

Summer 2015

Squaring the Blade

A Newsletter for MIT Crew Alumni

Director's Message

by Tony Kilbridge

On June 7 more than seventy MIT crew alums returned to Pierce Boathouse for Reunion Row. Together with their families and friends, the rowers filled the boathouse and dock. Regatta director Stu Schmill quickly organized two heats of four crews, followed by a grand final. Even with eight 8s competing, some people were unable to row for lack of seats. Several reunion classes fielded complete crews, and representatives were present from classes as recent as 2011 and as distant as 1945. The sun was warm, the water was calm, and humor and good feelings filled the boathouse.

At the same time, a reunion of my college crew was underway on the Thames River in Connecticut, in connection with the 150th running of the Harvard-Yale race. While I missed that event, I felt connected to it through the exchange of emails and photos with my crew-

mates, with whom I have remained in touch since graduating 33 years ago.

These two events happening on the same day, and my different role in each of them, brought home to me the complicated relationship between a crew program and its alumni. Certainly, tensions exist. Alumni are bound to a program

by the memories and friendships formed during their era, which by definition is over. The coaches and current rowers are consumed with the challenges of the present, and are not inclined to look backward. Still, like members of a big, multi-generational family, we are bound by continuity and identity. Today's rowers are tomorrow's alumni, and we are all MIT crew.



Director's Message

Director's Message

Continued from p. 1

It's natural and proper for each alumnus to believe that his or her personal experience on the Charles was of great importance, perhaps the most important ever. That conviction is earned through the time, effort and devotion that all MIT rowers give. Those of us who run the program must honor our alumni by making the current crew a source of pride for them, even as the program changes over time and may look less familiar to them. We also hope that we are producing

happy, satisfied alumni, and that each graduating class will stay in touch with one another and with us.

MIT crew's relationship with its alumni goes beyond sentiment, of course. More than half of our operating budget each year is funded by alumni donations. The team faces significant financial challenges, the most substantial of which is the need for a new or renovated boathouse. The future of MIT crew, and its ability to remain a team its alumni can be proud of, is to a large degree in the hands of its former athletes.

All of these elements of the

crew-alumni relationship were on display at Reunion Row. The good feeling among the alumni of all eras was obvious. The athletic director and coaches socialized and facilitated, but mostly stayed out of the way of the fun. Among those racing were many who have donated to the team, and some who have donated with great generosity. Anyone observing the scene would have felt, as I did, optimistic about the future of MIT crew.

I hope to see you at our fall Alumni Day races and banquet, on October 3.

Go Tech!

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Henley Royal Regatta

Henley Royal

by Jeff Forrester

The MIT lightweight men will be racing at the 2015 Henley Royal Regatta in Henley-on-Thames, England. The crews took a week off after the IRA for the seniors to enjoy the graduation activities and recover from the trials of the season. After the rest, though, the crews hit the water with renewed energy and fervor on June 9th and have been finding new speed in anticipation of this unique racing opportunity. The team departs on the evening of June 23rd, allowing for a few days to acclimate before racing begins. The varsity eight will be in the Temple Cup while the top four guys from the second varsity eight will be in the Prince Albert Cup. The eight will probably not have to go through the qualifying race,

which will be held on June 26th, but the four most likely will. Assuming all goes well, both crews will begin the actual regatta on July 1st.

Aside from racing, on June 28th the crews will be attending a garden party hosted by the parents of Jamie Voros '16 (one of the lightweight men's coxswains), who lives in London. After that, the team will enjoy a boat tour of London via the [Thames RIB Experience](#). The day will conclude with a reception hosted by the MIT Club of Great Britain at R.S. Hispaniola Bar & Restaurant. Details regarding this event can be found [here](#).

All members of the travel party are very excited for this event and cannot wait to make the trip. With the exception of one rower, none of the athletes has experienced Henley. As those

who have raced there know, it is truly a unique event and one that has to be experienced to be understood. The team wants to thank all of those who have supported us in the planning and organizing of this trip and hope to see as many of you as can make it in England.

