



The winning team from left to right Jennifer Votava, Katie Cronin, Racheal Perry, Charlie McIntyre, Dolores Meehan, Gretchen Coffman, Margaret Keenan

Women of the Weiland

Rachael Perry

"Losing is not an option." That's what the crew was told before their first practice in the *Weiland*. The Dolphyn Club's tradition of winning the opening race of the interclub triathlon seemed a distant memory. Enough was enough—we wanted our title back!

My plan was to recruit experienced *Weiland* rowers and a coxswain who were fit, knew what to expect on race day, and wanted to win as badly as I did. My first task was to enlist a cox who could coach sweep rowers and manage the boat. No small task: it required patience, experience, and an open mind. I found the perfect man for the job—Charlie McIntyre.

Next step, assemble a Dream Team. Since it was my dream, after all, I thought I should be part of it. I could not contain my excitement as I proposed the prospect to each potential crew member. One by one, they signed on. Each woman offered something that could make our crew successful: Gretchen Coffman's experience and strong oar; Margaret Keenan's physical strength and consistent and aggressive strokes; Dolores Meehan's boundless energy, winning attitude, and devotion to the crew; Jennifer Votava's ability to row well in any seat; and Katie Cronin's always steady and consistent oar and a choral repertoire appropriate for any situation.

I set out the conditions. Three mandatory practices: if someone had a schedule conflict, she would be replaced. With only three practices, I knew that everyone had to be in decent shape. Gretchen, Jennifer, and Margaret had all just completed the Escape so they were already fitter than fit! Dolores had been running regularly so she had the cardio, Katie had been on a swimming tear; she jumped on the erg to bring her cardio up to snuff. I had been training regularly for

open water regattas and the upcoming head racing (flat water three-mile races) season. We were going to rock!

We fit together in the *Weiland* like an old pair of slippers. As Charlie assembled the seating order of the crew, he had to take into consideration the ailments of each rower as they affected her rowing, either starboard or port. It was a laundry list that would keep a physical therapist busy for a year. With experience comes injury, and we had plenty of both.

We were ready and hungry and by race day the excitement and nervousness were palpable. Charlie executed his warm up plan and got us to the start line off Alcatraz exactly on time. The SERC had arrived ten minutes earlier and had to sit, wait, and worry. We arrived warmed up and ready to race. The SERC won the coin toss and chose to start to the West, the better position in a flood as they could push the other boat offline as we crossed to the cove. The West boat controlled the course. Eventually it wouldn't matter. The SERC pulled out quick at the start, as they usually do. We didn't panic. Charlie kept us rowing in sync with calm confidence and we caught up with their bow after the first few minutes. Soon we heard Charlie yell "Four seats. We have four seats on them!" The SERC Cox was frantic, screaming at his crew. Charlie yelled "Power 20!" (translation: row your 20 best and hardest strokes). We gradually pulled out ahead, hijacking their course. As we rowed to the finish, Charlie shouted, "Power 10-nails in the coffin...one nail, two nails, three nails..." and victory was ours!

Though we lost this year's triathlon, every Dolphyn can hold their head high knowing we won the Barge race. SERC's "Plaque Day" victory wasn't as sweet without it.