Philadelphia University News

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Philadelphia University Men’s and Women’s Crew Will Race in Famed Dad Vail For First Time

Only two students had ever rowed before this year on the novice team.

PHILADELPHIA, May 2007 – For the first time this year, Philadelphia University men’s and women’s crew will compete in the famed Dad Vail Regatta, the largest collegiate crew event in the country.

“It’s so exciting, we’re all pumped,” said Lillian Anderson, captain of the women’s team. “We’ve improved a lot this year and we’re looking forward to competing against some of these teams again.”

The Dad Vail, which attracts teams from more than 100 colleges and universities nationwide, will take place on the Schuylkill River this Friday and Saturday.

In all, 27 women and 18 men will be racing on the University’s teams, which are finishing up their first year and competing at the club level. In the novice category, the students will compete in five different events in the 2,000 meter races: men’s and women’s eight-person teams, men’s and women’s four-person teams and a women’s lightweight four-person team.

Amazingly, only two of the current rowers had ever participated in crew before they turned out for the University’s fledgling teams this fall, said coach Chris O’Brien.

“I’m extremely happy with the way things have gone this year,” said O’Brien, who as an undergraduate was a coxswain for Villanova’s men’s lightweight-eight team. “A lot of the men and women really bought into the whole sport, believe in it and were willing to work and train hard.”

Indeed, in fall and spring the rowers are out on the river – rain, shine or sleet – for practice by 5:10 a.m. and back on campus in time for 8 a.m. classes. Conditioning workouts continue through the winter. “If we can, we’re in bed by 10 p.m.,” said Anderson, a junior Fashion Industry Management major. “We don’t have the time or energy for late nights.”

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Starting next year, the women’s crew will compete in NCAA Division II and the men will compete as a varsity team, as there is no NCAA league for men’s crew. And this spring, O’Brien is recruiting a handful of students for crew who do have previous experience and will help build the foundation for future years.

On Friday, the University’s men’s novice four will race at 11:52 a.m., the women’s novice four will race at 1:02 p.m., the women’s lightweight four will race at 2:33 p.m., the men’s novice eight will race at 3:27 p.m. and the women’s novice eight will race at 4:07 p.m. Top teams in each heat will advance to the semifinals and then the finals, which will take place on Saturday.

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