Rowing Travels to San Diego for Regatta

PULLMAN, WASH. – After falling in their first race of the spring season to Gonzaga, men’s WSU Cougar Crew will race a fleet of competitors at the upcoming San Diego Crew Classic. The team will travel to sunny Southern California to race in one of the West Coast’s biggest regattas, April 2–3.

The team will be looking to improve on their performance in their only race of the spring at the Fawley Cup. The varsity eight and novice eight boats both finished behind Gonzaga in the race March 19. The varsity boat held a slight lead early in the race before suffering a major crab, or when an oar gets stuck in the water, which reduced almost all boat speed.

“It’s just something that can happen and you don’t want it to happen, especially in an important race like that,” Coach Arthur Ericsson said. “The guys let it go, and they’re moving on.”

The novice boat also suffered a crab, but other factors contributed to their eventual demise. The team took too long to get down to race pace, and spent an excessive amount of their energy prematurely in the race.

“Our guys let their adrenaline get the better of them and maintained a really high stroke rate from the beginning of the race,” Ericsson said. “When they got tired the high stroke rate turned into inefficient rowing, so they were spinning their wheels in the second half of the race.”

The team will be working on their starts in preparation for their race in San Diego. Ericsson said that he will be giving the coxswain more tools so that when issues arise in a race like they did in the Fawley Cup, he can help get the boat back on track.

The varsity 8 and novice 8 will both race in the San Diego Crew Classic in their respective races. There will be 18 teams in the varsity race, and 16 in the novice race, much larger fields than the Cougs first race of the season, where they only went against Gonzaga.

The overall quality of the event will be much higher in San Diego and Ericsson said it will show the team what a proper championship roster is like. The race itself will feature both club and school funded programs that will make for stiff competition. Many of the other teams will have raced 3–4 times already this season while WSU has only competed in the Fawley Cup.

“In one sense you’re getting humbled by the very fast varsity programs,” Ericsson said. “But at the same time you can really put yourself on the map if you go in there and turn some heads with a strong performance.”

While the team is surely hoping to finish ahead of its rivals, their goal isn’t to finish in a certain time.

“The goal is to go down there and make improvements from our first race,” Ericsson said. “Get rid of the weaknesses we had at the Fawley Cup and have no regrets about giving it 100 percent.”

It will be the first time this season that the Cougs will be matched up with club competitors, who they will be racing against in playoffs. The San Diego Crew Classic should provide fans an idea on where WSU will
be seeded and ranked going into the postseason. The Cougs first step in the playoffs will be against fellow club programs in the Western Intercollegiate Rowing Association.

While the race will be the team’s focus, they will hopefully get to enjoy the overall trip as well.

“It’s a real reward for these guys that have been training through the cold winter and the dark mornings,” Ericsson said. “To go down there where the sun is out and the temperatures are 20–30 degrees warmer than here, it feels like summer to us.”

After the San Diego Crew Classic the Cougs will next race in the University of Washington duel April 9 in Montlake. For more information, you can visit the team’s website at http://www.cougarcrew.com/main.ph.

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