



Clash of the Blazerati Titans

2 am. Hammer Smith reports from the Chiltern Valley Winery.

As the crews lined up on the start for the big race of the day, Penny Chuter, coach to FISA, assured her boat that ambulances were waiting at the finish. At approximately three pm yesterday the three contestants jumped the start and each other. While the Juniors (who included several of the runners who sprint the day away delivering results to the press stand, the most important people — the runners, not the press, stupid — on the site) streaked away towards the boathouse and won by a country mile.

The FISA crew, containing the cream of the IOC with Denis Oswald (president) at 6 — resplendent in his old yellow racing headband — and Anita DeFrantz (vice-president) at 7, had some trouble near the start when cox John Boulton (Chair of competitive rowing commission) was observed clambering up the boat with a spanner. Apparently their stretchers came off their runners. Coach Chuter said they were given the lane farthest from her so that she couldn't coach them. In his letter of acceptance to the challenge from Mike Baldwin, chairman of the Organising Committee,

Oswald said, "we cannot satisfy your rule of engagement that our coxswain is of GB nationality, but we can confirm that he is." If Boulton, the chief exec of the Socceros, sees himself as a subject of Her Majesty, then I'm a Dutchman.

Anyway, the FISA boat claimed crewmembers from three continents. Daniela Oronova (events coordinator) was at bow, Melissa Bray (website journalist) at 2, executive director Matt Smith, who is American but gradually taking on the properties of a Swiss, at 3, athletes commission members Greg Kokas and Igor Boraska at 4 and 5, and Svetla Otzetova (events director) at stroke. I think it was a bit below the belt to field several athletes, considering that the organizing committee only had old unknowns like Ben Hunt-Davis (gold, Sydney, 4) and Sir Steve Redgrave (gold, LA, Seoul, Barcelona, Atlanta, Sydney at 6). Funny that. The latter's changed sides again.

The organizing committee had Sarah Edwards at bow, chairman Baldwin at 2, commentator Alison Mowbray at 3, John Hedger at 5, Annamarie Phelps at 7 and Elaine Laverick at stroke. Their cox was the chairman of the ARA, life-jacketed Di Ellis.

So there you have it. Hole those boats and you could have sunk the hierarchy of FISA and the ARA at the same time. An opportunity missed.

Turn over...

FROM THE MESS CRIME DESK

Grobler in bike drama

"Jimmy" Haggerty, Crime Correspondent, writes: First the good news: the local branch of the Pink Palace had its stolen beer supply restored yesterday, although now that the barrel's being moved backwards and forwards on a regular basis, early tippers may find that their pints are cloudy.

But the phantom traders of Slough have struck again. The Mess can exclusively reveal that British coaching head honcho Jurgen Grobler's bike has gone the way of the Sunday beer barrel. We understand that local police are looking for a drunk in charge of a bike.

TODAY

Brits to look out for

9:25 LW2x Helen Casey and Jane Hall, whose pace on Monday was not enough to take them to the final. Two qualifying places

10:00 LM4- Matt Beechey, Daniel Harte, Paul Mattick and James Clarke have to finish first or second

10:25 W8+ Crabbing crippled the women's eight in their heat. Two qualifying places

Plus

Races for lanes in Sunday's straight finals:

9:00 M4+ Simon Fieldhouse, Marcus Bateman, Tom Parker, Hugo Lee, cox Seb Pearce

9:15 LM4x Tim Male, Alasdair Leighton-Crawford, Ross Hunter, Dave Currie

Today's timetable

Repechages from 9:00 to 10:40

LM2- Lightweight men's pairs

LW4x Lightweight women's quads

LW2x Lightweight women's doubles

LM2x Lightweight men's doubles

LM4- Lightweight men's fours

W4x Women's quads

M4x Men's quads

W8+ Women's eights

M8+ Men's eights

Semi-finals C & D 10:45 to 11:20

LM1x Lightweight men's singles

W1x Women's singles

M1x Men's singles

M2x Men's double sculls

15.00 Umpiring seminar

16.00 Coaches' meeting

18.00 Volunteers' party*

Jury outing and dinner*

*Blaggers note, by invitation only

Quote of the day

"Coxed pairs aren't what they used to be" — Sir Steve Redgrave (winner M2+ 1986, winner B final M2+ 1994), surveying the Tuesday results.

Telling tales...