Temple Cup

(c) Ali Finkelstein '16
Tom Altmann '15
Mycal Tucker '15
Lee Mount '18
Luke Koblan '15
Chris Schlaepfer '15
Peter Augusciak '15
Chris Knapp '16
Jake Liguori '17

Prince Albert Cup

(c) Yooni Kim '15
David Danko '15
Jeremy Stroming '18
Jesus Mathus '17
Berk Ozturk '16

Fall Race Schedule

Head of the Charles (All Squads)

Boston, MA

October 17-18

Princeton Chase (Heavy Men, Open Women)

Princeton, NJ

November 1

Dartmouth Green Monster (All Squads - Novice Only)

Hanover, NH

November 7

Foot of the Charles (Heavy Men, Open Women, Light Women)

Boston, MA

November 14

Spring Racing

Open Women

by Holly Metcalf

This spring was one that would have challenged the most seasoned of teams. It began with the long winter that froze the Charles River through spring break, but we soon learned that this was just the beginning of a series of obstacles. Injuries, sickness, family crisis, and campus tragedies abounded. Yet the team responded by becoming stronger, more resilient, and more cohesive, and in the end the open-weight women saw the grand finals in all three events at the Patriot League Championship for the third year in a row.

The season started slow, with our crews getting on the water just

days before our first race, a day that included icy twenty-five mile per hour headwinds that ultimately caused officials to cancel all racing after an eleven minute varsity fours event. It wasn't until the George Washington Invitational that we were able to see how our fitness level, honed over a long indoor season, played out on the water. We were pleasantly surprised: the varsity eight finished 2.9 seconds off of the eventual Patriot League Champion and NCAA qualifier-Navy.

The final third of the season revealed the upward trajectory of our team, with the second varsity eight defeating Holy Cross and the varsity eight defeating Rutgers at the Eastern Sprints, avenging mid-season losses. The varsity four

also rounded into form at this race, defeating Georgetown, among others. All of this set the stage for the grand finals performances by all boats at the Patriot League Championships.

In the end, the competitiveness of the program may very well be measured by the crews we didn't beat. For instance, after losing to Boston University by nearly eighteen seconds at the 2013 Beanpot, we closed within 2.8 seconds of the scholarship-rich powerhouse on our last spring day of 2015. With eight formidable rowers and an outstanding coxswain enlisted to lead our incoming freshman class for this coming fall, along with a core of key returning varsity members, the squad is in a prime position to finish what they started.



Spring Racing

Heavy Men

by Tony Kilbridge

Our spring campaign began in the depths of a cold and seemingly endless winter. Eight feet of snow covered Cambridge, and 18 inches of ice locked up the Charles. When the ice persisted late into March, the heavyweight men executed an emergency evacuation to Cocoa Beach, Florida for spring break. Our budget would feel the brunt of this unanticipated trip later, but at the time it was heaven. The rowers put on sunglasses, took off their shirts and smiled (for the most part) through round after round of seat racing among the dolphins and warm breezes.

We returned to find the Charles still frozen, and had to cancel our first race, against Boston College and UMass. The last ice was cleared from the racecourse on Friday afternoon, April 3, the day before our

Alumni Cup race against Columbia, Dartmouth and Holy Cross. All four crews were suffering from a serious lack of water time, but the show went on, with Dartmouth winning, followed by Columbia, Holy Cross and MIT. The Holy Cross versus MIT race was a barn-burner, with the Crusaders nipping Tech by about six inches.

