

BE INSPIRED



Henley is over, so what next? Rowley Douglas has plenty of ideas

There is still some great racing left to be done in the UK this year, and also some top international races to watch. It's also a good time in the season for reflection: as a cox, you could identify things that you have done well and things that you could do better. Both these aspects can help you to improve your coxing while there are still a few races left this year to go and test a few more things out.

I would start by looking back at some of the goals you set yourself at the start of the season to get an idea of how you have progressed against these; this should be fairly 'black and white'. Where you have come up

short you need to identify a few things that can be improved and then do the same for your successes. I would also spend a bit of time talking with the oarsmen and coaches to get their feel for your progress.

If your club has had some success this year, or if you know people in some of the winning crews through the season – especially at the big events like Henley – then why not go and talk to them?

Get some information on what the cox was doing well from a technical viewpoint, as this will no doubt help you improve – but more importantly, try and get the story of the crew leading up to, and through, the race. All crews will have a story to tell, try to observe how this story is being told and



A Vesta cox at Henley Women's Regatta

identify key parts of it that you can take away and bring to life when you are building up to your next race. One of the take-aways from this exercise is the excitement and confidence that the winners will have brought to the table every day: you want to try and steal a little of that for next time.

I think we can all agree that all rowers like to sit around and have a good yarn about races won and lost – probably with plenty of embellishment! Joking aside, this isn't just good for morale, it's also a great learning experience. It is great to listen to the stories and you can use them as a source of inspiration for your future racing. It is also a great chance to hear the different ways in which the crew members have analysed their group and individual performances. Ideally you want people to have a similar take on the events. If they do not, then perhaps you need to question yourself a little and identify if you can improve the way you get everyone onto the same page.

So you have talked about the races that you and possibly your club have done: hopefully you have created some buzz and learning from this, so what



Pete Cipollone coxes the USA men's eight at the 2000 Sydney Olympics

PHOTO: PETER SPURRIER

“All crews will have a story to tell”



PHOTO: JOHN BATTY

Rowley Douglas

Rowley Douglas steered the GB men's eight to gold at the Sydney 2000 Olympics – Britain's first gold in this category since 1912. A year earlier, he launched his senior international career by coxing the eight to a silver medal at the Worlds. Rowley first learned to cox at Monkton Combe School, before studying technology management at Oxford Brookes University.

A Champion of Explore Rowing, Rowley is currently raising money for the NSPCC by trying out 30 sports as part of the Gold Challenge. Read more on page 1 of this issue, and follow Rowley on Twitter – @rowleydouglas

next? How about the teams we are watching on TV? I have got a list of some of the most exciting races I have watched over the years and love watching them and talking to the crews involved when the chance arises. I try and put myself in the mind of the crew and imagine what I would say or want to hear said.

In 2000 I remember watching the French men's

then sustain it with such venom?

How about the British men's four in both Athens and Beijing? In Athens they were standing toe to toe with Canada right until the final stroke – did they call something and then just put the blinkers on to the line? In Beijing the Australians dropped them but they kept their heads and kept dishing it out until they were back alongside and then across the

“What did they call to initiate the move and then sustain it with such venom?”

pair come from a long way back to race down the British pair in the Olympic final and take the gold. It seemed incredible that they could start pushing from what seemed to be half way and just keep blasting until they were through and out the other side. What did they call to initiate the move and

line in front – how did they stay calm?

Rewind to 1999 when I was in the GB men's eight and we took the lead from the USA in the second half – nobody had put their bows in front of that USA crew before and I think a lot of people thought that may be the end of them. The

Have you got a favourite race?

Have you thought about what was being said by the cox or the crew to make the race unfold the way it did? Tweet me @rowleydouglas and let's get a list of amazing races and some speculation about who said what! Even better tell me about your own special races.

USA had a different idea though and I am told that their cox Pete Cipollone asked the crew for a set of 10 stroke pushes, which had little effect until he called a big 10 for their “Moms”. They promptly turned it on and went straight back past us to take the gold! I'm not sure if it is true but it makes a great story if not...

The World Rowing website has all the racing dating back through the years for each event, though not for the Olympics sadly, and is a great place to look back at some high class and very exciting races. Check out www.worldrowing.com