

Ottawa Rowing Club AGM 2025

Vice-President Competitive report

Closing in on my second year as VP Competitive, I have continued to learn in my role and strive to continue my growth to best support the competitive programs at the ORC. The year has been action packed at the club with many successes. The club is moving in such a positive direction, and with the proposed changes to the club programming structure I am very excited to see what the coming years will bring for the Competitive programs.

Please see the following notes and highlights from 2024:

Competitions

Regatta Participation and Achievements

- This year, ORC had a full trailer attending nearly every possible regatta, with consistent representation from all competitive programs.
- Regatta attendance is currently under review to ensure alignment with the club's vision and athlete development goals, while maximizing value and minimizing resource expenditure on less impactful events.

Notable Athlete Achievements

- ORC athletes had exceptional performances at various regattas, including national-level representation. Congratulations to:
 - Aidan Hembruff (U23 Worlds, BM8+)
 - Madeleine Lauriault (U23 Worlds, BW8+)
 - Jack Coulson (CanAmMex)
 - Mia Bulmer (CanAmMex)
 - Samaya Kholsa (CanAmMex)

Head of the Rideau Success

- ORC successfully hosted the Head of the Rideau regatta, which received overwhelmingly positive feedback.
- Special thanks to the volunteers—umpires, coaches, athletes, family members, and board members—whose hard work ensured the event ran smoothly. Other clubs specifically praised the wet launch setup at Mooney's Bay, highlighting its efficiency and organization.

Programming

Coaching Highlights

- Head Coach Zak Lewis held a post-season meeting with coaches from all competitive programs to review 2024 highlights and discuss future improvements. A big thank-you to all coaches for their dedication and hard work!

Junior Program Success

- The Junior program saw significant success, thanks in part to the inaugural season with a paid staff member, Meghan Jolley, overseeing operations. Meghan excelled in her role.
- A major restructuring divided the Junior program into three tiers: Performance, Crew, and Development. This new structure allows athletes to train in groups aligned with their development stage, fostering growth and camaraderie.

Masters Program Updates

- Dan Brophy, the first-year coach for the Masters program, made a significant impact before moving on to a new opportunity. Recruitment efforts are underway to fill this important role.
- Based on member feedback, the Masters program will undergo restructuring similar to the Junior program. While not identical, it will feature high-performance and crew tiers, enabling athletes to focus on tailored goals, whether striving for competitive excellence or steady personal improvement.

Senior Program Achievements

- Led by Head Coach Zak Lewis and ORC legend Ed Fournier, the Senior programs enjoyed a successful season:
 - The men's program increased training volume significantly, setting the stage for strong momentum in 2025.
 - The women's program, the largest group, achieved remarkable accomplishments across all levels, from competitive to developmental athletes.

Volunteer Coaches and Development

- Volunteer coaches played a key role in the program's success. Their experience helped athletes progress into competitive streams, underscoring the value of robust development programs.

Looking Ahead

- More coaches are needed to support the growing demand and ensure effective management across all groups, particularly in the Masters and Senior programs. This

addition will strengthen development pathways and sustain the progress achieved in 2024.

Coaching

- Since 2021, Rowing Canada Aviron (RCA) has required all coaches to be certified through the Every Coach Certified program. This includes completing three mandatory online modules, a police check, and obtaining a Pleasure Craft Operator's Card. ORC has ensured compliance and will continue supporting coaches through this certification process.
- ORC is committed to supporting coaches' education financially, offering budgeted funds for further certification and professional development opportunities. Coaches can apply to the board for these resources.
- Head Coach Zak Lewis has been instrumental in advancing coaching education by mentoring coaches during practices, regattas, and meetings. He has also assisted with training plans, including weight training adjustments, and has brought in specialists to speak on topics like nutrition.
- ORC hopes to leverage the Canada Summer Jobs Grants to provide young individuals with opportunities to work at the club, fostering the development of future coaches and strengthening the coaching team's longevity.
- Together, let's continue creating a positive and supportive atmosphere for our coaching staff!

Discord

- A Discord server was created to bring all programs onto one application to group and include all members of the club in quick communications and decrease the feelings of "silos" between programs. General announcements, community posts and threads are easy to access for all, while program specific content can still be held within smaller groups. The overall activity is easier to manage, it creates continuity within the community and increases efficient communication across the membership.
- It has helped to integrate new members into the community more easily and allows for alumni to keep in touch in the future.
- Thank you to Paul Zaporzan for all the help administrating and managing our Discord server from the beginning!

SafeSport

- The committee worked towards integrating more up-to-date information from RowOntario into our ORC Policies and Procedures, which can be found under the Safe Sport section of our website.
- Chantal Saunders continues to volunteer for the position of Complaints Resolution Officer (CRO) for the ORC.

- RowOntario has provided all clubs in the province documentation, policies, and resources to implement within the club with regards to SafeSport, which will be relevant to our club culture, athlete and coach education as well as board implementation. As RowOntario continues to improve and implement more specific policies and information, we can update and improve our information dissemination as a club.
- As the implementation of SafeSport within the province continues, an Independent Third Party (ITP) at the RCA level was designated for each province. Information on how to reach the ITP can be found on our website under the SafeSport tab.

In conclusion, lots of action this year and lots more to come. Coaching and programming updates will continue until the season begins.

Thank you to all the volunteers and members that have helped support the ORC and to all my fellow board members for your continued wisdom and time. Special thanks to Head Coach Zak, Jr. Coach Meghan Jolley, Masters Coach Dan Brophy and Sr. Coach Ed Fournier for all their amazing support within my role, and for all their incredible input and energy to elevate all our programming.

Sincerely,
Grayson Gray
Vice-President Competitive
Ottawa Rowing Club
February 2025