Former Husky rowers pull U.S. boats to World finals

PLU rower helps women’s quad into semifinals

MILAN, Italy – Aug. 25, 2003 – Former University of Washington rowers helped the U.S. women’s eight and men’s four to berths in the finals of the 2003 FISA World Rowing Championships by winning their heats Monday on the Indroscala in Milan, Italy.

Led by former Husky rowers, Anna Mickelson and Mary Whipple, the defending world champion United States women’s eight dominated its heat to advance to Sunday’s final.

Racing in the first of two heats, Whipple (Sacramento, Calif.), Ali Cox (Turlock, Calif.), Jen Dore-Terhaar (Kearny, N.J.), Sam Magee (Simsbury, Conn.), Megan Dirkmaat (San Jose, Calif.), Michelle Guerette (Bristol, Conn.), Mickelson (Bellevue, Wash.), Maite Urtasun (Riverside, N.J.), and Kate Johnson (Portland, Ore.) grabbed the lead right from the start and quickly built a boat-length advantage on the rest of the field. By the 500-meter mark, the U.S. crew led then second-place China by 2.50 seconds. The Americans continued to build their lead throughout the remainder of the race, clocking a 6:16.40 to defeat Australia by 4.75 seconds. Romania won the other heat in a time of 6:12.95 to advance to the final. Romania finished 2.37 seconds ahead of Germany. The six remaining crews will race in a repechage, or second-chance race, on Wednesday in an attempt to qualify for the rest of the spots in the final. Mickelson is a graduate of Newport High School.
Former Husky oarsman, Matt Deakin helped the U.S. men’s four with coxswain set a strong tone for the U.S. team when it opened Monday’s racing with a one-length victory. Racing in the second of two heats, the crew of coxswain Marcus McElhenney (Lansdowne, Pa.), Luke McGee (Madison, Conn.), Jason Flickinger (Big Flats, N.Y.), Deakin (San Francisco, Calif.), and Brian McDonough (Spring, Texas) led from start to finish, clocking a 6:12.54 to defeat Germany by 2.32 seconds and advance to the final. New Zealand finished third, followed by Croatia. Great Britain won the first heat in a time of 6:12.69 and also advanced to Sunday’s final. The remaining crews will race in a repechage on Wednesday to try to qualify for the remaining spots in the final.

Pacific Lutheran University’s Sarah Jones helped the U.S. women’s quadruple sculls to finish third in its heat, advancing directly to the semifinals. With the top three crews moving on, the U.S. quartet of Danika Harris (Durham, N.H.), Jones (Stanwood, Wash.), Laurel Korholz (La Jolla, Calif.) and Hilary Gehman (Wolfeboro, N.H.) led the race after the first quarter of the race and held the second position through the 1,500-meter mark. However, New Zealand made a strong push over the final 500 meters to overtake the U.S. for second place. Belarus won the heat in a time of 6:35.03, followed by New Zealand in a 6:37.76. The U.S. clocked a 6:41.26, easily making the semifinals. The three crews join Germany, Denmark, the Ukraine, Australia, Great Britain, and Russia in the semifinals. The remaining crews will race in a repechage on Tuesday to fill out the remaining three spots in the semifinals. Jones is a graduate of Stanwood High School and graduated from PLU in 1992.

In addition, the U.S. men’s eight kept the Australians at bay to win its heat and advance to the semifinals. The remaining seven U.S. crews competing on Monday will now race in the repechages on Tuesday in an effort to advance.

**Tues., Aug. 26 Schedule for Seattle Athletes**

After finishing fourth in her heat of the lightweight women’s double sculls, first-time national team member Julia Nichols (Livermore, Calif.) of Seattle’s Pocock Rowing Center (www.pocockrowing.org) will race in the third of four repechages for a chance to advance to the semifinals. The former Cal rower will face scullers from Finland, Denmark, and Italy, with the top two finishers moving on to the semifinals. Denmark’s Kirsten Jepsen enters the repechage as the top seed, having finished second in her heat.

Kristin Goodrich (Portola Valley, Calif.) will take on scullers from New Zealand, Denmark, and Lithuania in the fourth and final repechage of the women’s single sculls. Goodrich finished third in her heat. New Zealand’s Sonia Waddell-Scown is the top seed in the fourth repechage, having finished second to Bulgaria’s Rumyana Neykova, the defending world champion, in her heat. The top two finishers in each repechage will advance to the semifinals.

In the women’s pair, 2000 Olympian and Lakeside School graduate, Lianne Nelson (Seattle, Wash.) and Katie Hammes (La Crosse, Wis.) finished second in their heat.
behind Canada’s Jacqui Cook and Karen Clark. In the first of three repechages, Nelson and Hammes will take on crews from Israel, Russia, South Africa, and the Ukraine. The U.S. duo is the top seed in the repechage. Russia finished third in its heat, while a good South African crew finished a disappointing fourth in its heat. The top three finishers in each repechage will advance to the semifinals.

In the men’s double sculls, former Husky oarsman, Steve Gillespie (Renton, Wash.) and Brett Wilkinson (Hyde Park, N.Y.) finished third in their heat and now will face Norway and Croatia in the fifth of six repechages. The top two finishers will advance to the semifinals. Norway finished second in its heat, while Croatia finished fourth in its opening race. Gillespie and Wilkinson enter their repechage having clocked the fastest time from the heats.

The lightweight men’s four of Paul Teti (Upper Darby, Pa.), Steve Warner (Livonia, Mich.), University of Washington’s Erik Miller (Renton, Wash.), and Matt Smith (Woodbridge, Va.) also finished second in its heat. On Tuesday, the foursome will take on China, Canada, and Japan in what will be a tough test. Although the U.S. is the top seed entering the repechage, Canada and China put up fast times in their respective heats. The top two finishers advance to the semifinals. Miller is a graduate of Eastside Catholic High School in Bellevue and 1992 graduate of the U.W.

Seattle athletes are competing in eight of the 24 events entered by U.S. crews in Milan. Eleven more boats will begin racing in heats on Monday. Racing runs from August 24-31. Repechages will be held Tuesday and Wednesday. Semifinals will be held Thursday, while placement finals for crews not making the top six will be held Friday. Finals will be held on Saturday and Sunday, August 30-31.

In addition to crowning the world’s best in each of the 24 disciplines, this week’s world championships also serve as the initial qualifier for the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, as 130 of the 202 boat spots will be determined. Rowers in the 14 Olympic-class boats – the men’s single sculls, women’s single sculls, men’s double sculls, women’s double sculls, men’s quadruple sculls, women’s quadruple sculls, lightweight men’s double sculls, lightweight women’s double sculls, men’s pair, women’s pair, men’s four, lightweight men’s four, men’s eight and women’s eight – will be fighting for their countries’ Olympic berth in each of the disciplines. Countries that do not qualify in a particular category in Milan will have a second chance to qualify for the Games early next summer.

Biographies of U.S. National Team members can be found at http://www.usrowing.org/itemdisplay.asp?id=162

About the George Pocock Rowing Foundation
Founded in 1984 as a tribute to the late world renowned shell builder, George Pocock, The George Pocock Rowing Foundation serves as a catalyst and a national model for the development and growth of rowing for all ages and abilities. Its facility, The Pocock Rowing Center is located on Seattle’s Portage Bay and is home to over 400 Seattle
rowers and 6 rowing clubs. The foundation also provides public learn-to-row classes, rowing opportunities for “at risk” children in the community, meeting space for community events, and sponsors men and women training for the U.S. National Rowing Team.

-- www.pocockrowing.org --