

2015 Icebreaker Race Hosts the Largest Number of Youth Rowers in New England to Date

SIT READY!

This past month, HLM's Boston Rowing Center hosted the 26th Annual Northeast Youth Open Water Rowing Championship, better known as the Icebreaker. From the moment we gave the "Sit Ready" command for this event, we knew that it was going to be a success! The preparation, planning, scheduling, and communication around rowing events is something that we all have been a part of for many years, but the level of volunteerism, skill, logistical know-how, and goodwill that was on display is DEFINITELY a HLM and BRC trademark. We often forget just how amazing things are in our own backyard.



Photo: Corinne Leung

READY!

Bringing the Icebreaker back to Boston Harbor, after a 10 year stint in Hull, was a very special and memorable undertaking. The Icebreaker started in Boston and became a tradition for youth rowing clubs to come and end their year. More importantly, it allowed them a training vehicle. Each year we strive to provide a challenging skills course and then end the event with a classic nautical mile race. This year's course was set up and reviewed and discussed and critiqued and advocated for and rebuilt; and that was just Tuesday! We did it again, and again...and we achieved our goal to provide the competitors a chance to display their craft under the heat of direct competition while maintaining safe standards and a fair playing field.

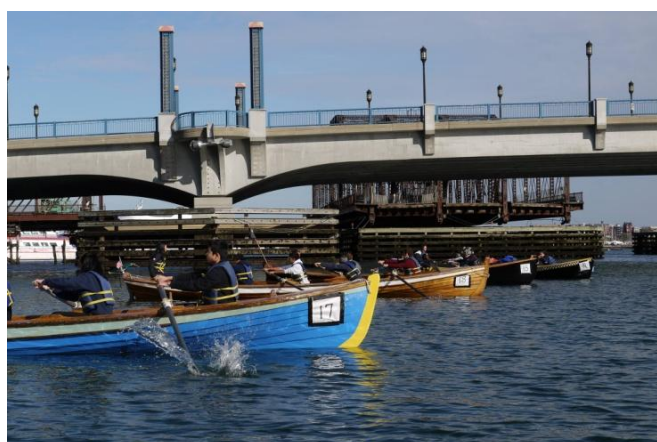


Photo: Corinne Leung

So meetings were held. Logistics were checked and rechecked. Maine, Vermont, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts clubs descended upon Boston. Boats were launched by the Little Mystic Channel public ramp and by crane at a very generous Courageous Sailing Center and then towed across the harbor to our floats. The final tow came in after dark and a valiant dock crew got the boats secured. Teams were added, subtracted, and then moved. Whole delegations were employed to carefully make changes to the reams of paper print outs. Getting the caravan of supplies up to Boston from Hull was an eleventh hour Hail Mary. And then...



: Corinne Leung

ROW!

What a day. The site of 28 Pilot gigs and Coxed Fours tied up at our docks with dawn breaking over them was a special thing. There were 24 heats of sprint courses, each team getting 2 tries in different boats to put up their best time.



Photo: Corinne Leung

Competition was strong. From the thunder of Coxed fours sprinting off the line to the power suddenly realized by very novice teams to the grace of Pilot gigs bearing down on a nautical mile, every team left it all out on the course and did themselves proud. Kudos to our homegrown youth crews from Inly School, the South Shore Youth Rowers, and

Charlestown High School for putting down some impressive times and playing the role of goodwill ambassadors to the out-of-towners.

The Boston venue proved to be a jewel. We would be very remiss in not taking a moment to acknowledge the Barking Crab, who gave us 2 days use of their entire

tent as a home base. Let's say that again: GAVE us 2 days use of their entire tent. Their generosity and support of our event and our organization has been fantastic, but this was above and beyond. Having a warm, dry shelter with which to feed and regroup was so welcome. The praise from competing clubs has been resounding. We think the Icebreaker has found its new home.

(For more Icebreaker photos visit our Flickr page: <http://bit.ly/1T8BgQi>)