few. I knew by sight his car, his boat, his wife, his family. I knew he could see the same of me as we arrived at regatta sites. We were amateurs. We had careers and families but were welded together in a mission to measure ourselves, ninety miles apart. Success or failure required each other.

"Almost without exception, Belden or Klecatsky won the lightweight single at the Nationals. We also met in the quarter-mile dash, in doubles and in quads. The only place I could 'own him' was in Canada or in fall head races. He even came to New York and led me down 'my course,' and I would return the favor in Philly."⁶⁸⁶⁴

Belden: "I thought of Larry obsessively, trying to find the right strategy or workouts to get over the top. His picture was on my fridge every winter to keep me from getting too big.

"I first beat Larry in 1970, and then chased him for four more years before I

finally caught him again at the 1974 Trials."⁶⁸⁶⁵

Klecatsky: "Bill and I always had great battles at the Nationals. When he won the Trials in 1974 by a little bit and then went on to win the Worlds by *a lot*, I started thinking about how I had been pretty close to him . . . and . . ."⁶⁸⁶⁶

Belden: "In 1976, Larry and I came in eighth in the heavy double at the Montréal Olympics."⁶⁸⁶⁷

Klecatsky: "That was a reflective year for me. I beat Dietz twice before the Olympic Singles Trials in May, but Jim's power and skill were too much in the final, which he won. My consolation was twofold: Belden had not made the Olympic Trials final while I had, and we finally talked and created an unbeatable double by American standards, perhaps better than either of us with Dietz.

"We won the 1976 U.S. Olympic Doubles Trials.

"Belden and Klecatsky met every other day in Princeton, rowing in the PM and following AM, and then returning to work respectively in Philly and New York. We used our own equipment (a U.S.-built Pocock), no coaching, some money for pizza and a dorm room (*hot!*) at Princeton. Both of us returned immediately to our respective jobs and families after the Olympic finals in Montréal.

"I won the Trials for the Lightweight Singles World Championship that year after the Olympics. Bill did not enter. In Austria I got fourth in a rented heavyweight boat.

"Two days after I returned were the heats for five events at the Nationals in Philly. Belden won the lightweight singles final. I settled for two Golds in the doubles and one in the quad.

⁶⁸⁶⁴ Klecatsky, personal conversation, 2010

⁶⁸⁶⁵ Belden, op cit.

⁶⁸⁶⁶ Klecatsky, op cit.

⁶⁸⁶⁷ Belden, op cit.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

“I beat Dietz in the November Trials to represent the U.S. in an invitational regatta in Brazil, and I won the head races in the single and with Dietz in the double.

“Bill and I teamed together to win Nationals in the Double and Quad in 1977 when he started rowing for the NYAC.”⁶⁸⁶⁸

Belden: “In 1977, Jim Dietz and I came in fifth in the heavy double at the Worlds.

“In 1979, I won my second World Championship in the lightweight single and came in seventh in the double with Jim.

“In 1980, I won the Nationals and came in second at the Worlds in the lightweight single. In the heavyweight single I won the Olympic Trials and lost to Phil Monkton of Canada in the heats for the Diamond Sculls after having a great start called back.

“In 1984, I was back in Montréal eight years after the Olympics at the Lightweight Worlds in a double with Larry. We got fourth.”⁶⁸⁶⁹

Klecatsky: “Back in 1968, I had been the old guy and Bill was young. By 1984 we were both ‘seasoned.’ We won our heat, beating the World Champion Italian crew ‘big’ in heavy wind. A strong tail wind in final had us fourth.”⁶⁸⁷⁰

Belden: “I had a great fall season after the Worlds in ‘84, won the Head of the Schuylkill, beating Larry in a head race (the only time in my career), but then I hurt my



Larry Klecatsky

1981 United States Champion Lightweight Double

Klecatsky and Belden
Oak Ridge, Tennessee

back in early 1985, and it was time to start spending time with my family.

“Altogether I had thirty-two National Championships with Undine, Fairmount and NYAC, thirteen National Teams, seven FISA medals. I had lots and lots of help along the way, especially from my wife Cathy.”⁶⁸⁷¹

Klecatsky: “Belden and Klecatsky had no telephone visits, letters, cards, parties over the years, yet I felt as close to Bill as any friend or professional colleague, and I still do. Cathy, his wife, and their kids were a family admired at arm’s length.

“There was one telephone call I do recall. Bill was having back issues with radiculitis (pain and tingling down the leg). He possibly knew I had similar symptoms, and he also knew I was a physician. I often

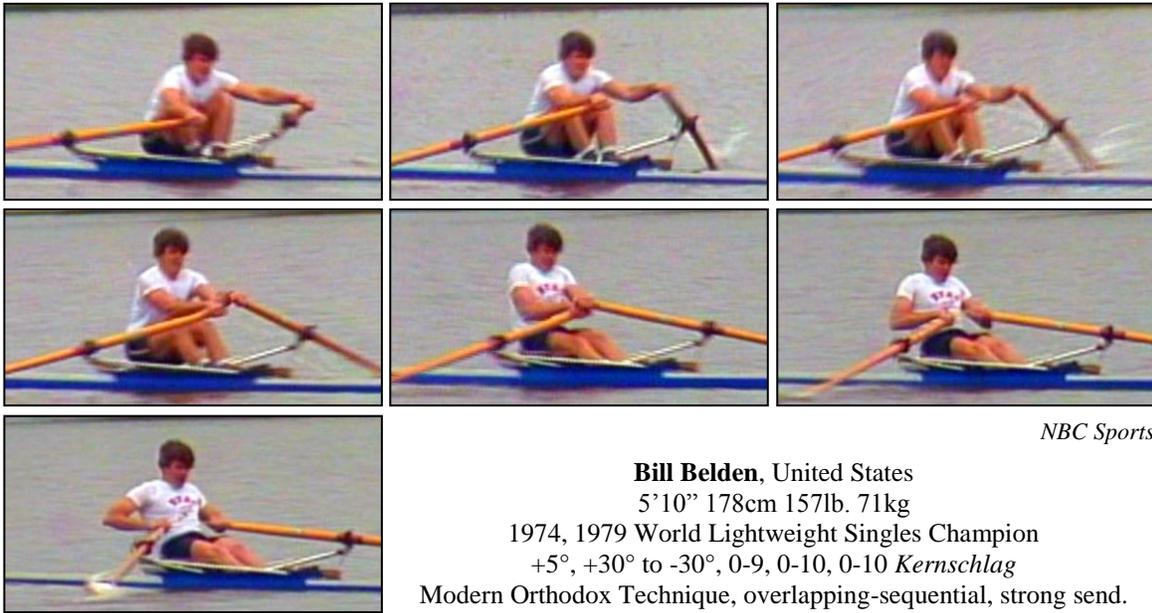
⁶⁸⁶⁸ Klecatsky, personal correspondence, 2010

⁶⁸⁶⁹ Belden, op cit.

⁶⁸⁷⁰ Klecatsky, op cit.

⁶⁸⁷¹ Belden, op cit.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



NBC Sports

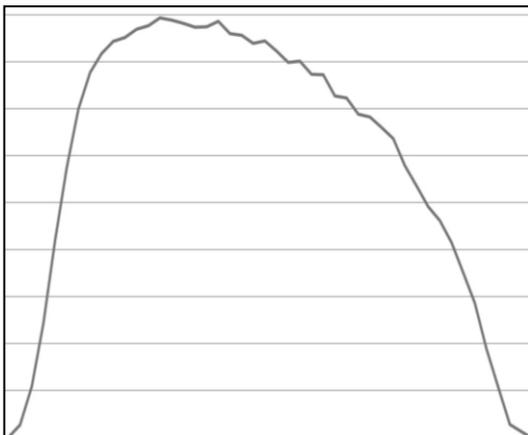
Bill Belden, United States

5'10" 178cm 157lb. 71kg

1974, 1979 World Lightweight Singles Champion

+5°, +30° to -30°, 0-9, 0-10, 0-10 *Kernschlag*

Modern Orthodox Technique, overlapping-sequential, strong send.



Author

Bill Belden

Mild *Kernschlag*, close to a parabola

served as team physician on early low budget U.S. Teams.

"I was always conflicted when asked for medical advice, up against the masochistic value of 'no pain, no gain' or 'pain is weakness leaving the body.' I know herniated discs are major (I have four), but I found it impossible to prescribe surgery

and/or limited rowing. Bill found a 'real doctor' after our conversation."⁶⁸⁷²

Belden: "I listened to Larry's advice on my back and got a few more good years out of it as a result.

"There is still not a day that goes by that I don't think of Larry, and that is for forty-two years and counting . . ."

Klecatsky: "A word about lightweights. Insecurity, lack of respect, lack of recognition, dissatisfaction, missing meals, standing in line to weigh in are all motivators. We are 'lightweights', too small, too short, too weak, no coaching, left-over equipment, no funding, no international forum, no second or third place medals, can't stand on a podium even if you win the World Championship,⁶⁸⁷³ the quintessential underdogs.

"All this said, I think together we raised the bar in U.S. sculling for both lightweights and heavyweights. We could win both lightweight and heavyweight National

⁶⁸⁷² Klecatsky, op cit.

⁶⁸⁷³ This has been changed in the years since.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Author

Long Beach / Mission Bay / ZLAC Lightweight Coxed-Four

1975 San Diego Crew Classic Champion

Coxswain **Jeanne Bedford**, Stroke **Rod Johnson** (1975 World Silver, Ltwt. Eight), 3 **Author**, 2 **Scott Roop** (1976 World Bronze, Ltwt. Eight, 1980 World Silver, Ltwt. Double, 1981 World Gold, Ltwt. Single), Bow **John Fletcher** (3 U.S. Teams, 1979 World Silver, Ltwt. Eight)

Championships and World heavyweight Team spots.

“Bill, on loan from his family, certainly made me more than I ever expected to be.”⁶⁸⁷⁴

Technique

Belden rowed a very aggressive but smooth *Kernschlag* Philadelphia version of Modern Orthodox Technique. Leg drive was strong enough to momentarily slow the back swing to a crawl, yielding overlapping-sequential body mechanics, the Philadelphia

dipsy-doodle,⁶⁸⁷⁵ but Belden made it work. The arms broke early, and he squeezed hard for a strong send at the finish. He tended to row about 34 strokes per minute down the course. He won the ‘80 Olympic Trials in the first 500 meters.

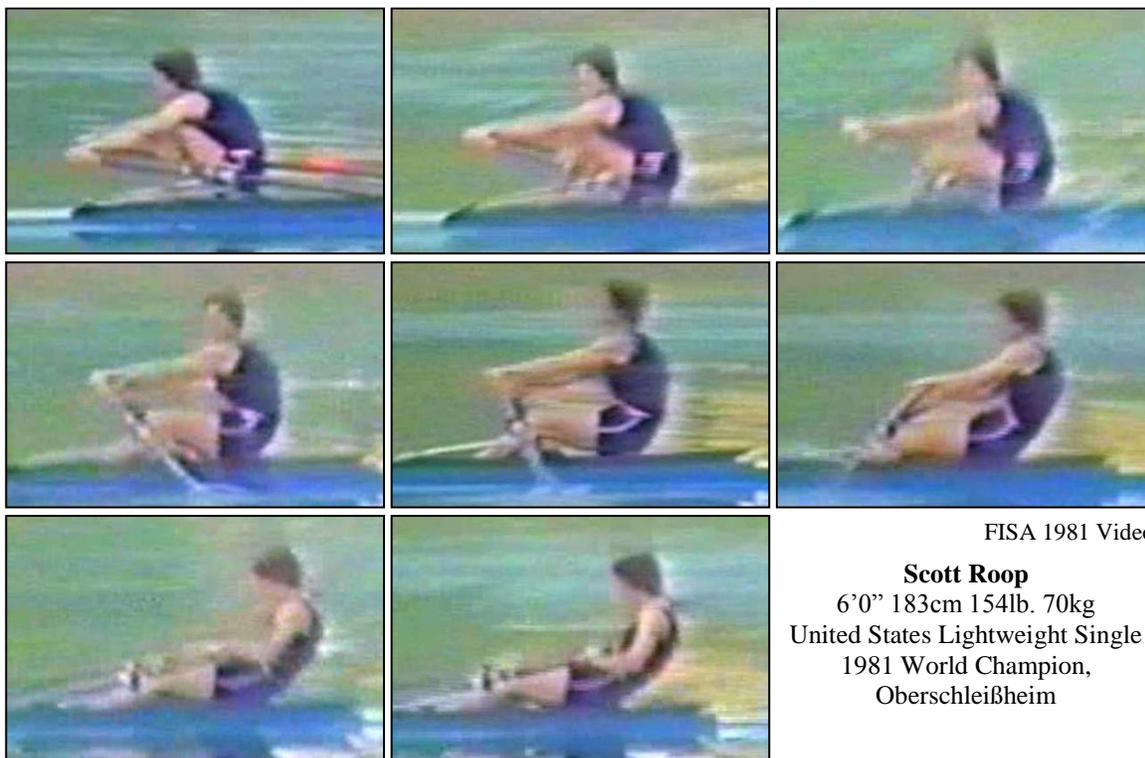
In all of rowing history, only nine single scullers from the United States have ever won a Gold Medal in a year-end FISA championship,⁶⁸⁷⁶ but Bill Belden is one of only two who have ever done it twice.

⁶⁸⁷⁵ See Chapter 107.

⁶⁸⁷⁶ **Frank Greer** in 1904, **John B. Kelly, Sr.** in 1920, **John B. Kelly, Jr.** in 1949, **Don Spero** in 1966, **Bill Belden** in 1974 and 1979, **Scott Roop** in 1981, **Kris Karlson** in 1988 and 1989, **Jamie Koven** and **Sarah Garner** in 1997.

⁶⁸⁷⁴ Klecatsky, op cit.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



FISA 1981 Video

Scott Roop
6'0" 183cm 154lb. 70kg
United States Lightweight Single
1981 World Champion,
Oberschleißheim

+5°, +35° to -40°, 0-9, 0-10, 5-10 *Schubschlag*
Concurrent Classical Technique, late arm draw, strong send.

In his career, he made two Olympic Teams as a heavyweight. He won two World Golds, one Silver and two Bronzes in the Lightweight Single and two more Silvers at the end of his career in the Lightweight Double with **Paul Fuchs** of Detroit Boat Club.

Bill Belden is a life-long friend of mine. I came in second to him by a heartbreaking two feet, half a meter in the 1971 U.S. Lightweight Singles Dash on Hunter Island Lagoon, my only claim to fame, the closest I ever came to the peak of the mountain.

There is no fiercer competitor or finer gentleman in the sport than Bill Belden . . . except maybe our mutual friend Larry Klecatsky.

Bill and his wife now live in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where he is a banker.

Scott Roop

Klecatsky and Belden were only two of several world-class American lightweight single scullers in the 1970s and '80s. The other who won a World Championship was **Scott Roop**, a product of West Side Rowing Club in Buffalo, New York.

Scott was a rower and sculler with concurrent *Schubschlag* Classical Technique. His back described a high 75° arc, using steady leg drive and long layback to send the boat between strokes.

Before returning to Buffalo State University and wrestling for two years, Scott

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Carol McGowan

Scott Roop

spent the year after high school rowing in Long Beach, California, and he rowed right behind me in a composite lightweight four that won the San Diego Crew Classic in 1975. I had already retired from international competition and was coaching the boat from the 3-seat. The three in the boat with me all ended up later medaling in World competition.

In 1976, Scott rowed 7 in the U.S. World Bronze Medal Lightweight Eight behind a Penn sophomore named **Sean Colgan**, who will figure in the following three chapters of this book.

Scott became a member of seven straight U.S. Lightweight Teams, winning World Silver sitting in front of **Larry Klecatsky** in the double in 1980.

In 1981, Roop won his World Championship in the Lightweight Single in Oberschleißheim, stalking **Raimund Haberl** of Austria down the course before driving past him and into the lead with 500 meters to go.

In 1982, his last year representing the U.S., Roop finished second to Haberl. His career medal count stood at one World Gold, two Silvers and one Bronze. He had rowed internationally in singles, doubles, fours and eights.

During his coaching career, Scott coached at Princeton, Temple and Brown Universities, for whom he won the IRA in 1995. He coached Brown graduate **Jamie Koven**⁶⁸⁷⁷ to the Heavyweight World Singles title in 1997.

Koven: “Scott has such a diverse personality. He’s an artist. He totally brings that out on the water. His speeches to us as we’re turning around are like something I’ve never experienced. He always has metaphors and analogies – all the time. He’s really creative. He has such a great time when he’s out on the water. He really makes it fun when you’re working yourself to death.

“He says rowing is our form of art. It’s our way of expressing ourselves.”⁶⁸⁷⁸

Scott is now expressing himself as a full-time artist in Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

John Biglow

Whereas Gregg Stone achieved unremarkable international results in the single, his surprise successor as America’s premier heavyweight sculler, **John Biglow** from Yale University, earned a World Bronze Medal in his debut as the American single sculler in 1981.

Stone: “Biggie was the number four erg in the country, and probably better than that on a weight-corrected basis! I had been unranked. Big difference!”⁶⁸⁷⁹

⁶⁸⁷⁷ See Chapter 149.

⁶⁸⁷⁸ Qtd by Brad Alan Lewis, *Who Is Roop?* *Independent Rowing News*, October 8-21, 1995, pp. 8, 15

⁶⁸⁷⁹ Stone, op cit.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



FISA 1981 Video

John Biglow

U.S. Teammate in 1983 and 1984, **Brad Lewis**:⁶⁸⁸⁰ “Biggie? Great guy! I liked him a lot. I still do. I miss him. I wish I saw him more. He was a total . . .

“On the water, he was really something. He had a pain threshold that was off the charts. He could really push himself . . . *hard!* That was really impressive. It’s always scary when you come up against a guy who you realize is tougher than you are.”⁶⁸⁸¹

John’s Yale and U.S. teammate, **Joe Bouscaren**: “He’s an aerobic machine.”⁶⁸⁸²

Biglow’s Coaches

Biglow had been introduced to the sport at Lakeside School in Seattle, Washington. He was well schooled in the Thames

Waterman’s Stroke by **Frank Cunningham**,⁶⁸⁸³ a friend and disciple of George Pocock.

Cunningham: “What I tried to teach my boys at Lakeside was how to protect their backs, to finish the stroke with the arms, back and legs together and how to recover their balance as they changed direction [ferryman’s finish]. Most importantly, in the light of the modern ideas of bladework, I demanded that they listen to their blades at catch and release.”⁶⁸⁸⁴

But Biglow’s international sculling career came on the heels of his four years rowing in some of Yale University’s finest recent eights.

John’s Freshman Coach, **Buzz Congram**, taught him Classical concurrent *Schubschlag*. The sole variation in fundamental technique from that of Frank Cunningham would have been the elimination of the ferryman’s finish.

Cunningham: “Unfortunately for John, he was always a ready listener, and he had great respect for his coaches over the years. He listened too much and so went in many different directions!

“It is too bad that there was such a large disparity in the various interpretations of the stroke [East and West] during his racing career.”⁶⁸⁸⁵

In fact, there was little fundamental disagreement between John’s Seattle sculling coaches and his Yale sweep coaches. The Yale Varsity Coach at that time was **Tony Johnson**, a former Syracuse rower with a firm grounding in the Conibear Stroke,⁶⁸⁸⁶ and, like Cunningham, he considered George Pocock a mentor and friend.

⁶⁸⁸⁰ See Chapter 140.

⁶⁸⁸¹ Lewis, personal conversation, 2009

⁶⁸⁸² Qtd. by Halberstam, p. 43

⁶⁸⁸³ See Chapter 63.

⁶⁸⁸⁴ Cunningham, personal correspondence, 2008

⁶⁸⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁸⁶ See Chapter 46.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

Biglow: “Tony talked about ‘sculling the boat.’”⁶⁸⁸⁷

When it came to force application, Johnson was definitely a sensitive coach, a *Schubschlag* coach and a small-boat specialist.⁶⁸⁸⁸

Biglow: “During my junior and senior years at Yale, Tony was nice enough to let me row in the fall in the single and race in the Head of the Charles. In my junior year I got thirteenth, and in my senior year I got eighteenth.

“In that race my senior year, and I remember where it was, I was rowing past Newell Boathouse, and there was a rower coming up on me. I sort of knew who he was. I believe it was **John Brock**, Harvard ‘77, older than I was, and he was coming up on me.

“Then for about ten strokes my boat felt good. It felt light, and I moved out on him . . . but then I lost it, and he came back up and passed me.

“I wondered if that was equivalent to swing in an eight . . .

“Swing can be ephemeral. As much as I rowed through college and afterward, I wouldn’t say that I felt swing in an eight more than, I don’t know, a dozen times. It was a great feeling. I loved it, but it was very elusive.

“In that singles race in my senior year, I think I had a hint of what was to come. I never mentioned it to anyone. I just wondered, ‘Maybe there is something here worth pursuing.’”⁶⁸⁸⁹

The Eastern coach to whom Cunningham was actually referring was not so much Yale’s Tony Johnson but rather Harvard’s **Harry Parker**, the U.S. Men’s Sweep Coach leading up to the 1980

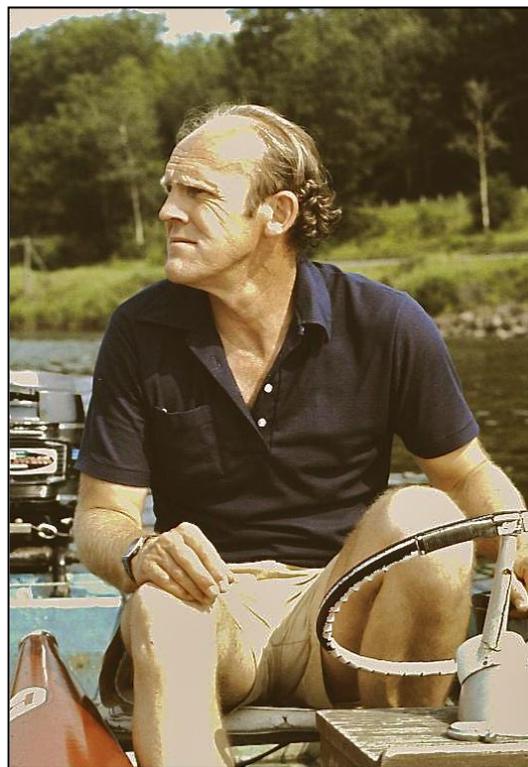
Olympics and the U.S. Men’s Sculling Coach leading up to the 1984 Olympics.

Cunningham: “With John, he’d be rowing pretty well, and then he’d go back and row for Harry and lose it all.”⁶⁸⁹⁰

In the coming years, Harry would end up having a profound impact on John’s rowing.

Harry Parker and the Olympics

There are more pages in this book devoted to Harry Parker, as athlete and coach, than to any other individual. As I write this, it is safe to say that Harry has had the longest, the most successful and the most influential career of any American coach in history.



Carol McGowan

Harry

⁶⁸⁸⁷ Biglow, personal conversation, 2008

⁶⁸⁸⁸ See Chapter 110.

⁶⁸⁸⁹ Biglow, op cit.

⁶⁸⁹⁰ Cunningham, op cit.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

It seems that Harry has always been fixated on the Olympics. His mentor had been **Joe Burk**, who had missed his own chance at Olympic glory in **1940** thanks to World War II.⁶⁸⁹¹

Harry rowed on a world-best Penn eight for Joe in 1955,⁶⁸⁹² but by the time that the Olympic year of **1956** rolled around, several crews had surpassed them.

With Joe coaching him, Harry represented the U.S. in the single at the **1960** Olympics, but he finished just out of the medals after a yeoman effort.⁶⁸⁹³

In **1964**, Harry coached an undefeated Harvard crew only to be the first top U.S. collegiate crew in forty-four years to lose the Olympic Trials. They lost to a club eight, Vesper Boat Club, which went on to win the Gold Medal in Tokyo.⁶⁸⁹⁴

In **1968**, Harvard won the Trials but was felled by illness and other factors in Mexico City.⁶⁸⁹⁵

In **1972**, Harry was the U.S. Sweep Camp coach. He selected a composite crew that won a superb Silver Medal.⁶⁸⁹⁶

In the ensuing years, in order to allow Harry to properly focus on his first responsibility, his Harvard crews, the U.S. federation chose to rotate the head men's coaching job among caretaker coaches with the unstated but implicit understanding that Harry would resume the top spot for the **1976** Olympics.

Then one of those caretaker coaches, **Allen Rosenberg**, won the World Eights Championship for the U.S. in 1974,⁶⁸⁹⁷ and all bets were off. Rosenberg was offered a year-round U.S. head coaching position to run through Montréal.

Harry was crushed, but he accepted a lesser job, the job as *women's* head sweep coach. Rather than brooding, he promptly elevated American women's rowing from oblivion to Olympian heights, winning World Silver in 1975 and Olympic Bronze in 1976.⁶⁸⁹⁸

To many, this will go down as Harry's greatest and most lasting contribution to rowing history.

Order was soon restored, however, as the **1980** Olympics approached with the women placed in good hands⁶⁸⁹⁹ and Harry again the U.S. men's head coach.

Through all of this, in between Olympics from 1963 onwards, Harry had been coaching the Harvard crew. He became a phenomenon, a celebrity, an institution, a religion. Virtually every year for decades he produced legends, perennial champion crews known for their innovative techniques and training, admired and lauded by most, feared by all, copied by many.

Harry Parker became simply Harry, an oracle to be interpreted, a god to be worshipped, revered and feared.

As 1980 approached, Yale had not beaten Harvard in their annual four-miler since Harry had taken over seventeen years before. Even the great Yale eights of 1978 and 1979 with John Biglow aboard were unable to beat Harvard when it counted, which for both crews was the four-miler in New London.

To the American rowing community, but to John Biglow especially, Harry Parker loomed very large indeed.

1979

Biglow: "I went through the 1979 National Team Camp with Harry in Dartmouth before my senior year at Yale.

⁶⁸⁹¹ See Chapter 58.

⁶⁸⁹² See Chapters 65 and 67.

⁶⁸⁹³ See Chapter 66.

⁶⁸⁹⁴ See Chapter 107.

⁶⁸⁹⁵ See Chapter 102.

⁶⁸⁹⁶ See Chapter 103.

⁶⁸⁹⁷ See Chapter 111.

⁶⁸⁹⁸ See Chapter 126.

⁶⁸⁹⁹ See Chapter 148.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Frinzi/*The Oarsman*

1979 Yale Heavyweight Varsity

Bow **Ted Jaroszewicz** 6'2" 188cm 185lb. 84kg, 2 **Joe Bouscaren** 6'3" 191cm 180lb. 82kg,
3 **Karl Zinsmeister** 6'4" 193cm 193lb. 88kg, 4 **Steve Kiesling** 6'4" 193cm 200lb. 91kg,
5 **Eric Stevens** 6'6" 198cm 215lb. 98kg, 6 **Andy Messer** 6'4" 193cm 215lb. 98kg,
7 **Matt Labine** 6'7" 201cm 213lb. 97kg, Stroke **John Biglow** 6'2" 188cm 190lb. 86kg,
Coxswain **Andy Fisher**

They tested everybody on a Gamut ergometer, and after taking into account our body weights, **Otto Stekl**⁶⁹⁰⁰ and **Tom Woodman**⁶⁹⁰¹ were the top, but I scored third or fourth with **Charlie Altekruise**.⁶⁹⁰² I was surprised because I was new on the National Team scene and I beat a number of other successful rowers.

"After the erg test, Harry put a heart rate monitor on me in the boat. I think he wondered if I was pulling as hard on the water as I had on the erg because my puddle didn't look that big to him. (I was kind of proud of that because it meant I rowed cleanly.)

"Anyway, I made the eight, and then I got very sick. I was never officially diagnosed with mono, but I think that fits.

"I rowed the spare pair and never raced."⁶⁹⁰³

At some point in 1979, Biglow herniated a disk in his back which would nag at him for the rest of his rowing career.

Biglow: "It occurred while I was on a Concept2 erg during a 30 minute piece with

about five minutes to go. An experienced orthopedic surgeon in Boston told me that people sometimes herniate a disc when sitting up in bed or passing the butter. It can be due to chronic misuse, poor posture, or genetic factors like a long torso, and it doesn't become apparent until the last layer of fibrous tissue around the disc ruptures and lets the gel-like cushion out to press on a nerve root."⁶⁹⁰⁴

1980

Biglow: "In 1980, which was my graduating year, we had a good crew at Yale. There were four of us who were trying out for the Olympic Team that year, me, **Eric Stevens**, **Matt Labine** and **Steve Kiesling**, the guy who later wrote *The Shell Game*.⁶⁹⁰⁵ Harry Parker was again the National Coach. At an early-season training camp down in Florida, the four of us decided that if any one of us got cut from this camp, then we would all leave and row in a four in the Trials.

⁶⁹⁰⁰ from Penn. See Chapter 129.

⁶⁹⁰¹ from Oregon State University.

⁶⁹⁰² from Harvard. See Chapter 140.

⁶⁹⁰³ Biglow, op cit.

⁶⁹⁰⁴ Biglow, personal correspondence, 2010

⁶⁹⁰⁵ For anyone interested in learning more about the special pressures involved in National Team rowing during this era, this book is a *must* read.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Bob Ernst/*The Oarsman*

1980 United States Olympic Coxed-Four "A"

Prince Philip Cup Champion, Henley

Coxswain **Bob Jaugstetter**, Bow **Tom Darling**, 2 **Otto Stekl**,

3 **Bill Purdy**, Stroke **John Biglow**

"It turned out that Eric and Matt *did* get cut, while Steve and I did not.⁶⁹⁰⁶ I withdrew to row the four in the Trials, and when Kiesling decided to stay with the camp, we replaced him with another Yale rower named **David Potter**. I believe that **Seth Bauer** was our coxswain.

"An additional motivation for quitting the U.S. Team in 1980 was that I hadn't enjoyed it much in 1979. I thought it was

⁶⁹⁰⁶ **Steve Kiesling**: "Matthew, Eric, John, and I could not have agreed in Florida to stick with the Yale four if any one of us got cut from the Camp. Matthew had already been cut after a test piece in the fall of '79 (the weekend of Harvard football game) and did not attend the January '80 training in Florida. Eric, John, and I all continued with the Camp after Matthew got cut. John and I both continued with the camp after Eric got cut.

"I had been through the straight-four Trials in '79, knew how good the camp boats were and figured my best shot at making the team was on my own. John made the decision to stick with the Yale four knowing that I wasn't going to do the same." – personal correspondence, 2009

ugly, kind of cutthroat. It was not pleasant, and I didn't want to be part of it again.

"Our Yale four went to the Trials, and we finished way behind the camp boat, but we *did* beat the Harvard boat.⁶⁹⁰⁷ Then we went back to Gales Ferry to get ready for the Yale-Harvard Race.

"Three days before the race, I got a call from Harry Parker. He said, 'Well, Otto Stekl's injured, and we need another rower to stroke, and so I'm calling to see if you could come with us on our European trip.'

"Tony was really upset about this. He said that Harry could have waited until after

the Yale-Harvard Race to ask me, and that he was hoping to distract me.

"Anyway, I said yes. So I made the Olympic Team even though I had quit the team first.

"When we went over to Europe and raced in Lucerne, Kiesling was in one four, and I was in another, and Kiesling's boat won. Then we went to Hazewinkel, Belgium, trained for two weeks and did a lot of seat racing. **Pete Gardner**, the Dartmouth coach, was in charge of the fours, and I ended up stroking the first four, and the sad irony for Kiesling was that he ended up in the second four.

"Then we went on to race in Amsterdam and Henley, and my boat won both regattas.

"I really enjoyed rowing in that U.S. boat in Europe. It was a *really* wonderful four. **Tom Darling**, **Otto Stekl** and **Bill Purdy** were in the boat with me. **Bob Jaugstetter** coxed.

"At Henley, when we beat Kiesling's boat, that was sweet because I always

⁶⁹⁰⁷ always critically important for a Yale crew.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

thought that he had kind of let us down in choosing not to stay with our agreement for the Trials.

“I don’t know if he mentions that in *The Shell Game* . . .⁶⁹⁰⁸

“I ended up not being an *official* member of the Olympic Team. I did not get an entire team uniform, and I did not get invited to Carter’s ceremony after the Olympics, but I really didn’t care about all that stuff. I much preferred the path I took, which was to stay with my friends and race.

“And I enjoyed the races.

1981

Biglow: “After graduation and our summer racing in Europe in 1980, I came back to New Haven and turned to sculling just to *try* it. I don’t think I was running away from sweep rowing. I wanted to scull probably because sculling seemed like a finer art and was also more ‘singular.’ In other words, I could really be put to the test in single sculling.

“Looking back on it, I didn’t really have much sense of what my intentions were. In my first year of sculling, I figured if I could get within twenty seconds of the fastest sculler in the country, then I might have a future.

“I sculled with a friend named **Eric Stevens** who had been the captain of the Yale Crew. We rowed in our singles next to each other up and down the river every day. We’d row roughly seven-eighths power at a low rating. I would try to row lower than

⁶⁹⁰⁸ **Steve Kiesling:** “I knew the Yale four was going to lose the Trials.” – *The Shell Game*, p. 195, but his retelling was far more complicated than that and worth reading in its entirety. The relationship between John and Steve over time was fraught with a kaleidoscope of emotions.

Incidentally, Steve gave John the last word in his book.

he, and that pushes you in a way that keeps you working hard and keeps you measuring how well you’re rowing.⁶⁹⁰⁹ You try to get ahead and then be comfortable and not run out of breath.

“We did that all fall.

“After several months of this, I went out to Seattle to visit my parents. I think it was early spring, and I ended up calling **Paul Enquist** and asking if I could go rowing with him.”⁶⁹¹⁰

Paul Enquist



Carol McGowan

Paul Enquist

Paul Enquist had begun his rowing career at Washington State University when “as a 6’6” freshman he took part in an open crew tryout after being denied a chance to try out for the basketball team.

“After graduating from WSU, Enquist hung around the University of Washington boathouse looking for a summer rowing program. The 1977 Washington crew [ended up winning] the prestigious Grand Challenge and Visitors Challenge Cups at

⁶⁹⁰⁹ This resembles the typical workouts of 20th Century Conibear coaches such as Rusty Callow. See Chapter 64.

⁶⁹¹⁰ Biglow, personal conversation, 2008

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

the Henley Royal Regatta in England, but needed four rowers to complete a third boat for training. Enquist agreed to participate.

“Enquist soon realized he was holding his own against some of the nation’s best rowers.”⁶⁹¹¹

Ted Nash: “In 1979, Paul rowed half a year with me at the Penn Elite Center and really came on stream in the 6-seat of our eight. They won Gold at the **National Sports Festival** in Colorado Springs.”⁶⁹¹²

“Paul, who was even then a commercial fisherman in Alaska, was ecstatic at the Sports Festival, and that is a lot to say as he is a quiet, yet friendly giant. He cherished the USA uniforms and the large gathering of all sports.

“He was a sweep rower about to become a sculler.”⁶⁹¹³

Biglow: “By 1980, Paul was considered the best sculler in Seattle, and he was being coached by **Bob Ernst** [the University of Washington Women’s Coach back then]. When I asked to row with him, he kind of paused and said, ‘Well . . . have you gotten a lot better?’ I must have rowed with him at some time before, and I didn’t do very well or something.