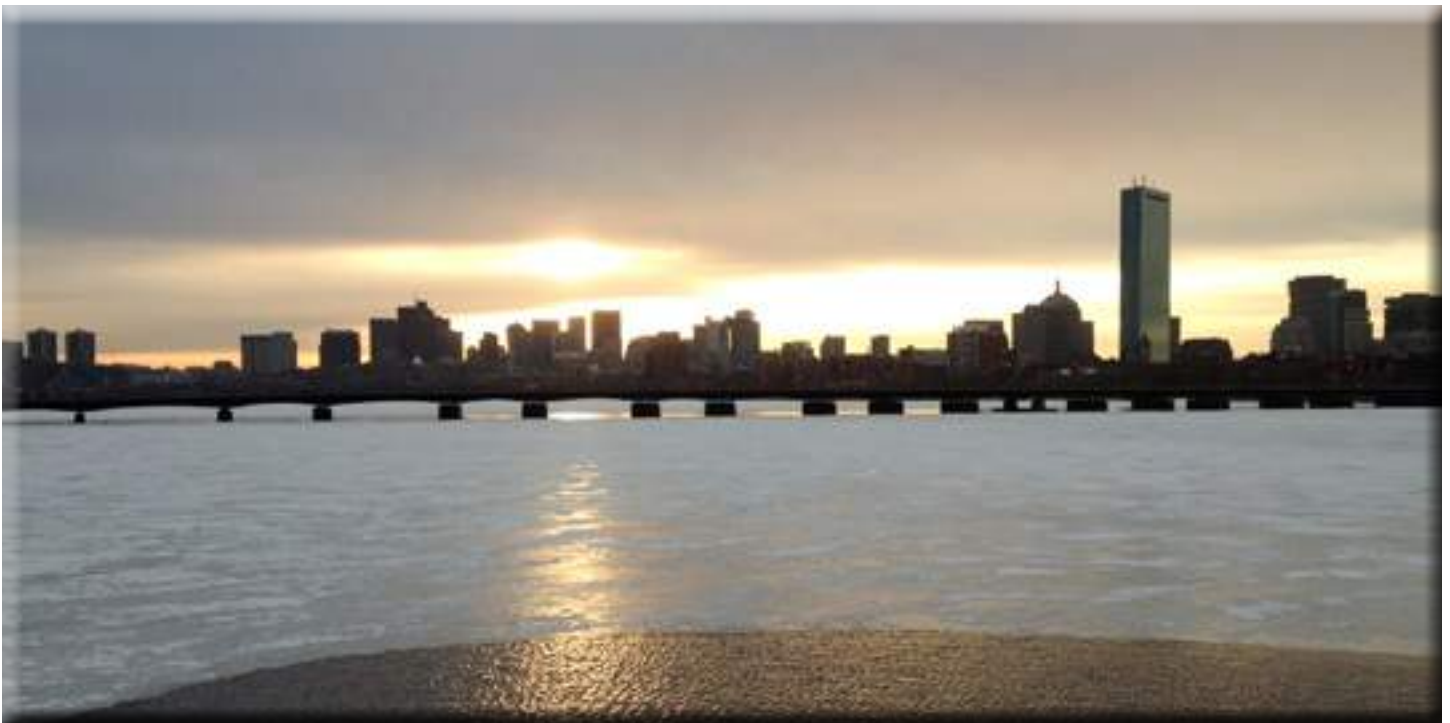
The following weekend the Donahue Cup was moved from Worcester to Cambridge, as Lake Quinsigamond remained frozen. Despite horrendous wind and water, and a crab at the 1000-meter mark, MIT's varsity boat beat Williams and WPI decisively, to win the cup for the first time since 2009.

Next up was the Compton Cup, against Princeton and Harvard, at Princeton. Tech's varsity started well, and was within a length of Harvard at the 800 meter mark, at which point Harvard and Princeton seemed to enter a worm hole and

emerge, thirty seconds later, with a multi-length lead. Still, Tech closed the gap significantly over past years against these top crews (Princeton went on to finish third behind Washington and Cal at IRA).

