



National Wins Five and Six for Falcon Women's Crews!!!

Last season provided a few more hallmark finishes for the women's crew at Seattle Pacific, two more wins at the national level including the program's first ever gold in a lightweight category and the third consecutive win for the women's varsity four at the ECAC National Invitational Rowing Championships. Furthermore, this is the first time that two varsity categories have been won in the same year by Falcon crews, and the first time SPU crew has earned simultaneous victories at different regatta venues. While the lightweight women were winning all their races in Philadelphia at the Dad Vail Championship Regatta, the varsity open women were just across the Delaware River competing at the Camden, NJ course on Cooper River. The Dad Vail Rowing Association is a national membership organization that has been running this event for 64 years hosting all categories, while the Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference conducts the relatively new National Invitational Rowing Championships, a much more limited regional-qualifiers-only event typically held the same weekend. That they were within a few miles of each other made it a logistical bonus for all crews as parents and spectators could enjoy supporting crews at both events.

The women's varsity four was nearly the exact lineup as last year's novice Vail championship crew but with senior, four-year member, Lindsay Dilschneider serving as coxswain. As novices this crew was honored as the 2002 USRA Northwest Region Crew of the Year, but for four rowers to take the step up from national champion novice crew to national champion varsity four was an ominous challenge to be sure. But with the help of senior leadership of Lindsay and the outright determination of the rowers it was not only possible, these gals won their event by an impressive 11 seconds over Mt. Holyoke, Wesleyan, Tufts, Santa Barbara, and St. Lawrence.

Perhaps even more astounding was the varsity four's win the previous weekend at the WIRA regional championships in Sacramento. This event has on most occasions proved to be more difficult to win than even nationals due to the strength of the WIRA member programs and crews. The varsity four faced significant challenge from such Division I powerhouses as San Diego State and UC Santa Barbara, as well as local threats from Pacific Lutheran and Puget Sound. The four had little trouble qualifying however; deliberately saving energy for the final they placed third in their heat. The final was quite another story however, as they poured on the steam for an amazingly fast time winning the grand final with a nearly a course record time of 7:15.5, a length ahead of PLU.

This is only the second occasion - and in as many years - that an SPU crew managed to win the conference, region, and national level events in a particular category. All this winning bodes well for the group as, except for the graduating Dilschneider, they are all set to return next year to defend their various titles.



Women's varsity four, 2003 ECAC National Champions. L-R: Sarah Zorn, Stroke; Shannon Buehler, 3-seat; Heidi Visser, 2-seat; Andi Martineau, bow; Lindsay Dilschneider, coxswain; Coach Jessie Pennington. Seattle Pacific is the only team to win this trophy three times



Women's light varsity four, 2003 Dad Vail National Champions, the first lightweight national win ever for Seattle Pacific University. L-R: Andrea Reichert, stroke; Julie Vieselmeyer, 3-seat; Elyse Cansler, 2-Seat; Kristina Richards, bow; Joanna Hodgkiss, coxswain; Coach Jessie Pennington.

2003 Spring Recap

Another terrific year for the Falcon crews and there were quite a few highlights for the team. The men's squad had very positive representation at the Northwest Collegiate Rowing Conference Championships winning all three of their categories in the novice four, the light four and the pair.

This year's light men's four, largely unchallenged locally and even winning an open category race, finished a strong second place at the WIRA regional championships in Sacramento in a come-from-behind scrap for the silver. The men's pair likewise had an undefeated regular season with little serious local competition, but they were to find more substantive opponents at the regional and national

Recap cont'd –

championship level. After starting out in middle of the pack, they led a charge in the last 500 meters to finish second at WIRA regional championships earning them a last minute opportunity to race the Dad Vail Championships in Philadelphia. This late season burst of speed was a necessary ingredient to any further post-season aspirations the pair may have had. Though they finished behind St. Mary's, the Division I pair that won last year was heading to the IRA national regatta so the Falcon pair could advance to the Dad Vail Championships.

The novice group developed well throughout the regular season, but the women were beset with injury issues that would disrupt their ability to establish a consistent lineup or a consistent set of winning results. Both the novice men and women always managed to find themselves in the medals at each event, but the wins were sporadic at two apiece. Both groups also fell short of capitalizing at regionals, with the men finishing third in the petite final, and the women finishing fifth in the grand final.

The strength however, is in the depth these novices will bring to the varsity groups next year and they should really be a bonus to rounding out the varsity categories. The outlook is good as these young athletes develop and advance their respective categories over the following years.



2003 Dad Vail Championship Falcon men's pair
Tyler Van Stright, stroke; Reid Shipley, bow

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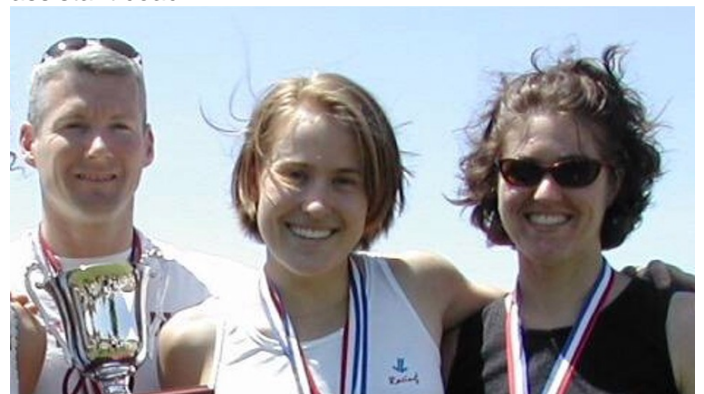
Coaching Change-up

Current events finally caught up with Head Rowing Coach Keith Jefferson this year, leading to his activation into the active duty Marine Corps for six and a half months. Just after starting the autumn schedule last year, the 14-year coach was mobilized to the Marine Forces Pacific Command at Camp Smith Hawaii where he had been conducting reserve drills since 2000. There have been considerably tougher duty stations for Marines so understandably things were a bit more challenging for both assistant coaches Jessie Pennington (2nd year) and Trish Sawatzky (1st year) who now had to pick the slack and run the program while Coach Jefferson lounged smartly in the tropic.

Along with an excellent set of leaders within the team itself, Coaches Pennington and Sawatzky however, didn't miss a beat. The team was solid enough and the program's tradition of excellence established enough to provide a seamless transition for these two splendid coaches. At the time of the change, Pennington had just taken over for Josh Adam, who she assisted for last year, as the Head Novice coach. Coming from four years on the Falcon squad herself, Jessie was in the first two National Champion women's fours in 2000 and 2001, as well the bronze medal crew from 1999. A team captain and an All-Region rower, Jessie was well suited and did an outstanding job coaching the varsity crews to two more national level wins.

Trish Sawatzky also had an amazing record in her career at SPU Crew. National champion last year in the pair, and nearly undefeated in two years of racing, Trish is one of the most competitive individuals to grace the staff. Her rowing accolades include NCRC All-Conference, All-WIRA Second Team, CoSIDA/Verizon Academic All-District, CRCA Scholar-Athlete, and CRCA All-American, among many internal awards, Trish was a good pick to bring in the novice squad for '03.

Things are returning to normal however for 2004 as Coach Jefferson returned in June from his less than rigorous military post and has reassumed his coaching duties, and Coach Pennington resumes as part-time assistant coach.



2002 file photo: Coaches Jefferson, Sawatzky, and Pennington