

Rowperfect

A White Paper on Rowperfect

Will Hoodless is a top club lightweight sculler and a RP owner. He sculls for Upper Thames Rowing Club. We caught up with him at Henley Royal Regatta 2006 when he'd just got to the semi finals of the Diamond Sculls (beating internationals on the way) and asked him about his background in rowing and sculling and how the Rowperfect was helping him develop as an athlete and scull faster.

What is your rowing history?

I learnt to row at school in Abingdon and then went to Edinburgh University and did sweep but stopped for a year. I then started sculling at Upper Thames Rowing Club and after a year and a half moved to be coached by Francisco Mascaro at the Oxford and District Sculling Club in 2001. Then I moved back to Upper Thames when he retired.

When did you first see a Rowperfect?

Years ago at the Oxford and District Sculling Club an athlete had one of his own. I used it but didn't know what I was doing.

Last year I was thinking about what I needed to do to change my sculling technique and particularly the connection and drive through the middle of the stroke. I thought that the way Rowperfect works would help me picture in my mind what I needed to do in order to change my stroke.

I bought the RP – the power curve is so detailed! The C2 one is next to useless in comparison – it's symmetrical.

On the RP you can see what's going on through the stroke. The big advantage is what I do in the pieces I use it to train on. I do short pieces and then take a break and so I can see the stroke breaking down as I tire through the pieces.

My back and core muscles let go as I get tired. And so I work on it and it has made me more consistent.

The work I do is 5 lots of 2 minutes work with 2 minutes rest at rates of 24 – 26 – 28 – 30 – 32. I do this workout once each week in summer.

In the winter I do this workout and add a second one of 4 minutes on and 4 minutes off at lower rates.

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How did your power curve change?

When I first started the curve was really front ended. I was quick on but letting it go through the middle of the stroke so there was a dip on the downward side of the curve.

I had footage of Olaf Tufte from my coach, Russell Stynes and I noticed his legs appear to be very slow going down from the catch. I was letting my legs go too fast and missing the middle of the stroke. By "slowing" my legs and connecting I have time to use my back and arms. My arms are definitely stronger this year with this new technique.

Do you have any advice for other athletes and coaches?

I was able to use RP and work stuff out for myself about the stroke. I think a lot about the detail. A key question to ask is "Why are you doing what you're doing?"

Take time to think on RP and what it's showing you. That's where you get a significant improvement.

What plans do you have for your racing?

I want to do more of the same – single scull racing as a lightweight.

I am now an open status sculler. This took quite a time as I only gradually acquired 6 points. In 2003 I did my first Diamonds at Henley Royal Regatta – I was so keen to do it that I travelled to a regatta in Scotland to win my 6th point to make me eligible!

This year has been good for me. I won on both days at the Metropolitan Regatta Senior 1 status both times. I have got to the semi-finals in the Diamonds beating a Spanish former international lightweight in the process and now I have won a silver medal at the National Championships in a time of 7:17.