

# Equipment, funding woes link women's, men's crews

By Dianna Barry

The women's rowing team at UNL seems to be having identity problems.

The team has the status of a club, but it competes with varsity teams from other schools.

According to Coach Peter Zandbergen, a senior and original member of the first men's rowing team at UNL four years ago, the team is not a club.

"It's not a recreational type of thing. It's an intercollegiate sport," he said.

Zandbergen said the women compete with teams from the University of Minnesota, Notre Dame, University of Wisconsin, Washburn University and many Eastern schools.

All rowing teams, men's or women's, are headed under one program at UNL, Zandbergen said. This program is funded by the Department of Intramurals and Recreation, by private donations and by team members.

In comparison the University of Wisconsin fully funds its rowing program, he said. Wisconsin's program has about 120 men and women involved and four or five coaches.

UNL's rowing team currently has 35 women, but Zandbergen said he hopes to recruit about 15 more.

Equipment for men's and women's rowing is shared, with a few exceptions, he said. A new shell or boat costs \$4,000, while new oars are \$800. He said that this year they are getting oars, the first new equipment they've gotten in four years.

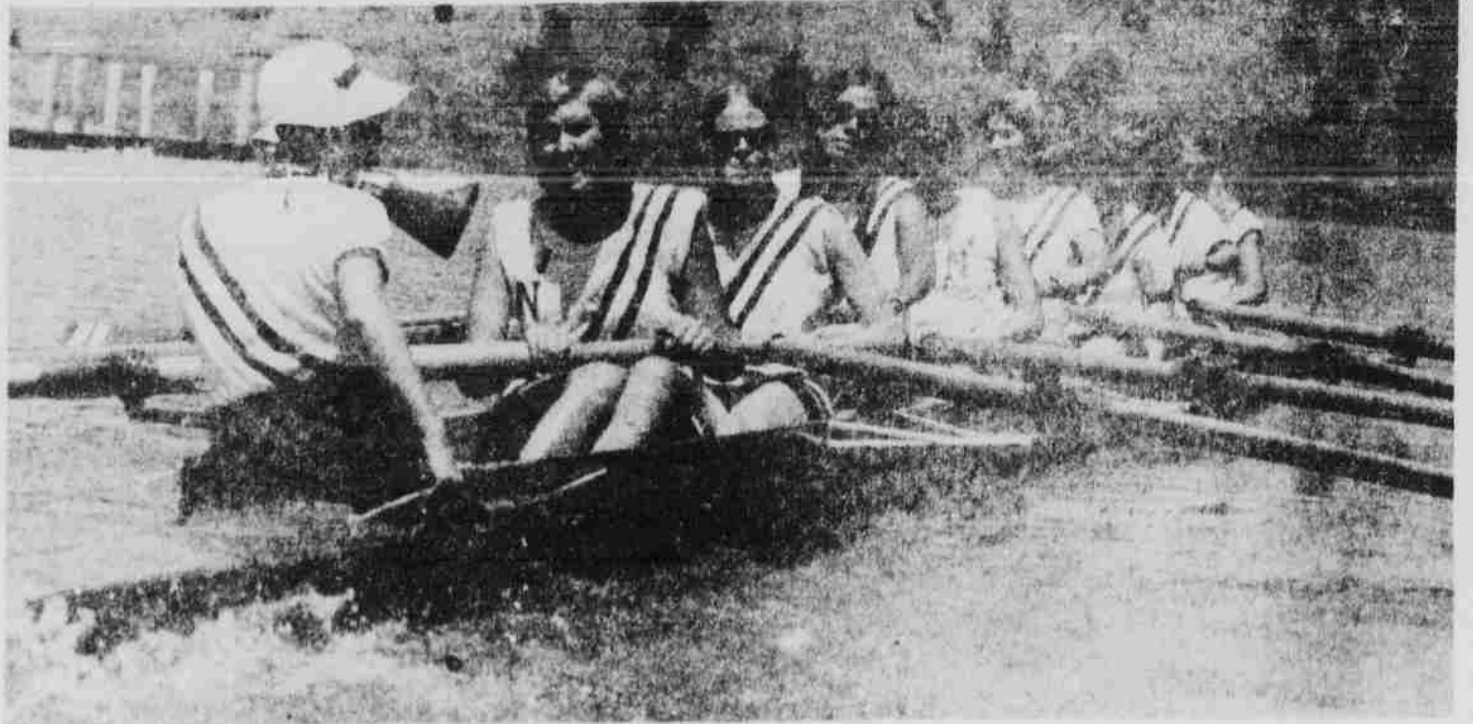
Zandbergen said every fall he writes all the other rowing programs to see if they have equipment to donate or to sell.

