

# Rowperfect

## UK Newsletter May 2007

Dear Rowperfect community

It's the racing season! We will be sharing a stand with Cambridge Racing Shells at the National Schools Regatta and will have our now-traditional warm-up Rowperfects at the Henley Womens Regatta.

Congratulations to Duncan Holland our seminar speaker 2006, whose CUBC crew **won the Boat Race** using Magik oarlocks. They also won the Goldie : Isis race and the reserves race.

We have a fantastic interview with Tim McLaren, Australian international coach who works with California Rowing club. His insights into coaching and language are worth savouring. The blog is growing on the website news page. Here you can comment on articles and start 'conversations' with other coaches and athletes about the topics we write about. Some of the comments relating to the Seminar and the new Rowperfect design are below.

The **video of the new Rowperfect** we launched onto YouTube got over 2,000 views! Thanks for your continued support and interest.

There is a **new brochure** for Dreher oars and sculls with photographs of all the spoon shapes. We can send you a copy.

Rebecca Caroe and Grant Craies, Rowperfect UK  
[www.rowperfect.co.uk](http://www.rowperfect.co.uk)

### Tim McLaren interviewed by Rowperfect

Tim is the Head Coach and director of California Rowing Club – a new club established 2 years ago and located next door to California University Berkeley Rowing Club's shed.

#### When did you first start coaching?

I started with school kids when I was 19, coaching rugby league. I played for 18 years as an amateur and as professional against the UK in 87. When I was 25 I switched to fine boat rowing but I had done surf boats from age 16 to 25. I grew up on surf life-saving in summer and rugby in winter.

#### What is your coaching record?

I have not had many wins....[I think Tim is being modest here!]  
Olympics – 1992; 2x, 1996 bronze in Lwt 2x and 4x; 2000 4- bronze; 2004 8 bronze.  
Worlds – I have had some crews that won worlds.

#### Who taught you how to coach?

Nobody teaches you how to coach. When you start at 19 you do the best you can with the commonsense you have at your disposal. You approach it largely led by your personality. I will let others comment on my personality. Most coaches have a good work ethic and that's probably what you need. Put the hours in and be diligent – the same stuff you tell the athletes. A bit of a carry-over from your own competition days.

#### Who has influenced your coaching method?

Everyone has a method. The people that coached me in surf rowing and rugby league and then John Williamson and Paul Rowe. He was a national sculler. Rusty Robinson, he was fantastic. He was outstanding and you remember the people more for their personality and how they handle situations. Reinhold Baatchi. All these characters you absorb stuff off them. Coaching with other coaches on the national team too. It is good to coach in a group. That is an art that Cambridge has mastered over the years the "cooperation in a good environment". Donald Leggett, Robin Williams and Harry Mahon.

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## **How would you describe your 'perfect' rowing / sculling stroke?**

I am not into words. Every rowing book around the world is the same but we all row differently. Me explaining it to me you will be your own interpretation of my words but that may not be my interpretation. There are many ways to do it – but whether you are a pusher or a puller do it to high level and you have a chance of being competitive

## **What is your main focus at different times of the season?**

I think that comes with the programme and how it shifts to technical sessions and as the need demand. Look at your crew. What's in front of you? Deal with that – it's just like football. You can be in the competitive part of the season and if the crew is average you may need to do technical sessions too. There is no foolproof method on paper. There is the normal theoretical framework which every coach has to work within. And there is always room for personal and collective improvement.

## **Do you have any advice for young coaches?**

Try and get out with older coaches now and again. A trip in a boat and discussion; ask questions while you have the crew in front of you. Read a bit of history and get a good understanding of the sport. I think to be organised in a practical sense is important.

Plan your sessions... I sense a lot of volunteers are under time pressure and this gets cut. If you can organise the hour into sections with drills at various pressures, rates with slide work and body work. You improve concentration and their ability to carry that onto racing. Have a plan with your session. Warm up, drills, ratings, pressures, and times. Bring all those things to the session. Not just work on row 40 minutes steady state. You need to be doing rating, starts and teaching skills. Young people need to be organised to fit all those things in over a period of time. You need structure of sessions in order to get it all in. Young people want variety. In schools; coaches are organised off the water with equipment and crews and maintenance. But on the water they need the same degree of vigilance.

