



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**WINNIPEG ROWING CLUB WINS COVETED LIPTON CUP
AT 109TH NWIRA CHAMPIONSHIP REGATTA**

Winnipeg MB (August 21, 2012) -- The Winnipeg Rowing Club sent 48 athletes to Kenora this weekend for two days of racing at the 109th NWIRA Championship Regatta – and came out on top!

A long and proud tradition that began in 1886, the NorthWest International Rowing Association (NWIRA) Championship Regatta takes place each summer as a competition between Canadian and American mid-western rowing clubs. This year there were 10 clubs in the running, from Duluth MN, Kenora ON, Minneapolis MN, Pinawa MB, Regina SK, Rochester MN, St. Paul MN, Thunder Bay ON, Wayzata MN, and Winnipeg MB.

Early this season, the Winnipeg Rowing Club set the group goal of winning the coveted Lipton Cup, presented annually to the club that wins the most aggregate points at NorthWest. Winnipeg rowers of all ages trained towards racing for the Lipton Cup – and it paid off! For the first time since 2004, the Winnipeg Rowing Club won the beautiful sterling silver Lipton Cup and named Grand Aggregate Champion.

Winnipeg also won the Henning Peterson Trophy (known as “The Rock”) for Women’s Division Championship (highest women’s aggregate points). And for the first time ever, the Winnipeg Rowing Club was recognized for winning the most overall aggregate points by master rowers.

A victorious WRC team effort was put forth by all, led by WRC coaches **Brent Figg** and **Ralph Penner**. WRC member **Allan Horne** was also in Kenora, working as Head Official at the regatta.

The following WRC crews receiving gold medals:

Open Women's Single - **Marianne Bergmann**
Open Women's Dash Single - **Kaitlin Rempel**
Lightweight Women's Single - **Brandi Smith**
Lightweight Women's Dash Single - **Brandi Smith**
Open Women's Double - **Marianne Bergmann, Kaitlin Rempel**
Open Women's Pair - **Kaitlin Rempel, Marianne Bergmann**
Open Women's Four - **Brandi Smith, Marianne Bergmann, Kaitlin Rempel, Tracy Taylor**
Open Women's Quad - **Brandi Smith, Marianne Bergmann, Kaitlin Rempel, Tracy Taylor**
Open Women's Eight - **Friederike von Aweyden, Crystal Evans, Kaitlin Rempel, Marianne Bergmann, Vanessa Brown, Andrea Lefort, Brandi Smith, Tracy Taylor, Megan Lydon**
Master Women's Quad - **Sheila Wilson, Vanessa Brown, Friederike von Aweyden, Andrea Lefort**
Open Men's Dash Single - **Mark Zwaagstra**
Master Men's Single - **Andrew Lamont**
Men's Masters Double - **Jeff Reitberger, Andrew Lamont**
Master Men's Four - **Tracy Kowal, Mitch Kasprick, Satoru Nakagawa, Vic Bartel**
Women's Junior B Double - **Fiona Rettie, Hanika Nakagawa**
Men's Junior B Single - **Josh Isle**

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ABOUT THE NWIRA REGATTA

www.nwira.com

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 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...

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 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 Northwestern 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 131 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 86, and the club offers programs for all skill levels. www.winnipegrowingclub.ca