"That's the way we get most of our equipment. It's a real challenge when you have to use equipment that's 20 or so years old and compete against teams with new equipment," he said.

While the equipment is mostly shared, Zandbergen said men and women's teams are definitely separate.

"I'm for women's athletics, but I feel there must be a definite separation. I feel that when you start mixing men and women on an athletic basis, it's degrading to both," he said.

"Rowing is a tradition-bound sport. Women's rowing is fairly new, but there are still a great many programs that absolutely refuse to have women in the



UNL women's rowing team

boathouse."

UNL's women's rowing team is the second such team in the Midwest, he said. It was started last spring.

"Women's rowing probably is the fastest-growing sport in the U.S.," he said.

He said the Olympic committee is spending a lot of money to get national teams started. In the past, the rowing powerhouses were in the U.S., but now they are in European and Asian countries where they are fully governmentally funded, he said.

One of the largest and most prestigious races in the world is the Head of the Charles regatta in Boston. This race, held in the fall, is a distance race, he said.

"The (UNL) women had been on daily workouts all summer for this race. We had planned to take them, but then at the last minute we found we didn't have enough funds," Zandbergen said.

Rowing is a two-season sport, fall and spring, and although the women are through racing for the fall, they are on a daily workout schedule, he said.

Practices are held at Branched Oak Lake northwest of Lincoln, where the rowing teams have a dock complex that was funded by ASUN, he said. When the water freezes, they move inside for training.

"We put a shell in the Abel Hall pool for training and conditioning the physical conditioning," he said.

Besides keeping up with training, Zandbergen said he just completed the fall recruiting program. However, he is still looking for more interested people.

"Anyone can join whenever they wish. All they have to do is contact me or come down to the dock complex. You don't have to be experienced, and size isn't a factor. With rowing, you can make up for size or strength with better technique and mental

concentration," he said.

Zandbergen said the rowing program also is trying to get other Midwestern schools to set up programs in rowing for men and women.

"We're giving one of our shells to Oklahoma State to get them started," Zandbergen said, adding that this was the shell that was damaged when a group of persons put it in the fountain behind the Nebraska Union about a month ago.

"It'll never be able to be used for racing, but it can be a training boat," he said. "We have to repair the shell this winter. Otherwise they would have had it by now. It puts Oklahoma State back half a year though," he said.

Zandbergen also said he hopes to set up a youth program like the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department or the YMCA.

"Hopefully, then we can get rowing into the high schools. Wichita, Kan. already has high school rowing for guys. We want to expand the sport as much as we can," he said.

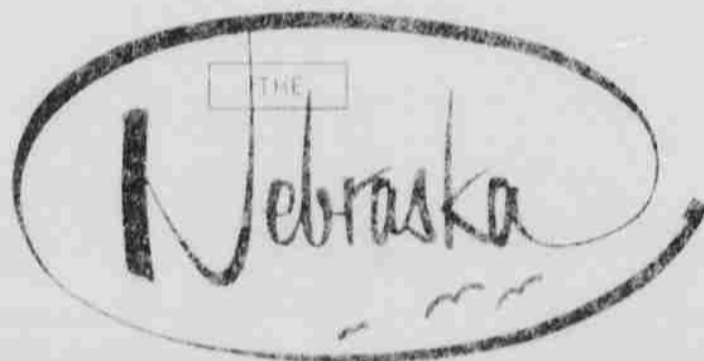
Zandbergen said he hopes that soon rowing will be recognized as an intercollegiate sport, rather than just a club at UNL.

"Right now, the rowing team is beginning to try to work with the Intramural and Recreation Department and other clubs to set up a governing body to coordinate funding and other problems.

"It (a central governing body) would be more efficient for the clubs and whoever we're trying to work with. I think it's needed and I hope we'll have it by spring," Zandbergen said.

He said one of the big events the team is looking forward to is the national championship for women's rowing in Oakland.

"We were asked to it last year, but we didn't have the funds to go. This time we're planning on going."



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