“Anyway, he allowed me to come row with him, and Bob sort of ran the workout and coached Paul. He would tell us to row this distance and that rating.

“I was feeling very comfortable rowing against Paul, and I would sort of keep him on my hip and not have to really push too hard. We got down past the Seattle Tennis Club toward Leschi Park [three miles south of the floating bridge on the western shore

of Lake Washington], way down towards the old bridge across the lake, and then we turned around and were going to do one long piece at full pressure back to the university.

“When Bob told us to row full pressure, I felt I *had* to if I was going to have integrity about it, so I rowed full pressure, and I pulled *way* ahead of Paul. I just left him so far behind it was embarrassing, and I think Bob was really mad at him.

“I felt bad for Paul, but it was a good sign for me.

“Later that spring, I went up to Boston, and that’s when I started to row against the famous **Tiff Wood**⁶⁹¹⁴ from Harvard, who had been on National Teams since 1975.

“That’s also when I asked Harry Parker to be my coach, and he accepted me into the Harvard boathouse.”⁶⁹¹⁵

Harry Parker 1984 Olympic Sculling Coach

Harry’s bad luck with Olympics continued in 1984. As the “preeminent figure of American rowing,”⁶⁹¹⁶ Harry wanted badly to again be the head Olympic men’s sweep coach while he continued to coach Harvard full time. He was the obvious choice, and he assumed he would get the job, but after considerable deliberations the Olympic Committee decided to hire a year-round coach and picked **Kris Korzeniowski**.⁶⁹¹⁷

In 1984, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist **David Halberstam** would write a best-selling book about Harry and several of the American male scullers preparing for and competing in the Los Angeles Olympics.

⁶⁹¹¹ Michael McLaughlin, *Where Are They Now: Paul Enquist*, www.seattlepi.com, March 31, 2004

⁶⁹¹² a multi-sport championship for the four regions of the USA used to encourage Olympic hopefuls. It had TV coverage, medal ceremonies and Olympic-type gear.

⁶⁹¹³ Nash, personal correspondence, 2006

⁶⁹¹⁴ See Chapter 140.

⁶⁹¹⁵ Biglow, *op cit*.

⁶⁹¹⁶ Halberstam, p. 162

⁶⁹¹⁷ See Chapter 124.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

Halberstam: “The fact that the Olympic Rowing Committee had picked a foreigner, scorning the best of the American coaches, had devastated Parker. After years of being unchallenged, he felt betrayed, and he protested the committee’s decision in the most personal terms.”⁶⁹¹⁸

In a move reminiscent of 1976, as was discussed above, Harry finally accepted an appointment to a “lesser job” as coach of the Olympic men’s scullers, until then only an afterthought in American rowing.

Halberstam: “He never entirely reconciled himself to his diminished status.”⁶⁹¹⁹

Nevertheless, as had been the case with women’s rowing in 1975 and ‘76, having the great Harry Parker as coach automatically lent instant credibility to a previously underappreciated and underutilized segment of American rowing. Many remarkable athletes converted to sculling just because of Harry’s presence. For better or for worse, the memorable events leading up to the 1984 Olympics would not and could not have happened without Harry.

If there are echoes of Homer’s tragic heroes in this story, Harry Parker would be their **Helen of Troy** and John Biglow their **Paris**, beautiful prince, obsessed with Helen, destined to slay Achilles.

Biglow in 1981

Biglow: “Even though I had had a successful sweep career at Yale, I was not known as a fast sculler at this point, so when I arrived in Boston from Seattle, I just came out of nowhere.

“There was already a big group of scullers in Cambridge working with Harry. They were going out and doing one-minute pieces. I think they were doing fifteen one-minute pieces the first day I joined them.

“Although I was really champing at the bit and felt like I was eager and ready to go, I remember starting off and really not opening up my throttle all out because I wasn’t familiar with the workout.

“I had heard so much about Tiff, and I remember wanting to stay close to him. I would start slightly behind just to make sure I was being honest about it, and I remember not really caring if I was half a length down because I felt *so* under control, and then I just remember feeling very confident and comfortable that I could beat him if I wanted. I immediately knew it in that *first* workout.

“I actually did get ahead of him in a couple of pieces that day, and he came back to the dock and said, ‘You beat me a few times, John.’ He was really bummed, but he started treating me with respect.

“That was my entry into the national level of sculling.

“There are maybe two or three races in my life that I consider great races that I loved and will cherish in my memory, and one of them was the **1981 Northeast Regionals** against Tiff up in Hanover, New Hampshire. It was a short race, maybe 1,500 meters, and it ended right in front of the Dartmouth boathouse.”⁶⁹²⁰

Halberstam: “Wood had gone out very quickly and very hard, at a 38, an unusually high stroke. He had kept it up for the first 500 meters, and for all of that he was only three-quarters of a length ahead. Then in the second 500 Biglow had almost rowed through Wood, but Wood had held on.

“With 500 meters left, when they were almost dead even, Wood started to sprint. That meant Biglow had to respond, and they rowed almost side by side, matching stroke for stroke, neither conceding, each simply trying to put more power into each stroke.

⁶⁹¹⁸ Halberstam, p. 163

⁶⁹¹⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁹²⁰ Biglow, op cit.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

“It was an almost perfect race . . . ”⁶⁹²¹

Tiff Wood: “It was one of those ‘neither of us is going to quit’ sorts of things. There’s a point where you put everything onto it, and usually for me if I do that, it happens.

“John and I developed a great relationship in ‘81. *Huge* mutual respect as competitors, I think driven in part by that race in Hanover. For a losing race, that was the *best* race that I’ve ever had.”⁶⁹²²

According to Halberstam, Tiff and John became good friends, members of a two-person exclusive club of fierce competitors who respected one another above all others. Very special experience for both of them.⁶⁹²³

Biglow: “Beating Tiff in such a special race qualified me for the U.S. Olympic Festival in South Carolina or North Carolina or someplace, and that regatta might have been my first 2,000 meter races.

“Then came the Trials.”⁶⁹²⁴

The New York Times: “John Biglow earned the right today to represent the United States in the World Championships in Munich, West Germany, later this month.

“Biglow, of Yale, was a comfortable 2½-length winner over Tiff Wood of Harvard on the 2,000 meter course in 7 minutes 8.5 seconds. Wood’s time was 7:16.8.”⁶⁹²⁵

Biglow: “I remember thinking when I raced in the 1981 Singles Trials, that it was around my third to fifth races ever at 2,000 meters, and then the World Championships in Munich would be my sixth, seventh and eighth races ever. It made me feel very humble. I was thinking to myself, ‘I’m not any more special than anyone else. I haven’t done any more. I haven’t worked

harder, but somehow single sculling is working for me.”⁶⁹²⁶

Gregg Stone: “The pattern of all American scullers of that era was to have very few races under their belt when they go to their first Worlds. We were amateurs in every sense. My first Worlds was my fourth regatta in a single. In 1985, **Andy Sudduth**⁶⁹²⁷ would win a World Silver in his second 2,000 meter sculling regatta!”⁶⁹²⁸

Wood: “I was John’s sparring partner until he left for Europe, and we had some great workouts. It was kind of fun, having decided I was not going, helping him get fast by going as hard as I could and pushing him.”⁶⁹²⁹

Oberschleißheim

Biglow: “One amazing thing for me at my first Worlds in Munich was that I was rowing against someone that Frank Cunningham looked at films of and said, ‘That person rows *beautifully!*’ It was **Ricardo Ibarra** from Argentina. Frank liked how flat his stroke was. He brought his hands in and out on a very level plane.

“Ibarra was in my heat, and I fell way behind. There was also this Swede, **Hans Svensson**, a huge guy [6’6” 199cm 227lb. 103kg, Falkenbergs Roddklubb], who was way out, like five lengths, after 500 meters, but near the end of the race I’d passed him, and Ibarra was right in front of me to my right within a length, and I remember thinking to myself, ‘I feel very comfortable! I can go harder,’ and so I did, and I passed Ricardo Ibarra!

“I was just dumbfounded. Here was this guy that Frank Cunningham had put on a pedestal, and I was rowing equal to him . . . and very comfortable about it. I was just

⁶⁹²¹ Halberstam, p. 81

⁶⁹²² Wood, op cit.

⁶⁹²³ Halberstam, pp. 83-4

⁶⁹²⁴ Biglow, op cit.

⁶⁹²⁵ 2 Rowing Titles to Ivy Leaguers, *The New York Times*, August 3, 1981

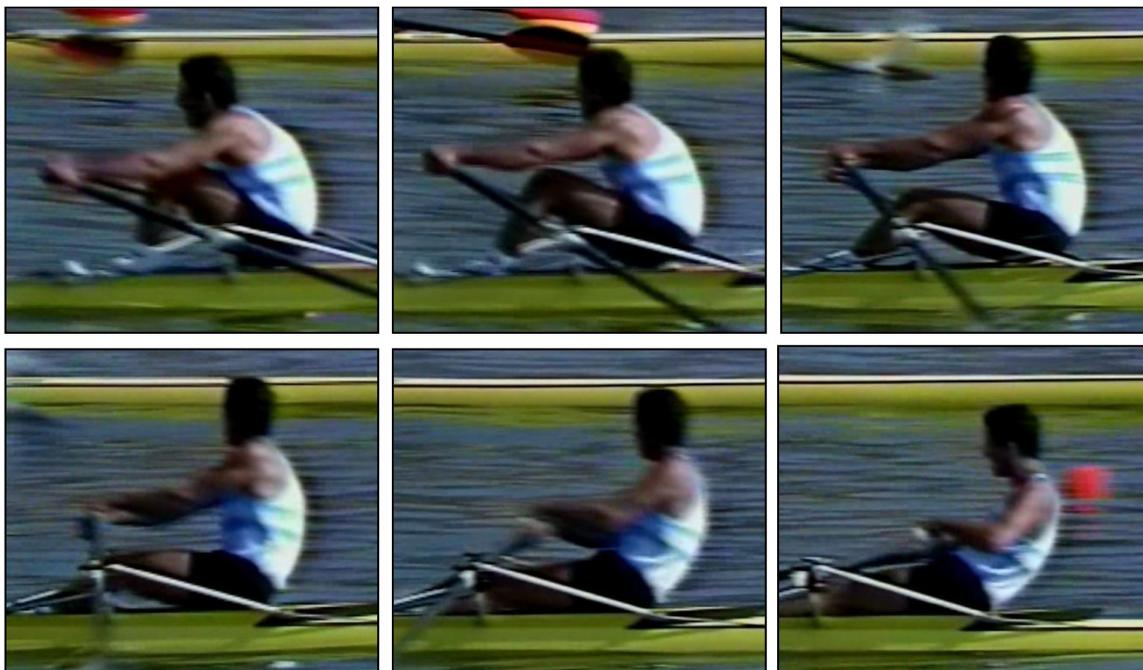
⁶⁹²⁶ Biglow, op cit.

⁶⁹²⁷ See Chapter 142.

⁶⁹²⁸ Stone, op cit.

⁶⁹²⁹ Wood, op cit.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



FISA 1984 Video

1976-1984 Argentina Single Sculler

Ricardo Ibarra, 6'4" 193cm 198lb. 90kg

-10°, +25° to -25°, 0-10, 0-9, 0-10, ferryman's finish

Classical Technique *Schubschlag* force application

Relatively flat back swing is what caught Frank Cunningham's eye, but the change in head height – compare to the boat in the background – is still significant and hardly negated by the very mild ferryman's finish.

Ibarra was a consistent finalist but never a medalist in a FISA International Championship

humbled by it. For the minimal racing experience I'd ever had, I was just blown away.

"The German papers wrote about this, and they described me, and I think the word that they used was *unterlächelnd*, and I think it means kind of quietly smiling, kind of humble. It was very flattering. They were actually correct in describing me if that's what it meant."⁶⁹³⁰

The two prohibitive favorites in Munich in 1981 were the GDR sculler, 6'7" 203cm

210lb. 95kg **Rüdiger Reiche**, 1974 World Quad Champion, 1976 Olympic Quad Champion, 1977 World Doubles Silver Medalist and 1979 World Singles Bronze Medalist, and the West German **Peter-Michael Kolbe**, 6'5" 198cm 210lb. 95kg, with two Golds and two Silvers in World and Olympic singles competition since his international debut in 1975.⁶⁹³¹

By contrast, Biglow was only 6'3" 190cm 188lb. 85kg and at his first World Championship in a single.

⁶⁹³⁰ Biglow, op cit.

⁶⁹³¹ See Chapter 125.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



FISA 1981 Video

Peter Michale Kolbe, FRG
rowing the **Empacher sliding-rigger single** in 1981.
Look carefully.
The riggers and footstretchers moved. The seat didn't.

In addition, Kolbe was rowing a revolutionary new **sliding-rigger single** built for him by Empacher Bootswerft of Eberbach on the Neckar River in West Germany.⁶⁹³²

In a normal boat, the footstretcher and riggers are bolted to the hull, and the seat slides along a track. In a sliding-rigger boat, the seat is bolted to the hull, and the footstretcher and riggers slide as a unit along a track. For the rower, the mechanics of the stroke remain identical, but his body's center of gravity remains in a relatively stationary position in the boat instead of moving up and down the keel.

By eliminating the boat's tendency to porpoise along with eliminating the Newtonian surge of the hull forward as the

⁶⁹³² Biomechanist **Volker Nolte** (See Chapter 134.), now of the University of Western Ontario, was instrumental in assisting Empacher in the development of Kolbe's sliding-rigger boat. – Bill Miller, *The Development of Rowing Equipment*, www.rowinghistory.net

rower slides toward the stern,⁶⁹³³ the sliding rigger reduces boat check and hydrodynamic drag. The concept was not new, having been tried several times as early as the mid-19th Century.⁶⁹³⁴

The Oarsman: “Biglow's semi-final featured the unknown American and local hero Kolbe facing one another after each had won his heat. The West German, starting carefully in the chop of the first 100 meters, poured it on after that to open a big early lead. The American, not pressing, moved steadily from fifth to third in the second 500, and easily

maintained that position for the rest of the race.”⁶⁹³⁵

The New York Times: “John Biglow of the United States managed a third-place finish in his [semi-final] of the singles competition to advance to the finals.

“But Bigelow's time of 8 minutes 7.71 seconds was well behind that of Rüdiger Reiche of East Germany, who won the second of two [semi-finals] in 7:50.66.”⁶⁹³⁶

The singles final was run into a slight cross-headwind with the water a little bouncy, especially in the first 1,000 meters. Kolbe started slowly in his sliding-rigger

⁶⁹³³ See Chapter 90.

⁶⁹³⁴ Bill Miller, List of U.S. Patents relating to rowing & training equipment, www.rowinghistory.net

⁶⁹³⁵ Bob Jaugstetter, Three Medals Highlight U.S. Men's 'Rebuilding Year.' *The Oarsman*, October/November 1981, p. 15

⁶⁹³⁶ East German Oarsmen Gain 8 Spots in Finals, *The New York Times*, September 6, 1981

THE SPORT OF ROWING



FISA 1981 Video

1981 World Singles Championships, Oberschleißheim

1 FRG 7:45.32, 2 GDR 7:48.90, 3 USA 7:51.55,

4 GBR 7:54.71, 5 ARG, 6 NZL

Silver: **Rüdiger Reiche**, GDR, 6'7" 203cm 212lb. 96kg

Gold: **Peter-Michael Kolbe**, FRG, 6'4" 194cm 185lb. 84kg

Bronze: **John Biglow**, USA, 6'3" 190cm 187lb. 85kg

Note the body language.

Biglow: "I remember feeling great honor and *really* small."

shell, but by the 250 meter mark he was tied for the lead with Reiche.

Biglow started well, and after the Argentine and New Zealand scullers settled into their racing cadences, the American found himself a solid third by 500 meters gone.

However, Kolbe was by then clearly in first place with more than three-quarters of a length on Reiche, who in turn had open water on the American.

Biglow: "In '81, I believe I raced it at something really low, 31, something around there."⁶⁹³⁷

⁶⁹³⁷ Biglow, op cit.

In fact, all three of the leaders were low in the slow conditions. Reiche was also at 31, and Kolbe at 29.

Kolbe extended his lead to open water over Reiche by 650 gone. By then Biglow was at least three lengths behind him. These margins remained relatively steady to the 1,000.

In the third 500, Kolbe made a big push to extend his lead to well over two lengths over Reiche. Biglow started swinging his back more purposefully to the release, but nevertheless he crossed the 1,500 four lengths behind the West German leader.

After that, he began to move. With 250 to go, Biglow was at 34 and almost overlapping Reiche. As they rowed by the grandstands, the GDR sculler at 35 regained a little bit of open water on Biglow and was closing on Kolbe as the West German savored his last few strokes. The final margins were just

over a length between first and second and just over a length between second and third.

The Oarsman: "John's Bronze was the first U.S. sculling medal since Dietz's Silver in 1974."⁶⁹³⁸

Biglow: "I remember getting on the trophy dock feeling great honor and *really* small. Reiche's taller, but Kolbe's got very broad shoulders.

"I remember Harry telling me that during the finals he had been riding in a vehicle with the coach of the fourth-place

⁶⁹³⁸ Bob Jaugstetter, Three Medals Highlight U.S. Men's 'Rebuilding Year.' *The Oarsman*, October/November 1981, p. 16

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



FISA 1991 Video

John Biglow

United States Single Sculler

1981 World Bronze, Oberschleißheim

-10°, +25° to -30°, 0-7, 0-9, 4-10, *Schubschlag*, late arm draw

Classical Technique concurrency with emphasis on back swing

British sculler **Chris Baillieu**, a member of the 1977 World Champion men's double with Mike Hart.⁶⁹³⁹ He was saying something like 'He can't do that!' referring

to my not having sculled enough to beat his man.

"Kolbe had won easily, and so we all ended up rowing sliding-rigger boats the

⁶⁹³⁹ The coach might have been **Mike Spracklen**. See Chapter 130.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

next year, and that was a real pain because it gave you blisters on your buttocks.⁶⁹⁴⁰

Biglow's Technique in 1981

Biglow's immediate success in a single cries out for an explanation. He was not one of the more imposing athletic specimens among the top international scullers of his era. He had done very well in physiological testing with the U.S. Team and had done well enough in seat racing to make the U.S. eight in 1979 and the four in '80, so he was obviously a boat mover.

What was his technique?

John Biglow no longer rowed the Pocock-influenced Thames Waterman's Stroke that **Frank Cunningham** had originally taught him.⁶⁹⁴¹ Nor did he row the Conibear-based, Ratzeburg-influenced high stroke technique that **Tony Johnson** had rowed to two European Pairs Championships in the 1960s.⁶⁹⁴²

Although Biglow lifted his chin, he did not do so nearly to the extent of his two predecessors at the top of the American sculling scene, Jim Dietz and Gregg Stone. Biglow's head lift, also typical of Harry Parker oarsmen of the era, was merely an idiosyncratic stylization for Biglow and not an indication of segmented force application.

In fact, when at his best he rowed a Fairbairnesque concurrent *Schubschlag* stroke characterized by a strong arc of the back. His sculling technique resembled that taught by the great Philadelphia coach of the 1920s and '30s, **Frank Muller**.⁶⁹⁴³

Biglow's pullthrough was concurrent with splendid coordination of leg and back motion. His back followed an elegant

vertical arc that organically united the pullthrough from entry to release. Arms were straining from the entry but did not noticeably break until the second half.

It is useful to compare the video frames of John Biglow on the previous page to those of Muller's most famous protégé, **John B. Kelly, Sr.**, in Chapter 56. Kelly compressed a bit more at the entry and might have broken his arms a bit earlier. Biglow might have lifted and dropped his chin a bit more, but the differences were very small and a matter of personal style. Overall, the resemblance is uncanny.

There is no reason to suggest a direct link between scullers Kelly and Biglow, but remember that Muller's teachings followed a main branch of the evolutionary tree of rowing that grew straight up from Ned Hanlan and had encompassed American collegiate rowing from Ellis Ward and Charles Courtney to the 1960 Annapolis crew that signaled the end of the Conibear Era. This technique has spontaneously recurred many times and in many places throughout the world over the last century.

By the time John Biglow turned his attention to the single in the fall of 1980, these same fundamentals were being applied anew with devastating effectiveness by the **German Democratic Republic**, as was discussed in Chapter 119.

1982

Biglow: "I always rowed a low rating, not on purpose, but it was just what I could do with my spread and the way I rigged my boat, which was kind of random. When I first started sculling and got my first boat, I didn't know anything. It must have been rigged a little bit different from normal, so I rowed a low rating, but it worked for me.

"After Munich in '81, Harry said, 'Well, we want to work your rating up, and we want you to feel more stable, so let's work

⁶⁹⁴⁰ Biglow, op cit.

⁶⁹⁴¹ See Chapter 63.

⁶⁹⁴² See Chapter 110.

⁶⁹⁴³ See Chapter 56.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



FISA 1982 Video

John Biglow

United States Single Sculler

1982 World Bronze, Rotsee

0°, +35° to -30°, 0-7, 0-9, 4-10, *Schubschlag*

Modern Orthodox hybrid-concurrent with late arm draw.

Note the change in head levels during the pullthrough.

Rhythm emphasized back swing. Leg drive dominated early, but the catch was *not* explosive.

on fast hands. I want to exaggerate your hands out of bow.’

“So I did that. It felt really funny, rushed, but it’s interesting to me that it was the opposite of Harry’s Stop & Shop style,⁶⁹⁴⁴ and it was similar to what Frank Cunningham had been talking about to me

in high school, but for different reasons. Frank had always said to get your weight out of bow quickly because if the bow is riding down in the water it’s more wetted surface.

“But it’s interesting to me that Harry eventually brought me to a place where Frank Cunningham wanted me to row.

⁶⁹⁴⁴ See Chapter 102.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Rüdiger Reiche, Dynamo Potsdam
1981, 1982 GDR Single Sculler

FISA 1981 Video

“That’s where I ended up. Faster hands.”⁶⁹⁴⁵

Biglow’s Technique in 1982

Biglow’s technique had evolved slightly but significantly between 1981 and 1982. Besides the faster hands and higher rating, the major difference was the increasing dominance of the legs in the first half of the pullthrough, leading toward Modern Orthodox hybrid-concurrency.

The Australian television commentator in Lucerne described his pullthrough as “awkward,” and with his initial leg pulse and chin lift at mid-stroke, his technique looked more frenetic than that of the other two medalists, Reiche and Yakusha. Reiche especially rowed a typical GDR heavier load, and so his pullthrough appeared slower and more disciplined. With his lighter load,

⁶⁹⁴⁵ Biglow, op cit.

Biglow relied on speed through the water and accordingly looked to be busier and working harder.

Biglow: “I think the sliding-rigger boat required a different touch, and this may have influenced any changes from 1981. In 1982, I was still rowing strong, but I did not like the sliding rigger. However, it was more forgiving regarding checking at the catch.”⁶⁹⁴⁶

The whole rationale of the sliding rigger was to keep the weight of the sculler’s body from traveling along the keel. This made a rush into the entry position less likely to disturb the horizontality of the hull and the flow of the boat.

But the little-appreciated, unintended and unexpected consequence of the sliding-rigger boat’s personality was that it also strongly discouraged extreme explosiveness in initial force application. Especially in the first ten strokes of a race, no matter how much tape you sat on, too strong an entry hit would cause the sculler to unceremoniously lift off his seat, which was immovable, and land on the front deck. This will be discussed further in Chapter 140.

At the 1982 World Championships in Lucerne, all six finalists, including John Biglow, were rowing sliding-rigger boats. Kolbe had chosen not to defend his title, so the favorite became **Rüdiger Reiche**.

Biglow: “In off-Olympic years, especially on the Rotsee, the championship regatta was quiet. You could really get to feel close to your competitors.

⁶⁹⁴⁶ Biglow, personal correspondence, 2008

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

“I couldn’t speak German, and Reiche couldn’t speak English, but when I walked my boat down to the water we would pass *right* next to each other, and he would wink at me. I loved that.

“Later at the Olympics in 1984, I never felt that close to the other athletes.

“I remember going into the heat in 1982, and I hadn’t really thought through all the details, like if I would get a better lane if I raced *hard* in the heat even if I was going to lose. Harry just said, ‘Race hard. Let’s see what you can do.’

“So I raced hard.

The Heat

Biglow: “Reiche was out ahead of me, but I came back on him, and it was *really* close at the end.

“We were neck and neck, like it had been with Tiff in the Northeast Regionals, where you row next to someone for thirty strokes and your legs really start to burn. If they’re a little bit ahead or a little bit behind, you can sort of ease up just a little bit, but if they’re *right* next to you, it really keeps you honest.

“I think he had to work really, really hard to beat me, and it was, I’m thinking, 0.1 seconds.

“Somebody said that they heard Reiche ask his coach, ‘What are we going to do now?’

The Final

Biglow: “In the final, when I raced Reiche again, I remember thinking I never go off hard enough.

“‘I’ve got to go off hard,’ I thought, but I couldn’t do it! It seemed like an impossibility.”⁶⁹⁴⁷

⁶⁹⁴⁷ It turns out that it was indeed an “impossibility” to go off the line hard in

“I went off the start, and Reiche was out to a length on me really quickly, and then the race unfolded.”⁶⁹⁴⁸

Vasily Yakusha, 6’4” 194cm 209lb. 95kg, Centraliy Sportiviy Klub Armii Minsk, the 1980 Olympic Singles Silver Medalist, took the lead in the first 500 and then dropped his rating to 29 as Reiche pushed past him by half a length before the 1,000. In the third 500, Biglow rowing 33 separated himself from the rest of the pack, and at 1,250 he raised his rating to 36 and began to move on the two leaders.

Biglow: “I started my sprint with 750 to go because Harry Parker told me to. He said, ‘So far, no one has ever been able to come back on you. You’ve rowed faster than everyone in the last 500, so why don’t we start the sprint earlier?’ So we did, and I found that I actually was at my limit.”⁶⁹⁴⁹

As the three leaders crossed the 1,500 meter mark, Biglow had moved past Yakusha into second place, only a half-length down on Reiche.

Yakusha then made his own move with 400 to go, raising his stroke rate to 37, repassing Biglow and moving up to within just a meter of Reiche at the finish line.

Biglow, also at 37, was unable to close on the GDR sculler and finished just over half a length behind the first two boats, earning his second consecutive World Championship Bronze Medal.

Biglow: “I never knew that I had been ahead of the Russian with 500 to go. I thought I always was behind him. He was way over on the other side of the course.

“It was a pretty exciting race to rewatch.”⁶⁹⁵⁰

Biglow’s sliding-rigger boat. See the extensive discussion in Chapter 140.

⁶⁹⁴⁸ Biglow, personal conversation, 2008

⁶⁹⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁵⁰ Ibid.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

Biglow's performance in Lucerne would be the high water mark of his international career. In all of history back to 1893, Biglow's accomplishment of two international heavyweight championship single sculling medals had only ever been equaled by three other Americans, **Jack Kelly, Jr.** after World War II and **Don Spero**⁶⁹⁵¹ and **Seymour Cromwell**⁶⁹⁵² during the American sculling heyday of the

1960s.⁶⁹⁵³

Many thanks to **Carol McGowan** for her many photos of this era. Back then, cameras took film, and film was expensive, so many rowers have since grown up and realized that no one had taken any photos of their salad days. Fortunately, in 1983 and 1984 Carol was there.

⁶⁹⁵¹ See Chapter 87.

⁶⁹⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁹⁵³ The feat has since been surpassed by American **Michelle Guerette**, World Bronze Medalist in 2005 and 2007, Olympic Silver Medalist in 2008.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

140. The Back-Story Behind *The Amateurs*

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

1982 Post Mortem

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

“After a slow beginning in the first 500 meters of the 2,000-meter course, Biglow finished third behind Rüdiger Reiche of East Germany and Vasily Yakusha of the Soviet Union.”⁶⁹⁵⁴

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

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

“Those weren’t his *exact* words, but when we finally got back to Boston maybe a month later, he said, ‘Well, we have to have a talk . . .’ and that’s basically what he said.”⁶⁹⁵⁵

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

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

“Now that I look back on it, I remember that I was having back trouble. I was rowing with a herniated disc, and he took me to a place where I believed that I hadn’t wanted it enough and I had to try *harder!* No matter what, I had to push myself *harder!*”⁶⁹⁵⁶

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

Altekruise: “In the fall of 1983, I had just begun graduate school at Tuft’s Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy and was training for 1984. We had had a pretty unsatisfying quad finish at Duisburg a few months earlier, not making the final.”⁶⁹⁵⁷ Harry pulled me aside and basically said I wasn’t being serious enough about the rowing. I challenged him, but I would end up postponing my next school semester to train in Switzerland.”⁶⁹⁵⁸

1983

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

⁶⁹⁵⁴ **Biglow Captures Rowing Bronze**, *The New York Times*, August 30, 1982

⁶⁹⁵⁵ Biglow, personal conversation, 2008

⁶⁹⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁵⁷ to be discussed later in this chapter.

⁶⁹⁵⁸ Altekruise, personal correspondence, 2009

THE SPORT OF ROWING

Charles. In the fall of 1981, I had started thirteenth and caught a guy at the B.U. Bridge.⁶⁹⁵⁹ I never thought I could catch someone that quickly. We overlapped oars. We had to totally stop and push ourselves apart, and then I had to get going again. I ended up losing to Tiff by two seconds.”⁶⁹⁶⁰

Wood: “After the Trials in ‘81, I *knew* that John was faster than I was. I remember finishing the Head that year and coming back to the boathouse and finding out that I had won, and it was probably one of the happiest rowing moments of my life. I felt like the gods had decided to give me a present. I felt like I had actually won a race I didn’t deserve to win.”⁶⁹⁶¹

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

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

“I didn’t catch him until the Riverside Boathouse,⁶⁹⁶² and then we rowed right next to each other *all* the way down the Powerhouse Stretch. It wasn’t until Newell Boathouse⁶⁹⁶³ that I finally passed him and started to open up on him. Then he faded, and I lengthened my stroke, and that’s how I set my record with Tiff’s help.

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

“I like to ask people’s input. I wasn’t going out there saying, ‘Frank, will you be my coach again?’ I was thinking to myself, ‘*Harry’s* my coach,’ but I was also wanting to share my successes with people who had helped me early on, like Frank and like **Charlie McIntyre**.⁶⁹⁶⁴

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

“Charlie was devoted to me and *so* proud. I just wanted to give something back, so I went out a couple of times with Frank and with Charlie.”⁶⁹⁶⁵

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

“He was very methodical. I only coached him once a week or so, and Charlie and **Stan Pocock**⁶⁹⁶⁶ also contributed, but I remember after one session he told me, ‘Well, that’s twelve things I have to work on.’

“Every day he would work on one or two.”⁶⁹⁶⁷

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

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

⁶⁹⁵⁹ Boston University Bridge, about 300 meters after the start.

⁶⁹⁶⁰ Biglow, op cit.

⁶⁹⁶¹ Wood, personal conversation, 2009

⁶⁹⁶² about 1,000 meters after the start.

⁶⁹⁶³ about 2,900 meters after the start and 1,900 meters from the finish.

⁶⁹⁶⁴ See Chapter 87.

⁶⁹⁶⁵ Biglow, op cit.

⁶⁹⁶⁶ See Chapter 83.

⁶⁹⁶⁷ Cunningham, personal conversation, 2008

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Newell Boathouse, Harvard

1974 Harvard Varsity Eight

“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**

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

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

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

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

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

Singles Trials. There was nothing I could do. I didn’t feel pain. I was just weak.”⁶⁹⁶⁸

Tiff Wood

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

As the smallest man in his Harvard Varsity, Tiff had been an overachieving teammate to Al Shealy, Dick Cashin and Gregg Stone during the Rude and Smooth years.⁶⁹⁶⁹ He went through four years at Harvard without losing a collegiate race.

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

⁶⁹⁶⁸ Biglow, op cit.

⁶⁹⁶⁹ See Chapter 104.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Carol McGowan

Tiff

was in that race, too, but I'm pretty sure we beat them."⁶⁹⁷⁰

Sean Colgan: "Tiff has more college shirts than Champion."^{6971,6972}

Halberstam: "If he had been one of the strongest men on those Harvard boats, he had also been one of the roughest, an oarsman who responded to pressure and challenge by beating his oar even harder into the water and by giving more of himself."⁶⁹⁷³

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

⁶⁹⁷⁰ Wood, personal correspondence, 2009

⁶⁹⁷¹ Champion® Sportswear, the maker of most of the racing shirts in the United States during the mid-20th Century, now a division of Hanesbrands, Inc.

⁶⁹⁷² Colgan, personal correspondence, 2009

⁶⁹⁷³ Halberstam, p. 19

Halberstam: "Steve Fairbairn"⁶⁹⁷⁴ taught his oarsmen to think of the end product rather than a predetermined conscious pattern of movement. He asked them to concentrate on bladework and left them to work out how best to do it."⁶⁹⁷⁵

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

Halberstam: "Early in Wood's college career, Parker had decided that any attempt to make him row with greater finesse would be counterproductive. He was impatient with technique. The best way to coach him, Parker decided, was not to coach him but to leave him to his furies."⁶⁹⁷⁶

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

Halberstam: "Tiff Wood was a violent seat racer.

"He was absolutely savage," [Dick] **Cashin**, his teammate, remembered. "I don't think he ever lost a seat race. I was bigger and stronger, and I was better on the erg, and I made the National Team in my sophomore year,"⁶⁹⁷⁷ but I could never beat Tiff in seat racing. I once tied him – it was April 17, 1975. I remember because it was my birthday.

"But I never beat him."⁶⁹⁷⁸

Ted Nash: "Tiff demonstrates what tough men Harry develops. Every race was

⁶⁹⁷⁴ See Chapter 19.

⁶⁹⁷⁵ Geoffrey Page, qtd. by Dodd, *World Rowing*, p. 162

⁶⁹⁷⁶ Halberstam, p. 62

⁶⁹⁷⁷ See Chapter 111.

⁶⁹⁷⁸ Halberstam, pp. 74-5

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

to the last stroke. No games – just race. He radiated confidence. The modern term, ‘Bring it on!’ could have been invented for Tiff.”⁶⁹⁷⁹

After Harvard

For his size, Wood was superbly gifted in strength and cardiovascular capacity, so some believed that he “was able to waste immense amounts of energy with poor technique and still succeed,”⁶⁹⁸⁰ and he did nothing to disabuse anyone of such beliefs. After Gregg Stone founded the **Charles River Association of Sculling Has-Beens**

(CRASH-B) in 1977, Tiff took over in 1982 and started the annual CRASH-B World Indoor Rowing Championships, for which the organization has become best known. Significantly, the prize for winning the CRASH-Bs is a hammer, a term often used to describe Tiff as a rower.

Wood: “My approach to rowing has been to throw caution to the wind and expend every ounce of energy.”⁶⁹⁸¹

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

After Tiff had had a less than satisfying experience as the Olympic sweep spare in Montréal, **Gregg Stone** suggested that they row a double together.



