

Taylor rocks boat; female crew shell-shocked

Ask an average student on the UNL campus about women's crew and you may get all sorts of answers. Many of those questioned might think women's crew is a group of ladies who clean residence hall restrooms or a living. Others may think you are talking about the latest hair style for rock stars.

In reality, women's crew is a physically demanding sport where nine girls row a long, narrow boat down a river at breathtakingly speeds.

This year's women's crew team is an ambitious bunch, coached by a UNL sophomore. Jim Elstun said there is a simple explanation for his coaching status.

"There wasn't anyone else to do it," he said.

Last week I set forth to find out about UNL's version of women's crew. Borrowing a page from George Plimpton's Book, *Peper Lion*, I acquired permission to practice with the team during last Wednesday's workout.

I had reason for apprehension as I got up for the 5:30 a.m. practice.

"Why the early practices?" I wondered. "Does Jim Elstun have something to hide?" I imagined the girls on the team as having the physiques of Mama Cass Elliot and faces like Alice Cooper's.

Another fear I had was that I would make a complete fool of myself in the boat. Or worse, I would drown and give secret satisfaction to the women's liberation members of the team.

As it turned out, my worries were unnecessary. The team is a cheerful, witty group who talked about a variety of subjects—not about how much weight they could press.

Anxiety about my performance on the lake proved justified, though.

The women's crew practices at Branched Oak Lake, a peaceful fishing and boating haven 20 miles from Lincoln. On the way to the lake, a few of the team members discussed their feelings about getting up at 5:30 a.m. every morning.

"Once you're up it's great," Jane Anderson said. "You'll be OK if you didn't do any catting around the night before."

Marilyn Peters was slightly less enthusiastic. She claimed she had to go to bed at 10 p.m. to get up for the early practices.

steve taylor taylored sports

Cocaptain Paula Brust had reason to wish she was somewhere else on this particular morning. She had just had some wisdom teeth removed and was not crazy about rowing a boat.

"If I don't feel too hot they'll put someone else in," she remarked through clenched teeth.

One unnerving feature of the car ride to the lake was the women's insistence on describing the many boat spills they had witnessed during their crew careers. Only last week their own shell had taken on too much water and sunk.

When we arrived at Branched Oak, the team wasted no time getting the shell into the water. Under the detailed instruction of coxswain Nancy Wood, they had the boat in position in less time than I

would have thought possible.

Riding in the observation boat with Elstun, I watched awestruck as the team propelled the craft across the lake with the grace and timing of a ballerina. It was truly poetry in motion and an effort I knew wouldn't be duplicated once I was in the boat.

But I couldn't refuse when I was asked to give it a try. As I climbed into the shell I felt all eyes on me.

Anderson carefully instructed me on what to do once the craft got underway, but I had the feeling I was doomed to humiliation. I was right.

After a few pitiful practice strokes, I decided not to do any paddling and just went along for the ride. However, as the craft began to glide across the water at an exhilarating pace, I felt a surge of confidence. Thinking it wasn't so hard after all, I tried to catch up with the paddling rotation.

About 10 seconds later the shell pitched violently and nearly tipped over. It didn't take much investigation to find the source of the trouble. The women who turned around saw the only male in the boat with a huge oar wrapped around his neck.

I found out later I had "caught a crab," which is jargon for not keeping up with rest of the crew. Several consoling remarks were made, which I greatly appreciated. There were also some not too well hidden smirks.

On the way home I found out about the annual crew banquet to be held May 4. After last week's experience I'll have immense respect for the award winners. Now I realize just how much talent it takes to be a member of a crew.

The trophies given at the banquet will be paddles broken in practice, called the Cracked Oar Awards.

If the women ever take me on another practice, they might be giving a Cracked Boat Award at their next banquet.

sports shorts

The UNL women's softball team closes its regular season with games against Concordia State College today and with Midland College Tuesday. Both contests begin at 5 p.m. on the field behind the Women's Physical Education Bldg.

Ernie Martin, 6 ft. 6 in. forward from Denver Community College, has become the fourth basketball player to sign a national letter of intent to attend UNL.

The UNL golf team came from sixth place after the first day to tie Illinois State University for the lead Friday in the Drake Relays Invitational. Illinois State then

won the sudden death playoff for the title.

The UNL crew finished fifth out of seven teams Saturday in the Midwest Championship Sprints at Madison, Wis. The Huskers beat Notre Dame University and Washburn University and were just 14 seconds out of second place in the 2,000-meter race. In other events, both the freshmen and women's teams finished third, while the open four team took the consolation championship.


The Husker baseball record dipped to 7-23 after three weekend defeats by Colorado University. The Friday game was a 2-1 22-inning marathon.

Putter Away the WEEK
MONDAY Dollar Day Play 3p.m. - 7p.m. only \$1
TUESDAY Bonus Day Win \$1.20 in golf discount with hole-in-one
WEDNESDAY Amateur Tour. Anyone can Win the Prizes Enter
THURSDAY Dollar Nite Play 3 games - \$1
FRIDAY Free Pizza for every group from Shakey's
SATURDAY-SUNDAY Great Day for groups
Bring in AD For a 50¢ Discount
Putt Putt 11th & Cornhusker Belmont Plaza M-F 3-12 pm Sat. 9 am-12pm Sun. 12am-12pm

**You got a letter
from home and
there was just
a letter inside.**

You owe yourself an Oly.

Olympia Brewing Company, Olympia, Washington *OLY**
All Olympia empties are recyclable



FLIGHTS & STUDY TOURS

10 WEEK SUMMER CHARTER TO EUROPE
just arranged for N.U. students, faculty and
immediate family! \$311 round trip--Chicago-Paris;
May 26-Aug. 9 Children under 12—half price.
Contact Flights Office, 204 Union, 472-2482-5
immediately for details.