Rowperfect

The Rowperfect Challenge!

A letter to the Editor of Rowing Magazine 14/01/2006.

I read with interest the article regarding the Rowperfect in the Nov/Dec 05 Regatta. I must add my support to the article, as the machine is a brilliant piece of training equipment; I know as I have one myself but have convinced other scullers that this is the equipment to invest in. When I procured my Rowperfect, a fellow sculler was fairly dismissive about the advantages of training on it. I challenged him to allow me to prove its worth. He was a Senior 1 sculler who was now moving over to veteran sculling at the age of 35, and had been rowing and sculling for about 8 years.

The challenge was that he would train on the C2 Ergo every day for two weeks and then do some videoing analysis on the water in his single and conduct a question and answer session about how the boat felt when being sculled, we would then do exactly the same for the next two weeks using my Rowperfect for the training. The results of the first two weeks training were very interesting, he had trained on a C2 ergo for all his sculling life and from the videoing it was obvious that he had transferred the ergo skill to the boat. In the question session he stated he felt hurried and crowded at the catch, but thought that he was applying his legs properly and coordinating the stroke correctly. The videoing did not support this at all. The sculling was very snatched at the catch with lots of effort in the initial phase of the drive and a burying of the sculls; the legs, body and arms were not properly coordinated and the finish was wrenched through to give a hurried finish. The recovery was not as coordinated as it could have been and this led to an inconsistent set up of the body for the next stroke.

The results of the Rowperfect training were a revelation to him. He struggled with the co-ordination of the technique and the firing the correct muscle groups at the right time at first, but with perseverance, coaching by me and the instant feedback the monitor gave him from the power curve; he got the hang of it. He realized how to apply his legs and coordinate his body correctly for the drive and recovery phases. The second set of videoing was like watching a different sculler. The catch was much more coordinated, with a quick entry and smooth application of the legs. The body was coordinated properly with the body and arms keeping the pressure on to the end of the stroke giving time to execute the finish properly. The question session was also revealing, with the sculler stating he felt that he was applying power the whole way through the stroke and that he had time at the finish to get his hands away. The overall stroke flow was better and he felt less 'cramped up' at the catch.

I had convinced him but then the Rowperfect had done it really, we also worked out that his overall distance per stroke had improved by 1.79 meters, so he was getting more output for less effort as he was coordinating the power properly and sculling the boat as it should be. He now trains on a Rowperfect rather than a C2 ergo. This was not a rigorously conducted scientific experiment, but as anecdotal evidence, it adds to the body of research that highlights the advantages of training on a Rowperfect.

Yours sincerely,
Murray McLeod-Jones