Bob Ernst/*The Oarsman*

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

Halberstam: “In the fall of 1976, with only three days of practice together, they entered the Head of the Charles. They surprised themselves by taking second. The following year, in **1977**, they went to Henley and took second behind the British double [Baillieu and Hart⁶⁹⁸²] that had been second in the 1976 Olympics.”⁶⁹⁸³

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

⁶⁹⁷⁹ Nash, personal correspondence, 2009

⁶⁹⁸⁰ Halberstam, p. 33

⁶⁹⁸¹ Qtd. by Xavier Macia, [Enter the Hammer](#), *Rowing News*, September, 2004, p. 49

⁶⁹⁸² See Chapter 130.

⁶⁹⁸³ Halberstam, p. 76

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Peter Klavora

United States Men's Quad
1979 World Fifth Place, Bled
Bow **John Van Blom**, 2 **Tiff Wood**, 3 **Chris Allsopp**, Stroke **Al Shealy**

“At the World Championships on Lake Karapiro, we placed fifth – nearing true world class performance.”⁶⁹⁸⁴

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

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

“Oh, and he said that he used to *really* argue when he was rowing a double with Neil Halleen from Wisconsin.”⁶⁹⁸⁵ He said with me it was much better. [laughing]”⁶⁹⁸⁶

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

aggressiveness and a long efficient stroke. After my being rejected by Tiff, ours was sweet revenge.”⁶⁹⁸⁷

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

“But Chris deserves his satisfaction. He taught us a lesson.”⁶⁹⁸⁸

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

“He and Howes did beat us at the Trials, of course, in some pretty rough water. Tiff and I chose to row a prototype Van Dusen double which we could not handle in the water. No question we would like that decision back again. In flat water they were not in our league.”⁶⁹⁸⁹

At the 1979 Pan Am Games, Allsopp and Howes won Silver in the double while Stone and Wood with Washington grad **Bruce Beall** and Harvard legend **Al Shealy**⁶⁹⁹⁰ won Bronze in the quad.

⁶⁹⁸⁴ Allsopp, personal correspondence, 2009

⁶⁹⁸⁵ See Chapter 106.

⁶⁹⁸⁶ Wood, personal conversation, 2009

⁶⁹⁸⁷ Allsopp, op cit.

⁶⁹⁸⁸ Wood, op cit.

⁶⁹⁸⁹ Stone, personal correspondence, 2009

⁶⁹⁹⁰ See Chapters 104, 111 and 114.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

Allsopp: “After the Pan Am Games, Gregg went back to his single while Tiff and I were reformed into a quad at 2 and 3 with **Al Shealy** stroking and **John Van Blom**⁶⁹⁹¹ in the bow. Under Coach **Peter Raymond**⁶⁹⁹²,’s gifted eye, within a couple of weeks of forming we placed fifth at the 1979 World Championships.

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

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

“Who knows how we would have fared had the boycott⁶⁹⁹³ not kept us home.

“At Henley the next year, **1980**, Tiff and I advanced to the Double Sculls Challenge Cup final. A little known fact is that in the heats, we beat a British double that included a young **Stephen Geoffrey Redgrave**.⁶⁹⁹⁴ That might have been Redgrave’s only Henley loss.⁶⁹⁹⁵

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

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

“We achieved our goal of not losing to an outstanding Canadian double [Victoria

City R.C., **Pat Walter**, 6’3” 190cm 192lb. 87kg, and **Bruce Ford**, 6’2” 187cm 185lb. 84kg] by Henley’s ‘easily’ verdict, but we sure paid a price. Tiff passed out and had to be revived in the medical tent, and I was as spent as I had ever been.

“At Luzern in 1980, I stroked the Olympic quad with Tiff, Brad Lewis, and Tom Howes. It was okay. The first day we didn’t make the finals, and the second day we made it and placed fourth.”⁶⁹⁹⁶

Tiff Wood, Single Sculler

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

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

Rowing USA: “In 1981, when Tiff hoped to take over the single sculling slot, John Biglow emerged as the top sculler. In 1982, Tiff hoped to take that slot away from him, but flipped his boat in the Trials.”⁶⁹⁹⁷

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

⁶⁹⁹¹ See Chapter 88.

⁶⁹⁹² See Chapter 103.

⁶⁹⁹³ See later in this chapter and Chapter 140.

⁶⁹⁹⁴ See Chapter 130.

⁶⁹⁹⁵ an exaggeration, but Steve did win the Diamond Sculls that year.

⁶⁹⁹⁶ Allsopp, op cit.

⁶⁹⁹⁷ U.S. Athlete Profiles, *Rowing USA*, June/July 1984, p. 44

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Steve Fontanini/*Los Angeles Times*

Tiff

single. I was spending most of the time running up hotel stairs in Dubai and building a B-52 runway for the Air Force in Diego Garcia.”⁶⁹⁹⁹

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

“In the heat when Sean barely lost to me, I was ahead and rowing just hard enough to win, and even though they had to go to the video, I was pretty sure I had held him off. The officials, of course, had the video pointed such that all they could see was my head going across the line, so who

era are forgotten and turned to dust. Thanks to **David Halberstam**, anyone who has read *The Amateurs* must be filled with a sense of foreboding whenever the events of Tiff’s rowing career are retold.

Biglow: “1983. That’s when Tiff went over and got his Bronze Medal, and I’m so glad that he did that. I’m glad I had that off year from the single because I still feel really sad for Tiff.”⁷⁰⁰³

The Sliding-Rigger Single

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

⁶⁹⁹⁸ Colgan, op cit.

⁶⁹⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁰⁰ Wood, personal correspondence, 2009

⁷⁰⁰¹ Colgan, op cit.

⁷⁰⁰² Wood, op cit.

⁷⁰⁰³ Biglow, op cit.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Lucius Biglow

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

It is ironic but probably not coincidental that rowing in a sliding-rigger single produced the best results in John Biglow's entire career, before or after, in 1982,⁷⁰⁰⁴ and a year later the very same boat carried Tiff Wood to the best results in his entire career.

U.S. Teammate **Brad Lewis**: "Tiff's success came with that sliding-rigger boat, and that was a huge asset for him because it absorbed the check so he could really reef

on it. It was basically like a floating erg."⁷⁰⁰⁵

Contrary to Brad's assumption, Tiff's boat was actually quite a handful to row. Built by American **Ted Van Dusen**⁷⁰⁰⁶ in response to the Empacher sliding-rigger single rowed in 1981 by Gold Medalist

⁷⁰⁰⁵ Lewis, personal conversation, 2009

⁷⁰⁰⁶ a PhD graduate of MIT and a lightweight single sculler during the 1970s. Ted's company is Van Dusen Racing Boats, a division of Composite Engineering of Concord, Massachusetts, outside of Boston.

⁷⁰⁰⁴ See Chapter 139.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Lucius Biglow

1983 World Championship Men's Singles Final

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

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

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

– personal conversation, 2009

All finalists were rowing sliding-rigger singles.

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

Peter-Michael Kolbe,⁷⁰⁰⁷ the boat in its final form was a standard Van Dusen hull with two-sided tracks in place of splash boards on either side of the athlete’s station. The seat deck was reduced to the space below the stationary seat, and the rest of the sculler’s station was a long cockpit open to the keelson to accommodate the heels of the

rigger / footstretcher module, which slid just above the keelson as a unit during the stroke cycle.

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

⁷⁰⁰⁷ See Chapter 139.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Lucius Biglow

1983 World Championship Men's Singles Final

Regattabahn Wedau, Duisburg

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

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

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

more effort from the hamstrings to overcome inertia than a normal sliding-seat configuration.

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

"For the first sliding rigger, I used Harken traveler tracks and ball bearing cars. Each one was rated at 1,000 pounds load capacity, but probably not at the speed of the slide. I barely got two months of use out of them because the balls would jam and slide, wearing flats on them.

"The next system, which is what Biglow used, had pairs of round bearings much like the usual seat wheels and UHMW⁷⁰⁰⁸

polyethylene tracks to match. After a year of use, the tracks started to pit. I was surprised by this, since the weight of the rigger and the rower's legs is much less than the load on the seat.

"The third system that Tiff used had four sets of three flat bearings rolling on Nylon tracks. I remember that it was quite an ordeal getting everything machined and aligned accurately enough without the computer numerical controlled equipment that we have today."⁷⁰⁰⁹

Because the hull and the rigger/foot-stretcher unit had to have structural integrity independent of one another, the weight of the boat as a whole was several pounds over the FISA minimum, and thanks to the height

⁷⁰⁰⁸ "ultra high molecular weight."

⁷⁰⁰⁹ Van Dusen, personal correspondence, 2009

THE SPORT OF ROWING



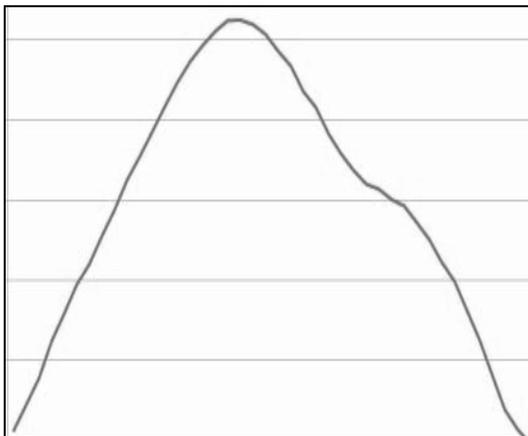
Andy Anderson



Tiff Wood

1983 World Bronze Medal, Regattabahn Wedau
 0°, +30° to -35°, 0-9, 0-10, 5-10 Modern Orthodox
 Hybrid-concurrent *Kernschlag* with late arm draw.

Note how Tiff's seat stays in one place.



Author

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

of the sliding unit above its tracks, the boat's center of gravity was noticeably higher than usual, making the boat even harder to balance than a normal Van Dusen, which

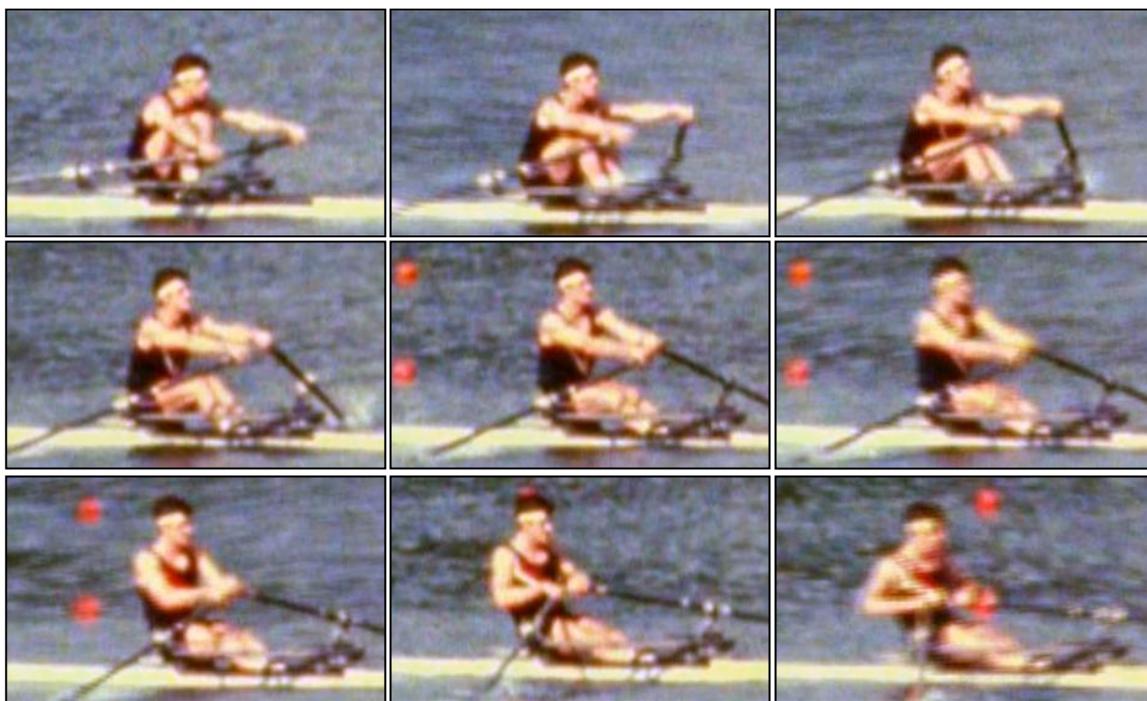
was already considerably less stable than a comparable Stämpfli or Empacher.

Add in that any effort to jam with the legs upon entry, especially at the start, would inevitably lift the athlete off his stationary seat and deposit him abruptly on the bow deck, and you had a boat that severely punished any inattention or any roughness at all in force application and strongly encouraged and rewarded smooth *Schubschlag* rowing.⁷⁰¹⁰

⁷⁰¹⁰ Interestingly, a quarter century later neither athlete remembers any of this. **Wood:** "It looked weird more than felt weird, and there was very little issue in adapting. It did generate some wicked butt sores, which made me popular with the medical staff." - Qtd. by Andy Anderson, *Survival of the Fastest*, *Rowing News*, November 2007, p. 54.

Both remember the blisters, caused by rubbing against the awkward vertical lip that Van Dusen added to the bow edge of the seat to discourage one's butt from sliding off in that direction. It helped, but only a little bit, and it was very

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Lucius Biglow

Tiff Wood

1983 World Bronze Medal, Regattabahn Wedau

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

Modern Orthodox hybrid-concurrent with late arm draw.

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

Tiff's Technique

Throughout his career, Tiff had employed a Modern Orthodox *Kernschlag* two-part pullthrough with his "vicious"⁷⁰¹¹ initial leg drive followed sequentially by back swing, and his arms remaining straight until the second half of the pullthrough.

However, his technique in 1983 was unique. After a poor result at the Internationale Rotsee Ruder-Regatta in

uncomfortable. A couple of months between the Trials and the Worlds were not nearly enough time to completely adjust to the boat's many idiosyncrasies.

⁷⁰¹¹ Allsopp, op cit.

Lucerne, Tiff was forced to make "adjustments to his style and his boat."⁷⁰¹²

Wood: "I didn't have enough time, but I started experimenting with rowing really high. I was doing 500 meter pieces up in Hanover where I was rowing at 36 to 38, and it wasn't that tiring and I was getting really good times. I just wasn't sure that I could keep that up. I think that the rig potentially lent itself to possibly rowing a much higher stroke, maybe even a shorter stroke, which is technically more efficient. But I didn't have time, so I ended up rowing kind of the same cadence. I didn't have

⁷⁰¹² U.S. Athlete Profiles, *Rowing USA*, June/July 1984, p. 44

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Carol McGowan

1983 United States Men's Quad training in Dartmouth
Stroke **John Biglow** 6'3" 190cm 187lb. 85kg, 3 **Bill Purdy** 6'5" 196cm 196lb. 89kg,
2 **Charlie Altekruise** 6'3" 191cm 210lb. 95kg, Bow **Joe Bouscaren** 6'3" 191cm 180lb. 82kg

enough faith in the idea yet to go to the World Championships and try it out."⁷⁰¹³

Thanks to the peculiarities of his sliding-rigger single, Tiff had to be much more careful with his leg drive and rely more on his back swing. This was the approach that Chris Allsopp had been encouraging him to adopt in their double in 1977 and 1980.

Swinging to the finish allowed the conversion of more of Tiff's enormous work capacity into boat speed, and the result was a magnificent Bronze Medal behind West German **Peter-Michael Kolbe**⁷⁰¹⁴ and the GDR sculler **Uwe Mund**.

Rowing U.S.A.: "Setting a very hard pace, the USSR's **Vasily Yakusha** led for

over a thousand meters. Kolbe was content to keep a slim lead over Mund as both went by the Soviet, then crept away for the Gold by a bit of open water.

"Meanwhile, Tiff Wood was regaining contact with the tiring Russian. With 500 meters to go, he was still over a length behind but coming on strong, and kept the pressure on until he broke through for the Bronze. The Czech and Polish scullers were well back."⁷⁰¹⁵

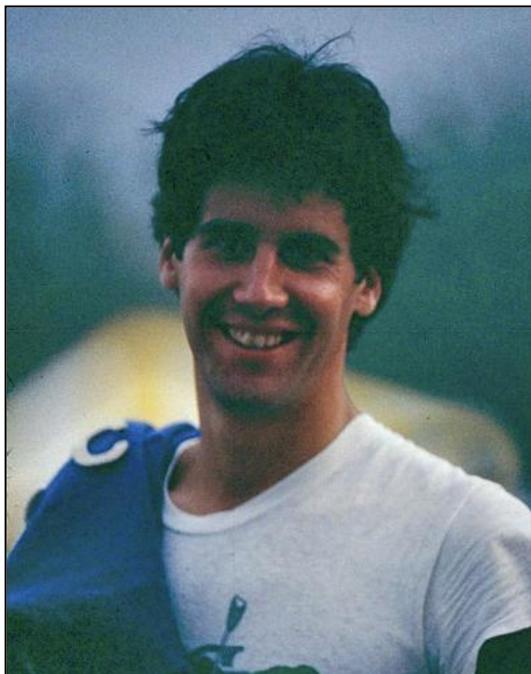
Wood: "After falling behind everybody in the first 500, I was relieved that pretty quickly I got ahead of the two who came in fifth and sixth. But the front three were just gone! It was only after the 1,000 that I

⁷⁰¹³ Wood, personal conversation, 2009

⁷⁰¹⁴ See Chapter 125.

⁷⁰¹⁵ Bob Jaugstetter, The 1983 World Championships, Rowing U.S.A., October/November 1983, p. 23

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Carol McGowan

Joe Bouscaren

began to think that maybe I was going to catch Yakusha. If only I hadn't fallen so far behind . . . I mean I beat Mund by a ton at Lake Casitas.⁷⁰¹⁶

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

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

⁷⁰¹⁶ Wood, op cit.

The 1983 Quad

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

"I rowed in the quad in 1983 in Duisburg, and it was a great experience for me. I was with **Joe Bouscaren** from Yale, **Charlie Altekruise** from Harvard and **Bill Purdy** from Syracuse, and it was a really fun boat."⁷⁰¹⁷

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

Joe Bouscaren

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

After graduating in 1979, Joe rowed in the tenth-place 1981 U.S. men's double with **Scott Roop**, who also won the World Lightweight Singles Championship at the same regatta.⁷⁰¹⁸

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

⁷⁰¹⁷ Biglow, op cit.

⁷⁰¹⁸ See Chapter 139.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

Charlie Altekruise

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

Charlie Altekruise: "I had learned how to row in Ireland. That was my first exposure to rowing, but it got ingrained in the St. Paul's / Harvard environment. There was some emphasis on technique, obviously timing and stuff, but I think there was more of an emphasis on aggressiveness and determination."⁷⁰¹⁹

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

While still a Harvard undergraduate, he made Harry Parker's **1979** U.S. Camp eight which also contained Biglow before he got sick.⁷⁰²⁰

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

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

Bill Purdy

Purdy: "I began rowing at Liverpool High School, a public school in the Syracuse



Carol McGowan

Charlie Altekruise

area. I needed a replacement for swimming, in which I had been competing year round for more than six years.

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

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

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

⁷⁰¹⁹ Altekruise, personal conversation, 2009

⁷⁰²⁰ See Chapter 139.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Bob Ernst/*The Oarsman*

United States Men's Olympic Eight

1980 Grand Challenge Cup Winner

Bow Sean Colgan 6'2" 188cm 180lb. 82kg, 2 Dick Cashin 6'4" 193cm 205lb. 93kg,
3 Kurt Somerville, 4 **Charlie Altekruise** 6'3" 191cm 210lb. 95kg,
5 Tom Woodman, 6 Steve Christiansen 6'5" 196cm 205lb. 93kg,
7 John Everett 6'4" 193cm 205lb. 93kg, Stroke Bruce Ibbetson 6'2" 188cm 183lb. 83kg,
Coxswain John Chatsky

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

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

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

"During our European tour, the final line-up for the four-with was not completed until after Lucerne. The top four turned out to be a very fast boat. (Tom Darling, Phil Stekl, me, John Biglow, Bob Jaugstetter) We won the remainder of our races in Europe.⁷⁰²¹

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

"I had career plans of attending dental school, which I had delayed a year so that I could compete for a spot on the Olympic Rowing Team. I began school in

⁷⁰²¹ See Chapter 139.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Lucius Biglow

1983 World Championship Men's Quad Sculls Semi-Final

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

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

September, 1980, but continued to train with no plans to attempt to make a team again. I applied for an Olympic Development single and began sculling in 1981. I trained primarily on my own, but during summer break I was able to train with **Scott Roop**⁷⁰²² and **Mike Totta**, who was a fast up-and-coming sculler in the central New York region.

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

“As in 1979 and 1980, Harry had a group of oarsmen who were training for the U.S. Sculling Team out of the Harvard boathouse. In the early morning, we trained in doubles and quads under Harry's guidance and rowed our singles on our own in the evenings. We had a cohesive group of

men, including Joe Bouscaren, Tiff Wood, Charlie Altekruise, Mike Totta, Scott Roop, Bruce Beall, and Ridgley Johnson, but every day was like a day at a selection camp, with the same intensity. Brad Lewis, John Biglow and Paul Enquist joined us later in the spring. Brad was aloof and kept to himself.

“I remember the camp that summer in Hanover as seemingly lasting forever. As with all of Harry's camps, there was almost daily seat racing. He tore people down, and it was a matter of survival. No one really knew where they stood in Harry's eyes.”⁷⁰²³

1983 Quad Technique

The 1983 quad had a lineup of formidable athletes and was a well-coached,

⁷⁰²² Ibid.

⁷⁰²³ Purdy, personal correspondence, 2010

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

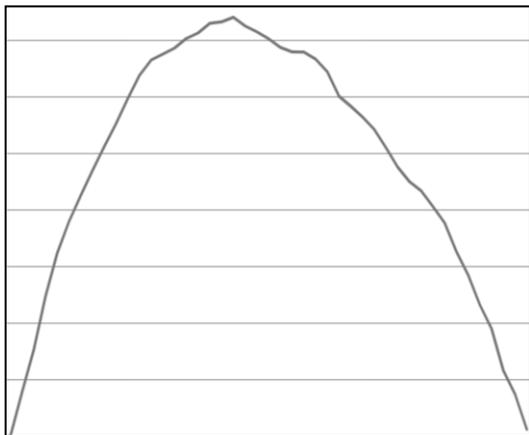


Andy Anderson

1983 United States Men's Quad
1983 World Seventh Place, Regattabahn Wedau
(Shown winning the petite final)

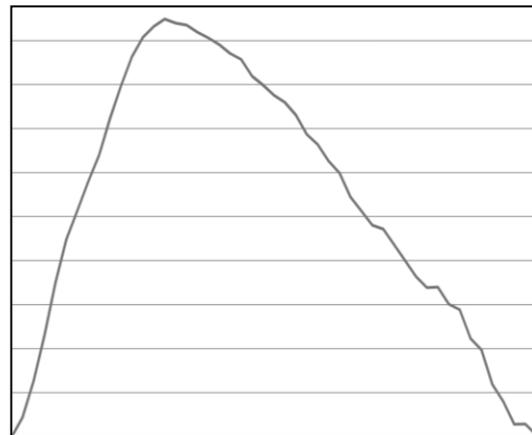
Bow **Joe Bouscaren** 6'3" 191cm 180lb. 82kg, 2 **Charlie Altekruise** 6'3" 191cm 210lb. 95kg,
3 **Bill Purdy** 6'5" 196cm 196lb. 89kg, Stroke **John Biglow** 6'3" 190cm 187lb. 85kg

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



Paul Smith

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



Paul Smith

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

smooth boat, as the film frames on the following pages amply demonstrate.

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

THE SPORT OF ROWING

Biglow: “My herniated disc gave me sciatica, which is an aching in your leg. There’s nothing wrong with your leg. It’s all in your back. The nerve from your leg is getting compressed, so therefore it sends a signal to your brain that feels the same as leg pain.

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

“That’s what I was wrestling with.

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

“Harry looked at it and said, ‘Yeah, I can’t figure out why you were doing that.’”⁷⁰²⁴

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

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

“Biggie was a tough guy to row against but pretty good in the boat. He rowed okay in the quad, technically better than Tiff would have, but he basically treated it like a floating erg.”⁷⁰²⁵

Cunningham: “I was with the team that year as a rigger, and that was some awful quad. They whacked at the catch so that there was an impact instead of picking the

boat up. Those guys had erred a long way from what I think of as good sculling.”⁷⁰²⁶

Halberstam: “West Coast coaches were traditionalists [who] considered those who favored power over technique the Philistines of sculling.

“To Cunningham and McIntyre, Biglow, more than any other American sculler, was *their* sculler and *their* hope. After going East to college, he had strayed from the true course and been seduced by the theory of power and endurance. He had gone over to the Easterners and sacrificed style for strength.

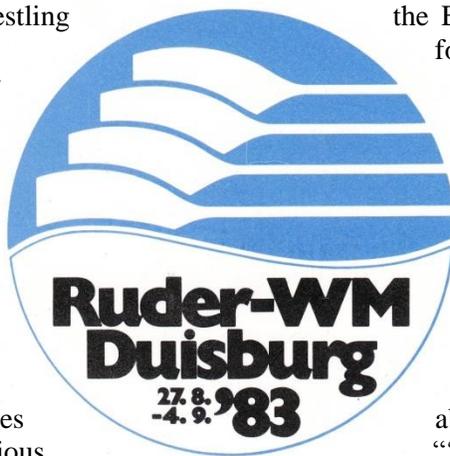
“McIntyre was particularly outspoken on the subject. As far as he was concerned, it was Biglow’s particular skill to be able to apply his power smoothly without lurching and jerking on the slide. He hated it when Biglow went for power and abandoned his technique.

“‘He’s chopping wood again,’ McIntyre would say.”⁷⁰²⁷

Biglow: “The quad is a stable boat, and you can go up there and feel like you really want to wind up and feel really powerful.”⁷⁰²⁸

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

Biglow: “We were fast in ‘83, but I kind of spoiled it for us in the semis. Unfortunately, when I really hit it hard, it slowed the boat down. The guys behind me



⁷⁰²⁴ Biglow, op cit.

⁷⁰²⁵ Lewis, op cit.

⁷⁰²⁶ Cunningham, op cit.

⁷⁰²⁷ Halberstam, p. 143

⁷⁰²⁸ Biglow, op cit.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

were great, really strong and rowing better than I was.

“We won the petit final, so we were seventh. We wouldn’t have medaled, but we probably could have beaten some of the crews in the final.”⁷⁰²⁹

1 FRG	5:45.97
2 GDR	5:47.87
3 ITA	5:49.79
4 CAN	5:51.33
5 CZE	5:52.77
6 FRA	5:54.46
7 USA	5:57.93
8 HOL	6:01.15
9 NOR	6:02.01
10 URS	6:05.03
11 BUL	6:10.28
12 HUN	6:11.19

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

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

“The American way of showing up for the World Championships and having your first race . . . That’s *no* way to go for a serious boat!”⁷⁰³⁰

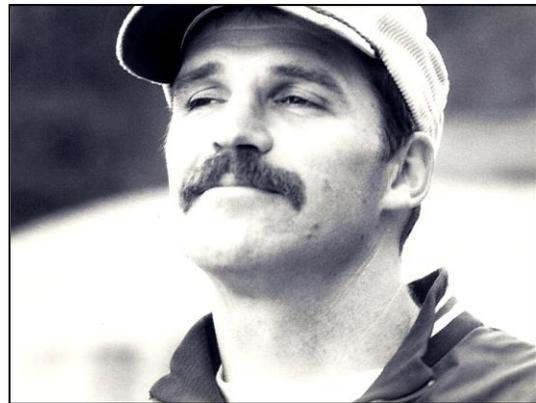
Purdy: “It was a bittersweet year, and I remember wishing that we had more opportunity to race together. I seemed like a long year and a long process for a limited racing experience.”⁷⁰³¹

1983 U.S. Double

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

Lewis: “I was on the team in ‘83 with all the good scullers. Harry Parker was the coach. We all got along great. We had a great time, all of us, really having a lot of fun.”⁷⁰³²

Brad Alan Lewis



Carol McGowan

Brad

Halberstam, describing Brad: “When he had made the National Team in a double, his partner, Paul Enquist, had found sustaining the friendship required for a double to be one of the hardest things he had ever done. There had been long periods when Lewis barely spoke to Enquist, and sometimes Brad treated him as if he were an opponent, not a teammate.”⁷⁰³³

Enquist: “Well, Brad *is* different.”⁷⁰³⁴

In *The Amateurs*, David Halberstam cast **Brad Alan Lewis**, 6’4” 193cm 196lb. 89kg.,

⁷⁰²⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰³⁰ Altekruse, personal conversation, 2009

⁷⁰³¹ Purdy, op cit.

⁷⁰³² Lewis, op cit.

⁷⁰³³ Halberstam, p. 102

⁷⁰³⁴ Qtd. by Halberstam, p. 175

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Carol McGowan

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

as the ultimate outsider, the brooding, angry loner from California in '84, crashing the party at the Harvard boathouse.

Brad would be our **Achilles**.

Lewis: "Was I an outsider? At that point, I'd been in rowing for thirteen years, a long time, and I'd been on the team since '77, so to be honest, I really didn't think of myself that much as the outsider. I think that was more of a Halberstam creation. I just happened to train on the West Coast. It made sense to train there if you want to get a lot of miles, and I don't like erging. I don't think it translates that well to sculling.

"That's one of the things I took umbrage with in Halberstam's book. It was all these pigeon-holed things. You're the *outsider*. You're the *Harvard* guy. You're the *Yale* guy. It was much more complex, much

more subtle than that, and we were actually pretty good friends."⁷⁰³⁵

Another actor in Halberstam's drama agrees.

Sean Colgan: "I put Halberstam in the 'fiction writer' category."⁷⁰³⁶

Nevertheless, if you read Brad's own passionate memoir of the events of 1984, *Assault on Lake Casitas*, he carefully describes how he intentionally built a wall between himself and "Harry's Boys" as "an artificial device that I had constructed in the past year."⁷⁰³⁷

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

⁷⁰³⁵ Lewis, op cit.

⁷⁰³⁶ Colgan, op cit.

⁷⁰³⁷ Lewis, *Assault*, p. 14

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

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

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

"A bunch of us tried out, showed up at this guy's classroom to talk about it. Two of us who were in that classroom went on to make the Olympic Team in 1984, myself and **Curtis Fleming**.⁷⁰³⁸ That was the only year it existed. A student teacher named **Mark Sandusky** had organized it. He left the next year.

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

"There was this guy, **Duvall Hecht**,⁷⁰³⁹ who let me use his wooden Pocock single, and I would go putting around in the afternoons. UC Irvine Coach **Bob Ernst**⁷⁰⁴⁰ saw me training, and he asked me to come row for him.

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

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

"Once I got there, I was fine.

"Ernst was a student of rowing, never much of a rower himself, but he studied it,

and my hat's off to him because a lot of coaches never do. They just go on gut instinct, and that will get you just so far. To make the really big improvements, you've got to have some theoretical background."⁷⁰⁴¹

The University of California at Irvine had a wonderful Varsity in 1974. Brad ended up in the Jayvee, but Ernst had trained everyone in singles, doubles and pairs. Brad continued to scull on the side in Duvall Hecht's single.

Lewis: "Duvall gave me a steady stream of low-key advice that I greatly needed."⁷⁰⁴²

Brad quit crew his senior year, but witnessing in person the battle between Kolbe and Karppinen at the 1976 Olympics in Montréal⁷⁰⁴³ had a life-changing impact on him.

Lewis: "Within a few days, I had acquired a racing shell, and before a year had passed, this obscure antiquated sport had become my passion."⁷⁰⁴⁴

Lewis first made the U.S. Team in 1977, stroking the quad with Ted Van Dusen,⁷⁰⁴⁵ John Bannen and Casey Baker. They came in ninth.

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

Lewis: "I found my way to Zurich, and **Melch Bürgin**⁷⁰⁴⁶ and we hit it off. I trained at the club there and went with them to regattas."⁷⁰⁴⁷

After a stint in the 1980 Olympic Quad with Chris Allsopp, Tiff and Tom Howes,

⁷⁰³⁸ See Chapters 141 and 142.

⁷⁰³⁹ the founder of rowing at UCI. See Chapter 81.

⁷⁰⁴⁰ See Chapter 148.

⁷⁰⁴¹ Lewis, personal conversation, 2009

⁷⁰⁴² Lewis, *Assault*, p. 10

⁷⁰⁴³ See Chapter 125.

⁷⁰⁴⁴ Lewis, op cit, p. 4

⁷⁰⁴⁵ the builder of the U.S. sliding-rigger single in 1982 and 1983.

⁷⁰⁴⁶ See Chapter 87.

⁷⁰⁴⁷ Lewis, personal conversation, 2009

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Lucius Biglow

1983 United States Men's Double

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

Brad would next appear on a U.S. Team roster in the 1983 National Sculling Camp double with Paul Enquist. They had both failed to make Coach Harry Parker's priority boat, the quad.

Altekruse: "Brad was incredibly strong, but you could feel the boat jerk through the power application."⁷⁰⁴⁸ It just didn't work, and that's why nobody could row with him."⁷⁰⁴⁹

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

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

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

"Power curves are really hard to change, but if the power matches up, then it's just a matter of matching up catch timing, stroke length and hands away speed."⁷⁰⁵⁰

⁷⁰⁴⁸ It may have been that Brad's sculler-oriented *Schubschlag* conflicting with the Harvard/Yale sweep-oriented *Kernschlag*.

⁷⁰⁴⁹ Altekruse, personal conversation, 2009

⁷⁰⁵⁰ Lewis, op cit.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Andy Anderson

1983 World Championship Men's Quad Sculls Semi-Final

Regattabahn Wedau

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

Recent testing reveals similar but not identical *Schubschlag* force curves for Lewis and Enquist.⁷⁰⁵¹ The tests were separately conducted twenty-five years after their competitive careers, and unfortunately, Lewis was pulling much less hard than Enquist.

However, as we shall discover, film and feedback from his 1983 and '84 campmates strongly suggest that Brad may have been at least as susceptible as Biglow to mutation towards segmented *Kernschlag* at full pressure.

1983 Worlds

Lewis: "With 500 meters to go in the semi-final, Paul and I rumbled past the Soviets, and then, on the last stroke, we nudged ahead of the Canadians. Dramatic, gutsy rowing."⁷⁰⁵²

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

". . . but then we had a really bad final. I was sick, and we raced poorly and got sixth."⁷⁰⁵³

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

Enquist: "Racing at the Worlds went well until the last 750 meters of the final when we picked up the wake from the East Germans and couldn't steer the shell anymore."⁷⁰⁵⁴

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

⁷⁰⁵¹ See Chapter 141.

⁷⁰⁵² Lewis, *Assault*, p. 56

⁷⁰⁵³ Lewis, personal conversation, 2009

⁷⁰⁵⁴ Enquist, personal correspondence, 2009

THE SPORT OF ROWING

“I thought I’d do the single the next year, but of course that ended up not working out.”⁷⁰⁵⁵

Fateful words.

