

Stourport Race recap – 615 days

Stourport Head marked 615 days since the club last raced at Wycliffe Big boats head back in February 2020. In that time the club and school has seen many changes and new experiences. However, what remained a constant throughout that time was the desire to go racing and showing the rest of the rowing world what we can do.

Stourport Head saw a reduced entry with year 10 athletes withdrawn by the event committee earlier in the week due to forecasted conditions. With only year 11 and 6th Form athletes waving the flag for the club at the event, it was important an example we set for the year. Our focus for the day was to go out and enjoy the experience of racing once again. Winning would only be a bonus, on what should be a great day. Little did we know the day would prove to be a club wide success.



With the majority of athletes racing in the morning division it was crucial that we were ready and boated in good time. Being the first crews on the water for the whole event just showed our eagerness to be back racing. Our J17 4x- of Elliot Lynch-Warden, Boris Hale, Lewis Edwards, and Tom McNally would be the first of our crews down and a quiet sense of optimism was growing as the crew came by over taking another crew with 1000m to go in the race. It was an early marker of things to come.



Our next crew down was our WJ16 4X- of Violet Holbrow-Brooksbank, Madison Dickens, Emily Probert & Hannah Rodgers, they were showing a gutsy effort as they came down the course. With it being one of the least experienced crews racing, it was great to see the effort being shown. They were closely followed by our the other year 11 boat the J16 2X of Max Hole and Ffyn Parry, racing time only. With no competition they wanted to put in a performance to show the other senior athletes that they could do the business of race day. They did not disappoint with a solid performance and holding off coxless quads chasing them down.



There was a gap between our J16 2x and our next group of crews racing in the morning division, with two crews racing against each other in the WJ 2X. Crews of Club Captain Peaches Hale and Beth Crossley going up against Laura Willis and Megan Clifton in a heavily contested event. They both Showed our depth in quality in our senior women's squad setting the tone for their event with some smooth high-quality rowing. Creating a large gap behind them on the other crews in their event, the chances of the first win for the club were growing.



The final boat racing in the morning division was Seren van der Horst racing up a category in WJ17 1X, with it being Seren's first race in a single. Some nerves were felt at the start, but she then grew into the race and finished off strong in her race. A learning experience for the season ahead for sure. As the morning division ended, results slowly came out and our J17 4X- had claimed our first win of the year and this was quickly followed by the news that our WJ 2X had come 1st and 2nd in their race. With the crew of Peaches and Beth claiming a tight win over our other double. After a short celebration of the news, our attention then turned to the afternoon division and the three remaining crews.



First on the water was our crew of Harriet Morgan, Ella Miles, Kate Rodgers and later sub Violet Holbrow-Brooksbank, racing in her 2nd race of the day following a forced change to the crew. With no practice as a crew, this did not dent the sprint of the crew. Carrying a sense of confidence and optimism into race. With no opposition the aims were to be the fastest women's crew in the afternoon division.



They were closely followed by our next senior boys crew of Tom Coates and Vice-Captain Jack Bufton in the J18 2X. Showing a slick performance going through the gears as they came past the boathouse heading into the last 1000m. Cheers of Monmouth could be heard along the riverbank.



Our final boat of the day was Tom Powell in the OJ 1X, all eyes were on him to cap of a day of racing. He did not disappoint! Coming past the boathouse overtaking two singles in his event and storming onto a strong performance.



All three crews in the afternoon division showed their class and they were rewarded with their results with our WJ 4X- fulfilling their ambitions of being the fastest women's boat in the afternoon and both senior boy's crews coming home with wins. Bringing our event total wins to four. Our intentions were to refamiliarize ourselves with racing again and gain experience for the year ahead. This was achieved and then some! With 4 of the 9 crews picking up wins and everyone setting a standard to maintain.



Hopefully we do not need to wait another 615 days for our next race day!