



**Nelson Mandela  
Metropolitan  
University**

*Rowing Club*

**NMMU Rowing Club  
Training Camp Report  
22<sup>nd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

The Men's division of the NMMU Rowing recently held a very successful training camp in Port Alfred. It was held during the June holidays in preparation for the USSA Boatrace due to be held in Port Alfred in early September. All training was done on the Kowie River.

The highlight of the camp was the opportunity to be coached by Olympic medal winner Donavon Cech who won bronze with his pairs partner Ramon Di Clemente at the 2004 Athens Olympics. His experience and expertise proved to be extremely beneficial throughout the camp with the Club's member's getting coaching of the highest quality.

Twelve members from the Men's division attended the camp. Unfortunately this number could not be higher due to the costs involved and many members wanting to attend could not because of the cost involved. The ladies division unfortunately were also unable to attend due to the cost but held a short camp at Redhouse to try to make up for it.

The squad arrived on Sunday morning and proceeded to check and set up the equipment. Don's experience here proved to be invaluable as he made numerous changes to the settings of the boat that the crew would not usually have done. Properly set up equipment is essential as it enables the rower to move the boat with less effort. The training consisted of a morning session of two hours followed by a late afternoon session also of two hours. Each day would start with the squad waking at 06:15 and having a light snack before heading down to the river. There the rowers would go on a short warm-up run followed by a long stretch. The water training would then take place for the next two to two and half hours where the sessions were a mixture of power and distance pieces together with a mixture of technical exercises. As the squad consisted of twelve members the rowers were rotated between the eight and smaller boats giving

everyone an equal chance to row in the eight. During the week the squad racked up over 250km in total, averaging 20km per session. The weather was excellent with very little wind and the rowers were fortunate that no water sessions had to be substituted for running or cross training sessions. The rowers really benefited by having a coach there to pick up on any little discrepancies in technique and each rower had to be 100% focused throughout the session.

On the final night of camp the rowers enjoyed a braai together at their chalet, which was a welcome alternative from the pasta and mince that was the staple meal throughout the camp. The camp ended with the rowers becoming an even tighter knit group with high moral and a very good team spirit.

The Club would like to thank Don Cech for helping to make the camp such a success and for taking the level of rowing of the small squad of rowers fortunate enough to be on the camp, to the next level. A special thank you must go to Nico Barnard who towed the boats both to and from Port Alfred, giving up his free time over the weekend to help out the Club. A great debt of gratitude is owed to Mike Clarke who came through for three of the days to learn from Don and who will now be able to implement his training techniques back at Redhouse. Mike puts in a massive amount of time and effort into the Club and is always available for with advice and guidance and for this the Club is extremely grateful.

Overall the camp was a huge success with the squad making massive strides in both their level fitness and technical ability and are edging ever closer to their goal of becoming a powerhouse in South African rowing.

David Pearton

Chairman

*NMMU Rowing Club*

**ROWERS WHO ATTENDED CAMP:**

- Blake Atherton
- Tarquin De Vega
- Andrew Dunn
- Benji Ekron
- Russel Hodge
- Stacey Howcroft
- Gareth Lochhead
- Pierre Niemand
- Chris Osmond
- David Pearton
- Shane Reynolds
- Jason Taylor



Donovan Cech, Olympic Bronze medalist coaching NMMU at their training Camp in Port Alfred in June 2008.