Contact Hammer Smith and the Eton Mess:

E hammer@rowingservice.com
Text 07710-538114

The Eton Mess

Read this issue online at www.rowingservice.com/mess and print off as many copies as you want



Yesterday's inspirations

"And a hushed tension permeates the grandstands as the camera closes in on Redgrave's third and final attempt in the cherry pit spitting competition..." (John Hill, Radio Dorney commentator)

"Those fireworks are really oarsome" (Robert Treharne Jones)

"The war party in the pedalo put their flags at half mast as Sir Steve swallowed the fly." (Ian D Robinson)



Today's caption competition: come up with a line for this. Answers to hammer@rowingservice.com

I meet Attila the Hun

Hello there.

Well it's nice to know, reading your correspondence, that some other people are still alive and capable of being rude. Ivan Pratt!! Towpath Tim!! They both used to be very important and presumably the viagra must be working although neither can remember what they take it for.

I spoke to that nice Alan Campbell on Tuesday after he won his sculls repechage. He is a quiet bloke and difficult to get a quote from, rather like another former top sculler, Peter Haining, who used to get his quotes ready as part of his training programme.

Mr Campbell was very complimentary again about the volunteers. I was a little rude to one of them first thing this morning. It was early, he wanted to be in bed, and he was in charge of welcoming and parking. I made a comment and back

came, "Putting me in charge of meeting and greeting is like putting Attila the Hun in charge of a nursery".

I spoke to Andy Triggs Hodge and he was bewailing the fact that other members of the GB four got interviewed more than he did. Well I suppose the fact that one arrives at the course to see huge pictures of him on the side of a lorry advertising bananas could help. Free bananas for a mention?

Oh yes... I am going to arrange a couple of whip rounds. One is for a new pair of shorts for Sir Steve since I noticed he was still wearing the Lombard-sponsored ones of yesteryear when he rowed in the organising committee eight yesterday. The other is for some decent intermission music.

Cheers anyway. Getting exciting isn't it?

AL7

Clash of the Blazerati Titans continued....

Oh yes, the race. Sir Steve got the OC going by taking twice as many strokes as the others in the first 20 seconds, and they whooshed away from FISA "They should have been disqualified for being late on the start," said the famous oarsman from the Liverpool 8 club. However, here is where he was wrong. According to the FISA bye-laws (10 vols plus supplements, 100,000 Swiss francs, apply to M Smith), a crew in this race could only be disqualified for being early on the start, because the starting time was "3pm approximately".

In a typical bureaucratic maze and pending appeals and counter-appeals, no official verdict has been issued. I am reluctant to take Sir's verdict, which was "we were very close to the juniors and there was about six lengths between us and FISA."

Students are revolting

Sometimes you get a result just by lifting the lid of a photocopier. Here's one from last night, purporting to be from the British Universities Sports Association: "BUSA are given to

understand that the ARA are planning to launch their so-called University Club Accreditation Scheme at the Worlds tomorrow, despite its advice to the contrary... It is becoming apparent that the ARA either do not collectively have the manners, or the individual knowledge and ability, to recognize that BUSA were trying to get a positive result to end the utter failings of the ARA vis-a-vis the university sector for at least the past five years and to help generate a positive move forward, working closer together."

After a wonderful rant about how the ARA doesn't understand university rowing, British University Rowing, BUSA, the world or the universe it concludes: "The wider support of university rowing is something we had clearly hoped to help you progress far more positively and in a much better manner to the benefit of all rowers at universities across the UK. The Rowing Association has had little to no involvement with the sector for half a decade, during which time others have clearly had to fill that void..."

Tut, tut, boys and girls. The gloves will be off in the ARA' hospitality tent today. Jolly boating weather — the chains that bind us now will be severed.

Hammer Smith

SHOW BIZ DESK

The F Factor

FISA Family Grandstand choirs league:

NZL 10/10 for presence, but 6/10 for actual vocal support (has fallen off since day 1).

USA 10/10 enthusiasm, 1/10 tunefulness and -99 for the female car-alarm shrieker.

AUS 9/10 for chanting, nicely in time together and more or less on key.

GBR 9.5/10 for fervour, but 1/10 for audibility (far too polite to yell).

CAN top marks for signage, lacking on the decibels.

NED 8/10 for dutiful stoicism in the face of repechages

Simon Cowell

Robert Treharne Jones, race commentator, to Bryn Vaile of media centre, complaining about malfunctioning aircon: "It's making a noise for no good reason."

Bryn Vaile: "Just like you."

Commentaryballs

"Who wins between these two crews is going to be a little academical"

Send quotes to hammer@rowingservice.com