

World Rowing Championships 2015: gold for Grace and off to Rio 2016

Written by Administrator

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The World Rowing Championships were held in Aiguebelette, France, from August 30th - September 6th. As it was also a qualifying regatta for the Olympics in Rio 2016 it attracted 1,800 athletes from 77 countries, including 41 men's single scullers.

Rowing Team GB sent 24 crews with 75 athletes, including Nottingham Rowing Club's Grace Clough and her LTA (Legs/Trunk/Arms) Paralympic Mixed Coxed Four. This crew, which comprises Dan Brown, Pam Relph, James Oliver, James Fox and Grace are the current World Champions and Record Holders over 1,000m. They hope to follow, and even to better, the example of Anna Thornton and Kyra Edwards from the Nottingham club who recently won silver at the World Rowing Junior Championships in Rio.

The racing was held in warm, calm conditions. In their first heat the GB paralympic crew were first ahead of Canada, Ukraine, Brazil, China and Poland. It was a good solid row with 'no fireworks'. 17 boats contested this event all hoping for a place in Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

In the semi-final team GB led from the start and finished six seconds ahead of Italy who were followed by Ukraine, Brazil, France and Israel. Grace said: "We train hard every day. We showed what can be done with this training but we are ready for a big performance in the final". The United States won the other semi final ahead of Canada in a fast time.

The six boat final was a classic and the 'big performance' was indeed needed. The American crew was lightning quick off the start, with GB hanging on; showing great grit and determination they just got over the line first. Two tenths of a second separated the crews, with Canada taking the bronze followed by Italy, South Africa and Ukraine. "It was the hardest race of my life", said Grace. "All credit to them; it was a great race."

Club President Keith Atkinson said: "Nottingham Rowing Club has had an incredible summer. Katie Bartlett and Gillian Cooper won bronze at the U23 World Championships in Bulgaria. Then Anna Thornton and Kyra Edwards took silver at the Junior Worlds in Rio de Janeiro and now Grace Clough, in an epic clash, wins gold in France. All credit to our talented girls - time we had a party!"