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

“Harry had gone out with us five to six days a week in the spring of 1983. We did a

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

“As Charlie Altekruze has said about the Olympic year, the group was very deep – there were only a few single scullers who were outstanding, but there were another six to ten people around who could also move team boats well, and that made for a very competitive environment.”⁷⁰⁵⁶

⁷⁰⁵⁵ Lewis, op cit.

⁷⁰⁵⁶ Totta, personal correspondence, 2010

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

141. American Iliad

1984 Singles Trials – Sculling Camp – Lucerne

Biglow: “After the quad in ‘83, Harry and I figured out that I should go back out to Seattle and row in a double because it didn’t hurt my back so much. I started rowing with **Paul Enquist**, and we spent the winter working out and running stairs, and it was *great!*”

“Paul is a great friend.”⁷⁰⁵⁷

Enquist: “The stairs were near John’s home, 192 stairs, very steep with only a three-foot landing in the middle. The first time I did them with him I was only able to do one flight running. I managed to finish ten by running, then walking and then crawling to the top. My legs were jello for the next week. This was in early January.

“By mid April, two days before leaving Seattle for Boston, we both did 20 flights, two at a time.”⁷⁰⁵⁸

While in Seattle, John and Paul again got help from **Frank Cunningham**.⁷⁰⁵⁹

Enquist: “It is interesting to read about the weakness in John’s legs due to his back condition. I know we adjusted our 1984 winter workouts to accommodate his needs.

“When we trained in the double, I was the timer, so I know the long pieces were six minutes on, three off, up to ten or twelve cycles. The quality of the rowing became very good doing this method.

“It is interesting to note that **Kris Korzeniowski**⁷⁰⁶⁰ had told us we were

wasting our time training that way, but later after both our results from the 1984 Games, he had his sweep rowers doing some of our workouts the following year.”⁷⁰⁶¹

Purdy: “During the fall of 1983, I trained at Harvard. We had fewer organized rows with Harry and trained as a group mostly by ourselves in singles and doubles. I raced at the Head of the Charles in the championship double with Charlie Altekruise. We won and set a course record.”⁷⁰⁶²

The Harvard boathouse had been the informal center of U.S. men’s sculling since the spring of 1983 when Harry Parker accepted the position as Olympic men’s sculling coach. A group made up mostly of Yale and Harvard graduates coalesced there around Harry, and for those athletes whose personal lives prevented them from relocating to Cambridge for a year, there developed a sense that they were outsiders.

Harry’s personality and coaching style did not discourage this mindset. For twenty years, Harry had been known as a coach of few words who selected his crews through relentless intramural competition, especially seat racing, and who seemed to rely on the athletes themselves to resolve issues of technique.

All this was evident during the two-week camp in **Tampa, Florida** in January, 1984.

⁷⁰⁵⁷ Biglow, personal conversation, 2008

⁷⁰⁵⁸ Enquist, op cit, 2010

⁷⁰⁵⁹ Halberstam, p. 159

⁷⁰⁶⁰ See Chapter 124.

⁷⁰⁶¹ Enquist, op cit, 2008

⁷⁰⁶² Purdy, op cit.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

Jim Dietz: “NO boats were rigged properly. The doubles were in a range from 155cm to 162cm spreads with varying [oarlock angles and distances] through the pin. The oarsmen themselves agreed upon and rigged these boats after the first week.

“Instead of constant racing and pressure of being ranked in a point system, Mr. Parker should have established a greater aerobic base with more emphasis on technique. At no time did he ever identify the style he wanted.”⁷⁰⁶³

Purdy: “Following the winter training session in Tampa, I moved to Long Beach, California to train for the rest of the winter. While there, I made frequent trips to Newport Beach, where I trained with **Curtis Fleming**. Curtis was a class guy, an accomplished sculler and a great friend. Out of everyone in the Olympic Quad that later beat us in the Trials, I was happiest for him.”⁷⁰⁶⁴

Charlie Altekruse: “I felt like I was a pretty good quad sculler but not as comfortable in a single. After Harry had challenged me to take my training more seriously,⁷⁰⁶⁵ I was determined to become a top-tier sculler, and I also wanted an adventure worthy of postponing my education and career. So, after our team trip to Tampa, I went to Switzerland from roughly mid-January to mid-April. I planned to return in time to acclimate for the U.S. Singles Trials.

“I trained amidst the steam boats on the big lake at Luzern and on Lago di Lugano in the Ticino (Italian) part of Switzerland. I trained mostly by myself, though sometimes with the Swiss national sculler, who I consistently beat, and a few times a week with **Fredy Bachmann**.

⁷⁰⁶³ Dietz, memorandum to Men’s Olympic Rowing Committee, September, 1984

⁷⁰⁶⁴ Purdy, op cit.

⁷⁰⁶⁵ See Chapter 140.

“Fredy is perhaps one of the greatest rowers ever. A natural lightweight at 5’11” [180cm] and 154lb. [70kg], Fredy rowed heavyweights his whole life.

“After barely losing the 1972 Swiss Olympic Singles Trials to European and World Doubles Champion **Melch Bürgin**,⁷⁰⁶⁶ Fredy was relegated to the sculling spare position. During training in St. Moritz before the Games, Fredy consistently beat Melch in pieces. Just before the Munich Games, the stroke of the Swiss straight-pair was hit by a car and couldn’t row. Someone suggested the bow rower move to stroke and Fredy jump into the bow seat. Fredy says from the beginning the boat flew – mostly because of his incredible technique, honed from years in sculling boats (as is the European way). A week or two later, they won the Silver Medal very unexpectedly.

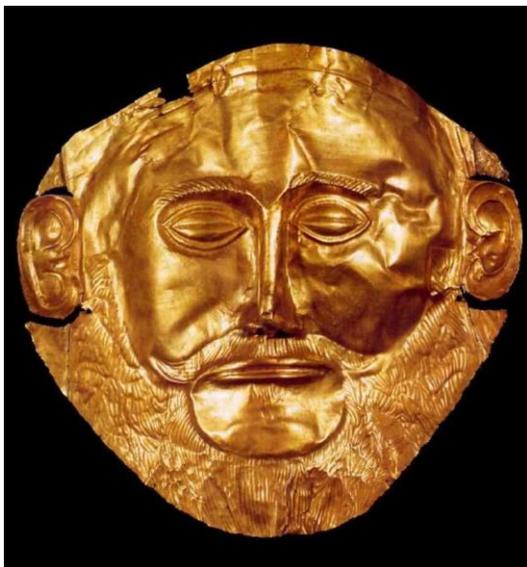
“Fredy Bachman rows like Joe Bouscaren. He glides in the boat and does nothing to check its forward movement. Huge emphasis on getting hands and back extended quickly on the recovery and leaving the seat behind. Also, emphasis on preparing for the catch, blades arching for the water and placed in before the catch. The catch is a gradual pickup rather than a hard attack, like they do in eights [*Schubschlag* instead of *Kernschlag*].

“I trained about twelve times a week, including a very little bit of land workouts. For the twelve weeks, I averaged over 100 miles [160 km] a week, which works out to almost 16 miles [23 km] a day.

“A typical morning workout for Fredy and me would be to row a 5-mile piece, either from the small town of Agnuzzo to the little statue in Morcote on Lago di Lugano or from the city center in Luzern to Küsnacht on the Vierwaldstättersee, at full power at about 28-30. Thirty minutes right

⁷⁰⁶⁶ See Chapter 87.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



National Archaeological Museum, Athens

The Mask of Agamemnon

off, no stopping. On the way back we would do shorter pieces. I must have done this thirty times in those three months in the Alps.

“I already knew from Tampa that I was among the ‘stronger’ scullers, and I came back from Switzerland even stronger than when I left.

“The physiological benefits of this training were huge: when we returned to the sculling camp and were tested, I recall my anaerobic capacity was at the top of the team by a substantial margin (10-15%) above the next person, who I believe was Biglow. I think my lung capacity approached 7.5-8 liters.

“I could technically row much better as well. I came back with a much better feel for the boat than I had had in ‘83, and I felt prepared to row competitively in the Olympic Singles Trials.”⁷⁰⁶⁷

Charlie Altekruise has the wide visage seen on the Mask of **Agamemnon**, the king of Mycenae who led the Greek assault on

Troy but nevertheless was destined by fate to play only a minor role in the epic that would follow.

Jim Dietz: “There were four weekends held in Boston [during the early spring of 1984]. The first two consisted of seat racing in quads. The third was for physiological testing in Hanover, New Hampshire, followed by singles racing in Boston. This was the second physiological test held. The first was attended mostly by the Boston-based scullers. The others received notice three days late.

“There was little communication outside the Harvard boathouse. Mr. Parker did not attend the testing or the singles racing. He did assign heats.”⁷⁰⁶⁸

Enquist: “Before leaving Seattle in the spring of ‘84, John and I made a trip to Canada for the weekend. The day before leaving, the blade broke off one of John’s sculls and we had to make a switch to a set of different length and size of blades.

“On Saturday we raced **Pat Walter** and **Bruce Ford** at Burnaby Lake over 2000m. They had represented Canada at the Worlds a number of times. We lost by half a length. Settled too low and fell way behind early. Couldn’t make up the difference.

“Sunday we raced the **Tim Storm** / **Peter MacGowan** double on Elk Lake near Victoria. We did 3 x 1500m, holding the rating to 32. As was becoming normal, we fell behind in the first two but were able to row back through them for 2 to 4 sec. wins.

“The last piece we settled at around 34 and moved out to a length or more of open water immediately. Jack Nicholson, their coach started screaming at us to take it down, and we did, but the damage was done, we pulled steadily away and beat them by 8 seconds.

⁷⁰⁶⁷ Altekruise, personal correspondence, 2009

⁷⁰⁶⁸ Dietz, op cit.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

“This was the same Canadian double that raced in Lucerne and Casitas. I still have the time splits note Jack gave me after the workout. It was a great confidence builder just before leaving for Boston. I was hoping it would be enough to keep John away from the single. No such luck.”⁷⁰⁶⁹

Biglow: “After the winter, Paul Enquist and I came back to Boston, and we did really well. This was when Harry had the Olympic Sculling Camp, and he had all these doubles that had been working out with him all fall and all winter, and Paul and I came back and beat them all. We were the fastest double. It was great.

Easter, 1984

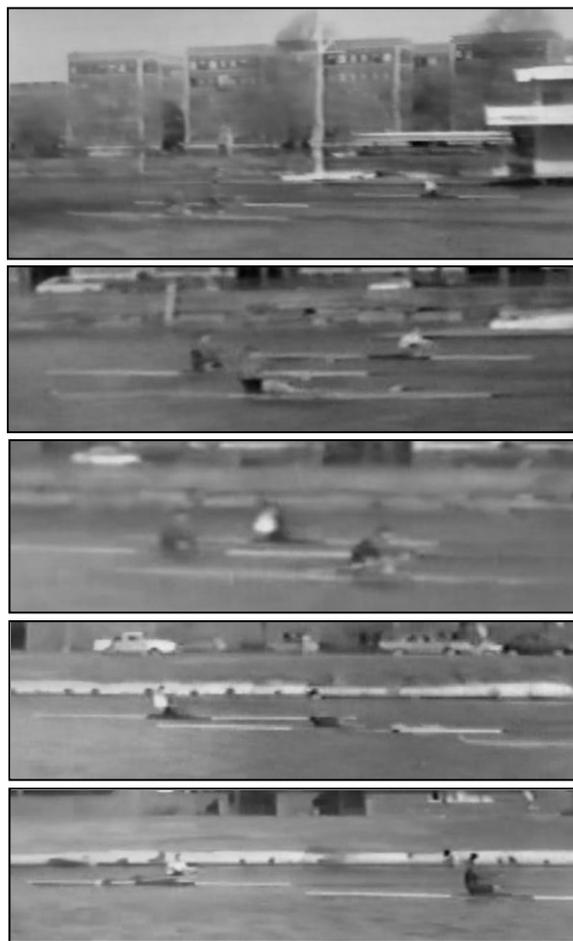
Biglow: “I had not been training in the single *at all* because of my back, and then we did a singles race. It was down in the Charles River Basin. It was kind of choppy, and I usually don’t do well in choppy water.

“Joe Bouscaren was there, and Tiff was there. We started off, and *Boom!* Those guys are out. Joe was really quick off the line, and Tiff was quick off the line, too. They’re both fast twitch guys, but at the Mass. Ave. Bridge where it got rougher and rougher, I was catching up! I moved through them both just after M.I.T., and I won! It blew my mind. I had no idea. Where did this come from? How could I have gotten fast again?

“Then I thought to myself at the finish line, ‘It’s April 22nd, Easter Sunday!’ I’m not especially religious, but I was thinking, ‘Well, someone has risen again.’

“That was another humbling experience for me.”⁷⁰⁷⁰

Wood: “I have a very vivid recollection of that race. It’s funny. I remember racing Joe. I don’t even *remember* John being



Harry Parker

Singles Race, Easter Sunday, 1984

Charles River Basin

As they passed the MIT boathouse, **John Biglow** (in white, far lane) rolled through **Tiff Wood** (near lane) and **Joe Bouscaren** (middle lane).

there. I got Joe at the very end, and I was *sure* that I had gotten him, and he didn’t believe me, sort of thing, until Harry in the launch confirmed it.”⁷⁰⁷¹

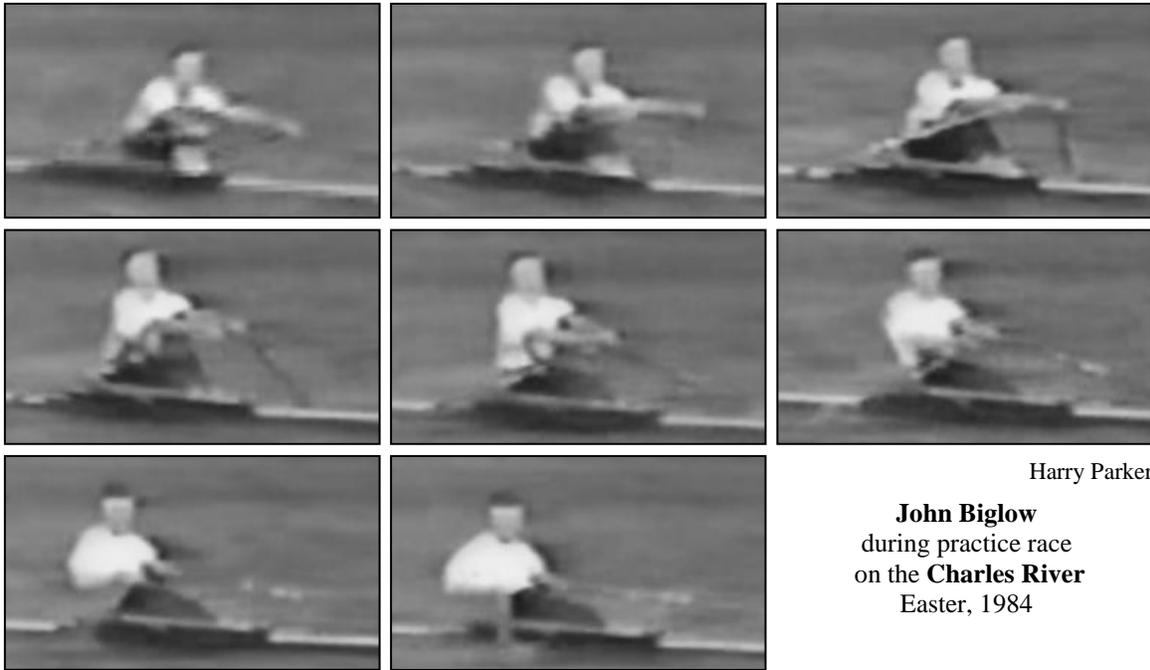
Enquist: “After the stair workouts combined with the high quality rowing workouts, I was not surprised when John rowed away from everyone on Easter

⁷⁰⁶⁹ Enquist, op cit, 2010

⁷⁰⁷⁰ Biglow, op cit.

⁷⁰⁷¹ Wood, personal conversation, 2009

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Harry Parker

John Biglow
during practice race
on the **Charles River**
Easter, 1984

-10°, +25° to -30°, 0-7, 0-10, 5-10, *Schubschlag*, late arm draw
Return to his 1981 Classical Technique concurrency with emphasis on back swing

Sunday in the single. Probably the fastest he went in the single all year.⁷⁰⁷²

Technique

After spending the winter rowing a double with Paul Enquist and being observed by Frank Cunningham and others in the Seattle community, John Biglow had returned to the form he had shown three years earlier. The Modern Orthodox hybrid-concurrency of 1982 and 1983 had been replaced by the Classical concurrency of 1981 and before. The emphasis was on back swing right from the entry and solid follow-through to the release.

John Biglow never rowed better than he did on that Easter Sunday in 1984, and Harry Parker's film of that practice shows him rolling through first Tiff Wood and then

Joe Bouscaren like a hot knife through butter. The other scullers in the workout were many lengths behind the three leaders.

Rowing with Paul Enquist had been *very* good for John Biglow.

Halberstam: "After Biglow had won the race, Enquist had not said anything, but there was a sad look on his face. Later, Enquist had shaken his head and made a downward circling motion with his right hand. The meaning was perfectly clear. Their double was down the drain."⁷⁰⁷³

Olympic Singles Trials

The Olympic Singles Trials took place two weeks later on the weekend of May 6.

Biglow: "Before the Olympic Singles Trials, Tiff had granted an interview to author **David Halberstam**, who was

⁷⁰⁷² Enquist, op cit.

⁷⁰⁷³ Halberstam, p. 15

THE SPORT OF ROWING

preparing an article for *Parade Magazine*, and Tiff was saying that it was too early for the Singles Trials. ‘The cherry trees have not even blossomed,’ and that showed me that he was not confident.

“Halberstam considered writing something longer only after his first interviews for that *Parade Magazine* piece. He loved rowing himself, having rowed on a house crew at Harvard. I remember him saying after our first three-hour interview, ‘I may have enough here for a book!’⁷⁰⁷⁴

The result was *The Amateurs*, a classic in American 20th Century nonfiction.

Altekruse: “From my point of view, the way that 1984 worked out was pretty unfortunate because of the timing of how it was put together. Also, the way that the Olympic boycotts washed through the system is not to be understated. We boycotted ‘80, which meant that we had twice as many people trying out in ‘84, which is one reason why it was so hard to make the team.

“The Singles Trials were *packed* with good scullers.”⁷⁰⁷⁵

Dietz: “Mr. Parker took it upon himself to seed the Olympic Trials. This was unprecedented in U.S. rowing and believed by many a tool to protect the scullers he favored.”⁷⁰⁷⁶

There were thirty-five entrants in the Olympic Singles Trials. After six seeded heats with one to advance and six repêchages with one to advance, all the favorites had made it to the semi-finals. In the first semi, **Tiff Wood** led throughout with **John Biglow** stalking a half length back, **Joe Bouscaren** another half-length

behind and the ageless **Jim Dietz** a close fourth.

Rowing U.S.A.: “Coming into the last 500 meters, third place was still a question. Bouscaren seemed to have it, but with about 20 strokes to go, Dietz put on an amazing run to take back the half length that Bouscaren seemed to have on him.

“As they flashed past the finish line, the general feeling in the crowd was that Dietz may have just nosed past Bouscaren, probably by inches. The videotape left the officials in a quandary. The body of [Biglow] obscured the view of [the bow balls of] the two boats. The race was declared a dead heat for third [with four advancing to the final].”⁷⁰⁷⁷

Sean Colgan: “Even though he definitely came fourth, Harry wanted Bouscaren in the final and unilaterally put him in. My dad⁷⁰⁷⁸ was the head judge and would not allow it. After a one hour fight on the Princeton bank, my dad was overruled by the Men’s Olympic Rowing Committee.”⁷⁰⁷⁹

Dietz: “If there was a finish line picture taken of the semi-final, it was not necessary. Mr. Colgan told me I clearly had beaten Joe. I knew it, Joe knew it, and everyone else knew that Harry had put him in the final.”⁷⁰⁸⁰

“Blatant interference. He never should have been allowed in the finish line area, having no official capacity.”⁷⁰⁸¹

“I also remember that I was given an outside lane in the final with Joe more in the

⁷⁰⁷⁴ Biglow, op cit.

⁷⁰⁷⁵ Altekruse, personal conversation, 2009

⁷⁰⁷⁶ Dietz, op cit.

⁷⁰⁷⁷ Kathryn Reith, Men’s Olympic Single Sculling Trials, *Rowing U.S.A.*, June/July 1984, p. 37

⁷⁰⁷⁸ **Chuck Colgan** (1927-1999), University of Pennsylvania and Vesper Boat Club, a tireless rower, coach, father of rowers, referee and raconteur his entire life.

⁷⁰⁷⁹ Colgan, personal correspondence, 2009

⁷⁰⁸⁰ Dietz, personal correspondence, 2009

⁷⁰⁸¹ Dietz, memorandum to Men’s Olympic Rowing Committee, September, 1984

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

center of the race course. Harry threw out the rules of rowing and orchestrated the race as he felt it should go.”⁷⁰⁸²

In the second semi-final, there were also four competitors closely tracking each other down the course. Several went out too fast, and all crossed the finish line within 1.1 seconds or just over half a length. It was **Sean Colgan** first, **Brad Lewis** second, **Greg Montesi** third and **Charlie Altekruise** a heartbreaking fourth.

Lewis: “I survived the semi-finals, although only by inches, due to a blazing fast start and a remarkably slow finish.”⁷⁰⁸³

Colgan: “I won my semi by 0.7 seconds over Lewis, but I had shut down as I had the final the following day.

“Harry then proceeded to assign the lanes for the final, which is also illegal. My dad walked out and quit. Winning my semi, I should have had Lane 3 or 4. Instead, I got Lane 1!!!”⁷⁰⁸⁴

Greg Montesi, 6’1” 185cm 179lb. 81kg, a 1982 United States Naval Academy graduate, is the son of Ed Montesi, 5-seat on the 1959 Pan Am Champion Syracuse University Eight.

At the age of 17, Greg had won Bronze in the single at the 1976 Junior World Championships in Villach, Austria. He won the U.S. Junior title a second time in 1977, but mononucleosis kept him from again competing in the Junior Worlds.

An active-duty Marine in 1984, he had been training hard for the Olympic Singles Trials only since the previous January.

Altekruise: “It ended up that the only time in my life that I ever officially raced a single was at the ‘84 Trials, when I missed the finals by a split second to Greg Montesi.



Carol McGowan

Discussions during the Singles Trials Harry (above) and Korzo

“I told Harry Parker that I didn’t want to race in the petite finals because I knew that the Doubles Camp was going to start two days later. I was exhausted, I was disappointed, and I couldn’t understand what *I* would have to gain.

“That conversation features in *The Amateurs* as a confrontation between Harry and me, which *I* never talked to Halberstam about. I would be surprised if Harry talked to him about it, but maybe he heard about it third hand.”⁷⁰⁸⁵

What are Selection Trials?

In fairness, it should be noted that selection trial races are unique in sport. In a

⁷⁰⁸² Dietz, personal correspondence, 2009

⁷⁰⁸³ Lewis, *Assault*, p. 19

⁷⁰⁸⁴ Colgan, op cit.

⁷⁰⁸⁵ Altekruise, op cit.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

perfect world, they would pick not the fastest entrant on the particular day but the strongest candidate for the coming World or Olympic competition, weeks or months away. At the 1956 Olympic Eights Trials in the days before seeded heats, this rationale was used by the overwhelming majority of participating coaches, the very best in America at the time, to justify open manipulation of the lane draws after the fact.⁷⁰⁸⁶ Today seeding, a form of manipulation, is common in international sport, including rowing.

Every time that equipment breakage has impacted a trials outcome, there have been strong arguments made to set aside the results and rerun the trial.

It need not be mentioned that all this represents a slippery slope towards institutionalizing bias and pre-determined outcomes, and so in recent decades most sports in the United States that use selection trials, including rowing, have made their procedures and their results absolute.

However, the 1984 Singles Trials were even more problematical in that they were being used not just to select the Olympic single sculler but also as a prelude to the Doubles/Quad Camp by a head coach who had been working with many of the athletes involved for more than a year and seemed to have already begun the coming selection process in his mind.

There is no question that Harry Parker had an agenda when he injected himself into the semi-final results and into the lane assignments in the final of the Singles Trials, but that agenda was to collect information he believed would help him in his job as Olympic Sculling Coach.

One of the great strengths of selection trials is that they allow the outsider to prove himself. Unfortunately and inevitably, manipulation of trials works against

⁷⁰⁸⁶ See Chapter 68.

outsiders, and there were many outsiders in 1984, including Jim Dietz.

Dietz: "Harry set aside procedures several times to get the results that he wanted. I don't think there was even an attempt on his part to cover up his desired outcomes. He knew, as did everyone else, that he would do what *he* felt was best, regardless of the rules.

"I have come away from 1984 dedicated to making any coaching decision (and life decisions) as fair and honest as I can for all involved. *No one should be prejudged.*

"All the scullers in '84 gave it their best and deserved an open and fair environment to demonstrate their ability. Today's selection criteria and Rules of Rowing are in place for just these reasons."⁷⁰⁸⁷

The Singles Trials Final

Rowing U.S.A.: "The final was another classic race, a tactical duel to the finish. Tiff had a slight lead off the start, but he settled back into the pack.

"At 1,000 meters, Bouscaren had a length lead with Colgan a half-length ahead of Biglow, Dietz, Wood and Lewis. Only two to three feet separated third through sixth."⁷⁰⁸⁸

Wood: "I remember looking over and saying to myself, 'Wait a second. I'm not even ahead of Brad!'"⁷⁰⁸⁹

So far, only Montesi in seventh had fallen off the pace.

Lewis: "At the half-way mark, I took three deep breaths, sucking heavy on the air. Then I began to lean on it. I caught Joe Bouscaren in 20 strokes, and I was in first place."⁷⁰⁹⁰

⁷⁰⁸⁷ Dietz, op cit.

⁷⁰⁸⁸ Kathryn Reith, Men's Olympic Single Sculling Trials, *Rowing U.S.A.*, June/July 1984, p. 38

⁷⁰⁸⁹ Qtd. by Reith, op cit.

⁷⁰⁹⁰ Lewis, op cit, p. 22

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

Rowing U.S.A.: “At 1,250 meters, Lewis made a strong move into second place, drawing Wood and Biglow along. At 500 meters to go, Lewis moved into a half-length lead over Bouscaren, Biglow and Wood.”⁷⁰⁹¹

Halberstam: “Lewis had surged ahead, going by so quickly that Bouscaren could not respond. That seemed to stagger him mentally for a moment, and now as he looked out he saw both Wood and Biglow beginning their sprints. It was hard for him to find more energy, and he had a sense that he had gone out too fast.”⁷⁰⁹²

Biglow: “Brad was far away from me. I was in a far right lane, and he was in a far left lane, and the finish line at Princeton is at an angle to the shore so it’s really hard to read.”⁷⁰⁹³

Colgan: “Montesi was screwed out in Lane 0, which was dead slow. I was in Lane 1, and Biggie was in Lane 2 or 3. Brad had Lane 6, which is a *big* advantage in Princeton.”⁷⁰⁹⁴

Wood: “That’s interesting about Lane 6 being an advantage. I was never too aware that Princeton was unfair, though it does ring a bell that at high water there could be some lane difference, and the Trials were early enough in the season that maybe there was some water running.

“At the time I don’t remember thinking about it – probably one of those things you try not to be aware of.”⁷⁰⁹⁵

Biglow: “I came from *way* behind, and I was thinking, ‘I *can’t* let Brad Lewis win! I *can’t* let Brad Lewis win!’”⁷⁰⁹⁶

Halberstam: “It seemed wrong to Biglow that Brad Lewis should be the sculler. It offended his Biglovian sense of order and hierarchy. It was easy to picture

Tiff as the single sculler, but Brad Lewis was different.

“With 500 meters to go, Biglow set out to catch him. Probably Biglow would have tried to win anyway, but his feelings about Lewis gave him more reason.”⁷⁰⁹⁷

Rowing U.S.A.: “Coming into the last 25 strokes, Lewis led with Biglow moving and Wood taking over third. In the last ten, both Biglow and Wood tried to catch Lewis with a last surge. Biglow succeeded. Wood didn’t.”⁷⁰⁹⁸

1 John Biglow	7:27.10
2 Brad Alan Lewis	7:28.00
3 Tiff Wood	7:28.10
4 Joe Bouscaren	7:32.05
5 Sean Colgan	7:32.10
6 Jim Dietz	7:34.10
7 Greg Montesi	7:37.60

Wood: “The heat and the semi-finals at the Trials had gone . . . perfectly. I was in the semi where they ended up having four people go to the final, so ostensibly it might have been thought of as being a really hard race, but it was a race that I felt in control of, and that’s somewhat unusual for me. Often I get nervous about not being far enough ahead or whatever, but that was one where honestly I *did* feel very much in control and watching these other people fighting it out, wondering what was going to happen but never feeling threatened by it.

“It wasn’t to me a hard race. There have been people who have postulated that as the oldest person there maybe I didn’t recover as well as everyone else, and that was the problem the next day.

“In the final, I had the most incredibly awful race. Five strokes into it I felt like I couldn’t find the rhythm. I couldn’t get it going.

“If there was one thing that was wrong in my single sculling career, it was inconsistency. It took me a long time to

⁷⁰⁹¹ Reith, op cit.

⁷⁰⁹² Halberstam, pp. 129-30

⁷⁰⁹³ Biglow, op cit.

⁷⁰⁹⁴ Colgan, op cit.

⁷⁰⁹⁵ Wood, personal correspondence, 2009

⁷⁰⁹⁶ Biglow, op cit.

⁷⁰⁹⁷ Halberstam, p. 131

⁷⁰⁹⁸ Reith, op cit.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Carol McGowan

John Biglow
1984 Olympic Singles Trials Winner

learn to row the single, and it wasn't the technique. It was in my head.

"Relatively early in the race, I remember having difficulty having a good race. At some point, around the 1,000 probably, I decided that if I'm not going to be able to row right, I might as well just take it up, and that's all I did for the rest of the race. Every 20 strokes I took it up.

"And I *did* start to move. I actually started to row better . . . at some point, but I was coming from pretty far behind. I remember John telling me after the race that he saw me back there, and he was thinking, 'What is Tiff's strategy?'

"Typical John. [laughing heartily] Rather than thinking, 'Great! I'm killing

him,' he's thinking, 'This has got to be a trick!'

"No . . . It was just Tiff having a bad row."⁷⁰⁹⁹

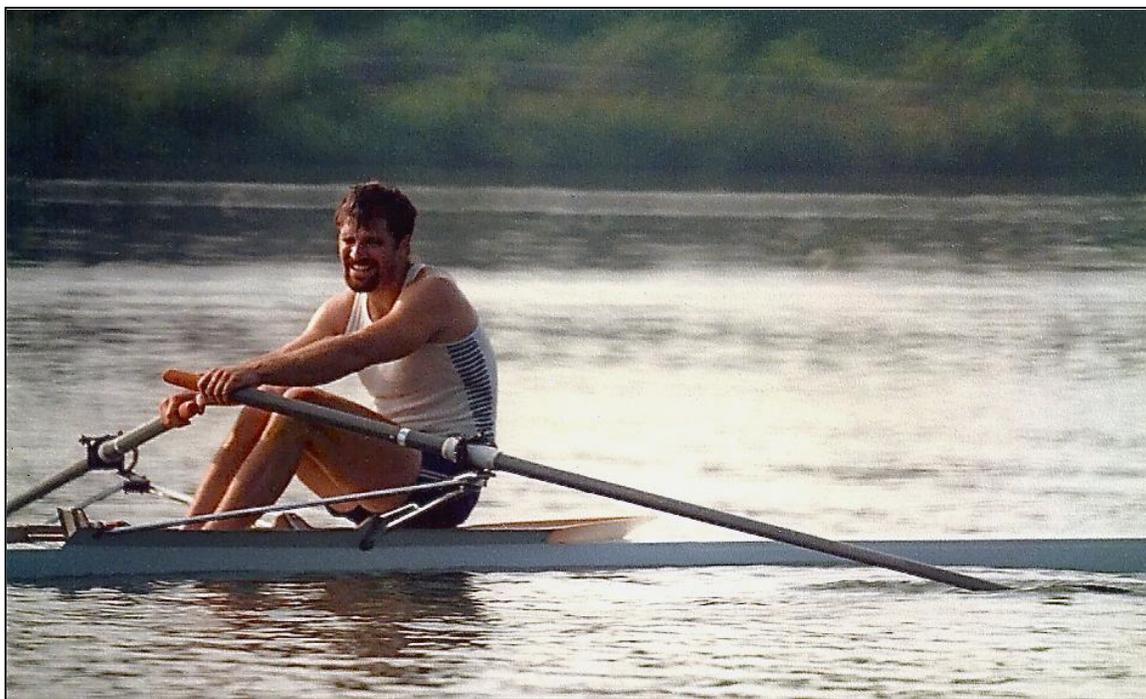
Lewis has written of the Singles Trials from his own unique perspective in his memoir, *Assault on Lake Casitas*.

Lewis: "At the time it felt like a great tragedy, but . . . in retrospect, the best thing that ever happened to me was that I lost those Singles Trials."⁷¹⁰⁰

⁷⁰⁹⁹ Wood, personal conversation, 2009

⁷¹⁰⁰ Lewis, personal conversation, 2009

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Carol McGowan

Brad Lewis
1984 Olympic Singles Trials Runner-Up
The Agony of Defeat

Olympic Sculling Camp

Halberstam: “If rowing is an estimable sport filled with virtue and honor and strength, then there was something about team camps that was the reverse of that. They became its Darwinian lowest common denominator.

“This camp was, if anything, worse, filled with anxiety and tension and paranoia.”⁷¹⁰¹

Charlie Altekruise: “When we gathered in Hanover, New Hampshire on the banks of the Connecticut River for the Olympic Sculling Camp in 1984, it was eight days after the Singles Trials in Princeton, where we had had eight people within three

seconds,⁷¹⁰² and three of them, Dietz, Biglow and Wood, were already World Medalists! It had all been there for anybody to win.”⁷¹⁰³

Enquist: “The week immediately after the Singles Trials, a lot of us continued rowing in doubles in Boston under Harry’s eye. I spent that week rowing with Bill Purdy, Jack Frackleton and Greg Montesi as partners. After Saturday morning’s row, Harry left for the Eastern Sprints, and the rest of us were told to meet in Hanover Sunday evening.”⁷¹⁰⁴

⁷¹⁰² **Colgan:** “. . . in the semis, but semis are always close because people shut down to save themselves for the final.” – personal correspondence, 2009

⁷¹⁰³ Altekruise, op cit.

⁷¹⁰⁴ Enquist, op cit, 2010

⁷¹⁰¹ Halberstam, p. 160

THE SPORT OF ROWING

Altekruse: “We had fifteen people invited to the Camp. We went through the schedule for the summer, and I said to Harry, ‘How are we going to do this? How are we going to have a training camp for three or four weeks, go to race in Lucerne and come back and do the Olympic Trials two weeks later?’”