## **What is the thing you are most proud of in your coaching career?**

I am not sure. I think wherever I go I try and create a culture around the club whether surf, football or rowing and bring that element of teamwork to the culture of where you coach. A social element with hard work which brings people together and makes a stronger unit and makes you a better competitor. I try to set a high standard and get people to rethink possibilities. Raise their level of thinking and to manage themselves really well. That is people's biggest challenge. You aim to try and keep them developing not only in a rowing sense but in life.

## **How about national coaching styles?**

When you work in a system you are dragged along by the philosophy of that system, often people try to replicate them from one country to another. They sometimes fail to factor in the culture of the people. Many countries moved to a centralised model and there are some more successful versions than others. UK is lucky because here is a healthy underpinning of strong clubs. Outside the national programme there is a lot happening in rowing. Lots of volunteers and people with a passion for rowing without the national programme being the prime focus. That is the result of the historical importance of rowing in UK particularly.

School rowing is very successful in many countries but it is that step after school when you have to catch them, coach and develop them and that often gets very shaky. I am looking at that in US now. I am looking at the best way to approach that and collect kids with ability who are interested in rowing at a higher level. There is a lot of development there.

## **How should coaches continue their learning?**

Your perspective shifts a little when you get older. Coaches develop as well and they need to. It is not only your coaching knowledge but your management of yourself and your athletes. Coaches that are reading this will understand. Athletes improve as they get older but coaches should do as well. Sometimes you can. Go back to who you learnt from and their influences. You learn a lot off the athletes too. Try different things and they are the litmus test of your method of feedback. It is good to have a group of athletes that can give you feedback. Learn through trial and error and athlete feedback. Trust your own intuition. Particularly if you have rowed yourself you have seen a lot of good athletes and you

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can learn from them and should try things and sometimes it is successful and develop those and carry on working on others. It is a patience game.

I do a bit with development athletes like Cambridge and sometimes the people are inexperienced. You can get good feedback off novices about what it feels like. Anyone can give it; some are better than others, more articulate.

## **Are there any common themes that all coaches can work on?**

I once watched Thor Nilsen in a meeting of national coaches who were trying to describe the perfect stroke without a picture or a model. Everyone has a different interpretation of the same words. This is evidenced by the different styles in different countries. Look at the crews to see the outcomes. This struck me early on. Communication and interpretation are big things for thinking in coaching but in the end everything is limited by what you see. There could be more training teaching people to see a little better. One day I'll do that.

Your athletic ability coordination and your understanding. Every athlete brings faults to the game. You are limited by how well it was explained when you first started, your understanding and how well you can transfer that understanding into action.

Rowing teaches you a lot about yourself.

## **New Coxmate accessories**

Coxmate has made a 'plug' to fit into a circular NK cox box mount to make it easier to fit the unit into boats.



Fit plug with tape

Stick on Coxmate mount

Start to use!

We have sample plugs to give away to the first two clubs emailing us to [info@rowperfect.co.uk](mailto:info@rowperfect.co.uk) with the subject "Coxmate NK Mount".

## **Coaching novices and beginners**

Do you have any beginners who are learning to row and scull for the first time? Noelle Stallard at Broxbourne RC has confirmed our view that the MK1 Magik oarlocks are a great tool for drilling in the square and feather technique. And they make it easier to learn the basic row/scull action.

*Far from not liking the Magik oarlocks, all the current beginners have given them a nearly resounding thumbs up .....*

*Mat is now trying them and likes the way the click gets him to square at the same time on both sides and the positive feel for a racing start.*

*I would second all of that.*

*Noelle*

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## Coaching – Achieving the best results possible Rowperfect Seminar 2007

Download the slides from Jim Flood's seminar

<http://www.rowperfect.co.uk/news/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/Rowperfect-seminar-2007-slides.pdf>

Some extra information Jim produced in response to questions from Sarah-Kate Millar of Kings School Worcester.

