



July 2, 2015

To whom it may concern:

Based on conversations in the fall of 2012 about their previous rowing experiences and a desire to see rowing in North Bay, Dr. Dean Hay and Dr. Nestar Russell decided to advertise dry land rowing sessions at Nipissing University with the intention of gauging support for a rowing team for the following school year. The advertisements gained the attention of 15 dedicated students who consistently trained during the winter semester with minimal resources. Hay and Russell worked with these students, building fitness and proficient rowing technique with two privately purchased ergometers. The commitment of the students validated Dr. Hay and Dr. Russell's belief that rowing could be a viable varsity sport at Nipissing University.

The coaches contacted Cindy Rusak of the Muskoka Rowing Club (MRC) in the spring of 2013 to ask for advice and support for the new program. From the start, MRC was exceptionally generous with time and resources. Having no equipment of their own, the coaches were granted permission to host a summer training camp at Bracebridge in preparation for the university fall season. Ms. Rusak ensured that the administration of the event went smoothly and, furthermore, provided valuable coaching advice to the new rowers.

To assist in the Nipissing University program's development, MRC donated a 4+ and oars, and sold a Hudson 2x for below-market value. As there was no rowing club in North Bay, the university's rowers registered under MRC.

The first cohort of Nipissing rowers finished 15th out of 17 crews in the Novice Women's 8+ at the OUA Development Regatta – a reasonable result for a new program with borrowed equipment. In 2014, MRC generously allowed Nipissing's rowers to register under their club at no financial gain to MRC. The Novice Women's 8+ finished 4th out of 18 crews, beating established programs including UofT, Brock, and McGill.

Community rowing in North Bay is beginning to take shape, but financial realities have delayed the development of an independent club. Thankfully, MRC has once again offered to support rowing in North Bay by allowing both community and university athletes to register under the MRC banner. Without MRC's support, rowing at Nipissing University and North Bay would not have been possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Dean Hay'.

Dean Hay, Ph.D.  
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