

OTRC Match Report – Bedford Head, October 2015



Simon writes:

Bedford Autumn Small Boats Head is for many clubs, OTRC included, the first major event of the head race season. It is set up specifically to allow coaches to try different crew combinations in a competition environment, so is very popular particularly with schools and junior club rowers who tend to dominate the event. We entered 9 junior crews in quads, doubles and singles; the 8 who started all performed creditably although were unable to produce a winner. Not all our senior crews were allowed entry (due to numbers and lack of competition) but again, all who did matched their expectations. The OTRC tradition continues with all the help received from parents and friends with carrying oars, boats & shoes; rigging and de-rigging boats; trailer loading & unloading, and all with the good humour that is a hallmark of our club.

Special mentions to Daisy Attley for bringing her 9 good fingers to help the cause; Fiona for coming to support Hugh and finding herself as substitute in the women's novice masters 4, and Olivia Moyses who was roused early and persuaded to steer the J16 boys coxless quad and who deservedly wins the "Man of the Match" award.

W Mas Vet D 2x: Jo and Vicky – Time: 9:04 (winners, but not worthy of bold print)

Arrived at the course to find my crew mate had rigged the boat, her husband had towed the trailer, the sun was shining and my husband had survived his rugby trip to Manchester unscathed. A good start!

We boated on time (not always the case for us at Bedford) with our oars in the right way (again, not always the way we've done it...) riggers all attached (again, every race something new...hurrah!)

Got to the start. Helped the marshal (some things don't change...) and then we were off. A fairly good start, but a sudden head wind and some fairly bumpy water came as a bit of a surprise. Vicky steered a good course as ever (although apparently we tried a different arch at the town bridge. Whatever...I set the rhythm, she steers the boat. Seems to work!)

The row felt strong, and we really concentrated on the front end and the finish of the stroke as discussed in the race plan. However, it felt surprisingly heavy, and the rating sat a bit lower than our normal expectation. Something different about the flow??

A reasonable time of 9.04 I think made us one of the fastest OTRC doubles (although I can't be sure as the results are not out at time of writing) and only 4 seconds slower than our race last year, despite going up an age group and less boat time together this year. As it turns out our only oppo scratched, and we were **winners**, but as it was by default we chose not to take the medals. They might weigh us down in our next race...

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W IM3 4x: Jo, Vicky, Becky, Bec – Time: 8:34

This entry for Bedford was a late decision after several of the women's crews were unavailable and some members were going to be without a race. Decision made, we managed to get together for a couple of outings prior to the event (cheating, I know, but in our defence one outing was in the dark...) and we agreed to give it a go. Same tactics as the double. Looking at the front end of the stroke; trying to marry up our body shapes (not as interesting as it sounds, tragically) and giving it our all. We had a good start going off at 31 strokes per min, but again struggled to keep the rating above 28 for most of the course, although our finish rating was boosted back up to 31 again by the OTRC roar from the bridge.

Having been denied of any vet oppo, we were racing at IM3 with rowers who could have been our children, and were set off in a sandwich of young men's quads. At any other time this might have been fun, but rowing through their dirty water as they overtook us made for another bouncy ride.

Bec took a good line, and the video shows the blade work was quite tidy.

A faster time than we might have expected, and better than the double (which hasn't always been the case), so it felt like it was a worthwhile row, with lots of effort going in and a respectable time coming out.

Thanks go to Daisy and the other girls for helping us get off the water. We were all too knackered to speak at the end. Thanks girls!

W Nov Mas C 4+: Rhona, Fiona, Jacqui, Kate; cox: Claire M. – Time: 11:37

Supersub Fiona was a star and swapped sides to row for us, as Mel was feeling under the weather. We had a good row and know we have to work on a few issues but we kept together and rowed at a good rate all down the course. First race for Jacqui and first coxing of a head race for Claire so all good experience.

Mas E 4+: Simon, Andrew, Hugh, Peter; cox: Becs – Time 8:24

Your correspondent was kindly invited to join this crew as Martyn was unavailable. As is often the OTRC way, all the practising was done via email; so the warm-up to the start was our first outing together. There was no drama at all; we arrived at the start in good time, waited barely 5 minutes and we were under way. The row itself was rhythmic and solid, if a little sedate, with motivational calls from our cox to keep us focussed. Some enthusiastic youngsters passed us in a blur of blades and blue, otherwise nothing notable to report. The time was a bit disappointing, if not unexpected from a scratch crew; but we only need to be 10% better and we would have won. Go guys next time! We were slightly perturbed to find that our cox had been poached by one of our opposition (Marlow), but we did get her back afterwards; sadly they didn't win either.

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W J18 2x: Becky Smith Jnr and Rochelle Cox and – Time: 9:17

After the quad in the first division was cancelled, we were quite happy to get a bit of a lay in before the race and I was still knackered from Saturday's row. It was a stop and start row up but when we got to the start, we surprisingly only had to wait about 10 minutes. With Keely and Libby behind us, we were determined to stay ahead of them. After the first 500m, we were already so tired but we tried not to slow down. Daisy ran with us for the second half (love you, Daisy!) which was motivating and hearing everyone on the bridge helped us to push to the finish. Even though we came in last place, it was still a pretty good row.

J16 2x: Harry Buley and Will Berridge – Time: 9:32

This was my second race with Will together so far. Our confidence was high at first, then the nerves began to kick in especially as we had a long wait, with multiples of boats lined up before us. It was also our first rolling start as a pair in a race together, we kept our strength for the majority of the course, until I caught a crab with my right oar with the finish line in sight only 5 metres ahead. Full marks to Will keeping the boat steady whilst I maneuvered the oar back in to position enabling us to cross the finish line with out swimming. Overall a strong and spirited effort from the both of us.

J16 4x-: Joe Pendred (compiler comment: and others) – Time: 7:51

I would like to start off by saying thank you to Olivia who stood in for Jordan last minute. Our boat did not win but we did beat the other Oundle Town J16 Quad so we shall not let them forget the time when girl power won! Considering that we had never rowed together before the race (in true Oundle Town style), I think we had a strong start to the race. For the duration of the race we kept together and in time at a good pace, although half way through I felt a slight drop in speed which was corrected by Will's shouting and lead to a great finish.

J16 1x: Joe Pendred – Time: 9:08

I did not win the race although I was pleased with my time and glad that I didn't capsize! I was consistent with technique and pace for most of the race until the last 500 meters when a cheer from Oundle Town gave me the strength to push even more for the finish. I enjoyed the race and can't wait for the next. A big thanks to everyone who organised and helped out, without the whole club effort at all these events we wouldn't get a chance to race.

J16 2x: Rohan and Alfie – Time: 9:01

Our race went well. Our timing was excellent and we kept up a good pace the entire length of the course. The balance, however, was a little off, although that may have been due to the choppiness of the water between Star Club and Bedford Rowing Club. All in all a good race, but with a slightly slower stroke rate and better balance we could improve our performance greatly.

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Match reports not received from the following crews:

J16 4x (Anand) – Time: 8:08

J16 2x (Leo/Honeywell) – Time: 9:05

W IM3 2x (Watson/Mitchel) – Time: 9:21

W J16 2x (Guttridge-Smith/Moyses) – Time: 9:23

Mas A Nov 1x (Box) – Time: 9:45