On April 25 the Tech heavies raced Bates and Delaware on the Charles. Even though they had lost their bow man to injury, the Tech varsity was perhaps overconfident, and was beaten by a surprisingly quick Bates crew. This was a hard lesson, which the coaches and athletes hoped to learn from.

For our final regular season races, the crew traveled to Devil's Lake State Park, in Baraboo, Wisconsin, a beautiful site in the exact center of nowhere. In the first race of the day, rowing once again in high winds, Tech beat EARC rival Georgetown, quickly and decisively. Tech had open water on the Hoyas one minute into the race, and finished six seconds ahead.



An iced-over Charles River Race Course on March 30, 2015

Spring Racing

Heavy Men

Continued from p. 5

Several hours later, Tech raced again, this time against Wisconsin for the Cochrane Cup. MIT had trouble getting pointed in 25 mph wind gusts, and got off to a bad start. Nonetheless, Wisco had better speed all the way down the course, and won by ten seconds.

Two weeks later the Eastern Sprints at Lake Quinsigamond brought – finally! – calm, warm conditions. MIT's varsity heavies raced well in both their heat and in the third-level final. In the final, Tech finished fourth, in a time of 5:49.135.

George Washington was third,

.097 seconds ahead. Based on this finish, GW's eight was invited to the IRA championships, and MIT's was not. While it was tough to fall short of a team goal by less than a tenth of a second, the team re-grouped and the coaches selected a varsity 4 for IRA.

Our preparation time between Sprints and IRA was short, especially since it included finals week. Nonetheless, the varsity 4, comprising Alex Feldstein (cox), Connor McMahan (4), Matt Connelly (3), Clay Jones (2) and Matt Miklasevich (bow), was confident and moved well in practice. The IRA Championship was a great competition and spectacle, held at

Mercer County Park, New Jersey, over three days. The 24 crews in the varsity 4 event were sorted through heats, reps, semis and finals. Four races in three days under the hot sun took their toll on all the crews, and the Tech rowers were noticeably tired by the end of the weekend. Nonetheless, the crew finished fourth in the petite final, well within the top half of entrants. Four seniors graduated from the heavyweight team this year. While they will be missed, the team has a strong group of rising seniors and sophomores, and is looking forward to the arrival of nine recruited athletes in the fall. All in all, this year was another step forward for MIT's heavyweight men.



Spring Racing

Light Women

By Claire Martin-Doyle

The lightweight women kicked off the spring 2015 campaign at the San Diego Crew Classic without having taken one stroke on the water prior to arriving in San Diego. Needless to say, it was not the fastest of races. Looking ahead to a packed spring schedule with races every weekend, things did not look optimistic as we returned home still not able to get on the water. A full two days before our first home race, we were actually taking strokes in the lower Basin and waiting patiently for the upper basin to clear in hopes of racing a

full 2K.

And it finally happened, the ice cleared and we raced 2,000 meters on April 4 versus DIII openweight opponents Bates and Simmons. Losing to a very-fast (and later NCAA championship winning crew) Bates, but beating Simmons, we kicked off home racing, and really, home rowing of any kind.

Over the next three weeks, we raced the top crews in the country, multiple times between Knecht Cup, the Lightweight Invite, Muri Cup and Beanpot. Our results weren't stellar and our very short weeks of practice were busy with crew selection, getting up to race

speed and trying to fit a lot of preparation work in to a very short time. We kept the focus on getting better and faster every opportunity we had to practice, and as we got in to our final lineups and prepared for Dad Vail, the focus of the team was palpable.

Just five weeks after taking our first strokes on the water, we set off for The Dad Vail Regatta which shaped up to be a remarkable weekend for our team. A repeat gold in the eight and a bronze in the four, made it the best overall Dad Vail performance as a team in our history.

