

## Henley Royal Regatta 2015 - Nottingham Rowing Club boys battle to the line

Written by Administrator

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The most famous rowing regatta in the world, Henley Royal Regatta, took place from the 1st to the 5th of July in Henley-on-Thames, on a straight 2112 m course delineated by unforgiving wooden booms. This year the event received the huge number of 526 entries from 18 countries, an increase of 32 on last year, with six of them coming from Nottingham Rowing Club.

This was the first regatta held under the Chairmanship of Sir Steve Redgrave, and in an innovative move was streamed live on YouTube using 10 cameras down the course, including the use of a drone to provide fantastic overhead coverage of crews in the middle of the race. Finals on Sunday were also televised live on the BBC's red button service. The general consensus is that this online coverage has significantly raised the bar for coverage of rowing in the media.

Three of our entries (the Fawley quad, the Wyfold 'A' crew and the Princess Royal single scull) were pre-selected, meaning that they were automatically entered into the regatta on the basis of their proven quality. The other three had to face the timed qualifying races on Friday 26th June, designed to whittle down the entered crews to the number that can be accommodated at the regatta. The coxless four of Joe Heade, Stuart Sykes, Daniel Benton and Toby Piggott qualified for the Wyfold Challenge Cup as the 'B' crew, and the coxed four of Ben Farrell, Max Hearnadan, George Eden, Kenny Gray and cox Sophie Lawton qualified for the Britannia Challenge Cup. The quadruple scull of Anthony English, George Halliwell, Jon Stimpson and Ben Sibily failed to qualify for the Prince of Wales Challenge Cup despite a fine time of 6' 57", one of 18 that failed to make the cut for this ferocious event.

The Fawley Challenge Cup is for junior boys' quadruple sculls, and on the basis of their pedigree and prior performances this season, the crew of Jack Smith (Bingham, Toot Hill School), James Mawby (Nottingham City Academy), Rowan Law (West Bridgford School) and Harvey Kay (Rushcliffe School), were seeded. They are coached by Dez Atkins and Tom Kay.

In their first round on Thursday, against San Diego Rowing Club, USA they won well. Next, early on Friday morning they beat Northwich Rowing Club by two lengths. In Saturday's semi-final they faced Frankfurter RG from Germany and won by nearly three lengths, putting them in Sunday's final against Sir William Borlase Grammar School. In a gripping final on Sunday that was televised live on the BBC, both crews gave it their all, with Borlase eventually winning as Nottingham tracked them to the line a length and a bit behind. It was a magnificent effort, of which the athletes and coaches should be proud. Our congratulations go to Sir William Borlase Grammar School as worthy winners.

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The Wyfold 'B' crew, rowing early on a scorchingly hot first day, lost to a very strong Petone Rowing Club from New Zealand. A short time later, the Wyfold 'A' crew met Elizabethan Boat Club from Ireland and after an initial flurry of the umpire's flag, settled down and rowed to victory. Late on Wednesday the Britannia coxed four raced a very powerful Sydney Rowing Club, and after a fine tussle were eliminated by what turned out to be the eventual winners of the event. Both the Wyfold 'A' and Britannia boats are coached by Olympian Lenny Robertson.

On a cooler Thursday the Wyfold 'A' four lost to Tyrian Club from London, and the boys' quad progressed.

Laura Wheeler's first race in the Princess Royal Challenge Sculls was on Friday morning against a Spanish opponent. Laura, coached by Dez Atkins, sculled strongly to convincingly defeat her opponent. This was the first time that an athlete from Nottingham Rowing Club had won a race in this event, no mean achievement among such high quality competition. Her semi-final was against a Dutch international sculler; after a sound start she lost her early lead and was duly eliminated.

"It has been a wonderful Henley for Nottingham Rowing Club", said Club President Keith Atkinson. "Following the great effort by the women last week the men, and of course Laura Wheeler, raced well, were seen worldwide with their Robin Hood logo on the kit and were a credit to us. The local schoolboys raced with great courage in the final of the Fawley Challenge Cup. We rowed against boats from all over the world. It's now over to the Club veterans who are due to race at Henley Masters next weekend."

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Photo thanks to Henley Royal Regatta.