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7 GOLD MEDALS FOR WINNIPEG ROWING CLUB AT HISTORIC NWIRA REGATTA

Winnipeg MB (August 22, 2011) -- The 108th NWIRA Championship Regatta took place August 19-20 in Duluth, Minnesota. Over 350 athletes representing ten rowing clubs from Canada and the US participated in the various events.

The regatta went ahead despite two days of very windy conditions on Lake Superior. Winnipeg Rowing Club had strong results, placing third overall in total club points. The following Winnipeg athletes captured gold medals in their events:

- Open Women's Single – **Kaitlin Rempel**
- Open Men's Single – **Paul Thiessen**
- Lightweight Women's Single Dash – **Brandi Smith**
- Open Women's Double – **Nia Perron, Claudia Blandford**
- Mixed Masters' Double – **Brandi Smith, Andrew Lamont**
- Open Women's Quad – **Nia Perron, Claudia Blandford, Kaitlin Rempel, Natasha Tersigni**
- Junior B Men's Quad – **Maxwell Harley, Ben Dearing, Anselm Raetli, Joshua Ilse**

On the second day, racing was stopped for a 'memorial row' and minute of silence to recognize NWIRA rowers who recently passed away. Winnipeg's legendary sculler Theo Dubois was among the honoured. A longtime competitor of the NorthWest circuit, from 1931 to 1955 Theo acquired more trophies at the NorthWest Regatta than any other oarsman. Winnipeg rowers Andrew Lamont and Jeff Reitberger took part in the on-the-water procession, rowing in their double to honour Theo.

ABOUT THE NWIRA REGATTA

The NorthWest 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 first 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 and crossed the line first, winning a coveted championship that would trade hands many times over the next 108 regattas. The NWIRA Regatta has continued to grow and thrive since that first race won by Winnipeg in 1886. An annual event, it has only been postponed during times of war. The grand aggregate trophy – the Sir Thomas Lipton Cup – is up for grabs annually, and awarded to the club receiving the most points. In 2011, the Lipton Cup was presented to Minnesota Boat Club.

At 130 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 from 13 to 85, and the club offers programs for all skill levels.

www.winnipegrowingclub.ca