<http://www.rowperfect.co.uk/news/2007/05/11/rowperfect-seminar-follow-up/>

## Comments from the Rowperfect rowing and sculling Blog

Feedback from **Marco Espin, CUBC, on the new Rowperfect Video**

<http://www.rowperfect.co.uk/news/2007/04/11/new-rowperfect-demonstration-video/>

Hey, I assume feedback is left through this comment board.

A few things:

1. The spring in the handle looks like it could hit you in the middle of the abdomen if you draw too long. Has this issue been addressed?
2. Surely it's no trouble to secure the bit of foam/plastic to the seat; I really hope that comes into the product version.
3. I really like what appear to be sculling grips on the handle. On my C2 model D ergo the blue plastic on the grip fell off with wear, I put on two grey Croker sculling grips and they work much better: giving people the option to put on their own sculling grips would be a great change and fit in with your 'indoor sculler' theme.
4. I really hope this version still moves, feels and is just like a rowing boat to the same degree as the last rowperfect. The only thing which looks like could alter is the new slide for the seat and their attachment.

I'm sure you've thought through all of this, I just thought some feedback could be useful.

## See the video of the new Rowperfect design

Mark Campbell uploaded a video of his first model Rowperfect in the new design to the public video website, YouTube.

Here is Mark's video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUe1q7X4mwo>

It shows reduced noise from the new low mounted flywheel, it stores vertically, has a new handle with an "oarflex" spring inside to mimic an oar in a boat and has a plastic adjustable foot stretcher. And it retains the 600% less strain on your back feature of the original RP.

Here are all the videos about Rowperfect on YouTube

[http://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=rowperfect&search=Search](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=rowperfect&search=Search)

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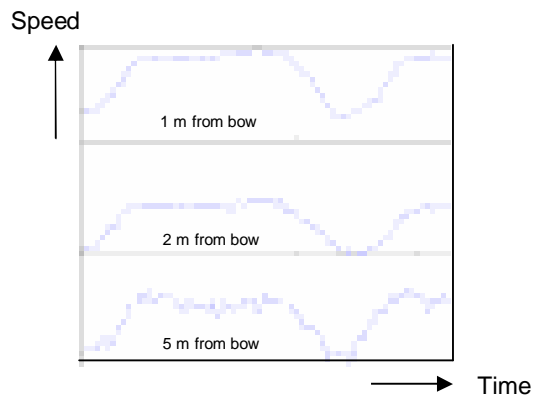
## New Rowing Research into Fins and Impellers

Coxmate is sponsoring Adrian Oest, a final year engineering student at Adelaide University, in a project to determine the optimum fin/rudder design. He is also investigating the effect of speed impellers in fins. We will reveal more results as they are known.

Ideally impellers should be outside the boundary layer, to provide a 'clean' signal which gives the greatest accuracy and the most value for analysis. To achieve a 'clean' signal you need to have impeller mounted very near to the bow, or some distance from the shell. The thickness of the boundary layer increases as you get further from bow. If the impeller is mounted in the fin, then it can be some distance away from hull.

The graph shows the degree of turbulence at three points on a scull: 1, 2 and 5 metres from the bow waterline. The impeller was 38mm from hull in all instances. The 3 graphs are all real data without any smoothing. The horizontal axis is time and represents approximately one and a half strokes. The speed sample time is around 25m/S. As you get further from the bow, the graph becomes more ragged as a result of increased turbulence – the small eddies of swirling water cause the speed reading to change.

In order to use the stroke-velocity profile to analyse rowing technique, a 'clean' signal is imperative. The '5m from bow' graph above would be of little value in analysing the stroke speed profile. We have experimented with a small impeller mounted near the bow. Apart from difficulties of mounting the impeller, it offers low drag and a 'clean' signal.



Now, have a look at the new impeller size that Coxmate will launch in the summer. Small, isn't it? Yes, that tiny silver thing is the impeller casing – the spinning part fits into the gap.



The impeller, like all Coxmate products, is fully compatible with NK systems and so you can use it with existing hardware.