



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

112TH NWIRA CHAMPIONSHIP REGATTA: Winnipeg Rowing Club takes top prize!

August 24, 2015 (Winnipeg MB) -- The **Winnipeg Rowing Club** sent 43 athletes to Regina this past weekend to compete at the **112th NWIRA Championship Regatta** – and came out on top!

A long and proud tradition that began in 1886, the North West International Rowing Association (NWIRA) Championship Regatta is an annual competition between Canadian and American mid-western rowers. This year there were 486 entries from nine rowing clubs: Winnipeg MB, Regina SK, Saskatoon SK, Edmonton AB, Kenora ON, Long Lake MN, Duluth MN, Minneapolis MN, and St. Paul MN.

The coveted **Lipton Cup** is presented to the club that wins the most points. This year, the Winnipeg Rowing Club captured the beautiful sterling silver trophy, and the title of Grand Aggregate Champion. Winnipeg also won the Henning Peterson Trophy (known as “The Rock”) for the most women’s points, and the trophy for most points by Master rowers. Also notable is that Winnipeg placed second for aggregate points in the Junior category, despite only having 11 Junior athletes competing.

Congratulations to the following WRC athletes who won gold medals:

Master Women’s Quad – **Sheila Wilson-Kowal, Friederike von Aweyden, Vanessa Brown, Andrea Lefort**
Master Men’s Quad – **Andrew Lamont, Jeff Reitberger, Satoru Nakagawa, Elliott Garfinkle**
Mixed Master Quad – **Andrew Lamont, Jeff Reitberger, Vanessa Brown, Andrea Lefort**
Master Women’s Single – **Sheila Wilson-Kowal**
Master Men’s Single – **Andrew Lamont**
Open Women’s Four – **Casie Gauthier, Janine Stephens, Amy Kroeker, Christina Blouw**
Open Men’s Single – **Riley MacCharles**
Open Men’s Single Dash – **Riley MacCharles**
Junior Women’s Single – **Emma Gray**
Junior Men’s Single – **Josh Ilse**

In addition to these first place wins, there were numerous second and third place finishes. Overall, a victorious effort was put forth by the entire WRC team, led by Head Coach **Steve Taylor**. WRC member **Allan Horne** was in Regina, working as the regatta’s Head Official, and WRC member **Sandra Kirby** was also on hand to officiate.

Racing took place over two days of competition on Regina’s Wascana Lake, in cold, rainy, and horribly windy conditions. In fact, the weather was so terrible that a number of events had to be cancelled on Saturday (with winners chosen from previous heat times).

ABOUT THE NWIRA CHAMPIONSHIP REGATTA

www.nwira.com

The 112th North West International Rowing Association (NWIRA) Championship Regatta was held August 21-22 in Regina. 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.

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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 129 years.

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 the Winnipeg Rowing Club.

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.

At 134 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 early teens right up to the 80's, and the club offers programs for all skill levels. www.winnipegrowingclub.ca

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