



March 26, 2009

## Rowers' life is but a dream

### Club draws raft of teens

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**NEWPORT** - The Cincinnati Junior Rowing Club is starting to make the Licking and Ohio rivers look like Boston's Charles River after moving their practices outdoors.

The club sport has attracted high school students from across Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky. The boys varsity has earned six national titles since 1999 while the girls varsity has earned five. Walnut Hills graduate Kelly Salchow went to the 2004 Athens Olympics. St. Xavier's Pat Todd competed at Athens and the games in Beijing last year.

Wilder resident Alex Spaulding looked into rowing when he learned that, as an out-of-state student, he couldn't play other sports for St. Xavier High School.

"I went to a couple practices and was hooked," he said.

"Rowing is physically demanding, especially at first, but it gets easier. Rowing will definitely get you in shape. Aside from just getting you in shape, you will also learn the value of teamwork. You work hard with your teammates at practice, and when it comes time to race, you can trust that everyone will give their all and try to get the boat across the finish line first."

Dwayne Smith, a Fort Mitchell surgeon, has had three sons row for the club. Two continued to row in college and a third is a sophomore at St. Xavier.

"Citywide, I don't believe many of the schools are aware of the resource of the rowing club as an option for kids," said Smith.

Kim Luber's two daughters had been gymnasts growing up. The Villa Hills resident's older daughter, Casey, is a student at the University of Vermont. Anna, her younger daughter, is a junior at St. Ursula Academy.

"They had been involved in gymnastics in a big way and it didn't give them time to do soccer or baseball, so they were out of that loop by the time they got to high school," said Luber. "This is a great sport for high schoolers because not many people have experience in it."

During winter, students compete indoors and practice at facilities under the Montgomery Inn boathouse.

"Athletes use rowing machines that are all electronically linked to a scoring system so that rowers can view a screen to see how they are doing against their competition," said Benjamin Willingham, the club's marketing coordinator.

In the spring, the rowers move outdoors. Their base is a boathouse on the Newport side of the Licking River near the Fourth Street Bridge.

"Rowing has something for everyone," said Spaulding. "It is a very team-oriented sport, and very rewarding. Some may join to help them get into a good college, as it looks really good on a resume."

Others join just to be part of the team. Some may want to row in college, or possibly even go to the Olympics and compete. No matter why you join, if you stick with it, then you'll love it and you meet people that will be your friends for life."

The club's next local event is the Cincinnati Junior Invitational on April 11 at East Fork Lake State Park. For more information, visit [www.cjrc.net](http://www.cjrc.net).

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