



May 23, 2005
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Women's Crew

No. 1 California Heads to NCAA Championships

THIS WEEK: Friday-Sunday, May 27-29 at NCAA Championships Rancho Cordova, CA All Day

Head Coach Dave O'Neill

Now in his seventh year at Cal, head coach **Dave O'Neill** has established the women's crew as one of the premier programs in the country. O'Neill has led Cal to seven consecutive team invitations to the NCAA Championship Regatta, and his varsity eight has placed among the top four nationally three times. In 2003, the team took fourth at the NCAA regatta, with the junior varsity 8 capturing the silver medal.

O'Neill has received numerous coach of the year awards for his work. The 1999 national coach of the year, he was voted the 2005 regional coach of the year earlier this month. Regarded as one of the finest young coaches in the country, his philosophy of enthusiasm and competitiveness has the Cal women's program focused on winning its first NCAA title this year.

Before coming to Cal, O'Neill headed the women's program at Boston College for seven years. Under O'Neill, the BC women were the only club program in the country to compete against Division I varsity competition, and they did so with tremendous success. His crews won numerous championships at the Big East Regatta, New England Championships, Champion International Regatta and the IRA.

THIS WEEK: The undefeated and No. 1-ranked Golden Bears make the short trip to Rancho Cordova for the NCAA Women's Rowing Championships Friday-Sunday at the CSUS Aquatics Center on Lake Natoma, just outside Sacramento. Top competition is expected to come from three Ivy League schools that rank among the Top 5: No. 2 Yale, No. 4 Princeton and defending champion and fifth-rated Brown. In addition, Ohio State enters the regatta ranked third. Other schools invited to the three-day event are: Harvard, Michigan, Michigan State, USC, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin. At-large entrants Stanford, Syracuse, Tennessee and UCLA will compete in the varsity 8 races only but will not score points towards the team championship.

Competition starts with varsity 8 heats at 8 a.m. Friday, and Division I races run from 9:30-11 a.m. Saturday. Sunday's Division I finals begin at 10:30 a.m. and conclude with the varsity 8 grand final at 12 noon. For complete schedule and ticket information, visit hornetsports.com.

PAC-10 RECAP: For the second consecutive year, Cal captured the Pac-10 team title May 15 at Lake Natoma. The Bears dominated the varsity 8 race, winning by nearly six seconds over runner-up Stanford (6:20.6 to 6:26.1). Cal also prevailed in the junior varsity 8 and placed second to Washington in the novice 8. In the final standings, the Bears totaled 68 points to Washington's 56 and USC's 53.

O'NEILL, 5 ROWERS HONORED WITH REGIONAL AWARDS: Head coach **Dave O'Neill** was voted regional coach of the year by the Collegiate Rowing Coaches Association, while five of his rowers received all-region recognition. **Kaylan Vander Schilden, Jelena Djukic, Iva Obradovic** and coxswain **Remy Hitomi** earned first team status, while **Laura Terheyden** was chosen for the second team.

2004 NCAA CHAMPIONSHIPS: Cal placed fourth in last year's team competition at the NCAA championships in Rancho Cordova. The varsity 8 finished sixth in its grand final, moving up four spots from its 2003 standing. The junior varsity 8 captured the silver medal, the highest finish ever for the Bears in the event. In the varsity grand 4 final, Cal took fifth. The Bears earned 51 points overall and were just one point shy of third-place Michigan and seven points behind Yale. The fourth-place finish marked the fourth time since 1999 that the Bears have placed in the top five at the NCAAs.

BEST IN THE NATION: Cal recently claimed the top position in the final USRowing/Collegiate Rowing Coaches Association NCAA Division I Varsity Eight Coaches Poll. The Bears received 15 of the 24 first-place votes to take over the No. 1 spot following its victory at the Pacific 10 championships.

SPRING RECAP: Cal's varsity boat swept all six races this spring, including a third consecutive Jessop-Whittier Cup at the San Diego Crew Classic in April. The Bears also posted their third straight dual win over Washington April 23 and followed it up a week later with a more than six-second win over Stanford April 30.

CAL AT THE NCAAs: Since the arrival of head coach **Dave O'Neill** in 1999, Cal has received a team invitation to the NCAA championships each year. The Bears captured the bronze medal in the varsity 8 races in both 1999 and 2002, while the junior varsity 8 brought home silver in 2004 and bronze in '03. In team competition, Cal finished third in 2002 – the Bears' highest team standing since the 1980 squad won the AIAW national championship. If the Bears prevail this weekend, it will mark the second NCAA women's team title in school history, following the Cal softball team that won the NCAA crown in 2002.