The varsity eight repeated their 2014 gold-medal performance with another upset victory in this year. Like Bucknell was last year, Villanova was heavily favored coming in to the race, previously defeating us by large margins at both Crew Classic and Knecht Cup. Our Engineers, however, were ready to perform and had gained a lot of speed in previous two-weeks of training. In the end, we crossed the finish line three seconds ahead of Villanova for the gold. Here's a recap from Row2K of the race,

"Lightweight Eights"

The Women's Lightweight Eight was won by a poised MIT crew who had lost to Villanova previously this spring. "We knew it was going to be a very challenging race but they have been in big races before," says Coach Claire Martin-Doyle. "We haven't had a great season so far, it took a while to get things together."

Martin-Doyle said the weather in



Spring Racing

Light Women

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Boston this spring has been a challenge, but the crew had been building despite that. “I knew we were going faster, but you never know how until a race. We had a pretty simple race plan, but they did race at a higher rate than normal, they just had to hold onto it.” Villanova, stroked by the silver-medal winning single sculler Woodhull, was sullen on the dock after being out paced. Coach Jack St. Clair gave a quick pep talk on the awards dock, but the race was a fresh memory.”

In the lightweight four, our crew came in 2nd in their heat to qualify

for the final, but went in to the final with only the 5th fastest time in the event. It was going to be tough to get on to the podium. The crew had an outstanding performance in the final and raced to a bronze medal, in a very close battle with the first and second place crews. Getting on the podium in the four was a first for our program and a great achievement as many of our competitors prioritize this event with their top four rowers.

All in all, it was a thrilling afternoon and a great feeling to see so many of our rowers with medals around their necks!

Three weeks later, at IRA, our team had another historic performance,

with the four advancing directly from the heat to the grand final, the first time we’ve had a crew in the grand final of this event. Eventually coming in sixth in the grand was disappointing, but just getting there was a big step.

The eight didn’t quite have the speed to advance to the grand final and raced in the petite final, disappointingly on the wrong side of Villanova this time, but in a very tight and exciting race. However, with true MIT tenacity, and looking ahead to next year, the words of our varsity eight stroke seat sum it up, “disappointment just motivates you to work harder”. And, it’s on to next year! GO TECH!



Spring Racing

Light Men

by Will Oliver

The beginning of the spring season was quite an adventure in the Boston area, with record snowfalls and ice levels on the river. With the latest ice-out in recorded history (as provided by our friends at the MIT Sailing Pavilion), the lightweight men did not start their spring season until Wednesday, April 1. We were able to travel to Yale for a few days during our spring break week, which offered some valuable water time and helped prepare us for our first race, which was the Joy Cup.

MIT faced off against Yale and Georgetown in Derby, CT for this traditional early-season race. Everything seemed up for grabs; with no racing to look at to gauge speed, the team had to rely on its fitness (good, thanks to a long winter season) and experience (also good, with 5 seniors and 3 juniors making up the bulk of the varsity 8), rather than water time, to get them through the race. Yale charged out to an early length lead, but MIT held on, rowing a gutsy race and moving back into Yale beginning in the 3rd 500. In the final 300m of the race, Tech charged forward, but unfortunately they ran out of room just before overtaking Yale. The final margin was less than a seat, with the Engineers trailing by 0.4 seconds and finishing in a time of 5:34 and completing a clean sweep of the Georgetown crews, beating the Hoyas in the 1, 2, and 3V events.

The following weekend the Biglin Bowl went off in extremely windy,



rough conditions. With a consistent 15mph headwind in the Basin and gusts of nearly 30mph, conditions were far from ideal for lightweight rowers. Despite the conditions, the race went off fairly cleanly, with MIT jumping out to a very early lead and then settling early. Dartmouth and Harvard moved up following the MIT settle, taking advantage of their much higher stroke rate and both boats moved ahead. The MIT rowers were not daunted though, and began to move back into their challengers as they came down to their base rate. By the 500 they

had moved back into Harvard and established a solid lead on Dartmouth. The rest of the race featured the MIT and Harvard crews jockeying for position, each moving and being reeled back in turn, while moving steadily away from Dartmouth. In the final 500, however, Harvard managed to get their bow out and then Engineers couldn't quite respond. The final margin was about a bow deck, with Harvard finishing in 6:47.4 and MIT coming in at 6:48.4. Dartmouth came in at 7:02.1.