“He said to me, ‘Charlie, that’s for me to worry about. I’m the coach,’ in perfect sort of Harry Parker style.”⁷¹⁰⁵

Halberstam: “Some of the oarsmen, Jim Dietz among them, did not like Harry Parker and knew that he did not like them. If most of the oarsmen called him ‘Harry’ and spoke of him as a kind of rowing deity, Dietz referred to him as ‘Parker’ and thought of him as an enemy.”⁷¹⁰⁶

Dietz: “At the Camp in Hanover, there were two different groups that trained separately: the group that Harry favored, and then the second group that I was in with those never under consideration. I was the only singles finalist not in the mix.

“I knew before even going to Hanover that Harry would never seat race me or let me row with the better scullers. That’s why I soon left.”⁷¹⁰⁷

Enquist: “Racing started Tuesday, May 15. Group A was Brad, Tiff, Charlie A., Joe, Bill Purdy and me. Almost every combination was put together with the exception of Brad and Tiff. On Thursday, May 17, I was paired with Tiff. During the first six minute piece, I strained a muscle in my left forearm. As the forearm fatigued during pieces, I would start to lose my grip. It was a big problem for me the rest of the camp and to a point, the rest of the summer.

“Sean and Charlie Bracken joined this group on Tuesday afternoon, May 22. Then on Friday, May 25, Jack Frackleton and

Ridgley joined, and we had the final ten of the camp.”⁷¹⁰⁸

Dietz: “Mr. Parker informed Group ‘B’ after one week that Group ‘A’ was unchallengeable, and he had no intention of mixing the groups before the next day’s cuts. His reason was that Group ‘A’ had proven their ability throughout the year. The following day he made his cuts and kept S. Colgan and C. Bracken – all others were out. Two hours later he decided to keep R. Johnson and J. Frackleton. This did nothing for the morale or the psyche of these men or for those who were cut, who believed Mr. Parker was keeping them for the sole purpose of preventing challenge boats from forming.

“That day, Mr. Parker left for the Harvard-Yale Race and did not return for one week.”⁷¹⁰⁹

Colgan: “It was not that stressful. I loved it. What, seat racing every day??? Bring it on!

“Through the entire camp, I had my work sent from Philly by courier. While everyone else napped between practices, I was on the phone and doing paperwork. I did not need the rest. I needed my mind doing something else. I still have to play golf in under 2.5 hours. There is always too much to do in life.”⁷¹¹⁰

The first task of the camp was to select a double that would compete in Europe and then come back and take on all comers at the Doubles Trials. The fastest combination before the Singles Trials had been **Biglow and Enquist**, but that possibility had been eliminated since Biglow had already made the Olympic Team as the single sculler.

Another obvious pairing was **Lewis and Enquist**, the 1983 sixth-place U.S. double.

⁷¹⁰⁵ Altekruse, op cit.

⁷¹⁰⁶ Halberstam, p. 161

⁷¹⁰⁷ Dietz, op cit.

⁷¹⁰⁸ Enquist, op cit.

⁷¹⁰⁹ Dietz, memorandum to Men’s Olympic Rowing Committee, September, 1984

⁷¹¹⁰ Colgan, op cit.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

A third possible combination was **Colgan and Altekruse**, who had done well in Tampa four months earlier.

Colgan: “In the January Florida camp, Charlie and I had been undefeated in doubles races, but we never rowed together again as Harry wanted me in the quad.

“Later at the Head of the Charles in October, 1984, Charlie and I jumped into a double without practice and won the race over Brad Lewis and set the course record that stood for eleven years.”⁷¹¹¹

A fourth possibility was **Lewis and Wood**, who had finished second and third at the Singles Trials. Brad suggested to Tiff that the two of them bypass the Camp entirely and just go for the Trials. Tiff thought for a moment but turned him down.

“Nah, I don’t think so.”⁷¹¹²

It turned out that during the entire month of the Camp they would not row a double together even once. Brad eventually went up to assistant coach **Chris Allsopp**, his 1978 double partner, and pleaded his case.

Halberstam: “Allsopp said he would think about it, but nothing ever happened.”⁷¹¹³

Toward the end of the Camp, Brad approached Tiff a second time about leaving and preparing together for the Doubles Trials.

Again, Tiff said no.⁷¹¹⁴

Wood in 2009: “What I *should* have done was win the Singles Trials. After that, what I *should* have done was leave the Camp with Brad.”⁷¹¹⁵

On the first day of the Camp, **Harry Parker** announced, “Each morning you’ll row two 2,000 meter races. The winning crew will stay together, and everyone else

will be assigned a new partner. You’ll use the afternoon practices to get acquainted.”⁷¹¹⁶

Enquist: “At camp, a two-mile warm-up with your new partner was all we usually had before racing. This produced really inconsistent results. Even the same partners would be inconsistent from day to day and sometimes even piece by piece.”⁷¹¹⁷

Purdy: “I don’t recall much about the 1984 camp except that it was physically and psychologically as intense as ever.

“I recall rowing with Brad and not having such a great time. He was constantly correcting me. I don’t think we rowed well together. I regretted that John had won the Singles Trials. I knew he was a stronger team boat sculler than Brad, and I liked rowing with him better.

“I was not privy to all of the maneuvering and requests from people to row with others in a double. I kept to myself and rowed in the boats where Harry placed me. Despite the fact that I had rowed for Harry in 1979, 1980 and 1983, I did not feel that I was one of his favorites at the camp. I had to prove myself every day and was seat raced frequently. I think it was better that I didn’t know what was going on with all of the potential alliances that were being formed. There was a lot of politicking going on behind the scenes that many of us were not aware of.”⁷¹¹⁸

Brad Lewis believed he was trying his best to fit in, but it wasn’t easy for him, and it wasn’t very successful.

Lewis: “Over the past year, I had worked myself into a massive ball of anger for the sole purpose of traversing the 2,000 meter race course in a single faster than any American.”⁷¹¹⁹

⁷¹¹¹ Ibid.

⁷¹¹² Qtd. by Lewis, *Assault*, p. 24

⁷¹¹³ Halberstam, p. 165

⁷¹¹⁴ Lewis, op cit, p. 60

⁷¹¹⁵ Wood, op cit.

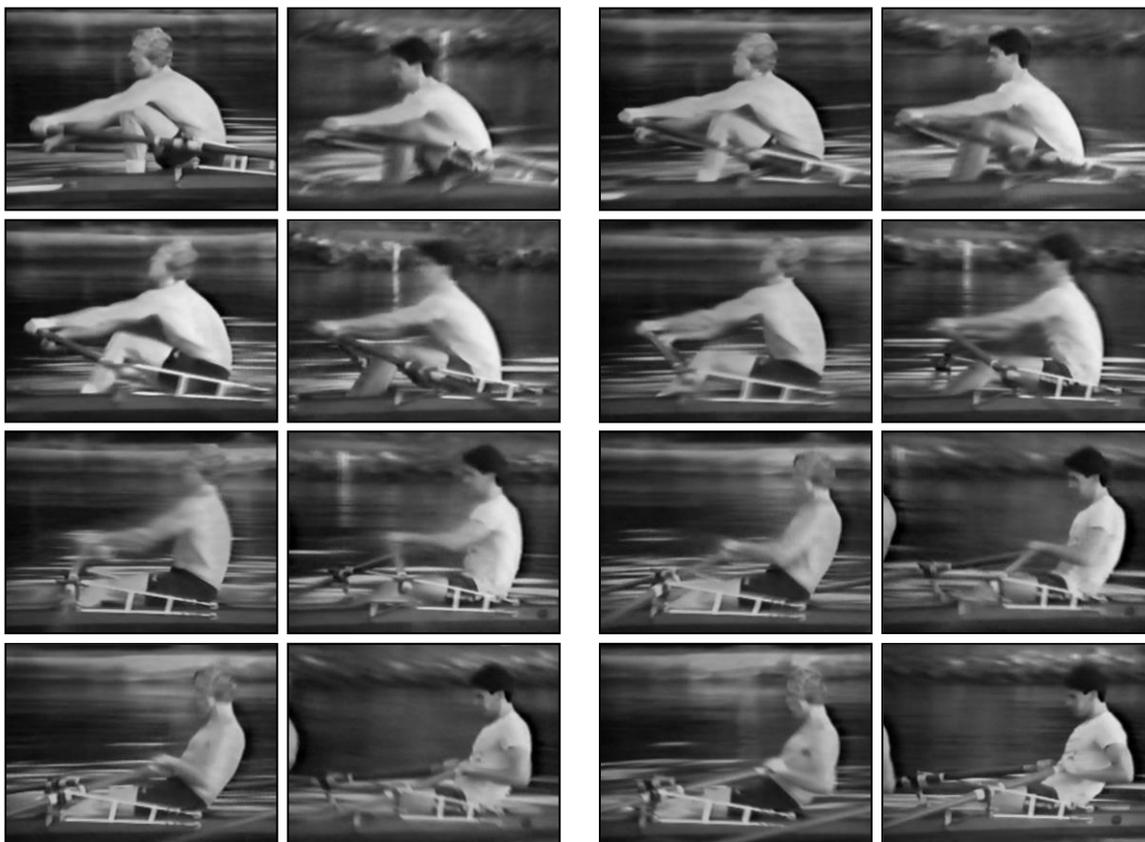
⁷¹¹⁶ Qtd. by Lewis, *Assault*, p. 31

⁷¹¹⁷ Enquist, op cit, 2009

⁷¹¹⁸ Purdy, op cit.

⁷¹¹⁹ Lewis, op cit, p. 29

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Harry Parker

1984 U.S. Sculling Camp Men's Double

Stroke **Charlie Altekruise** 6'2" 188cm 194lb. 88kg, Bow **Joe Bouscaren** 6'3" 191cm 180lb. 82kg

Film taken during a long, full-pressure piece, Tampa, Florida, January, 1984

Altekruise: +5°, +35° to -30°, 0-8, 0-9, 4-10, ferryman's finish

Bouscaren: -5°, +40° to -30°, 0-9, 0-9, 0-10

Modern Orthodox hybrid-concurrent, *Kernschlag*

Leg pulse dominated first quarter of drive, then smooth surge to release.

Integrity of the pullthrough at steady state looked good in January.

"I rarely [socialized] with the other scullers. In retrospect, this was probably not wise. If I had made an effort to be friendlier with my campmates, perhaps I would have had an easier time when I was teamed with them."⁷¹²⁰

Tiff was also struggling.

Wood: "I don't know if on some level I was still processing the loss in the single as

to why I couldn't perform at that Camp. I'm *not* a bad team boat rower. Historically, I've done better in team boats as opposed to the single until finally I got the single going. Greg and I had a great double for a while, and Chris Allsopp and I, and that quad in '79 had some real possibilities."⁷¹²¹

Once the workouts started, very quickly one double combination separated itself

⁷¹²⁰ Ibid, p. 46

⁷¹²¹ Wood, op cit.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

from all the rest, **Altekruse and Bouscaren**, bow-pair in the 1983 U.S. quad, both among the top eight single scullers at the Trials, both perceived as members of Harry's inner circle.

Altekruse: "We spent a month getting selected [actually Tuesday, May 15 to Sunday, May 27]. We did two or three weeks of almost pure doubles 2,000-meter races. Joe and I beat every combination, *including* Enquist and Lewis, over those weeks."⁷¹²²

Enquist: "Tiff and I were paired together on Sunday afternoon, May 20. Brad's head was still screwed up from the Singles Trials, and I had pulled some sort of muscle in my forearm [gestures] and felt I could barely hold on to my oar in the last few hundred meters of each piece. Over two six minute pieces, we lost to Charlie and Joe by about one seat in each piece after giving away open water in the first two minutes. Brad and I were paired together on Monday morning, May 21. We lost to Charlie and Joe by about a length in the first six minute piece after giving open water to them in the first minute. We lost the second piece by about half a length after giving up open water in the first minute again. Harry stopped the second piece at four minutes for an unknown reason, but we were moving back strongly. That told me that we wouldn't have to get a lot faster and we'd beat those guys."⁷¹²³

Lewis: "Paul and I started slowly in each of the two races. We struggled to within striking range of Charlie and Joe at the finish, gaining on them with each stroke, climbing up their stern, hauling them down, but each time we finished a half-boat behind.

"A loss is a loss,' Charlie reminded us as we paddled back to the boathouse."⁷¹²⁴

Enquist: "Sunday morning, May 27, Sean and Ridgley did beat Joe and Charlie. Joe and Charlie were named the double later that day."⁷¹²⁵

Colgan: "Charlie and Joe did lose one day. 'Happy'⁷¹²⁶ stuck me with **Ridgely Johnson**, and we won. Harry would not let us continue. He wanted me in the quad to stabilize the crew, like I had done with his eight in 1980. I did not like the decision, but that is the system. I was enjoying myself. It was always fun to watch all the Harvard and Yale guys constantly trying to outthink a simple system. If they had spent less time on mind games and more time just racing, they might have done better."⁷¹²⁷

The atmosphere continued to be extremely stressful for many during the entire Camp.

Biglow: "I had two really hard decisions that followed winning the Singles Trials. One was that if I accepted the single position at the end of the Trials, then I couldn't row the double with Paul . . . and we were the fastest double.

"The next decision came after I went up to Hanover to start training in the single at Harry's Sculling Camp. Harry approached me and said, 'How about if Brad rows the single because he's really hard to coach? Would you be willing to row in the double?'

"Joe and Charlie had quickly become the fastest double in the Camp, and for them it was obvious that I was crossing the line by even considering Harry's suggestion. It was *very* tense for a while.

"Helping me decide was getting on the phone with Charlie McIntyre and Frank Cunningham out in Seattle and having them say, 'No, you've got the position. It's a

⁷¹²² Altekruse, op cit.

⁷¹²³ Enquist, op cit, 2008 and 2010

⁷¹²⁴ Lewis, op cit, p. 55

⁷¹²⁵ Enquist, op cit, 2010

⁷¹²⁶ "Happy Harry," a nickname for Harry Parker used by some (*non*-Harvard) rowers.

⁷¹²⁷ Colgan, op cit.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

position of great honor. You've got to row it.'

"Anyway, I decided to stay with the single. With 20-20 hindsight, I wish that I hadn't, but I did."⁷¹²⁸

After Altekruise and Bouscaren had been selected as the double, the next task was to select a quad for Lucerne and the Olympic Quad Trials. In well-established Harry Parker style, this was done primarily through seat racing in quads between Monday, May 28 and Friday, June 8.

Altekruise: "Bouscaren and I were doing a lot of the stroking because we were already designated the double, so we were going to be neutral.

"Enquist was close to making the quad, but it became pretty clear that if you jacked it up in the last twenty strokes you could pass any boat that Enquist was in.

"And then at that point you also had Lewis trying to make the quad, and the flow issue was terrible. I could remember when we went to a training camp in Tampa in January of '84, and nobody could row with Brad. His power application was too jerky, and his temperament seemed to fit that. I mean this is a man who would end up writing 'Rape & Murder' on the side of his single for the Trials.

"These were the issues with those two guys that helped determine that they wouldn't make the quad."⁷¹²⁹

Lewis: "I couldn't win any seat races. It's that simple. I can offer a lot of excuses. I was tired from the Singles Trials, the boatings were screwy, but when it came time for Harry to make his decision, he went with the proven seat racers."⁷¹³⁰

When Harry returned from the IRA on Wednesday, June 6, Ridgely Johnson and Paul Enquist were cut.

The nominated Camp quad would be stroked by **Charlie Bracken**, from a Philadelphia Boathouse Row family. He had done his rowing at West Catholic High School, Fairmount Rowing Association and Northeastern University before he stroked Temple University's 1983 Dad Vail Champion crew.

In 3-seat behind Bracken would be **Bill Purdy**. **Sean Colgan** and **Tiff Wood** would round out the Camp Quad.

Harry also nominated **Brad Lewis** and **Jack Frackleton**, 5'11" 180cm 187lb. 85kg, another Philadelphian, to be in a second or spare double to compete in Lucerne.

Interestingly, Bracken and Frackleton had been members of a Fairmont R.A. quad which had won the Quad Trials for the 1982 Worlds over a high-powered big-name crew of Wood, Dietz, Lewis and Colgan.

Lewis: "The characters in my rowing career, from year to year, never changed very much. Only the boatings were reshuffled."⁷¹³¹

Colgan: "Dietz, Tiff, Altekruise and I had all pledged early in 1982 to row a quad for the Worlds if we did not win the Singles Trials (never much of an option for me). We practiced it several times through the year. I even remember a long weekend at NYAC.

"Anyway, Parker asked me to row in the four-with that he was forming, but I declined, saying I was pledged to the quad. That did not stop Parker from asking Altekruise, who accepted. Then as a spare in Luzern, I substituted for Charlie for most of the time as his back was injured.

"Small world."⁷¹³²

⁷¹²⁸ Biglow, op cit.

⁷¹²⁹ Altekruise, op cit.

⁷¹³⁰ Lewis, op cit, p. 90

⁷¹³¹ Lewis, op cit, p. 108

⁷¹³² Colgan, op cit.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

Once the '84 Camp lineups were announced, Brad quickly contacted Paul Enquist, who had left Hanover after being cut, and getting his assent, politely declined Harry's invitation by phone, saying he preferred to commit to the Doubles Trials with Paul. Harry instantaneously called Paul and invited him to take Brad's place in Lucerne.

You can just imagine what Brad and Paul thought of that!

Paul also declined, and Harry then invited and was turned down by two other camp cuts, Ridgely Johnson and Greg Montesi,⁷¹³³ who had already committed to a challenge quad of their own for the Trials.

Dietz: "Mr. Parker tried, in vain, to get another sculler back – but no one would return."⁷¹³⁴

Mike Totta: "Actually, Ridgely initially accepted. I still remember as clear as yesterday standing in the parking lot at Newell Boathouse talking Ridgely out of Lucerne and into going to Squam Lake for a long weekend with Brad, Paul, Bruce Beall, Curtis Fleming, and Gregg Montesi to arrange a challenge double and quad.

"As it turned out, *I* was the guy voted out of the quad . . . with the inclusion of Ridgely in the process! I had thought that Curtis would be the one left out, but the consensus was that I was less effective. I can come up with excuses and claims that the process was unfair (What jilted rower can't produce the same?), but we were without a coach and it had to be that kind of decision, and it ended up working out for them, so it wasn't wrong.

"After the vote happened back in Newell, as a 26-year-old I went out into the parking lot and just sat on the guardrail and cried for about five minutes – I knew my Olympic dream was over.

"Funny but the four men in the quad told me after the vote that if they won they'd choose me as their spare.

"When they did win, I got excited about that possibility, but when they came back to Boston after the Trials, I saw Ridgely warming up on an erg and asked him what they were going to do. He didn't even make eye contact and said, 'We don't owe you anything . . .' – a funny comment coming from a guy who wouldn't have even been in the boat if I hadn't talked him out of Lucerne.

"In 1983, I had competed well at the Camp and was in the final selection for the last seat in the quad with Charlie. That fall of 1983, I had foolishly overtrained and frequently got sick. I went to Long Beach for the winter and continued just pounding myself. I wasn't listening to my body – I didn't know any better. By the Tampa camp, I was very ill and had to go home, only to be diagnosed with mono – I was wiped out for two months at about the worst time possible.

"I returned to Boston but just couldn't develop the fitness fast enough – I didn't get invited to the camp and had to wait for guys to fall out to develop a challenge. Since there were so many guys close in the team boats, I thought there was still a chance . . .

"That guardrail still sits at the end of the parking lot at Newell. I see it every time I drive by . . . and I remember."⁷¹³⁵

So plans for a second double in Lucerne had to be abandoned. Wood and Frackleton would take turns in the bow seat of the quad in the separate Saturday and Sunday race programs on the Rotsee.

Brad and Paul then quickly removed one of several Men's Olympic Rowing Committee doubles and two sets of oars from the Camp trailer parked at the Harvard

⁷¹³³ Lewis, op cit, p. 79

⁷¹³⁴ Dietz, op cit.

⁷¹³⁵ Totta, personal correspondence, 2010

THE SPORT OF ROWING

boathouse and prepared to leave town in a hurry. There was a harsh exchange of words in the parking lot between Brad and Charlie, and the following morning Harry hit the roof when he found out the equipment had been taken.⁷¹³⁶

This was not an isolated incident.

Dietz: “When asked by scullers who were cut if they could use equipment which was not being raced, he refused permission. This is not the kind of action which should come from a coach whose responsibility is to create the fastest boats for the USA. He had no reason to refuse equipment to Olympic contenders except to give his favored boats another edge.”⁷¹³⁷

Wherever Brad and Paul went after they left, their reputation as “the guys who blew off Harry” would precede them.⁷¹³⁸

And so the actors in Halberstam’s epic drama reassembled and hastened toward their destinies.

Ted Nash: “I can’t believe that Paul and Brad were ever cut, but that is what all good club athletes feed on. Tell them they are ‘nothing special,’ and they will find a secret lake or river and become *very* special.”⁷¹³⁹

Altekruse: “One more story. Paul is a wonderful guy, a gentle soul, sort of the opposite of the Brad Lewis cool.

“The day that he got cut from the training camp in Dartmouth, I was hitchhiking from town back to the Chieftain Motel when I happened to find a little four-leaf clover that I plucked and taped to a card.

“When I ran into Paul, I said, ‘This is for you. I really respect you as a rower.

Good luck. I’m sure I’m going to see you down the road.’

“This was before we went to Lucerne, so the Trials were off about three weeks away. It wasn’t clear that Enquist and Lewis were going to get together, although it was obviously a possibility.

“Later I reminded Paul of the story and told him maybe I should never have given him that four-leaf clover.”⁷¹⁴⁰

Lewis and Enquist

Lewis: “If the best thing that ever happened to me was that I lost those Singles Trials, the second best thing that happened was that Enquist got kicked out of the Camp, and the third best thing was that I did poorly at the Camp, too, so we were both freed up to do our own thing.”⁷¹⁴¹

Altekruse: “Brad was terrible to row with . . . *except* when he was rowing with Enquist, whom he respected and had rowed with and done well with the year before at the World Championships.

“They had been able to put in a lot of miles as the double in ‘83, but they ended that year sort of swearing they would never row together again. It was *that* hard emotionally.

“The next year turned out to be the perfect scenario for Brad because what happened was when they got cut from the camp, they came back together because there was nothing else left, and they only had to stay together for a few weeks to win the Trials, go to the Olympics, win the Olympics, and then they were done with each other again.

“Don’t get me wrong. Paul and Brad were a *really* strong crew. Joe and I certainly knew that. After all, we had watched them race magnificently in Duisburg in ‘83, and we had raced them

⁷¹³⁶ Lewis, op cit, p. 75

⁷¹³⁷ Dietz, op cit.

⁷¹³⁸ Lewis, op cit, p. 83

⁷¹³⁹ Ted Nash has made a career of taking camp rejects and molding them into Trials-winning boats. See Chapters 129 and 132.

⁷¹⁴⁰ Altekruse, op cit.

⁷¹⁴¹ Lewis, personal conversation, 2009

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

twice over 2k at the Olympic Sculling Camp in Hanover. We only narrowly beat them, our closest races by far!”⁷¹⁴²

Lewis: “Back then was a golden era of sculling in this country thanks to Harry Parker being coach. We had about eight or nine guys who were *really* pretty good in a single . . . but Paul Enquist was not one of them.

“He didn’t enter the Singles Trials in ‘84 because he knew he wouldn’t even make the second-level final. He was just *not* a single sculler. He was too big, wasn’t quick enough, didn’t have the balance or the boatmanship skills, but he was smart enough to just not do the Trials and wait for team boats in ‘84.

“Paul’s a really good stroke in a double, straight ahead, doesn’t look out much, cranks, good rhythm. Great work ethic.

“Me, I like to look around. I like to steer. I like to think strategy, so we were really different. Sometimes differences work against crews, but sometimes they complement, and in our case we really complemented each other.”⁷¹⁴³

Technique

Except during power-10s, Lewis and Enquist rowed nearly pure Classical Technique, Enquist betraying his Pocock/Seattle heritage with a mild ferryman’s finish. Lewis’s pullthrough showed mild leg emphasis, while Enquist’s was more back-dominated. The Enquist force curve rose a bit more precipitously than Lewis’s.

Lewis: “My approach? I was a student of some excellent coaches, including yourself, Peter, along with **John Van Blom** and **Tom McKibbon**,⁷¹⁴⁴ excellent technicians, **Bob Ernst**, strong on discipline,

Hans Svensson,⁷¹⁴⁵ solid work ethic, **Kris Korzeniowski**,⁷¹⁴⁶ good on technique.

“And of course **Harry** . . . I respect him a lot.

“Lots and lots of good rowing people.

“Also of key importance . . . for several years we had a large, active, aggressive, competitive group training out of the UCI boathouse in Newport Beach, California. Essentially no coaching – just a bunch of guys who liked to train really hard every day.”⁷¹⁴⁷

“With that in place, you’re most likely going to improve over time. Without it, you’ll never reach your potential.”⁷¹⁴⁸

Enquist: “I was handed a two-page description of the sculling stroke by **George Pocock**⁷¹⁴⁹ when I bought my first single from Stan [Pocock] in 1977. I think I may still have it somewhere. Never really deviated from it, even when training on the East Coast.

“Brad and I certainly followed its content pretty closely, even though he may not have known it.”⁷¹⁵⁰

John Biglow had done his very best rowing in 1984 after rowing in a double with Paul Enquist. Paul also brought out the very best in Brad Lewis.

⁷¹⁴⁵ Swedish single sculler who trained with Brad’s group in Newport Beach, California

⁷¹⁴⁶ See Chapter 124.

⁷¹⁴⁷ Brad forgets to mention the key role played by **Mike Sullivan**, then the UC Irvine Freshman Coach, in getting Brad’s boat into the boathouse and giving him guidance in technique and training during the mid-1970s. It was Mike who organized Sunday 6-mile 10k all-comers singles workouts to attract other scullers and who nurtured UCI grads like Curt Fleming. It takes a village to create an Olympian.

⁷¹⁴⁸ Lewis, personal correspondence, 2008

⁷¹⁴⁹ See Chapter 47.

⁷¹⁵⁰ Enquist, op cit, 2008

⁷¹⁴² Altekruise, op cit.

⁷¹⁴³ Lewis, op cit.

⁷¹⁴⁴ See Chapter 88.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



FISA 1984 Video

1983 United States Men's Double

Stroke **Paul Enquist** 6'6" 198cm 205lb. 93kg, Bow **Brad Alan Lewis** 6'4" 193cm 196lb. 89kg
-5°, +25° to -25°, 0-8, 0-9, 0-10, Classical Technique
Schubschlag, ferryman's finish.

Enquist: "When we started training in Ithaca after our weekend at Squam Lake, Tony Johnson and Findlay Meislahn immediately took some video. We discovered I was much longer than Brad. To match, I needed to shorten up at the catch quite a bit. It felt like I was rowing $\frac{3}{4}$ slide, but what a DIFFERENCE it made our speed.

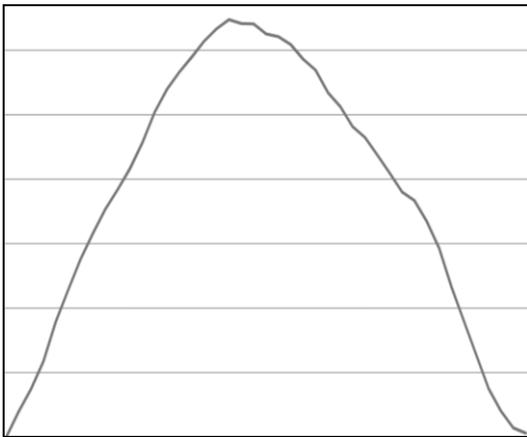
"When I got too long it was a struggle to row above 32. When I shortened up and sat up a little straighter, everything was better. We could row 35-36, bladework cleaned up and our legs felt so much stronger. This was the main thing that was the difference between the camp double of Brad and I and the Trials and Olympic double.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



FISA 1984 Video

When **Brad Lewis** was on one of his power-10s, his leg drive would explode in a manner that is hard to capture in a still photograph but easy to appreciate on film. On the previous page during the body of the race, his legs were mostly in synch with Enquist. In this video frame during a 10, they were going down noticeably faster.



Author

Brad Lewis

Schubschlag, close to a parabola.
Kink at top indicates force discontinuity



Paul Smith

Paul Enquist

Schubschlag, closer to a parabola.

“We even installed some crude front stops about five inches from the front of the tracks to keep me from accidentally coming too far forward. We also made some wooden rests at the front of the tracks to pad

our calves at the end of the leg drive. Most rowers had holes in their calves from the

THE SPORT OF ROWING

tracks back then. We could then push the legs down hard all the way to the end.”⁷¹⁵¹

Training

Halberstam: “Rowing with Paul, thought Bob Ernst, who had coached both men, was as close as Brad could come to being alone in a single. His ego could rule completely. Enquist would never challenge him.”⁷¹⁵²

But even just reading about the grueling preparations Brad planned for their double between the end of the Camp on June 8 and the finals of the Doubles Trials on July 1 is physically and emotionally draining.

Rowing with Brad Lewis in the best of times must have been an exhausting proposition, but Brad’s mental intensity after leaving the Camp burned like a blowtorch.

There were repeated side-by-side interval pieces against three heavyweight coxed-fours and a lightweight coxless-four training with **Tony Johnson** out of the Cornell boathouse in Ithaca, New York.

There were gym workouts with heavy weights. There was deep muscle massage in an era when only professional cyclists and East Bloc rowers recognized its enormous benefits. There was rock music and even “aura balancing.”

There was an inspirational tape from **Mike Livingston**, bow-seat of the 1972 U.S. Olympic Eight,⁷¹⁵³ set to music he had composed.

Halberstam: “Livingston was fascinated with the unknown limits of human experience, the secrets of the mind. A devotee on the writings of Carlos Castaneda, he tried to create what he described as ‘white-hot concentration,’

maximizing each moment or living each day as if it were the last.”⁷¹⁵⁴

“‘Good day,’ the tape began, ‘we are privileged to live another day in this magnificent world. Today you will be tested. Today you will confront your death with the power of your living. As a warrior, this is your . . .’”⁷¹⁵⁵ and on and on.⁷¹⁵⁶

There were repeated race simulations through what Brad called “**shadow rowing**,” sort of a precursor to the now common technique of visualization. Paul and Brad would get on two ergometers and pantomime the entire race in real time, going up and down the slides but without touching the handles, all the while with people screaming at them, trying to distract them. They imagined and practiced every possible scenario, defending a lead, coming from behind, crab at the start, hitting a buoy, endless possibilities.

Altekruse and Bouscaren in Lucerne

Altekruse: “Joe Bouscaren was like rowing with a butterfly. It was incredibly fragile but incredibly beautiful. When I rowed with Joe, he really challenged me to take a different approach to the catch and a different fluidity to the stroke. That was a real test for me . . . but also a real opportunity. I think out of that I gained as an oarsman and was able to develop a much lighter approach to the catch.

“What was difficult for Bouscaren and me was clicking on the mental side. We got it to click, and that’s why we were able to do well in the Camp and in Lucerne, I mean reasonably well for only rowing solidly together as a double for about two weeks prior to the Rotsee Regatta.

⁷¹⁵¹ Ibid.

⁷¹⁵² Halberstam, p. 173

⁷¹⁵³ See Chapter 103.

⁷¹⁵⁴ Halberstam, pp. 109-10

⁷¹⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 176

⁷¹⁵⁶ Livingston wrote a book on the subject. Refer to the Bibliography.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

“I think we finished fourth one day and fifth the other day against a lot of Eastern European crews that were really angry because they weren’t going to Los Angeles. That was pretty good.

“Nobody beat us in Lucerne that was going to show up at Los Angeles, with the possible exception of West Germany.”⁷¹⁵⁷

That is not accurate. In the Sunday final, Altekruise and Bouscaren were relatively slow off the line but with the pack at 500 meters. The GDR crew led from Canada, with everyone else, including the U.S., around a length behind.

At the 1,000, the American double was a clear fourth, less than a meter behind the third-place Czechs and half a length ahead of Switzerland and the Norwegian crew of Thorsen and Hansen.⁷¹⁵⁸

During the third 500, the very aggressive Canadians sprinted hard and took the lead over GDR. Charlie and Joe lost contact with the Czechs and found themselves about to be overtaken by Norway.

In the last 500, the German Democratic Republic took back the lead for good. By the line, the Czechs just took second over a fading Canada, who then almost lost the Bronze to Norway on the last stroke. As the others surged to the finish, the U.S. fell away to fifth.

This was a very good GDR double. Twenty-year-old **Thomas Lange**, 6’2” 189cm 196lb. 89kg, and the veteran **Uwe Heppner**, 6’5” 196cm 201lb. 91kg, who had been a member of the 1980 Olympic Champion Quad, were already 1983 World Doubles Champions and would win their second Doubles Championship in 1985. Lange would go on to win the Olympic Singles Gold Medal in both 1988 and 1992.⁷¹⁵⁹

The second-place Czech double from Dukla Praha (Prague), **Václav Vochoska**, 6’4” 192cm 187lb. 85kg, and **Zdeněk Pecka**, 6’4” 193cm 194lb. 88kg, had been the 1980 Olympic Silver Medalists.

GDR and CZE would not compete in Los Angeles due to the Soviet-led boycott.

Geoffrey Page: “Denying that it was tit-for-tat for the American-led boycott of the Moscow Olympics, Soviet officials claimed that the reason was fear for the safety of their athletes in Los Angeles, and accused the Americans of organizing an anti-Russian campaign and violating the Olympic charter.”⁷¹⁶⁰

The third-place Canadian double of **Tim Storm**, 6’3” 190cm 183lb. 83kg, and **Peter MacGowan**, 6’3” 190cm 187lb. 85kg, had been fifth in the 1983 World Championships, one place ahead of the U.S. double of Lewis and Enquist. In Los Angeles, they would advance through the repêchages but fade to sixth in the final.

The fourth-place Norwegian double⁷¹⁶¹ of **Rolf Thorsen**, 6’3” 191cm 198lb. 90kg, and 36-year-old **Alf Hansen**, 6’1” 185cm 187lb. 85kg, 1982 World Champions and 1983 World Silver Medalists, were in the midst of a down year for them. After failing to medal in Lucerne, they would fail to make the finals and place tenth in Los Angeles. Still, they beat Bouscaren and Altekruise.

The sixth-place Swiss double from Grasshopper Club Zürich, **Mark-Sven Nater**, 6’4” 193cm 190lb. 86kg, and **Urs Steinemann**, 6’0” 184cm 190lb. 86kg, would place eleventh on Lake Casitas.

West Germany, the 1983 World Bronze Medalists, **Andreas Schmelz**, 6’5” 196m 201lb. 91kg, and **Georg Agrikola**, 6’5” 195cm 196lb. 89kg, had beaten Altekruise and Bouscaren in the Saturday final in

⁷¹⁵⁷ Altekruise, op cit.

