

Good times for Olympia Area Rowing

Grand opening for new boathouse today

BY CHESTER ALLEN

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These are good days for Olympia Area Rowing.

The club's junior team is coming off a strong showing at the regional meet and is sending two rowers — Malorie Harden and Kari Sulenes — to the national junior championships.

The club's 5,300-square-foot boathouse, which is near the Swantown Marina boat ramp, is finally completed, and a grand opening for the public is scheduled to begin at 11:30 a.m. today.

And the new boathouse will attract even more adult and junior rowers in the club — and on the water, said member Janet Waeschle.

"We're hoping for better visibility in the community," Waeschle said. "A big part of that is the boathouse, but word-of-mouth is also getting out — more people are trying rowing and finding out that it's a great thing."

The year's first learn-to-row sweeps class for masters attracted 20 people, and another is scheduled to start Aug. 5.

People who are curious about rowing should come by the boathouse today and check out the boats and sign up for a Try Rowing day that starts at 10:30 a.m. June 18, said Marika Bertolini.

The new boathouse, which also has room for city of Olympia boating programs, gets rowers close to the water — the old boathouse was an old shipping container that was a very long walk from the water, Bertolini said.

"Now it's easier for us to share our sport with the entire community," Bertolini said.



Toni L. Bailey/The Olympian

Kari Sulenes (left), 17, and Malorie Harden, 17, head to practice Friday from Olympia Area Rowing's new boathouse near Swantown Marina.

Teens row their way to national contest

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Rowers Malorie Harden and Kari Sulenes have put Olympia Area Rowing on the national stage.

Harden and Sulenes will row at the USRowing National Youth Invitational on Harsha Lake in Cincinnati, Ohio, on June 11 and 12.

It's the first time that OAR has had rowers in the national meet, said coach Will Hutcheson.

Harden, who is an Olympia High School junior, and Sulenes, a Capital High School junior, qualified for the meet with a strong finish at the regional competition in Vancouver, Wash., in late May, Hutcheson said.

"They were the first to finish in their heat by 45 seconds," Hutcheson said. "In rowing, most of the time, people are separated by four to five seconds at the most."

Harden and Sulenes will compete against 18 other double-scutt

boats at nationals.

Many of the other boats will have rowers bigger than Harden and Sulenes, Hutcheson said.

"They're going to be up against a lot of more experienced, larger rowers," Hutcheson said. "Size is a factor."

Harden said she just hopes to represent OAR well.

"I think Kari and I want to do real well," Harden said. "I'm not expecting to go out there and beat everyone, but I'd like to row in the finals."

Sulenes said she isn't nervous — yet.

"It's still kind of sinking in," Sulenes said. "When we get out there is when it will hit me."

Sulenes and Harden have rowed together for more than a year, and they are now hitting the water five afternoons a week.

The two are mostly working on



Sulenes



Harden

technique for their 2,000-meter event, Hutcheson said.

"We're not going for more strength or aerobic capacity at this late date," Hutcheson said. "Right now, we're working on getting them to row as well as possible."

It's been a long year of workouts, but all of the work is worth it, Sulenes said.

"It was definitely worth it, even if we didn't go to nationals," Sulenes said. "The extra practices really paid off — we've had good days and horrible days, but it's all part of the experience."

Harden and Sulenes will have a week off from rowing after nationals.

"Then summer crew starts," Harden said with a big grin. "We'll be out here from 6 to 8 in the morning every day."

ROWING EVENTS

Olympia Area Rowing has a free open house to the public today to show off its new boathouse. The event begins at 11:30 a.m. today at the boathouse, which is near the Swantown Marina boat ramp at 1022 Marine View Drive N.E.

Olympia Area Rowing is still paying the final costs of the \$408,000 boathouse. Donations are tax-deductible. For more information, visit www.olympiarearowing.org.

OAR's summer novice program for beginning rowers ages 13 through high school seniors begins June 22. Kids can learn to row during three two-hour sessions a week through August 6. Practices are Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at the boathouse and begin at 10 a.m. The cost is \$140 per novice. Participants will compete in the Green Lake Summer Extraganza Regatta on Aug. 6.

A free Try Rowing day will begin at the boathouse at 10:30 a.m. June 18. Visitors can row in a sweeps boat with experienced rowers.

A masters Learn-to-Row sweeps class — each rower handles one oar — will begin Aug. 5. Masters Learn-to-Row sculling classes — each rower handles two oars — will begin on July 8, July 29 and Aug. 26.

The cost of Learn-to-Row classes is \$130, and \$100 of that goes towards Olympia Area Rowing dues.

For more information, call 360-943-5580 or visit www.olympiarearowing.org.