The following weekend, the team

Spring Racing

Light Men

Continued from p. 9

traveled to Philadelphia for a pair of races versus Delaware and Penn. Both crews had previously posted some impressive race results, so we knew that racing would be fierce. The first race of the day was against the Delaware Blue Hens. Their early season victories over Harvard, Dartmouth and Georgetown made them a very intimidating opponent, but MIT was not to be cowed. Off the starting blocks, the Engineers began to move steadily, and continued to do so throughout the race. While the final margins were not immense with MIT finishing roughly 4 seconds ahead, on the race course it was obvious that the Engineers won during each stage of the race, moving steadily ahead during each 500 meters and underrating their opponents most of the way.

In the second race of the day, MIT raced the Penn Quakers. We've had a number of good races with Penn over the last few years, and this race was no exception. During the afternoon, MIT rowed an incredibly controlled race. Under-rating Penn by nearly four beats, the Engineers maintained a slight lead through the first 1000 meters of the race. Their patience paid off in the final 800 meters when they began moving ahead quickly, continuing to open a wider and wider lead until the finish, posting a final margin of nearly 7 seconds. The victory was made even sweeter by a pair of 2 and 3V wins, making the afternoon a clean sweep!

On April 25, the Engineers took on Cornell and Columbia for the Geiger Cup. Ranked #1 and #2 in the country respectively, the team knew these two crews would not be pushovers and were hopeful just to be in the mix, as these two teams had been crushing their competition all season. And in that sense, the race was very successful. Cornell was extremely fast off of the line and got a small lead on the field right away. Likewise, Columbia moved out to a half-length lead early in the first 1/4 of the race. From there, it was quite a race for the Engineers, who took moves and traded seats with Columbia throughout most of the race. In the last 300m, however, the Lions got away, ultimately opening up a 6 second margin by the finish line. Cornell, ahead the whole race, finished 4 seconds up on them. While not quite as close as we might have hoped, the MIT 1V had some very solid moments throughout the race.

On May 8 and 9, the team travelled to Philadelphia to race the Dad Vail Championship, and coverage of that race appears in another article in this newsletter.

At EARC Sprints, the squad performed well in a number of close races. In the morning, the 1V advanced to the grand final for the second straight year, while both the 2 and 3V placed into the petite final. In the afternoon, the 1V rowed a strong grand final, but the competition, which is always tough, was a bit too much, and they finished in 6th place, 10sec behind the leader. The 2V won an extremely close race with Dartmouth in the petite

final (less than .1 seconds) to finish 7th overall, and the 3V finished 9th, ahead of Georgetown, in an extremely strong field. All in all, the team was quite pleased with their performances.

Two weeks later at IRA, MIT fielded a 1V and a 2V4+. Unfortunately, a reconstituted Penn lineup gave the 1V some trouble in the heats, and the Engineers advanced to the petite final instead of the grand that they had hoped for. They crew came back strong in the afternoon against Navy, however, to win the petite final in a commanding fashion. In the 2V4+, the Engineers rowed behind through most of their heat before rowing back into the field to finish 4th. It was an exciting race, and in the petite final they stayed in the thick of the action throughout, before outlasting all but the Wisconsin crew to capture 8th place overall. Both of these places were one spot higher than the team's performance last year, and the 1V's finish in the lightweight eight event was the best placing since 1997 (the youngest member of the current crew was 1 year old!).

All in all, it was an extremely successful and competitive spring season. The team is still training, preparing for its trip to the Henley Royal Regatta, which is mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter. Looking forward to next season, we will have some definite challenges, as we are graduating seven seniors and the majority of our varsity 8 from this season, but hopes are high. We look forward to seeing all of our supporters at the races in the fall!