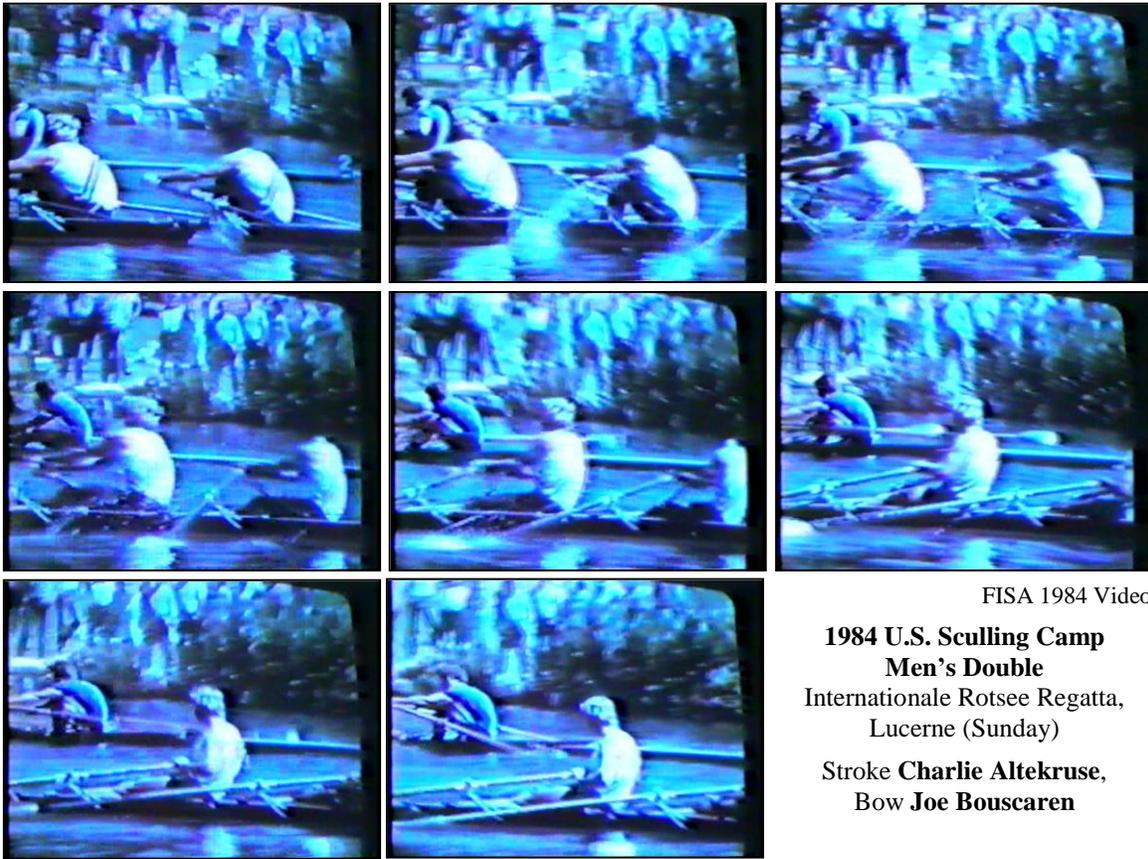
⁷¹⁵⁸ See Chapter 123.

⁷¹⁵⁹ See Chapter 119.

⁷¹⁶⁰ Page, p. 153

⁷¹⁶¹ See Chapter 123.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



FISA 1984 Video

**1984 U.S. Sculling Camp
Men's Double**
Internationale Rotsee Regatta,
Lucerne (Sunday)

Stroke **Charlie Altekruse**,
Bow **Joe Bouscaren**

1 GDR 6:21.45, 2 CZE 6:23.40, 3 CAN 6:23.62, 4 NOR 6:24.41, 5 USA 6:26.68, 6 SUI 6:36.58

Altekruse: -5° , $+40^{\circ}$ to -10° , 0-7, 0-9, 4-10, ferryman's finish, *Kernschlag*

Between January and June, force application had become segmented as the legs became ever more assertive.

This was especially true of Bouscaren (Frames 1 – 3).

Lucerne but failed to make the final on Sunday. On Lake Casitas, they would win their heat but place only fourth in the final.

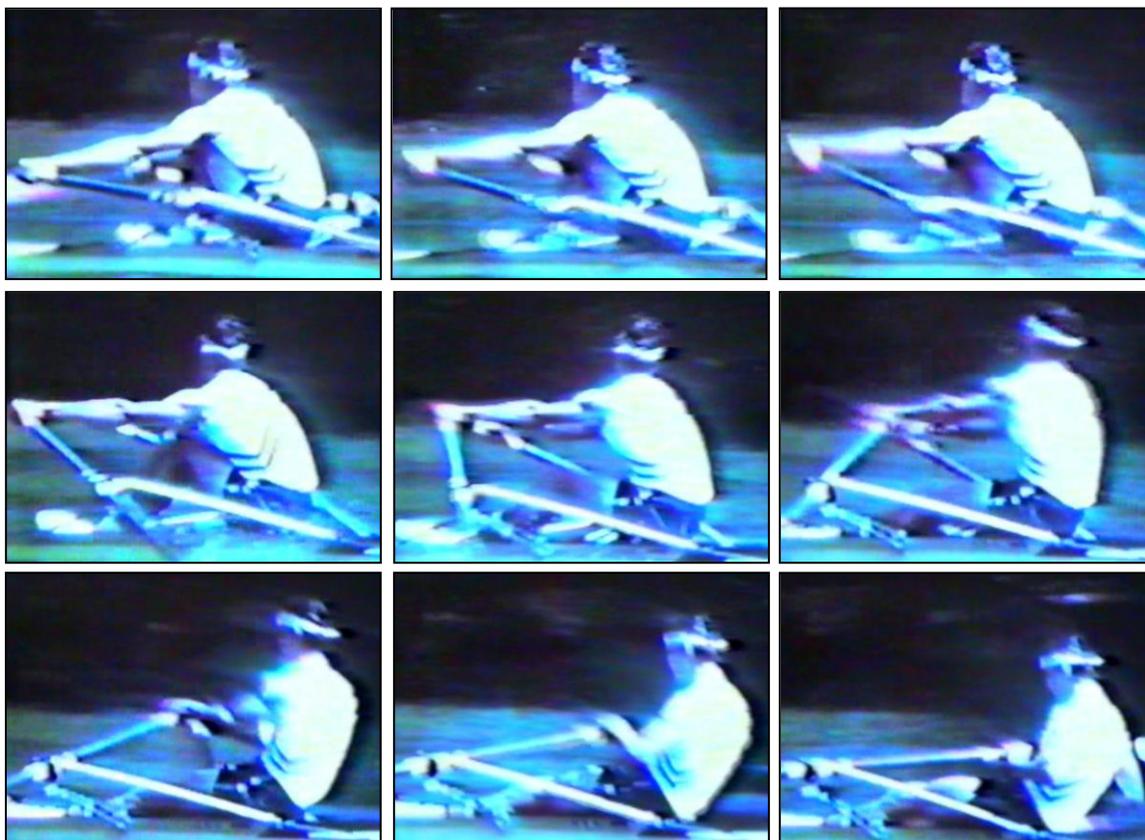
Altekruse and Bouscaren's Technique in Lucerne

Television footage from Lucerne on this page suggests that the Camp experience had taken a heavy toll on the U.S. Camp double's technique. Compared to film from January earlier in this chapter, Charlie's body language had changed markedly. A

disciplined erectness of posture had been replaced by a bit of a slouch.

Stroke mechanics had also materially evolved. Both athletes straightened their legs at 60-70% of the pullthrough rather than their 90% in January. This represents a major evolution towards sequential segmented-stroke *Kernschlag*, the same approach that Frank Cunningham had described in the 1983 U.S. Quad in Duisburg. As is typical of *Kernschlag* crews, Charlie and Joe had nothing left to give when the racing got serious in the last 500 meters.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



FISA 1984 Video

John Biglow

1984 Internationale Rotsee Regatta, Lucerne (Sunday)

1 Karppinen FIN 6:58.64, 2 Reiche GDR 7:03.64, 3 Pat Walter CAN 7:04.61,
4 **Biglow** USA 7:06.21, 5 RDA 7:10.55, 6 SUE 7:11.49

0°, +25° to -30°, 0-8, 0-10, 0-10, Modern Orthodox sequential, *Kernschlag*

Note in the first three frames he lost several inches of slide while covering the blade.

“Biglow had a tall trunk and sat very tall when in top health. In these pictures, his posture tells it all. His right elbow was far lower than his left. He folded his back into a low ‘C’ shape.

His chin fell, and his neck stretched. His knees bounced up at the release to try to get some momentary relief from the pain. Add to that the shock of shooting his tail. So many times

John raced his *heart* out when he was injured” – **Ted Nash**

There is no question that Altekruse and Bouscaren were a fine double, but their performance in Lucerne suggests that they already would have had serious trouble even making the Olympic final on Lake Casitas.

If they had slowed down during the course of the spring and summer, and surely

they had, the process had begun well before Lucerne rather than after.

Biglow in Europe

Biglow: “1984 for me was a lot of pressure, mostly from the expectations of others that I should be able to get third place

THE SPORT OF ROWING

at the Olympics.⁷¹⁶² It was challenging for me coming back from having had a year when I wasn't able to row the single fast because of my back injury, so when I got back and was able to secure the single sculler position, I was still kind of guarded in my optimism.

"I went over to Germany to race in Berlin-Grünau behind the Wall, and I was loaned a very heavy Stämpfli boat that I had never rowed before, and it was on an industrial river, and it was really hard to row, and I did miserably. I think my boat filled with water, and I don't think I even placed in a race there.

"Then I went to Lucerne. I was third on Saturday, and I beat the Canadian that ended up beating me in the Olympics. I'm trying to remember who was first and second. Karppinen and Kolbe were not there."⁷¹⁶³

In fact, both were there. On Saturday, John placed third behind Kolbe and Reiche and two seconds ahead of 1984 Canadian Olympic sculler **Bob Mills**, 6'4" 193cm 176lb. 80kg.

Mills, a 1983 Pan Am Gold Medalist in the double and quad, would go on to represent Canada and beat Biglow in Los Angeles.

On Sunday, Biglow placed fourth behind Karppinen, Reiche and Canadian Olympic spare **Pat Walter**, 6'3" 190cm 192lb. 87kg. That day, Biglow lost two seconds on the start and was four seconds behind the field after 500 meters. He then rowed the last 1,500 faster than everyone except Karppinen.

Biglow's Technique in Lucerne

Film of John in Lucerne on the previous page reveals a crucial new technical flaw.

⁷¹⁶² Behind Karppinen and Kolbe. See Chapter 125.

⁷¹⁶³ Biglow, op cit.

In the first quarter of the pullthrough, he shot his tail. His legs overpowered his back (Frames 1 – 3). For an athlete whose legs were supposedly weak and numb, this was unexpected and completely unintended.

Biglow: "I wasn't really aware of techniques differing or my changing technique. When you're rowing, you can't see yourself. I just felt frustrated that I couldn't do what the coach would ask me to do."⁷¹⁶⁴

Of course, John Biglow is not alone in being unaware of his technique in the moment. Throughout history, many of the best in our sport have relied on instinct instead of intellect, and rightly so.

The Camp Quad in Lucerne

Colgan: "Harry seat raced Tiff and Frackleton in Luzern all week long and through the weekend instead of resting us and recovering from the stress of the Camp and the jet lag."⁷¹⁶⁵

In Lucerne, the Camp quad rowed their Saturday heat with Tiff in 2 and Sean in the bow seat. They came in fourth and failed to advance.

Wood: "We didn't make the final on Saturday when I was in the boat, and they did on Sunday with Frackleton in the boat."⁷¹⁶⁶

On Sunday with Frackleton in bow and Sean in 2, they placed a very creditable third in the final.

Halberstam: "The word from the others in the quad was that the boat seemed heavier with Wood in it."⁷¹⁶⁷

On Sunday, GDR put nearly a length on the field in the first 500 meters, stretched it to nearly two lengths by the half-way point and then held that margin to the finish.

⁷¹⁶⁴ Biglow, op cit.

⁷¹⁶⁵ Colgan, op cit.

⁷¹⁶⁶ Wood, op cit.

⁷¹⁶⁷ Halberstam, p. 171

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



FISA 1984 Video

**1984 U.S. Sculling Camp
Men's Quad**

Lucerne (Sunday)

Stroke **Charlie Bracken** (shown),
3 **Bill Purdy**,
2 **Sean Colgan**,
Bow **Jack Frackleton**

Bracken: +5°, +40° to -15°, 0-6, 2-10, 5-10, Modern Orthodox *Kernschlag*

Sequential to the brink of tail-shooting, late arm draw

A product of post-Rosenberg Boathouse Row, Bracken's technique relied on good extension at entry, legs only to initiate the pullthrough, and then strong back swing to the release.

Behind them, everybody was within a deck at 500, and the eventual finishing margins for second, third and fourth places were pretty much set by the 1,000. Italy led the U.S. Camp by a bare half-meter with Spain a deck further back, and that's how it ended up at the finish.

Colgan: "Our Quad beat the 1984 Olympic Gold Medalists with one day of practice in the boat! We only lost to East Germany, who boycotted, and Italy, who took sick in L.A."⁷¹⁶⁸

The winning Grünau/Leipzig/Röstock/Magdeburg GDR composite crew of bow **Frank Dundr**, 6'1" 186cm 196lb. 89kg, 2 **Uwe Sëgling**, **Joachim Dreifke**, 6'4" 192cm 209lb. 95kg, and **Martin Winter**, 6'4" 194cm 201lb. 91kg, contained three 1980 Olympic Gold Medalists. Dreifke and Winter had also been members of the 1983 World Silver Medal Quad. Sëgling would be part of the 1985 World Silver Medal Quad.

The other Lucerne finalists besides the U.S.: Italy, Norway, France and Spain would go on to place fourth, eighth, fifth and sixth in Los Angeles.

⁷¹⁶⁸ Colgan, op cit.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



FISA 1984 Video

**1984 U.S. Sculling Camp
Men's Quad
Lucerne (Sunday)**

Stroke **Charlie Bracken**,
3 **Bill Purdy** (shown),
2 **Sean Colgan** (shown),
Bow **Jack Frackleton**

Colgan: +5°, +40° to -15°, 0-6, 0-9, 5-10 Modern Orthodox *Kernschlag*
Late arm draw, ferryman's finish

These television stills cannot convey the explosiveness of Colgan's initial drive.
His stroke mechanics were less sequential than Bracken's,
but his two-part *Kernschlag* pullthrough was unique.

The 1984 Olympic medalists would turn out to be 1983 World Champion **West Germany** Gold, who did not make the Lucerne Sunday final, **Australia** Silver, who was not in Lucerne, and **Canada** Bronze, who did not qualify for either day's final in Lucerne due to illness and injury.

Colgan: "We in the quad (well, maybe just myself) were extremely happy with our Bronze in Luzern, which was the only meeting in 1984 for all the world's crews. This was the first international medal for a U.S. men's quad ever, and it remained the only one until 1996.

"Los Angeles was never going to prove anything with the boycott, which of course today nobody remembers. Selective memory is wonderful.

"Luzern was wonderful. We proved that we could scull and win against the best in the world. That was why we fought to race in Luzern before the Trials. We all agreed that we did not need any more uniforms or other trappings of splendor. L.A. was the 'official IOC party,' but Luzern was why we trained for 1984.

"Unless you lived through the 1980 boycott, this might not make sense, but since

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Chris Allsopp

1984 United States Sculling Camp Men's Quad

Bronze Medal Internationale Rotsee Regatta (Sunday)

1 GDR 5:48.23, 2 ITA 5:51.77, 3 USA 5:52.10, 4 NOR 5:52.72, 5 FRA 5:55.25, 6 ESP 5:56.97

Stroke **Charlie Bracken** 6'0" 183cm 183lb. 83kg, 3 **Bill Purdy** 6'5" 196cm 197lb. 89kg,
2 **Sean Colgan** 6'2" 188cm 180lb. 82kg, Bow **Jack Frackleton** 6'1" 185cm 198lb. 90kg

most oarsmen keep their medals in their drawers, it is the finish place that counts, not whether there is someone to witness or remember . . . besides ourselves."⁷¹⁶⁹

Based on their performance in Lucerne, there was every reason to expect the U.S. Camp quad would make a strong showing in the Olympic final on Lake Casitas.

Quad Technique in Lucerne

It is interesting that after all the focus on **Harry Parker** and the scullers from Yale and Harvard, scullers like Biglow and

Bouscaren and Altekruise and Wood, the quad that came out of the Camp had the distinctive post-**Allen Rosenberg** style of Boathouse Row. Only Bill Purdy in the 3-seat was not a Philly rower, and they performed what Stan Pocock called the **Philadelphia dipsy-doodle**,⁷¹⁷⁰ essentially Modern Orthodox sequential *Kernschlag* pullthroughs with an explosive leg kick.

Colgan: "I had the really strong leg drive for two reasons. It evolved from sweep rowing and especially the 1980 eight, which was the fastest non-drugged eight on Earth that year. It exploded at each catch.

⁷¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷¹⁷⁰ See Chapter 107

THE SPORT OF ROWING

“Plus I did not have the size or strength to gradually build the power in the single. I had to lift it quick to lighten the stroke load, not to mention that explosive legs help in seat racing.

“I never lost a seat race in junior, lightweight, or heavyweight, sweep or sculling. I just loved it. Ted Nash gave me the ultimate compliment many years ago when he told me I was the best racer he ever coached.”⁷¹⁷¹

Wood: “Wait a minute – Ted told me that *I* was the best racer he ever coached.

“Oh yeah, now I remember. He said I was the best racer he *never* coached.”⁷¹⁷²

It is interesting. Films and first-hand accounts of the Camp clearly demonstrate

the preference for Modern Orthodox leg-dominated hybrid-concurrent *Kernschlag* force application, but at least three Camp athletes, two of them finalists at the Singles Trials, had really distinctive (and presumably disruptive) explosive leg drive before and/or after the Camp: **Sean Colgan, Curtis Fleming, Brad Lewis, and Tiff Wood.**⁷¹⁷³

It seemed to work for Sean, but not for the other three. Curtis was not invited to the Camp. Brad lost his last seat race to Bill Purdy by many, many lengths, and Tiff also lost convincingly his virtual seat race with Jack Frackleton in Lucerne. Sean made the quad, and helped them to their Bronze Medal in the Sunday final in Lucerne.

⁷¹⁷¹ Colgan, op cit.

⁷¹⁷² Wood, personal correspondence, 2009

⁷¹⁷³ John Biglow, Joe Bouscaren and Charlie Altekruze by the time of Lucerne might be added to this list.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

142. 1984 Olympics

Olympic Trials – Lake Casitas – Andy Sudduth

The Plot Thickens

Lewis: “Harry’s squad returned to Hanover for its final tune-up before the Trials – ten days away – and within a few hours of settling in, the rumor mill began to churn. First off, Tiff and Biggie raced a double against the Love Boat.⁷¹⁷⁴ Without having practiced and using a slower boat, Tiff and Biggie defeated it by half a length.

“Tiff was overjoyed at the thought of rowing with Biggie. Joe and Biggie, best of friends, had roomed together upon returning from Lucerne, but immediately following that fateful practice, Joe moved into a different room.

“Harry soon stepped into the fray. He entered Biggie’s room and closed the door. When Harry emerged, Biggie was firmly in the single, and Tiff was on his own.”⁷¹⁷⁵

That was the way Brad heard it from a distance. It was actually much worse.

The team got home from Lucerne on Monday, June 18, and the Trials were scheduled to begin on Friday, June 29. Biglow quickly suggested to Tiff that they row a double in practice with Tiff stroking, perhaps to give his back a bit of a rest and perhaps because he had been rattled by his relatively poor showing in Europe. Of course, Tiff was all for it, and Harry agreed

to let them race against Altekruise and Bouscaren.

On Wednesday, June 20, the two doubles did fifteen power-20s. Tiff and John, “filled with fury and rage,”⁷¹⁷⁶ won them all.

The next day, June 21, they rowed four 1,000s. Tiff and John won the first by half a length. Charlie and Joe won the last three, but very narrowly.

At that point, Harry called off the competition. Tiff then asked to seat-race Bouscaren. Harry turned him down.

Tiff and John kept rowing their double. On Sunday, June 24, they put Biglow in the stroke seat, and “the boat seemed to take off.”⁷¹⁷⁷ Tiff asked John if he wanted to row the double in the Trials the next weekend, and John said that he did.

When this idea got out, all hell broke loose. That was when Joe moved out of John’s room and Charlie moved out of Tiff’s room.

Tiff and Biggie continued to wrestle with the idea for two more days until Tuesday, June 26, when Biglow finally bowed to enormous pressure from Bouscaren, Altekruise and ultimately Parker and backed out.

Of course, that was just about the end of a life-long Olympic dream for Tiff Wood. Unless he could get into a Trials-winning double or quad, the best he could hope for would be to be named sculling spare, an

⁷¹⁷⁴ Lewis’ derogatory nickname for Altekruise and Bouscaren, after a cheesy American television situation comedy.

⁷¹⁷⁵ Lewis, *Assault*, pp. 102-3

⁷¹⁷⁶ Halberstam, p. 180

⁷¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 181

THE SPORT OF ROWING

agonizing third Olympics for him without rowing a single stroke in competition.

Tiff told Harry he was quitting the Camp immediately and called Brad Lewis. Tiff was finally ready to try their double.

With Brad committed to Paul, Tiff's second call was to Jim Dietz. Dietz agreed.

It was Tuesday night. The Doubles Trials began on Friday morning.

Dietz: "Tiff and I had only a few days to get a boat, get it reasonably rigged and get ready for the race. We had to borrow a boat because Harry would not allow us to race in one of the Camp doubles that he controlled.

"Sportsmanship!"⁷¹⁷⁸

Wood: "Rowing the double with Jim was a desperate act at that point, for both of us, less than a week before the Trials. Harry was pissed at me for leaving the Camp, but I had nothing to lose."⁷¹⁷⁹

Really! You *couldn't* make stuff like this up.

Olympic Doubles Trials

Altekruse: "The problem was that we got sent to Europe, and then we came back, and it was sort of a double-jeopardy thing. We didn't have anything to win and everything to lose. Also, I was suffering from bronchitis and on prescription antibiotics. I was on the mend, but I know I was not 100%."⁷¹⁸⁰

Seventeen doubles entered the Trials in Princeton. Three heats Friday morning with one to qualify, followed by three repêchages Friday afternoon with one to quality. Finals on Sunday. Lewis / Enquist won their heat. Altekruse / Bouscaren and Wood / Dietz also made it through to the final.

Enquist: "Our speed on the first day back together after the Camp had been just a shadow of what it became right before the Trials. We had had time to heal both physically and mentally from the stress of the Camp, and time to learn how to row together.

"The Lewis / Enquist double that showed up at the starting line of the Trials was nothing like the one that had rowed at the Camp."⁷¹⁸¹

The atmosphere was tense as the boats lined up for the final.

Lewis: "Charlie Altekruse, in the next lane over, turned to us and said, 'Good luck, guys.'

"Neither Paul nor I responded in any way."⁷¹⁸²

Their focus was unwavering after weeks of shadow rowing and Mike Livingston's tape.

Halberstam: "Brad Lewis had found the perfect role for himself, the outsider spurned by authorities, the challenger versus the favorite who had been given all the advantages. He was absolutely comfortable, absolutely ready."⁷¹⁸³

Casey Baker and Dan Brisson from New York A.C. led early with Lewis and Enquist a solid second. Brad and Paul made their move at 750 gone, overtook the leaders at the 1,000 and never looked back. Dietz and Wood moved into second with a final sprint, but they were well over a length of open water behind the winners.

1 Lewis/Enquist	6:35.50
2 Wood/Dietz	6:41.13
3 Baker/Brisson	6:43.00
4 Bouscaren/Altekruse	6:43.10
5 Ruane/Van Dusen	6:52.28
6 Spousta/Meyers	7:07.74

⁷¹⁷⁸ Dietz, personal correspondence, 2009

⁷¹⁷⁹ Wood, personal conversation, 2009

⁷¹⁸⁰ Altekruse, personal conversation, 2009

⁷¹⁸¹ Enquist, personal correspondence, 2009

⁷¹⁸² Lewis, op cit, p. 122

⁷¹⁸³ Halberstam, p. 187

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

Dietz: “The speed that Tiff and I had in the last 500m was great. With a little practice we might have been able to put together a better starting 500m that would have had us in better position at the finish.

“Hindsight!”⁷¹⁸⁴

Wood: “But we were second. For what we had, I think we did okay.”⁷¹⁸⁵

Altekruse: “We finished fourth in the Trials. We were just dead. There was no way we were going to win that race, although we went out there to try.”⁷¹⁸⁶

Olympic Quad Trials

Later that same day came the Quad Trials, no heats necessary, just a final.

Purdy: “The race in Lucerne had given us confidence that we could move the boat with Jack in bow. Despite this, after our return to Hanover, Harry continued to seat race Tiff, taking no time for tapering and rest before the Trials. I don’t think Harry thought that the Trials would be a challenge for the Camp boats. He underestimated the speed of the challenge boat.

:We went into the Lucerne Regatta tired and never had time to recover before the Trials. I remember feeling exhausted during the warm-ups in Princeton.”⁷¹⁸⁷

Altekruse: “In a last desperate attempt to make the Olympic Team, Joe, Tiff, Dan Louis and I jumped into a quad to race our own Camp Quad (thereby automatically switching the anti-camp crowd allegiance to us!?!?)”⁷¹⁸⁸

Dietz: “I did not go out to race in that quad at the 1984 Trials. I had had enough!”⁷¹⁸⁹

Not surprisingly, given what must have been the worst end to the worst day of their individual and collective rowing careers, the combo entry finished more than 100 meters into last place.

1 Charles River B	6:03.5
2 Olympic Camp	6:07.0
3 Combo	6:30.8

Lewis: “Bloody Sunday.”⁷¹⁹⁰

Purdy: “We were aware that the double had lost. Our race was flat. The challenge boat moved on us early, and we never were able to move back.

“The row back to the boathouse was the longest of my life.”⁷¹⁹¹

The Charles River Rowing Club quad that won the Trials was made up of Camp cuts and rejects: stroke **Greg Montesi**, singles Trials finalist and U.S. Marine, 3 **Ridgely Johnson**, Princeton University ‘80, 2 **Bruce Beall**, University of Washington ‘84, and bow **Curtis Fleming**, Orange Coast College and UC Irvine, a teammate and training partner of Brad Lewis off and on since high school.

Aftermath

With all of his boats defeated, **Harry Parker** offered to resign as Olympic Coach. This had to have been one of the toughest days in his long and storied career. Halberstam’s retelling of Harry’s self-reflection is very poignant.

Mike Totta: “My recollection was that the Olympic rowing people gave Korzo the eight job right after the 1983 Worlds – the decision happening in late August or early September, and from that moment until December most of us in the sculling group in Boston saw very little of Harry.

⁷¹⁸⁴ Dietz, op cit.

⁷¹⁸⁵ Wood, op cit.

⁷¹⁸⁶ Altekruse, op cit.

⁷¹⁸⁷ Purdy, op cit.

⁷¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁷¹⁸⁹ Dietz, op cit.

⁷¹⁹⁰ Qtd. by Halberstam, p. 189

⁷¹⁹¹ Purdy, op cit.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

“At least part of the success in 1983 had been related to months of almost daily double and quad rowing up and down the Basin on the Charles with Harry. I can’t help but think that if we had done more work on technical development in team boats that fall of 1983, that would have helped build on what was achieved in Duisburg.

“Instead, it seemed to be lost, with the final blow being the intense focus on the Singles Trials by the top four or five guys.”⁷¹⁹²

Now with the perspective of a quarter century, it still seems that a cruel fate had stalked so many of the protagonists of this tragedy, and that each one, even Harry, perhaps *especially* Harry, had been prisoner to a destiny months, years, even a lifetime in the making.

After the Trials were over, the new Olympic Sculling Team got together and picked Tiff as their spare. And these men, all rejected at one time or another by Harry Parker, voted over Brad Lewis’ vociferous objections to retain him as their Olympic Sculling Coach.

Harry was still their god, still the best. Extraordinary.

Wood: “It was terrible year for me, and it had to have been a terrible year for Harry.

“But we did have a stronger sculling program that year than probably ever up until then, in great part because of Harry being there.”⁷¹⁹³

Alternate Universe

Altekruse: “We all had to give our gear bags to the guys that beat us. I actually had to give mine to Paul or Brad. It was the greatest humiliation.”⁷¹⁹⁴

“That was a *great* Camp quad, and it absolutely should have gone to Los Angeles and won a medal.

“Bill Purdy was so disappointed after the Trials that he just threw his bag down and left and wasn’t around rowing for ten years or twenty years or something.

“Purdy was a *great* oarsman.”⁷¹⁹⁵

Purdy: “I sat in the parking lot sobbing, wanting to be left alone. With no disrespect to the challenge boat, I knew we were the faster quad . . . just not on that day. I also knew that Charlie and Joe were much faster than they showed. I was devastated. I felt like all that I had worked for was being taken away again, just like 1980. The selection process was not the primary problem. The timing of selection, followed by racing in Europe and finally the Trials less than two weeks later left no room for preparation for such an important race. The quad line-up was still not solidified a week prior to the Trials.

“I returned to the hotel later that day only to run into Curtis Fleming and his wife in the lobby. I congratulated him with tears in my eyes. I am sure it was bittersweet for him, as he knew how painful it was for me.

“It was almost surreal. I had endured the year of training with Harry in Boston, had been selected for the quad after an intense camp, raced in Lucerne wearing United States Olympic Team uniforms, finishing a respectable third, and after six minutes of misery, I was going home. I wasn’t quite sure what to do.”⁷¹⁹⁶

Mike Totta: “My 1984 dream had been let down in several steps – Bill Purdy’s crashed down at the Quad Trials in one day – a much more sudden, traumatic, and painful process.”⁷¹⁹⁷

Colgan: “Purdy is not mentioned in either book, but he was another solid guy

⁷¹⁹² Totta, personal correspondence, 2010

⁷¹⁹³ Wood, op cit.

⁷¹⁹⁴ Altekruse, op cit.

⁷¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁷¹⁹⁶ Purdy, op cit.

⁷¹⁹⁷ Totta, personal correspondence, 2010

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

throughout the Camp. I would have Purdy in my quad over ANYBODY else at that Camp, including Biglow. Purdy was that good!”⁷¹⁹⁸

Altekruse: “It still seems almost too odd an alternate universe to believe.

“All the Camp boats had made the finals in Lucerne. The quad had placed third, which was the best result for an American quad *ever* at an international regatta. Joe and I had placed fourth after only rowing in the double together, I mean since the Camp, for about two weeks.”⁷¹⁹⁹

“As for me, all the rowing I did in Switzerland, my disappointment after not making the Singles Finals, my concern about the schedule as laid out by Harry the first day of the sculling camp at Dartmouth, and finally my contracting bronchitis at Dartmouth between Luzern and Princeton . . . The point is, maybe all that training finally caught up with me a bit . . .”⁷²⁰⁰

Colgan: “The Trials were too soon after returning from Luzern since ALL THE BOATS THAT RACED AT LUZERN LOST!

“We saw the potential problem in advance, but to a man we voted to race in Luzern against the world’s best. We were almost all 1980 retreats. We wanted to race against the best in the world. We did not want a tarnished medal from L.A., where the best crews would not race. Up until then, almost 70% of the world medals had been won by the East Bloc countries. We took that chance.”⁷²⁰¹

Altekruse: “It was clear. Everybody was just flat. I don’t think there’s any deeper explanation. I don’t think there was anything about technique. We had all been trained together for at least a month, if not

longer, and it came down purely to faulty planning.”⁷²⁰²

Of course, that’s easy to say now. Hindsight is always 20-20.

Enquist: “In 1983, after five weeks of selection camp and Harry’s second set of selections, Brad and I were named the double. Eight days later, we raced in the Trials and won by 26 seconds. That is why having Trials for the Camp Double in 1984 seemed reasonable, and the added experience of international racing in Lucerne seemed to be a bonus.

“I don’t think anybody could have predicted what happened.”⁷²⁰³

A month after the Los Angeles Olympics, Harry looked back on the 1984 strategy in a memorandum to the Men’s Olympic Rowing Committee. In March of 1983, the original plan had called for an unchallengeable camp to choose the double and quad.

Parker: “In September, after enduring a spring and summer of grievance proceedings and being forced into challenge races in July of ‘83, I suggested to MORC that both the double and quad be made challenge races or be chosen through trials that national team boats would enter; that was a mistake. I had always maintained in the past that primary camp crews should be unchallenged, and I should have stuck to that position for ‘84!

“The second mistake was to go ahead with the plans to race in Europe even though we now had the challenge races to row shortly after our return. Because we had won the challenge races so convincingly in ‘83, I thought, in September, that this was a reasonable risk. What I failed to allow for was the far shorter time it left us for selection of the double and quad, the significantly greater depth of good scullers,

⁷¹⁹⁸ Colgan, personal correspondence, 2009

⁷¹⁹⁹ Altekruse, op cit.

⁷²⁰⁰ Altekruse, personal correspondence, 2009

⁷²⁰¹ Colgan, op cit.

⁷²⁰² Altekruse, personal conversation, 2009

⁷²⁰³ Enquist, op cit.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

and the problem of recovery from the trip to Europe.

“All of these factors worked against the double and quad that raced in Europe and contributed to their defeat in the trials. The first factor, i.e. the shorter time available for selection also led or contributed to my failure to properly recognize Brad Lewis’ and Paul Enquist’s potential. Had I more time and done a better job in that area, both the double and quad might have been stronger.”⁷²⁰⁴

More Plot Twists

Within days, Brad and Paul were at an impasse. Brad wanted to train the last month before the Olympics in California. Paul insisted on returning with the rest of the Trials-winners to Dartmouth.

By the time Brad had finally given in and arrived in Hanover, Biglow had approached Paul about the two of them rowing the double again and letting Brad row the single after all.

Paul told him he didn’t care. It was up to Brad.

So John asked him.

Brad was understandably stunned when he heard about Paul’s response, but still he thought about the offer for a day as he and Paul rigged a new boat for the Olympics. Then impulsively he decided to grasp the opportunity to row the single, his goal all year long, but by this time, Biggie had changed his mind once again, of course.

After extracting a promise that their conversation would never be shared with Paul, Brad walked down to Paul’s room and said, “Let’s get to work.”⁷²⁰⁵

Couldn’t make this stuff up. *Seriously!*

⁷²⁰⁴ Parker, Review of ‘83 and ‘84 sculling programs with suggestions for the future, memo to Men’s Olympic Rowing Committee, September 24, 1984

⁷²⁰⁵ Lewis, op cit, p. 138

Olympic Doubles Competition

Fast forward through a month of more training and shadow rowing and inspirational tapes to Lake Casitas.

Lewis: “In the **opening heat**, we were all primed, got to the start . . . *Êtes-vous prêt? Partez* . . . we crank, we’re in pretty good shape . . . they ring the bell, false start.

“What the hell? Somebody must have jumped. They have a guy with a red pylon, and he walks the length of the starting platform, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, all the way to Lane 6 and places the pylon in front of us.

“Jim Dietz used to say there’s a fine line between a false start and a *fast* start. Apparently, they had let an obvious false start go in the previous heat, so they were determined to knuckle down and send a message with our race.

“So the next start, we just had to sit there, count to three and make sure everyone is well away, and *now* we’ll go . . . because two false starts and you’re out, and it *does* happen. People get eliminated in the *Olympics!*

“So we spotted everybody a couple of lengths and had to grind, grind, grind and work our way back. We got through the whole field . . . and *almost* caught the Germans, came within a second or two.

