

Cougars Make Strides against Tough Competition at the San Diego Crew Classic

April 5 & 6, 2008



The Cougar Heavies in the sprint of their Petite Final ahead of Colorado and Texas.

SAN DIEGO, CA – In a historic weekend comprised of some of the finest crews across the nation, the 35th annual San Diego Crew Classic proved to have fast racing and competition galore throughout all heats and finals over the weekend. The Cougar Men's Crew looked to improve off the previous weekend's results, and great strides were made all around.

The Varsity 8+ once again competed in the Cal Cup, and placed 4th overall in their heat with a 6:08.44, relegating them to Sunday's Petite Finals. "It felt very solid," said sophomore two-seat Jaron Lindbom, "once we settled off the start, we powered down the course and it felt good." The Cougar Varsity 8+ was happy to be racing on Sunday at the SDCC again after narrowly missing the Petite Final last year in this event and having to race again on Saturday in the Third Final.

The Cougar's very own Brandon Caesar, Vice Commodore of the team and senior lightweight oarsman, spent a good deal of time this past fall organizing the return of the Secretary of the Navy Cup, the feature event for Lightweight 8+ racing at the SDCC. This was the first time the event was held in 4 years. With 5 total entries in the event, Saturday's heat was for lane placements on Sunday. Out of lane 1, the Cougars came off the line hard but had trouble establishing the rhythm that they had the week before, and they finished last with a time of 6:41.40.

The Cougar Novice 8+ had their hands very full this weekend with competition and were not able to overcome their heat in the Collegiate Novice Event. With the entries of many Ivy League crews in the Copley Cup this year, such as Harvard, Princeton and Yale, a third final for the Novice 8+ event was cancelled. The Cougar Novice found themselves in a heat with likes of Washington, Stanford, Orange Coast College, Sonoma State, Colorado and UC Davis, and were unable to finish in the top 4, ending their weekend with only the one race. They posted their fastest time of the year so far with a 6:40.54.

In Sunday racing, the Cougar Lightweights went back to work in the Grand Final of the Secretary of the Navy Cup. The race was much better than the prelim, and as the crew was walking through the UC Santa Barbara boat, disaster struck. "Everything was going great, and then all of a sudden we veered right," recalls stroke and Vice Commodore Brandon Caesar. Freshman coxswain Lauren Curtis added, "I didn't

know what happened because all of a sudden I lost control of the steering, and we dropped back on the field after that." After the race the Cougs realized the rudder had broken off from underneath the boat. The Cougars finished with a time of 6:35.66 and race winner Cal-Berkeley finished with a time of 6:07.5.

The Cougar heavies found themselves in the thick of competition in a very close Petite Final. When they crossed the line with a time of 6:10.80 the Cougars finished fourth overall in the Final and 10th overall in the Cal Cup. Not bad for being seeded 16th going into the weekend.