



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **WINNIPEG ROWING CLUB: STRONG SHOWING AT 110<sup>TH</sup> CHAMPIONSHIP**

*Winnipeg MB (August 6, 2013)* -- The Winnipeg Rowing Club sent a team of athletes to Lake Elmo this past weekend for the 110<sup>th</sup> North West International Rowing Association Championship Regatta, hosted by Minneapolis Rowing Club.

A long and proud tradition that began in 1886, the NWIRA Championship Regatta takes place each summer as a competition between Canadian and American mid-western rowing clubs. Over the course of two days, teams compete in 2000 meter sculling and sweeping races in junior, master and open categories.

This year there were 12 clubs in contention, from Lake Oswego OR, Hudson WI, Wayzata MN, Duluth MN, Minneapolis MN (two clubs), St. Paul MN, Rochester MN, Saskatoon SK, Kenora ON, Thunder Bay ON, and Winnipeg MB. It was the largest NWIRA on record in terms of entries, and WRC showed strong performances, bringing home ten medals:

Open Men's Single – **Paul Thiessen**  
Master Women's Single – **Tracy Taylor**  
Lightweight Women's Single Dash – **Brandi Smith**  
Open Men's Double – **Paul Thiessen, Loch Inglis**  
Open Men's Pair – **Paul Thiessen, Loch Inglis**  
Open Men's Quad – **Paul Thiessen, Loch Inglis, Riley MacCharles, Patrick Thiessen**  
Open Men's Four – **Paul Thiessen, Loch Inglis, Riley MacCharles, Patrick Thiessen**  
Junior Women's Quad – **Hanika Nakagawa, Rachel Bourassa, Bridget Burns, Fiona Rettie**  
Mixed Master Quad – **Andrew Lamont, Tracy Taylor, Brandi Smith, Jeff Reitberger**  
Master Men's Quad – **Andrew Lamont, Dave Cooke, Peter Vilks, Jeff Reitberger**

For the first time since 2000, WRC won the **Con Riley Trophy** awarded to the club with the most points in men's events. For women's events, WRC placed third. Out of all 12 rowing clubs, WRC placed second overall. The only team ahead was St. Paul, named Grand Aggregate Champion and winning the coveted Lipton Cup. Last year, WRC took home top prize, capturing the Lipton Cup for the first time since 2004.

Great effort was put forth by the entire WRC team, led by coaches **Brent Figg, Jeff Powell, Ralph Penner** and **Lisa Kates**. WRC members **Sandi Kirby** and **Don Hornby** worked as race officials.

### **ABOUT THE NWIRA REGATTA**

[www.nwira.com](http://www.nwira.com)

The North West International Rowing Association (NWIRA) is a regional association of Canadian and American mid-western rowing clubs, founded in 1885 by the Winnipeg Rowing Club, Minnesota Boat Club, and St. Paul Rowing Club.

The North American landscape of the time told a story of outlaws and opportunity. In Canada, the rebellious Louis Riel had fought his last fight, and the last spike was driven into the Canadian Pacific Railway. In the US, the notorious Jesse James met his demise, and Thomas Edison introduced methods of generating and distributing electric light, heat, and power. Into this world the NWIRA championship was born, and the race was on...

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The first NWIRA competition took place July 16, 1886, on Lake Minnetonka in Minnesota. What started as a quiet evening erupted into mayhem, as the sound of the starter's gun blast echoed across the lake, and fans began cheering wildly from hundreds of small boats and steamers. Three crews raced down the course with Winnipeg in last place. With a quarter-mile to the finish, Winnipeg sprinted ahead with Minnesota and St. Paul in hot pursuit. In the end, the Canadians crossed the line first and took home a championship that would trade hands many times over the next 105 regattas.

The NWIRA Regatta has continued to grow and thrive since that first race won by Winnipeg in 1886. An annual regatta, it has only been postponed during times of war. The grand aggregate trophy – the Sir Thomas Lipton Cup – is up for grabs annually, and won this year by St. Paul.

#### **ABOUT THE LIPTON CUP**

<http://www.nwira.com/node/60>

The Sir Thomas Lipton Cup stands over three feet in height. In the thoughts of hundreds of oarspersons in the mid-western area of Canada and the United States, who are members of the North West International Rowing Association (NWIRA), the size of the trophy and its valuation are not the paramount significance, but rather, the physical manifestation of the accomplishment.

The Annual NWIRA Championship Regatta is the culmination of the rowing season. All the effort and struggle of a full year's worth of training is reduced to two days of rowing. At the completion of the regatta's races, the huge trophy emblematic of the championship is placed in the arms of the winning rowing club.

The Lipton Cup is a symbol of dedication and hard work, so it is appropriate that the man who presented the Cup to the Association, Sir Thomas Lipton, epitomized these characteristics. As a young man, Tom Lipton stowed away on a ship bound to New York from his native England. Through hard work and determination, he became the millionaire head of the Lipton Tea empire. He was knighted for the great things he had accomplished in establishing good will between England and the United States.

In 1914, he presented the gleaming silver cup to his friend Con Riley of Winnipeg, as a means of promoting the sport of rowing in this area. Since then, the rowing clubs of the Association have battled each year for the honour of having their names engraved upon the Lipton Cup – awarded each year to the rowing club scoring the greatest number of points at the NWIRA championship regatta.

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*At 132 years old, the Winnipeg Rowing Club is one of the oldest sporting organizations in Western Canada. It has been in operation since 1881, stopping only twice – during WWI and WWII. A long-time tenant of the banks of the Red River in downtown Winnipeg, the WRC survived the North-West Rebellion of 1885, the General Strike of 1919, the Great Depression of the 1930's, the Great Flood of 1950, and the Flood of the Century in 1997. Over the years the clubhouse has been destroyed by fire, wind, and water, but has always managed to maintain its long and proud tradition. Today, the WRC is a non-profit organization with a rich and successful sporting history, fostering generations of camaraderie and friendships. Members range in age from teenagers right up to the 80's, and the club offers programs for all skill levels.*

[www.winnipegrowingclub.ca](http://www.winnipegrowingclub.ca)

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