1 FRG	6:36.70
2 USA	6:38.21
3 NOR	6:43.01
4 AUT	6:43.10
5 SUI	6:51.48
6 MEX	6:57.01

“So we were sent to the **reps**, and that turned out to be really good because it gave us another chance to race. We got a pretty good draw, but Finland was in our race. We were rowing against Karppinen’s brother!”⁷²⁰⁶ The two brothers had been third in the Worlds the previous year.

⁷²⁰⁶ **Reima Juhanna Karppinen**, 6’4” 193cm 199lb. 90kg

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Lucius Biglow

1984 Olympic Men's Doubles Final

1 USA 6:36.87, 2 BEL 6:38.19, 3 YUG 5:48.46:39.59, 4 FRG 6:40.41, 5 ITA 6:44.29, 6 CAN 6:46.68

Paul and Brad celebrate as the Yugoslavs sit stunned and the Italians finish.

“And there were some other pretty good people. Yugoslavia was in there, so it was going to be fun.

1 USA	6:38.32
2 YUG	6:39.70
3 MEX	6:42.86
4 FIN	6:44.43
5 AUT	6:44.54

“We won, and that was the first time we’d ever won an individual race at a regular FISA regatta. There’s nothing like crossing the finish line first to really feel like you’re on the right track. First and second qualified, but if you can win . . . and it was *easy* speed, controlled. We didn’t have to flog ourselves to do it.

“We were *so* happy!

“The **finals**? We were out in Lane 6, started a bit slower than we wanted, but we were two *big* guys. We had lots of horsepower but not much finesse, to be honest. My partner was a big, strong guy, great endurance and really good speed, but not the quickness you need to really crash off the line.

“So these other guys went like bats out of hell off the starting line. We did our thing, which was kind of controlled.

“The first stroke was for technique only. What happens is that a lot of times you take a bad first stroke, and the boat gets off, and you have to get it back on track, and then you’re a half a length down and you’re angry. No one ever wins the race on the first stroke, but a lot of people *lose* the race on the first stroke.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



FISA Centenary

1984 United States Men's Olympic Double
Stroke **Paul Enquist**, Bow **Brad Alan Lewis**
1984 Olympic Champion, Lake Casitas

“So we used to take the first stroke for technique. I mean you're still full of adrenalin anyway, so you're going to crank on it, but . . .

“Anyway, the water was a little rough, a little uneven, so we were just patient and worked through. By the 1,000, we were in the pack. The team from Belgium [**Brugse Trimm- en Roeiclub** in Bruges, **Pierre-Marie Deloof**, 6'2" 187cm 185lb. 84kg, **Dirk Crois**, 6'0" 184cm 192lb. 87kg] had gotten out a couple of lengths, but we had just been training in Ithaca, five minute

pieces over and over against a really good lightweight four, and so we had really good second-half endurance.

“It was pretty cool because it was kind of foggy, and you couldn't really see. Like the fog of war, the fog of racing. You can't really *tell* what's going on. You kind of get the sense that you're up there, so you keep throwing in strokes.

“We had a whole litany of 10s, 10 for West Germany who had this awesome sprint, 10 for New Zealand who used to sit up really high and row into their chests, 10

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

for Norway, 10 for everybody and everything, just a whole series of 10s all the way down until we sprinted like the dickens with like 250 to go.

“We were just starting to go off course. We were going to port, and we were too tired to get it back on course and just hoped we’d get to the finish before we got out of our lane and got disqualified. There was no time for course corrections.

“With about 20 to go, we did three short strokes to jack the rating up from 36 to 37 and then lengthen a little bit but keep the quickness.

“Crossed the finish line.

“It was . . . great . . .”⁷²⁰⁷

Enquist: “Our start was 20 strokes, settle to 35-36 and hold steady. I had the StrokeCoach between my feet. In the



repêchage we settled at 32 and struggled for the first thousand meters when we wanted to get out ahead early. It was too painful to go that hard in the early part of the race, so decided we couldn’t do that in the final.

“Everything went as planned. We had practiced our race plan three to four times shadow rowing on the ergs and once at just firm pressure on the course Saturday morning.

“Sunday morning we were on cruise control. Everything had been rehearsed. The only thing surprising was that everyone was out of sight ahead of us after 40 strokes.

“I held the rate steady and found we were moving back on the field at around 800m. From the 1,000, I started counting down from 120 (120 strokes to the finish line). At 100 strokes to go we were going to go up, maybe 1 stroke. The key was to sit

up a little taller and move the hands away from the body quicker. This moved us from fourth to second in a few strokes. We held this steady until 40 strokes to go.

“I would call out every ten (100, 90, 80, 70 . . .). At 40 strokes to go, we would go to 38-39. Sit up taller, quicker hands, hear the sound of the bubbles along the hull change. At that point I could forget relaxing my left hand as I knew could make it to the line from there at full pressure, even with a tighter grip.

“We were a length down at 40 strokes and pulled even with around 20 to go. A slight bobble with a lane buoy at 8 strokes to go, but we held the rate steady at 38 and heard the horn at stroke 120.

“It really was that simple.”⁷²⁰⁸



The system had worked. A Gold Medal boat had emerged from a brutal selection process. They played the Star Spangled Banner. Cameras clicking. Parents and friends and teammates gathering. Laughter and tears.

If only the story ended there.

Olympic Quad Competition

The Olympic Trials-winning quad had every reason for high hopes on Lake Casitas. After all, they had defeated by a length a Camp crew that had been right in the thick of things in Lucerne.

Unfortunately, they were never a factor in their Olympic heat and were outclassed in their repêchage. Perhaps they had had their best race at the Trials. Or perhaps the Camp Quad had had their best race in Lucerne.

⁷²⁰⁷ Lewis, personal conversation, 2009

⁷²⁰⁸ Enquist, op cit, 2010

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Dave Grant

1984 Olympic Men's Quad Sculls Petite Final

Lake Casitas

7 USA 6:11.50, 8 NOR 6:12.18, 9 NED 6:12.41, 10 ARG 6:32.52

(1 FRG 5:57.55, 2 AUS 5:57.98, 3 CAN 5:59.07, 4 ITA 6:00.94, 5 FRA 6:01.35, 6 ESP 6:04.99)

Or both.

Bruce Beall, Ridgeley Johnson, Greg Montesi and Curt Fleming won a spirited petite final where the first three boats were separated by less than a second, but three crews that had been beaten by the Camp quad in Lucerne made the Olympic final while the Trials winners did not.

Olympic Quad Technique

The technique of the U.S. boat showed the lack of uniformity one might naturally expect from a last-minute combination.

Halberstam: "The quad, which placed a premium on combined experience and smoothness of group technique, was a

difficult boat for Americans. It often went at very high strokes, deftly rather than powerfully executed. The best quad in the world [at the time] was the West German one, and there the same four oarsmen had been rowing together since 1977."⁷²⁰⁹

Indeed, the quad from **Ruderverein Ingelheim/Ulmer Ruder-Club Donau:** **Albert Hedderich**, 6'3" 190cm 207lb. 94kg, **Raimund Hörmann**, 6'4" 194cm 196lb. 89kg, **Dieter Wiedenmann**, 6'4" 192cm 185 lb. 84 kg, **Michael Dürsch**, 6'2" 187cm 176lb. 80kg, had been 1979 and 1982 World Silver Medalists and 1983

⁷²⁰⁹ Halberstam, p. 166

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



FISA 1984 Video

1984 United States Men's Olympic Quad

Montesi: -10°, +35° to -30°, 0-6, 0-19, 5-10, Classical Technique, *Kernschlag*
Fleming's sequential use of legs first is out of phase with the rest of the boat.
Stern-pair used ferryman's finish. Bow-pair did not.

World Champions before they became 1984 Olympic Champions.

The Americans were in a different world, lacking the Germans' homogeneity. For their stern three, force application was *Kernschlag*, but legs and backs were used concurrently, which set them apart from much of the rest of the Camp that had rejected them.

But Curtis Fleming went a different way, using his legs in the manner of John Biglow, Tiff Wood, Sean Colgan, Joe Bouscaren and several others: virtually complete sequentiality of motion.

Olympic Singles Competition

Biglow: "When the team went out to California two weeks before the Olympics, I started two-a-day workouts, feeling like I had to do something.

"I really *didn't* have to do something. It was just that everyone around me was doing

two-a-days. It was not what I was doing all year long, which was rowing in the double with Paul Enquist, and I think it was bad for me because my back was very sensitive.

"You've got a herniated disc. You've got a nerve going around that herniated disc, and if you irritate it too much, the disc gets enflamed, and then it compresses the nerve and gets weak.

"And that's what happened.

"Maybe what I should have been doing was row in the double and race in the single."⁷²¹⁰

Enquist: "John did team up with Tiff in a double a couple of times to practice against Brad and me. These were incredible intense practices, and the results were very close and split pretty evenly.

"Didn't seem to be any sign of leg weakness from John."⁷²¹¹

⁷²¹⁰ Biglow, personal conversation, 2008

⁷²¹¹ Enquist, op cit.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Dave Grant

United States Men's Olympic Quad

1984 Olympic 7th Place, Lake Casitas

Stroke **Bruce Beall**, 6'5" 195cm 205lb. 93kg, 3 **Ridgeley Johnson**, 6'9" 205cm 226lb. 102kg,
2 **Greg Montesi** 6'1" 185cm 179lb. 81kg., Bow **Curtis Fleming**, 6'1" 185cm 181lb. 82kg

The Preliminaries

Biglow: "The frustration for me was that the racing at the Olympics was so hyped up, and there was so much going on there with a *big* village, and it all ended up feeling like a

distraction to me, and I think this is separate from how I did, although I might have liked it better if I had gotten a medal.

"I ended up feeling better about the international competition in the non-Olympic years, and like I said, that may be

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

colored by my doing better in those years, but I felt I was able to focus much more and enjoy the racing and not be distracted by all the peripheral activities of the media and the fanfare, which was kind of wasted on me. I didn't even go to the opening ceremony at the Olympics."⁷²¹²

The Olympic singles field on Lake Casitas did not include defending World Champion **Rüdiger Reiche**, who was missing due to the Soviet-led boycott of the Los Angeles Games. However, in Lucerne the previous month Reiche had lost to both the two-time defending Olympic Champion **Pertti Karppinen** of Finland and the three-time World Champion **Peter-Michael Kolbe** of West Germany, both of whom were participating in the Games, so the field was only slightly diluted by his absence.

John Biglow drew *both* Karppinen and Kolbe in his **opening heat**.

Halberstam: “[Biglow] went out very quickly, which was unusual for him, but he gradually fell behind. Kolbe had taken the early lead; and then, in the last few hundred meters, Karppinen had made his move.

“Kolbe did not contest. This would be Karppinen's race without a challenge. Biglow, falling further and further back, was struggling. Known for his powerful finishing sprints, he appeared tired at the end. Karppinen beat him by ten seconds; Kolbe, easing himself in, by three.”⁷²¹³

John was forced to attempt to advance through the **repêchages**.

Halberstam: “The rep the next day was relatively easy. All he had to do was be among the top three finishers to make the semi. He wanted to win it, however, because Harry Parker had charted and projected the semis, and he drew an easier semi if he won.

“He finished first handily, but he had not been able to coast through on three-quarter pressure.

“In the **semi** he felt tired. At 500 meters he was sixth. The work was harder than it should have been. For the first time he began to worry about making the final.

“Slowly he passed some of the oarsmen.”⁷²¹⁴

Pulling his hardest at 33 in the third 500, Biglow moved up on the two leaders, Ibarra and Kolbe, who were cruising, the former at 29 and the latter 27.

Halberstam: “In the end he finished third, 2.5 seconds behind Kolbe. Biglow was not pleased with himself, but he had made the final and he had two days of rest.”⁷²¹⁵

The Final

Back in 1984, jumping the start was quite commonplace in FISA regattas, and Biglow was often the honest one left at the start floats. On Sunday in Lucerne a month earlier, he found himself open water into sixth place within ten strokes because he was the only sculler not to anticipate the starter's commands.

He had had only marginally better success in the preliminaries on Lake Casitas, but in the final he timed it perfectly and left the starting area tied for the lead.

It did not last long. In twenty strokes four boats had open water in him. By the 500, John was sixth, three lengths behind the leader, Peter-Michael Kolbe.

Biglow: “Nothing obvious happened like a crab. I got off the starting line, and I didn't feel any different except that I was weaker and slower than normal.”⁷²¹⁶

⁷²¹² Biglow, op cit.

⁷²¹³ Halberstam, p. 196

⁷²¹⁴ Halberstam, pp. 196-7

⁷²¹⁵ Halberstam, pp. 196-7

⁷²¹⁶ Biglow, op cit

THE SPORT OF ROWING



AP Wirephoto

John Biglow, shooting his tail on Lake Casitas

Halberstam: “Things that he had once done he could no longer do.”⁷²¹⁷

Biglow: “As I passed the first 500, I was feeling frustrated, helpless, like there was nothing I could do. I didn’t feel pain, but I was doing as much as my legs and my muscles could do. I felt as if I wanted to push harder, and I couldn’t.”⁷²¹⁸

At the half-way point, the margin between Kolbe in first and Biglow in sixth was five lengths. At 1,500 it was a stunning eight lengths!

Biglow: “At the 1,000 meters, I can’t exactly remember, but it was something about trying to push harder now, and maybe I could do something, and trying again with 500 to go. I can’t even remember being

aware of how far back I was. I was on the order of twelve seconds behind.”⁷²¹⁹

Unfortunately, by the 1,500 he had fallen so far behind the eventual Bronze Medalist, Canadian **Robert Mills**, that despite making up more than two lengths on him in the last 500, Biglow still finished nearly a length into fourth place.

Biglow: “I was not aware that I was making up ground on the Canadian in the last 500.”⁷²²⁰

Up front throughout the body of the race, Pertti Karppinen was content to row 30 and let Kolbe, also at 30, lead the race by half a length. With 500 to go, both raised their rating to 31 and then 33. The margin stayed the same.

⁷²¹⁷ Halberstam. P. 207

⁷²¹⁸ Biglow, op cit.

⁷²¹⁹ Ibid.

⁷²²⁰ Ibid.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

At the 250, Karppinen jumped to 37 and motored through to win his third consecutive Olympic Gold Medal, tying the record of the great Soviet sculler, **Vyachislav Ivanov**, between 1956 and '64.⁷²²¹

Ted Nash: “John had exceptional determination. Injury can hold us from our top end. John showed his top gear always. Had he any less guts, he couldn't have taken that fourth place in the Games.”⁷²²²

A healthy John Biglow probably would have had the speed to easily outpace every other competitor in 1984 with the sole exceptions of winner **Pertti Karppinen** and Silver Medalist **Peter-Michael Kolbe**, the dominant scullers of their era.⁷²²³ In fact, Biglow's time over the last 500 of the final matched Karppinen's!

John's major regret?

Biglow: “I'm sure that Tiff would have won the Bronze.”⁷²²⁴

Biglow's Technique at Casitas

John Biglow began our Homeric saga as Paris, the prince of Troy who stole Helen and provoked the Trojan War. He will end it as the other Trojan prince, **Hector**. Noble and serious, he would have been king . . . but he was doomed to fall in battle.

Film from Lake Casitas records the final chapter of a descent into hell for John Biglow. As in Lucerne, John was shooting his tail.

Watching the motion of Biglow's bow ball was instructive. Most of the singles participants rowed in Swiss **Stämpfli** or West German **Empacher** hulls which tended to maintain an even level as they proceeded through the water in response to *Schubschlag* force application. By contrast, the bow ball on Biglow's American **Van**

Dusen shell tended to rise and fall twice each pullthrough as it responded to his two distinct *Kernschlag* force inputs.

Having re-adopted by this time Parker's Stop & Shop recovery rhythm, probably while stroke of the 1983 U.S. Quad,⁷²²⁵ Biglow accelerated into the stern on his slide, and even though he was not intending to explode with his weak-feeling legs, Biglow's bow would rise at the rush of weight into the stern followed by the initial shock of his leg motion at the entry. Then it would react a second time to the remainder of his stroke. This is a classic two-part pullthrough, considered by George Pocock and his followers, including Frank Cunningham, as the cardinal sin in sculling.

After the initial leg pulse (“impact instead of picking up the boat”⁷²²⁶), the pullthrough resumed its pattern of strong, effective, near-parabolic surge to the finish⁷²²⁷ that Biglow had used since 1981.

Greg Rokosh, CBC television commentator at Lake Casitas: “You can see Biglow's rough style, his rough application of pressure on the oar. He's got to get much smoother if he is going to catch [the medal contenders].”⁷²²⁸

Biglow: “I didn't know that I was shooting my tail, but now that I am looking at these pictures, I am actually remembering more of what it felt like in that race. I can't explain why this would happen, but my legs felt weak, and therefore I didn't feel like I was anchored in a way that I could pry with my back.

“I was doing what I could in '84 after making my back worse with the two-a-days. I was not thinking about style.

“I cannot explain this. I'm looking at the pictures. They are amazing! I

⁷²²¹ See Chapter 86.

⁷²²² Nash, personal correspondence, 2009

⁷²²³ See Chapter 125.

⁷²²⁴ Biglow, op cit.

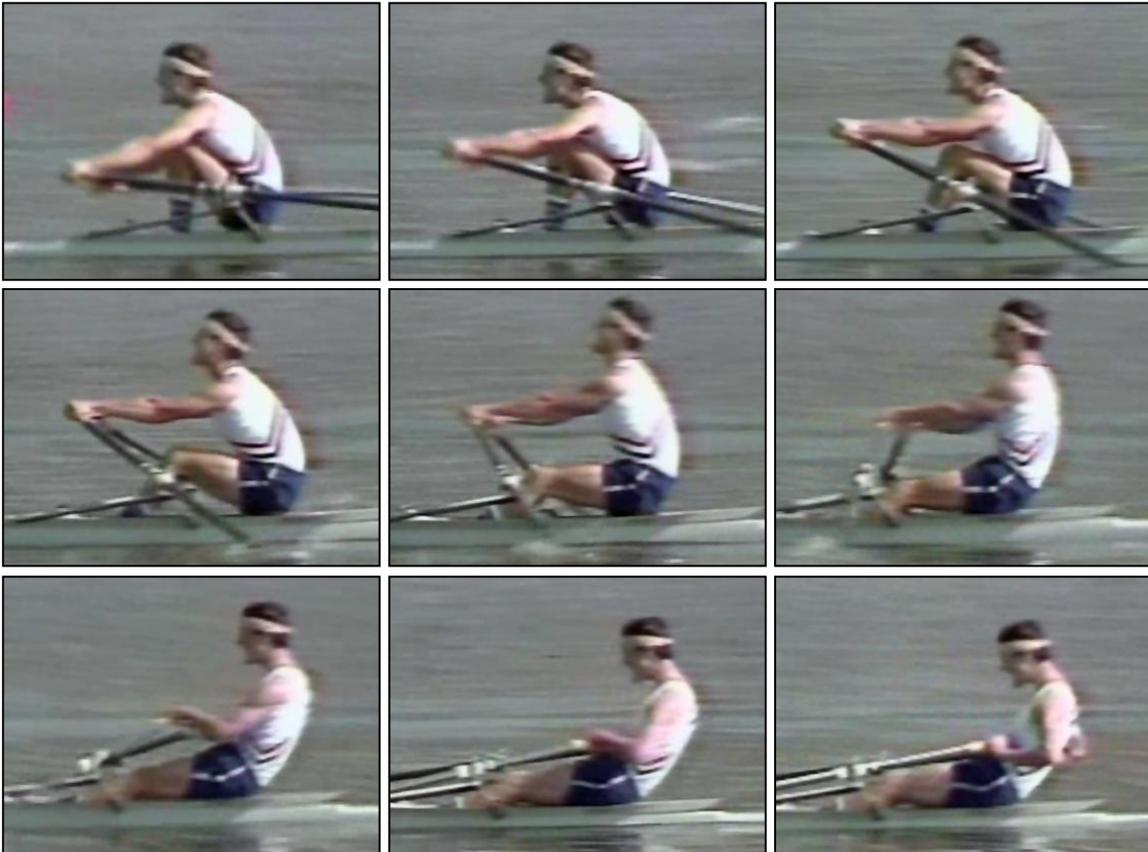
⁷²²⁵ See Chapter 140.

⁷²²⁶ Cunningham, personal correspondence, 2008

⁷²²⁷ See Chapter 139.

⁷²²⁸ Rokosh, commentary during the 1984 Olympic semi-final.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



FISA 1984 Video

John Biglow

1984 Olympic Fourth Place, Lake Casitas

0°, +35° to -30°, 0-8, 0-10, 0-10, Stop & Shop, *Kernschlag*

The equivalent of Modern Orthodox hybrid-concurrent with late arm draw.

Unlike 1981, legs and back were disconnected. Despite virtually unchanged stroke mechanics, the result was a two-part pullthrough in 1984.

“Note the disconnectedness of his arms.” – Frank Cunningham, 2008

remember what it felt like, and I can actually picture myself in the boat and doing it again.

“I don’t know why it happened like that. My legs were weak, and yet I shot my tail. Why wouldn’t I just pry with my back and hold my legs stable?”

“I wasn’t conscious or aware. It just happened. When I look back on the ‘82 pictures, I remember the feeling of the stronger legs allowing me to pry my back against my legs.

“I can remember the frustration of feeling so weak in the ‘84 Olympics . . .

“Reliving this is actually much more painful than I thought it would be . . .”⁷²²⁹

Flaw in the System

In summary, it is hard to avoid surmising that while Biglow’s technique was clearly affected adversely by his back

⁷²²⁹ Biglow, op cit.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

injury, starting in 1982 it had also tended to devolve toward mutant segmented-effort *Kernschlag* under the influence of the group of scullers working under Harry Parker in Cambridge, just as Frank Cunningham has surmised.

It seems more than coincidence that John's technique improved so much in Seattle during the winter of 1983-84 when he was rowing behind Paul Enquist, a fine Classical Technique role model, and receiving feedback from Cunningham.

But when he was struggling, there were so many technical similarities to the leg-back sequentiality of Tiff Wood during the 1984 Sculling Camp and to Altekruze, Bouscaren and Colgan in Lucerne and to Fleming on Lake Casitas.

It should be stated that this change was not intended by Parker himself, who relied on his athletes to subconsciously arrive at their own conclusions as to how to move boats without micromanagement from a coach.⁷²³⁰

The potential flaw in that approach is that intramural competition within teams or at selection camps, especially when seat racing is involved, tends to reward conformity to the group norm, whatever that may be. If you can blend with your teammates, then you succeed. Majority rules.

So if the majority is pounding the legs at the catch, then *that* is what you must do in order to succeed. Anything else, including Classical concurrent *Schubschlag*, the historic hallmark of champion sculling boats for more than a century, is selected out.

But it's more than that. As Sean Colgan stated in Chapter 141, explosive legs seem to have a particular advantage in a seat racing environment. The noticeable pulse upon entry is readily apparent to all and can quickly galvanize the members of a coxed-four or a quad. You pound the catch

together, get an early lead and demoralize the other boats. The pieces are shorter than 2,000 meters, so the advantage shifts to the aggressive early leader.⁷²³¹

For John Biglow, his personal devolution in technique perhaps involved not just his subconscious effort to compensate for a serious back injury but also his subconscious adaptation to the group-think of the Camp.

The Decline and Fall of Tiff Wood

In 1983 when Tiff placed third in the World Championships rowing in the sliding-rigger boat with mild *Kernschlag* force application, it had been the summit of his rowing career.

But the next year, when he returned to his regular segmented-force *Kernschlag* approach, it all came apart. First he narrowly missed out in the Singles Trials he had won the previous year. Then – despite the Camp Coach being Harry Parker, for whom he had rowed with such distinction at Harvard – Tiff also failed to make the top Camp Double.

Next he couldn't make the Camp Quad.

Then came the loss at the Doubles Trials. In frustration, his desperation double partner, **Jim Dietz**, had accused him of “killing fish”⁷²³² with his oars.

As a final humiliation, he suffered a horizon job in the Quad Trials.

Halberstam: “The more anxious he became, the more he sought to push through solely on power, and the rougher he rowed.”⁷²³³

⁷²³¹ Sean wrote an instructive article in Andy Anderson's Doctor Rowing column in the February, 2009 issue of *Rowing News* describing [How to Win a Seat Race](#).

⁷²³² Dietz, qtd. by Halberstam, p. 185

⁷²³³ Halberstam, p. 164

⁷²³⁰ See Chapter 102.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Lucius Biglow



Harry Parker

The Best of Times . . . The Worst of Times
Tiff Wood in 1983 and 1984



The Oarsman

Wood and Dietz at the end of the Doubles Trials

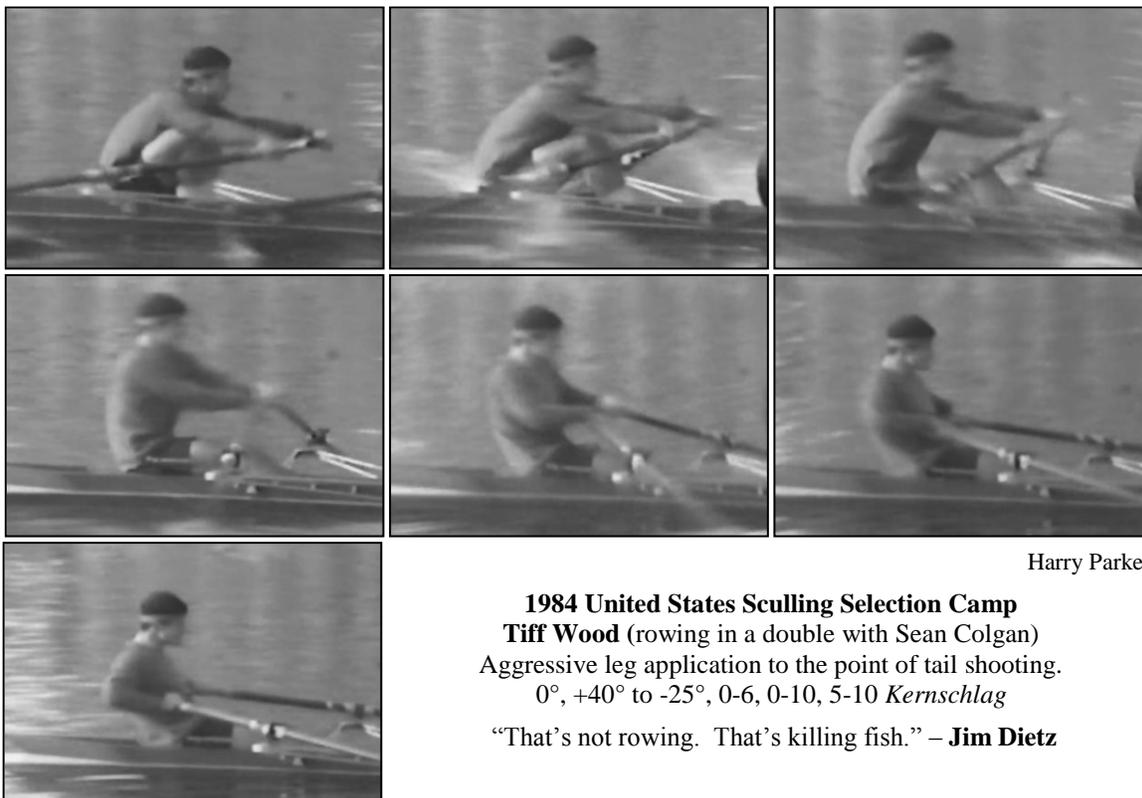
Odysseus tied to the mast.

Tiff's technique is recorded in extensive films of training that previous winter in Tampa and that spring in Cambridge. As is shown on this page, leg drive had become so explosive that he shot his tail out from under him. A second, magnificent effort completed the pullthrough, but there was no organic integrity to the stroke, no unified surging acceleration from catch to release. As a result, his crew boats didn't swing, and he had to achieve all that he did at the Singles Trials on pure talent and guts.

Mike Totta: "When I went to Boston in 1983 to join the training group, one of my

first workouts was in a double with Tiff Wood. I'll never forget the violence (and boat check!) associated with the catch with him in the bow and my less than technically-slick self in the stroke seat. I'd never felt anything like it before. It sounds stupid, but it really DID feel like a 'hammer' was hitting the footboard on every catch. The feel of a double with Tiff was different than the feeling with anyone else sculling at that time. It never surprised me that he had challenges blending into team boats. We all knew it.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Harry Parker

1984 United States Sculling Selection Camp
Tiff Wood (rowing in a double with Sean Colgan)
 Aggressive leg application to the point of tail shooting.
 0°, +40° to -25°, 0-6, 0-10, 5-10 *Kernschlag*
 “That’s not rowing. That’s killing fish.” – **Jim Dietz**

“However, you can’t fake speed in a single, and few were better than Tiff in 1983-84.”⁷²³⁴

Historical Perspective

Stunningly, the Olympic Gold Medal of Lewis and Enquist was the only one won by any American men, rowing or sculling, in any event in the forty years between Bill Stowe’s **1964** Vesper eight and Bryan Volpenhein’s **2004** National eight.⁷²³⁵

And yet, like the 1972 Vesper four,⁷²³⁶ Lewis and Enquist’s Classical Technique had little long-term influence in their own country. Author **David Halberstam** and the American rowing community focused on the human story of our heroic and tragic 1984

sculling heroes but never asked if there was a possible reason why our best Modern Orthodox *Kernschlag* scullers had been beaten.

A lost opportunity.

Lewis: “As a country, we used to be good in the double,⁷²³⁷ but only one other American crew has even made the *finals* at the Olympics since 1968, and that was 2004. They came in sixth, so it’s not an easy event for Americans.

“Paul was 29 years old. I was 29, and we both had been in it for a *long* time.

“Sculling is a tough sport to get good at. Sweeps is so much easier. I once talked to **Florijn and Rienks**, the Dutch guys who won the double in ‘88 and then stroked the

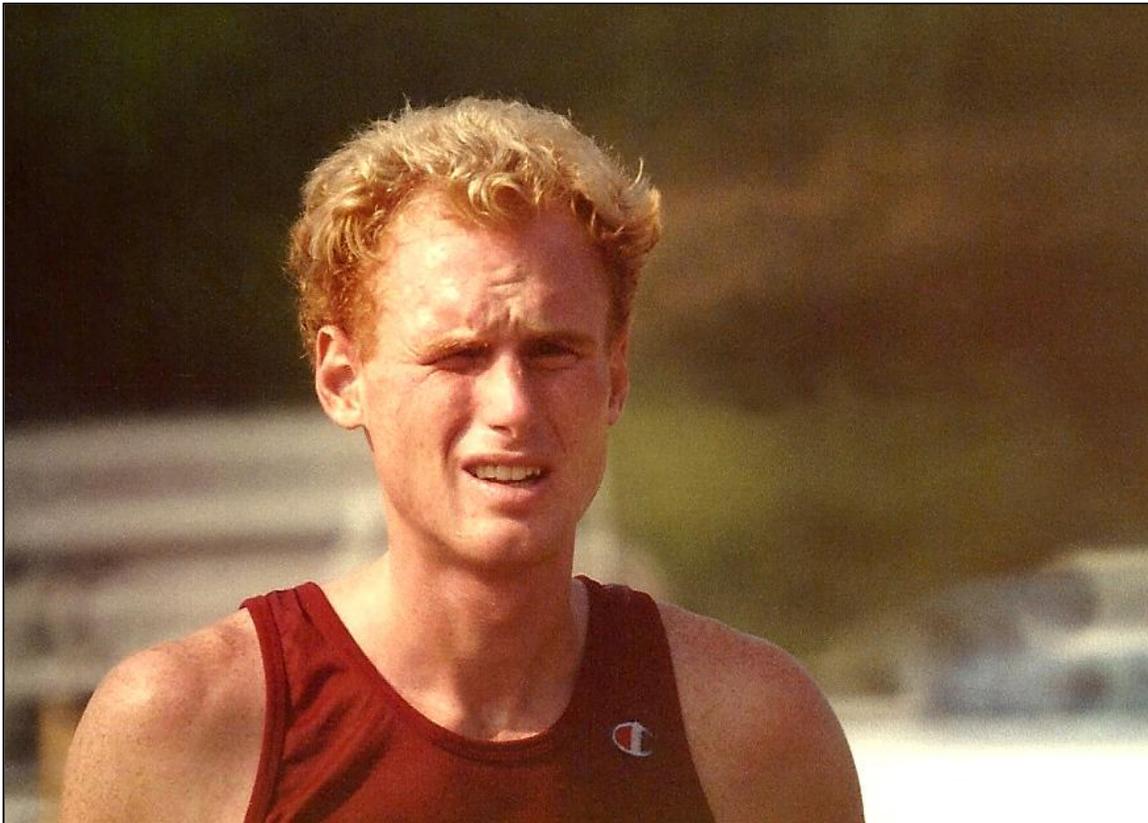
⁷²³⁴ Totta, op cit.

⁷²³⁵ See the Preface.

⁷²³⁶ See Chapter 122

⁷²³⁷ The U.S. won in 1920, ‘24, ‘28 and ‘32. See Chapter 56.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Carol McGowan

Andy Sudduth

eight that won in '96.⁷²³⁸ They had won at the highest level of both sweeps and sculls. I asked them which was harder for them, and they said that physically sweeps is harder because there's no strategy. You just crank it from the first stroke to the end. Sculling? It's heavy. The surface area of the two sculling blades is so much greater than the one sweep blade, so it's *heavy!* You can't row as hard. You have to strategize, pick your moves, and that's what makes sculling better suited for some people.

"You know, the greatest sweep oarsman of our time, **Steve Redgrave**, started out in sculling. Crashed and burned⁷²³⁹ . . . but, of

course, he did well enough to beat me in the finals of the Diamonds in '85, my last season.

"About that time I was envying my partner. Paul quit rowing, never took another stroke after '84."⁷²⁴⁰

Andy Sudduth

David Halberstam ended *The Amateurs* with the events of 1984, but the remarkable impact Harry Parker had on the perceived status of sculling in the eyes of American sweep oarsmen paid another dividend the very next year when Harvard rower **Andy Sudduth** made the international jump from the 2-seat in Kris Korzeniewski's 1984

⁷²³⁸ See Chapter 135.

⁷²³⁹ See Chapter 130.

⁷²⁴⁰ Lewis, op cit.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



The Oarsman

United States Men's Coxed-Four

1984 World Silver Medal, Oberschleißheim

Coach **Harry Parker**,

Stroke **Fred Borchelt** 6'5" 195cm 196lb. 89kg, 3 **John Everett** 6'4" 193cm 205lb. 93kg,
2 Tom **Woodman** 6'5" 194cm 200lb. 90kg, Bow **Andy Sudduth** 6'3" 191cm 201lb. 91kg,
Coxswain **Bob Jaugstetter**

Sudduth was just 19 when he was recruited from the Pre-Elite Eight after Lucerne.

Olympic Silver Medal Eight⁷²⁴¹ to the 1985 U.S. Singles Trials winner with Harry coaching.