Dad Vail Regatta

Dad Vail Regatta

by Amelia Patton

The engineers made their way to Philadelphia Mother's Day weekend for the annual Dad Vail Regatta on the Schuylkill. Representing MIT were a men's heavyweight 4, men's lightweight 8 and lightweight 4, a women's lightweight 8 and 4, and a women's varsity 4 and freshman 4, both populated with lightweight athletes.

Facing a field of over 60 entries, the heavyweight men's 4 event kicked off the regatta, and MIT stepped up to win their heat to advance to the quarterfinals. Ultimately, the field proved too deep, and the boat failed to advance into the semi.

The women's varsity four, comprised of rowers from Tech's lightweight second varsity, lined up against openweight competitors in their heat. The crew, with a lineup unchanged from the 2014 Dad Vail event, showed considerable improvement from the previous year to finish just 6 seconds away from a qualifying spot. This race marks the final collegiate race for seniors Zoe Steier and Carol Liu – a bittersweet end to two fantastic four-year careers.

The women's freshman four also faced a competitive field of 36 boats, and surprised everyone to take down

heavyweight crews from Marist, SUNY Maritime, and Emory to earn an early morning race in the next day's semi final. In the semi, the all-novice lineup charged hard through the last 500m, finishing 4th to miss the final by 5 seconds. It was a promising end to a strong novice season, and we expect to see big things from these athletes as they move onto the varsity squad.

The women's lightweight 4 was tasked with beating just one boat to advance into their grand final, and though they did one better to finish ahead of Georgia Tech and Florida, they did so with only the fifth-fastest qualifying time. Determined to earn a spot on the podium, the crew cleaned up the bladework and redoubled their efforts in Saturday's final to grab the bronze behind Penn State and Bucknell. This medal is the first-ever podium finish for MIT in the lightweight 4, and with all 5 members of the crew returning for next season, we have high hopes to improve our standing in 2016.

The men's lightweight 4 saw the top of MIT's second varsity 8 take to the water against top 4s from competitor schools. The crew kicked off their racing with a second place finish in the heat, then another second place finish in the semi-final, just 0.4 seconds ahead of Michigan. The final saw Michigan reverse that margin, pushing the engineers into 4th, painfully shy

of a medal. The crew raced hard and felt the performance was one of their strongest, but ultimately could not match the speed needed to take home hardware.

The men's lightweight 8 faced a final-only racing situation on Saturday afternoon, lining up against Delaware, Mercyhurst, Georgia Tech, Purdue, and Pittsburgh. From the stakeboats, Delaware and MIT dropped the field, pushing hard and stroking high. Reversing an earlier-season result, Delaware was able to squeeze out a 0.7 second win, leaving MIT with the silver. Mercyhurst finished in third, over 13 seconds back.

The women's lightweight 8 faced a three-boat field that included both Purdue, an unknown crew, and Villanova, a crew to which MIT had lost by first 24, 21, 15 then 12 seconds earlier this season. Determined to end Villanova's 2015 run, MIT charged hard off the line and never looked back. Setting the highest rate of their season, the eight charged to a 3-second victory over a surprised wildcat crew to claim their second consecutive gold in the event. Purdue finished third, 29 seconds back.

Coming home with medals in every color, we were pleased with the quality of racing overall, but determined as always to gain speed and take down new opponents!

Save the Date

Please make your plans now to join us for MIT Crew Alumni Day 2015!

When: October 3, 2015

What: AM - Alumni boat races and brunch at Pierce Boathouse
PM - Alumni Banquet

More information to follow!



Coaching Staff

Head Coach, Heavyweight Men
Assistant Coach, Heavyweight, Men

Tony Kilbridge
Evan Thews-Wassell

Head Coach, Lightweight Men
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