At the time of his switch, Andy was already one of America's most accomplished sweep rowers ever:

- 1979 New England Champion – Exeter
- 1981 Thames Cup – U.S. Under-23 Eight
- 1981 Silver – U.S. Under-23 Eight
- 1981 Silver – U.S. Worlds Coxed-Four
- 1982 Bronze – U.S. Worlds Coxed-Four
- 1983 U.S. College Champion – Harvard
- 1984 Silver – U.S. Olympic Eight
- 1984 Gold – Head of the Charles Single

- 1985 Gold – CRASH-B Ergometer Worlds
- 1985 U.S. College Champion – Harvard
- 1985 Grand Challenge Cup – Harvard

Gregg Stone has mentioned that John Biglow had been a much more talented athlete than he. Andy Sudduth was also brimming with what seemed like superhuman athletic capacity and potential.

It is interesting to note that Tiff Wood had won the Championship Single at the **Head of the Charles** three times from 1979 to 1981. Andy would win it five times in a row beginning in 1984.

The **CRASH-B World Indoor Rowing Championship** had been won in 1983 and

⁷²⁴¹ See Chapter 124.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

1984 by the 6'7" Olympic Quad Trials-winner **Ridgely Johnson**. Tiff and Biggie were good, but never quite the best. Andy Sudduth won it in 1985 and repeated in 1987 and 1988.

Wood: "Andy was a mild mannered, sweet guy. He loved to race. I remember actually being pretty happy that he was not going to switch to single sculling until after '84. It was already evident that he was a prodigy."⁷²⁴²

Biglow: "I have fond memories of rowing on the Charles with Harry coaching Andy, Tiff, and me, before Andy found his top speed.

"He was very stubborn. I could get ahead, but he never gave up, never caved in. Very strong.

"I never did overlap with him after he became the U.S. sculler."⁷²⁴³

Andy was plucked from the U.S. Under-23 Eight at the age of 19 to row on his first senior team in 1981. They won a Silver Medal.

Was he the best oarsman Harry Parker had ever coached at Harvard?

Parker: "There's no way to compare different people from one era to another. But he's certainly one of the very best that we've ever had."⁷²⁴⁴

1985 World Championships

By the time Andy lined up for the final of the men's single at the World Championships in Hazewinkel, Belgium, in just the previous twelve months he had already won the Championship Single at the Head of the Charles, won the CRASH-Bs,

and stroked the Harvard Varsity to wins at the Eastern Sprints, the Harvard-Yale Race (the first Harvard win in five years), the U.S. College Championship in Cincinnati and the Grand Challenge Cup at Henley.

Devon Mahoney Zimmerman, 1985 Harvard coxswain: "At Henley the night we won the Grand, the entire boat decided that tradition must be upheld and proceeded to strip and jump off the bridge right beside the Leander Club boathouse. Andy Hawley still remembers watching Suds, buck naked, climbing up the railing of the pub by the river to the deep amusement of those drinking on the porch, then racing off down the street, white skin glowing, cackling away, with two English bobbies in hot pursuit."⁷²⁴⁵



Surely it must have seemed that no one rower could possibly achieve any more in a single year than Andy already had in 1985, but it might not have happened at all if his 1984 U.S. Olympic Eight had not come in a heart-breaking second on Lake Casitas.⁷²⁴⁶

⁷²⁴² Wood, op cit.

⁷²⁴³ Biglow, personal correspondence, 2009

⁷²⁴⁴ Qtd. by Malcolm Moran, *Olympic Rower Sets Sights on '88*, *The New York Times*, May 11, 1985

⁷²⁴⁵ Zimmerman, tribute to Andy at the Head of the Charles, 2006

⁷²⁴⁶ See Chapter 124.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

Sudduth: “I came half a second from retiring. If we’d done as we expected and won the Gold Medal, it would have been easy to decide that rowing wasn’t all that important in the next four years, but there’s a fairly strong feeling of having missed out on something.

“It wasn’t that we didn’t win. We didn’t show up with our best performance that day.”⁷²⁴⁷

1985 Singles Final

A year later, Andy looked around him and saw one of the strongest fields ever assembled for a World Championship, with three Olympic Gold Medals, three Olympic Silver Medals, five World Gold Medals and four World Silver Medals *just in the single sculls event* already spread among the other finalists.

All six scullers rowed the first 100 meters between 39 and 42. West Germany’s **Peter Michael Kolbe**, **Vasily Yakusha** of the Soviet Union and **Uwe Mund** of GDR quickly established an early lead of nearly a length over **Andy Sudduth** of the U.S., **Pat Walter** of Canada and **Pertti Karppinen** of Finland in that order.

At 300 meters, Kolbe took a 10 and moved another half length into the lead, but Mund and Yakusha closed the gap by 500 meters after Kolbe dropped his rating to 31.

By 750, Sudduth at 35 was closing quickly on the GDR and Soviet scullers as Kolbe again pushed half a length past them into the lead. Further back, Karppinen was also on the move.

By the 1,000, Sudduth had swept up first a thoroughly beaten Mund and then Yakusha. His split time for the second 500 was at least 1.00 seconds faster than anyone else.

Yakusha collapsed after he had been passed. He would lose a full two and one-

half lengths in the next 500. Kolbe also folded, surrendering two lengths and the race lead to the American. Only Karppinen at 30 carried on, maintaining a consistent pace throughout the middle 1,000 while Sudduth continued to inch away from him at 34. There was a full length between them with 500 to go.

It would be a two-boat race the rest of the way.

Rowing U.S.A.: “Sudduth’s move into the lead brought the regatta crowd to their feet, but Karppinen was only 2.01 seconds back.”⁷²⁴⁸

With 350 to go, Karppinen raised his rate to 34 and immediately began to move. Sudduth was looking over at him almost every stroke and could see the danger. He responded by going to 35, but the margin had shrunk to just two-thirds of a length with 250 to go.

Five strokes later, Sudduth caught a small crab in the increasingly choppy water. Karppinen pounced and was by him before he could get going again. The Finn put in 10 more at 38 just to nail the lid on the coffin, but the race was already won. The final margin was 2.88 seconds, but that was misleading. Neither was going flat out in the last 100 meters.

Bill Belden:⁷²⁴⁹ “I remember watching Andy’s race with Karppinen. It looked to me like his Van Dusen shell⁷²⁵⁰ was a little unstable at the end. I think the overall instability of Van Dusen singles required additional small motor activity that drained energy, adding to fatigues and instability at the end of races. Perhaps a different boat might have yielded a better result?”⁷²⁵¹

The Times of London: “The men’s single sculls produced the expected classic

⁷²⁴⁸ Michael Hughes, *All Together Now: The World Rowing Championships, Rowing U.S.A.*, October/November 1985, p. 22

⁷²⁴⁹ See Chapter 139.

⁷²⁵⁰ See Chapter 140.

⁷²⁵¹ Belden, personal correspondence, 2010

⁷²⁴⁷ Qtd. by Moran, op cit.

THE SPORT OF ROWING



FISA 1985 Video

The margin was two-thirds of a length as Andy hit the 250.

when Finnish Olympic Champion Pertti Karppinen sculled through the American, Andrew Sudduth, in the last 250 metres. Sudduth a newcomer in this event, who stroked⁷²⁵² the United States 1984 Silver Medal eight and Harvard in this year's Grand at Henley, dictated the race until Karppinen relentlessly turned on the pressure in the closing stages.

"The pace was such that the Finn was under 6min 50sec with a length to spare over the American with four-times World Champion Peter Michael Kolbe of West Germany almost four lengths adrift in third place."⁷²⁵³

1 FIN Karppinen	6:48.08
2 USA Sudduth	6:50.96
3 FRG Kolbe	6:59.75
4 URS Yakusha	7:01.90
5 GDR Mund	7:03.58
6 CAN Walter	7:06.70

Throughout rowing history, there have been quite a few of extraordinary individuals who have amassed extraordinary accomplishments during their careers, but I think it is safe to say that no one has ever had a year to match Andy's in breadth of accomplishment, starting at the Head of the Charles on October 20, 1984 and ending at Wassersportzentrum Hazewinkel on September 1, 1985.

Andy's career didn't end there. There were two more CRASH-B titles, including a dramatic come-from-behind victory over **Steve Redgrave**⁷²⁵⁴ in 1987, and three more Head of the Charles wins to come. In 1986, he stroked the U.S. eight to Gold at the Goodwill Games in Moscow and Bronze at the World Championships in Nottingham, England. Returning to the international single, he placed seventh at the Worlds in Copenhagen and sixth at the Olympics in Seoul, Korea.

⁷²⁵² He was actually in the 2-seat.

⁷²⁵³ Jim Railton, British pair stretch Russians to the limit, *The Times* of London, September 2, 1985

⁷²⁵⁴ See Chapter 130 ff.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



USRA

1979 United States Junior Rowing Team

I came this close to meeting Andy Sudduth when I was a U.S. National Junior Coach.
(Andy's future wife Ruth was seated two places to his left.)

Gregg Stone: “Andy’s inability to replicate or top his Silver in the single is a story we have heard in various versions before with Cromwell, Dietz and Biglow. A decade later, it also happened to **Jamie Koven.**”⁷²⁵⁵

“Single sculling is not an American sport.”⁷²⁵⁶

Unlike the rest of the fine American scullers of the 1970s and ‘80s, today we already speak of Andy in the past tense.

Andrew Hancock Sudduth (1961-2006) died of pancreatic cancer several years ago at the age of 45. He has left a loving wife, two daughters and a host of grieving teammates and friends.

Andy spent his adult professional life as a computer software engineer, following a passion he first embraced in junior high school. As he went from the Harvard computer lab to the DHCP and DNS servers and on to Cisco Systems in the first heady days of the burgeoning world-wide web, he was one of its architects, contributing to the development of many of the programs that became the basis of the modern internet and discovering the internet’s first well-known virus.

But he is remembered by rowers as an inveterate prankster, a faithful friend and *the* consummate rower. He was the kind of guy that people, myself included, *wish* they had met even if they never did.

⁷²⁵⁵ See Chapter 149.

⁷²⁵⁶ Stone, personal correspondence, 2009

THE SPORT OF ROWING



FISA 1985 Video

Andy Sudduth, United States
1985 World Silver Medal, Hazewinkel
+5°, +35° to -35°, 0-8, 0-9, 0-10 Classical Technique
Concurrent *Schubschlag*, ferryman's finish.

Technique

Andy's widow, **Ruth Kennedy Sudduth**: "What I noticed the most about Andy's rowing was its *sheer simplicity and economy of motion*. [my emphasis]

"I remember glimpsing him row off the dock sometime in the '80's and thinking how he made something which I knew to be extremely nuanced appear so effortless and obvious."⁷²⁵⁷

It is interesting to contrast the above description of Andy's technique with previously mentioned descriptions of John

⁷²⁵⁷ Ruth Sudduth, personal correspondence, 2009

Biglow's "awkward" technique by various television commentators.

However, when Biglow was rowing at his best and not hampered by injury, there were more similarities than differences. Biglow rowed with more erect posture. The natural C-shape of Sudduth's back allowed him to compress his legs more going into the entry. Biglow dramatically lifted his chin. Sudduth kept his chin level. But these are stylistic differences, no more.

The real difference, what Sudduth could do perhaps better than anybody in the world, was make his sculling look *easy*. When first Mund and then Yakusha and finally Kolbe fell by the wayside in 1985, they looked labored compared to Andy. When Karppinen went by, he had to work *hard!*

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

Stone: “I suspect that every oarsman who ever rowed with Andy would list him as their favorite partner. He was a sailor first, and he combined excellent water skills with huge VO² and massive legs. He was just extraordinarily gifted, and extraordinarily humble as well.

“Whatever boat he was in felt better and performed better due to his presence, from the 1984 Silver Medal eight to unfit Harvard alumni boats. He even made you go faster if you were just sculling along with him. I remember going out with him in the mid-’80s. We just loped along in what turned out to be a 5.5k piece I did (and do) often. There was no effort to it, and yet when we finished I realized I had broken 24 minutes easily, something I hadn’t done for many years. For Andy, it was nothing, but he laughed at my pleasure.”⁷²⁵⁸

Sudduth rowed mainstream Classical Technique concurrent *Schubschlag* with a Fairbairnesque endless-chain rhythm. His was an approach that Guy Nickalls or Charles Courtney or George Pocock or Frank Cunningham could identify with and celebrate.

Of course, he didn’t just win beauty contests. He was also the ergometer World Champion! He had it all. He was truly a once-in-a-generation athlete.

Harry Parker in 1985: “It’s not just that he’s strong. There are a lot of strong people rowing. I’m sure there are several as strong as he is. He utilizes his strength very



Robert Visser, *Rowing U.S.A.*

Andy Sudduth
at the 1985 World Championships, Hazewinkel

well. He’s has a great natural sense of what it is to make a boat go.”⁷²⁵⁹

Bruce Ibbetson, 1984 teammate: “Andy was an extraordinarily tough individual. He also had a serious lack of fear, as exhibited by his crash while mountain biking across Costa Rica with us several years ago.

“He could easily have killed himself coming down a steep slope out of a mountain pass, doing about 30mph while the rest of us were picking our way through a boulder-strewn trail at about 10mph. Andy launched himself horizontally for about fifty feet, landing in a crumpled hump. He stood up slowly, bloody and dirty and said, “That didn’t go too well.”

“That was Andy.”⁷²⁶⁰

⁷²⁵⁸ Stone, personal correspondence, 2009

⁷²⁵⁹ Moran, op cit.

⁷²⁶⁰ Ibbetson, personal correspondence, 2009

THE SPORT OF ROWING

Ruth: “Andy commented to me once as we prepared for a workout and I asked him how hard we were going to go. ‘Why, you just go as hard as you can for the time allotted.’

“When he was well into chemotherapy, gaunt and pale, my mother saw him on his road bike on rollers with a lake of sweat growing under his bike. She said she’d never seen anyone work out so hard. It was just another day on the bike for him.

“He was amazing. If not impervious to pain, then with an incredible threshold. It took a serious change of approach as he was dying to treat pain differently. He had always used pain as information on how his body was performing. It became time to manage the pain and to keep it under control so he could function and be present for the people he loved.”⁷²⁶¹

Rest in peace, Andy Sudduth.

Perspective

The international success of Jimmy Dietz and Bill Belden in the 1970s, Scott Roop in 1981, John Biglow in 1981 and 1982, Tiff Wood in 1983, the double in 1984 and Andy Sudduth in 1985 represented flickers of light in the midst of the Dark Age of American sculling . . . and rowing, too.

The technique of Sudduth and the healthy Biglow was the reincarnation of Ned Hanlan and John B. Kelly, Sr. Unfortunately, rowers have short memories, and nobody in the ensuing years remembered.

Placed in proper historical perspective, Andy Sudduth, Lewis and Enquist, John Biglow, Belden and Roop, Jimmy Dietz, Hough and Johnson, Van Blom and McKibbon, the 1974 U.S. Eight and the 1964 Vesper Eight were the last echoes of the American bell first rung by Ellis Ward at

⁷²⁶¹ Ruth Sudduth, op cit.

Penn and Charles Courtney at Cornell three-quarters of a century earlier.

Cornell-grad **Bill Stowe** was the last of the great American international strokes produced by the Courtney/Conibear tradition. In the forty years since, there certainly have been other strokes as gifted. Al Shealy,⁷²⁶² Cal Coffey⁷²⁶³ and Andy Sudduth immediately spring to mind, but not until the basic truths about boat moving which Stowe embodied in 1964 could reemerge in U.S. rowing would an American eight win another Olympic Gold.

Ironically, during the American Dark Age, the rest of the world was experiencing an **Age of Enlightenment**. There was a free exchange of ideas such as had never been seen before in the history of the sport.

Other countries took turns sharing the forefront of world rowing, the German Federal and Democratic Republics, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Canada, Spain, Italy, Norway, Danish lightweights, Romanian women.

Not the United States.

Afterward

The year 1984 was an epic tragedy, the reason why at least two books⁷²⁶⁴ and one commercial film⁷²⁶⁵ have been made about the American men scullers of that fateful year.

Brad Lewis and **John Biglow** tried a double in 1985. It did not go well.

⁷²⁶² See Chapter 104 ff.

⁷²⁶³ See Chapters 116 and 129.

⁷²⁶⁴ the Halberstam and Lewis books. See Bibliography.

⁷²⁶⁵ *Rowing Through*, 1996, loosely based on the Halberstam book.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Inge Stekl

1980 Rowing Club

2007-2010 Head of the Charles Champion
Senior-Master Fours Men (50+)

Stroke **Mike Totta**, 3 **Bill Purdy**, 2 **Otto Stekl**, Bow **Dan Sayner**, Coxswain **Gary Goldring**

Since then, Brad has written several books, been an America's Cup grinder and done some coaching.

Lewis: "Today [2009] **Paul Enquist** is a member of the Port of Seattle longshoremen, the last great union in this country. He's 6'6". He's married to a really tall woman, and they have two boys who are even taller. One is rowing freshman at U-Dub this year. The other is a basketball player who is 6'10".⁷²⁶⁶

⁷²⁶⁶ Lewis, op cit.

After 1984, **Charlie Altekruse** kept with the sport and finally rowed in an Olympic quad.

Altekruse: "I stuck around to '88, but the problem was that when we got over to the Olympics, we ran up against these frustrated East Germans who hadn't got to go to Los Angeles, and it was much harder to win a medal.

"In the quad competition in Seoul, I think we had something like four previous World Champion quads in that race. The Norwegians, the Canadians, the Italians and the East Germans had all won the quad within a certain number of years [an exaggeration, but not by much].

THE SPORT OF ROWING

“That was the boycott washing its way through the system, and I got to experience all three phases of that cycle. I made the team and missed competing in ‘80, didn’t make the team in ‘84 and then made the team and ran into massive international competition in ‘88.”⁷²⁶⁷

In the intervening years, Charlie has done some coaching and some masters’ rowing. He is now an independent community development consultant in Berkeley, California.

In 1996, **Joe Bouscaren** briefly tried to make the Olympic Team as a lightweight. He still competes in masters’ cross country skiing. He’s a doctor now.

Purdy: “Mike Totta convinced me to finish out the summer of 1984 racing with him in a double. We won races in Boston, Providence, at the Canadian Henley and the Canadian Championships in Montréal. I remember hearing an announcement near the start before our race in Montréal that the Canadian men’s eight had just won the Gold. I didn’t want to hear anything about the Olympics. I was not interested.

“I returned to dental school that fall. My last race would be the championship single at the Head of the Charles, where I medaled.

“I rowed my single for a couple of years to keep from getting totally out of shape, but hung up the oars shortly after that.”⁷²⁶⁸

Since 1990, Bill Purdy has been practicing oral and maxillofacial surgery in the Burlington, Vermont area.

Mike Totta: “After establishing my medical career and starting my family, I came back to rowing in 1998, and it has never been so much fun for me. Sean Colgan had it very right in at least one way – rowing for me is most enjoyable in the



The author and **John Biglow** in 2008

context of a balanced life. For the past five years I’ve trained and raced with my teenage daughter – she won the Youth Medal at the Head of the Charles this year.

“Since 2000 I have been rowing again with Bill Purdy. He sits at 3-seat in our Head of the Charles coxed-four. In 2010, we won the Senior Master’s event for the fourth year in a row.”⁷²⁶⁹

Purdy: “I owe it to Mike for getting me motivated to return to rowing, which had been an all-encompassing part of my life for so long. The return to the sport has brought me lifetime friendships with some incredible people. I am fortunate to have such a great friend as Mike Totta.”⁷²⁷⁰

Today **John Biglow** is a physician and loving father in Woodstock, Vermont. He looks much the same as he did a quarter century ago and still wonders about the perfect storm that was 1984. After more than two decades on the sidelines, he is considering re-entering the rowing world as a coach.

⁷²⁶⁷ Altekruise, op cit.

⁷²⁶⁸ Purdy, op cit.

⁷²⁶⁹ Totta, personal correspondence, 2010

⁷²⁷⁰ Purdy, op cit.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



Jim Dietz and Tiff Wood
with the author in 2009

Susan Parkman

As the Athletes' Advisory Council Representative to the Men's Olympic Rowing Committee, **Jim Dietz** has worked tirelessly on behalf of reforms to ensure that what happened in 1984 would never be repeated.

Since his retirement as an athlete, Jim has made quite a name for himself as coach, first at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. His predecessor had been 1964 Vesper Olympic Champion stroke Bill Stowe, a *Schubschlag* rower who became a *Kernschlag* coach. Under Stowe, Coast Guard had dominated U.S. small-college rowing, but they were rough as cobs.

When Dietz took over the program, the technique he taught was also *Kernschlag*, another example in rowing history of the tendency of *Schubschlag* to mutate over generations.

In recent years Dietz has evolved back into a *Schubschlag* coach of the ten-time Atlantic 10 Conference Champion University of Massachusetts women.

Dietz: "Today, my crews have what is considered a sculler's catch, quick but not

hard. I teach a very relaxed style, mostly influenced by countless hours in a launch with **Kris Korzeniowski**.^{7271,7272}

Ted Nash: "Today Jim is coaching his son, Jim Jr., who reflects his dad's personality in so many ways and is getting stronger and better daily. Another Dietz will soon gain an elite podium."⁷²⁷³

Tiff Wood has moved to the West Coast and also turned to masters' rowing. Just like Gregg Stone, he has a son rowing for Harry at Harvard.

Gregg Stone: "Reading about 1984 has sure made me wish I hadn't quit and missed all that fun!

"On the other hand, as Tiff, Bill Purdy, Mike Totta, Dietz and I are the only ones still rowing, maybe it was better to not burn out.

"Tiff and I row the double each fall in the Head, but being bi-coastal and with very different physiologies, it can be painful. Some rows are better than others. We switch positions and try different approaches, but there is no substitute for being well matched."⁷²⁷⁴

Today, the life journey of Tiff Wood, the *Odysseus* of *The Amateurs*, continues, and his legend continues to grow.

Wood: "It's always great to meet some guy in a bar at a rowing convention and have him tell me, 'I read the book. You're my hero.' And I recognize it was all about having the right scribe.

⁷²⁷¹ See Chapter 124.

⁷²⁷² Dietz, personal correspondence, 2006

⁷²⁷³ Nash, personal correspondence, 2009

⁷²⁷⁴ Stone, personal correspondence, 2008

THE SPORT OF ROWING



Tiff Wood

Cambridge Boat Club Senior-Master Double (50+)
Third Place, 2006 Head of the Charles
Stroke **Tiff Wood**, Bow **Gregg Stone**

“My fame is sort of representative, not really individual. There are probably a thousand other stories just as compelling if the right person had been there to tell it. I recognize that. How can you not like being a hero to people?”

“But in some ways, it has made it harder to get past 1984 because it’s *always* there in everybody’s perception of me and in *my* memory. It took me a long time to actually read the Halberstam book because that was a summer I did *not* want to relive. [Laughs heartily.] I’d kind of read it in pieces. I would open it at random, read a bit and slam it shut.

““Okay, I can take that.””⁷²⁷⁵

⁷²⁷⁵ Wood, op cit.

David Halberstam (1934-2007)

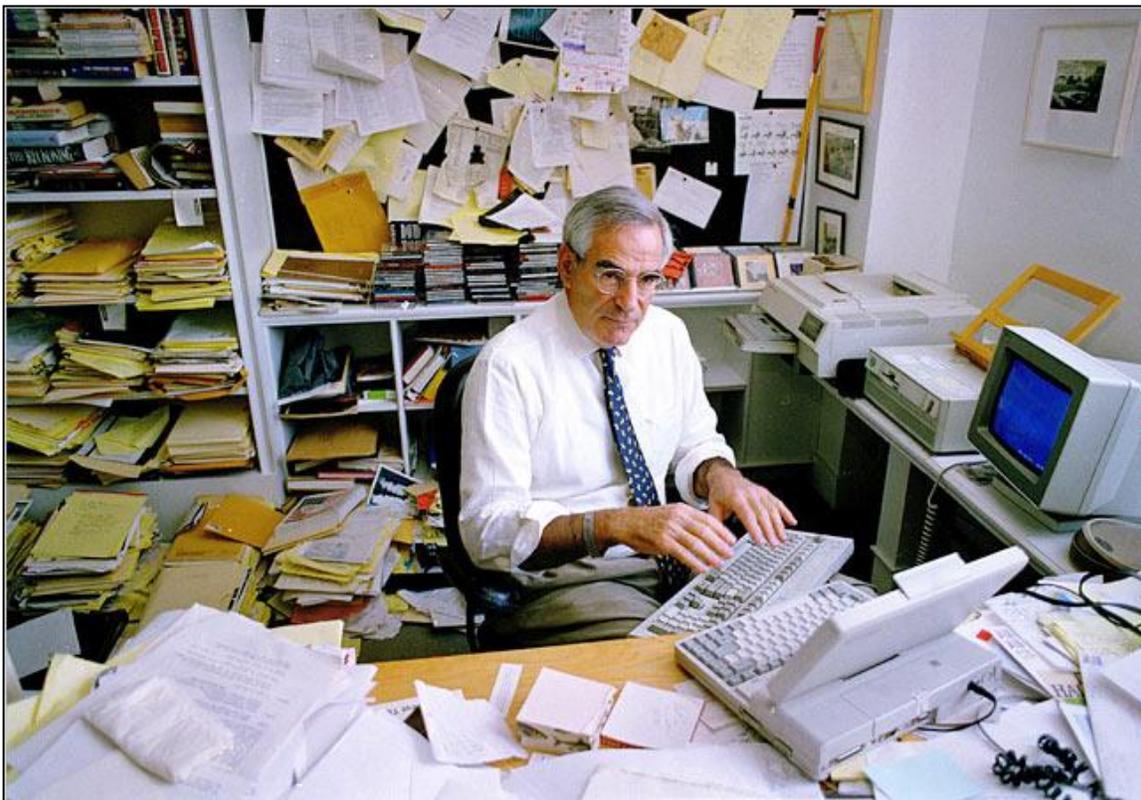
Dietz: “I’ve never been one to dwell on the past too much, and after a few days and a few beers, usually I’m happy to forgive those who may have wronged me.

“I did read *The Amateurs* but do not own a copy. In my eyes, *Assault on Lake Casitas* is a more accurate assessment of the truth.”⁷²⁷⁶

Wood: “It was a great pleasure just to get to know David Halberstam, such a professional about his craft, and he *really* did his research. He was the most careful in that aspect of his writing. Every time I told him a story about *my* perception of a certain thing, I would find out later on that he had

⁷²⁷⁶ Dietz, op cit, 2009

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION



AP Photo/Mark Lennihan

David Halberstam (1934-2007)

called every single person that I had mentioned.

“I realize that what an author chooses to include and what he omits shapes the story he tells, but however some of the other people may complain, I think there are remarkably few inaccuracies in *The Amateurs*.”⁷²⁷⁷

Colgan: “In *The Divine Comedy*, Dante wrote:

*Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria.*

No greater pain
Than to remember a happy time
While in misery.

“For all of the ‘84 scullers today looking back after twenty-five years, he could also have written:

*Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo miserabile
Nella felicità.*

No greater pain
Than to remember a miserable time
While happy.

“No one really wants to talk about 1984. It was an unhappy year, no matter who you were.”⁷²⁷⁸

David Halberstam was tragically killed in an auto accident in 2007 while riding as a passenger to an interview for his projected twenty-fourth book.

⁷²⁷⁷ Wood, op cit.

⁷²⁷⁸ Colgan, op cit.

THE SPORT OF ROWING

Until his death, he had stayed in touch with several of the men whose story he had told in *The Amateurs*.

And, eerily, John Biglow still strains at his oars in his parents' living room.



Author

Eerily, **John Biglow** still strains at his oars
in his parents' living room.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

143. Harry Parker Endures

Forty-Nine Seasons and Counting

Rowing News: “Thousands of hours of exposure to the elements have etched deep lines into his skin.”⁷²⁷⁹

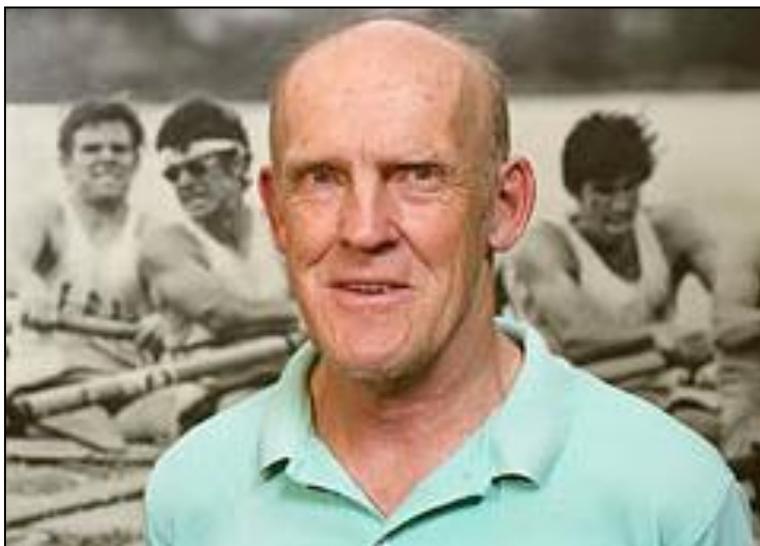
As it has for more than forty years, any discussion of contemporary American collegiate rowing must begin with Harry Parker.

Rowing News in 2004: “While at Harvard, Parker has compiled a dizzying winning record that may never be matched: eighteen undefeated regular seasons, nineteen Eastern Sprints titles, eight official national championships.

“But even a legend is only as good as his last race. When he went from 1991 to 2002 without a victory at the Eastern Sprints, the historic proving ground for Ivy League crews, people began writing Parker’s farewell speech for him.

“People were thinking, ‘Ah, maybe that’s the end of the rope for Harry,’ University of Washington men’s coach **Bob Ernst** recalls, ‘and I thought, “Yeah, right!”’⁷²⁸⁰

Ted Washburn, Harvard Freshman coach and recruiter 1965-1988: “If you don’t change your direction, you’re likely to end up where you’re headed.’ The year



www.news.harvard.edu

Harry

1980 was a dramatic turning point for Harry. By this time, with admissions ‘targeting’ increasing, even the staff of that office had begun to understand that great crews didn’t ‘just happen’ because Harry Parker coached them (a point that Harry himself had been pressing for years).

“The Yale varsity had won the 1979 Sprints, and they were about to win three of the next four. Meanwhile, the freshmen had not had a strong crew since 1976.

“But when I counted the 3x5 cards after the fall meeting for the 1980 season, there were more than twenty experienced rowers -- including **Andy Sudduth**. We lost Andy during the year, but, even without him, both freshman crews won the Sprints. For the

⁷²⁷⁹ Ed Winchester, *Deconstructing Harry*, *Rowing News*, December, 2004, p. 46

⁷²⁸⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 50-1

THE SPORT OF ROWING

only time in my memory, no novice rowed in the first boat.

“The mix of a robust on-campus recruiting effort with a more enlightened and supportive admissions staff proved remarkably successful. Novices returned to the first boat lineups (typically three each year), joined by some very talented schoolboy rowers. The freshmen won four straight Eastern Sprints titles from 1983 to 1986.

“The 1984 frosh lost to Leander in a semifinal of the Thames Cup at Henley (both crews breaking the course record). The 1983 and 1986 frosh finished first and second respectively in the Ladies’ Challenge Plate. The Varsity were to win five of the eight EARC Sprints Championships between 1984 and 1991.

“The 1986 Harvard freshman first boat comprised eight experienced oarsmen and an experienced coxswain. The very strong second freshmen, however, were almost entirely novices, and it was out of that second boat that a varsity captain arose. In my view, that model of good old-time intense, comprehensive on-campus recruiting, joined with contemporary pre-application / pre-admission recruiting of talented rowers and exceptional athletes who want to learn how to row is the optimal format for freshman, varsity, and USA National Team success.

The Dark Years

Washburn: “I left Harvard in 1988, and the last Harvard oarsman to be recruited under that precise format graduated in 1991. The Harvard Varsity did not win the EARC Sprints for the next twelve years. To underscore: ‘It was a bad time for results.’

“What I take from that is that recruiting can be importantly personality-based and that its success should be measured by its impact, not primarily on the freshman, but on the varsity record. Going back to the 1960s and 1970s, the Pennsylvania recruit-

ing model,⁷²⁸¹ although it produced stunning freshman crews, did not yield a single varsity Sprints title in the fourteen years from 1965 to 1978. During that same time span, the Harvard Varsity claimed eleven Sprints titles, including a streak of seven in a row between 1965 and 1971, when the Pennsylvania recruiting model was at its peak.

“What may have happened to Harvard in the 1990s is that recruiting fell primarily into Harry Parker’s lap; and Harry Parker had – and perhaps still has – a very conflicted attitude toward ‘recruiting.’ From the 1960s through the 1980s, with regard to recruiting, he was always ‘marching a bit behind the beat.’

“Now Harry Parker is anything but lazy. Rather, I believe this reluctance is tied to his profound discomfort with promoting himself. Harry has no interest in selling ‘his way,’ and even less inclination to ‘walk the plank to immortality.’

“But recruiting is all about selling and promoting, and what needed to be promoted was precisely Harry Parker (as overtly opposed to other coaches) and Harry Parker’s rowing program (as overtly opposed to others’). It was a very personal sell, and I believe *Harry Parker needed someone else to do it!*

“Meanwhile during the 1990s, other programs, notably Princeton and Brown, were marching ahead with robust recruiting programs which yielded some exceptional varsity crews developed from outstanding freshman boats mostly composed of domestic and foreign oarsmen who had rowed for years before arriving on campus. There still was the opportunity for an exceptional inexperienced athlete to crack into one of these line-ups, but that was a rare exception in the

⁷²⁸¹ under Penn Freshman Coach **Ted Nash**. See Chapter 94.

THE ERA OF POLARIZATION

Sprints winners. Most of the novices were gaining their rowing experience well out of the medals.

Return to the Top

“Before the end of the decade, Harry Parker made his move and hired a freshman coach [**Bill Manning**] who is a skilled, aggressive, relentless, and tireless recruiter. Almost immediately the scene changed to an all-too-familiar one as Harvard won three IRA National Championships in a row.”⁷²⁸²

And so Harry Parker endures, as of the fall of 2010 forty-nine seasons and counting. At the IRA since 2003: first, first, first, fourth, second, eleventh, fifth and fourth.

And the freshmen have been third, second and fifth the last three years, so the future looks strong.

Kathy Keeler,⁷²⁸³ Harry’s wife: “I’ve heard he’s mellowed a lot since I’ve met him. He also talks now, they say. They used to say he never talked, that he was very succinct in his words. I don’t think that’s true anymore.”⁷²⁸⁴



www.hcs.harvard.edu

2003 Harvard Varsity
IRA Champion, Cooper River

Parker: “For the record, I still teach simultaneous engagement of the muscles of the legs and back at the catch and sustained use of the back until the legs are fully extended and the arms drawn into the body. What has changed from time to time has been the rhythm of the recovery as different stroke-men came along.”⁷²⁸⁵

Edward W. Washburn

⁷²⁸² Washburn, personal correspondence, 2007

⁷²⁸³ See Chapter 148.

⁷²⁸⁴ Qtd. by Winchester, op cit, p. 50

⁷²⁸⁵ Parker, personal correspondence, 2010