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Case crew's Miranda Cullins won the women's open 1x at Saturday's Head of the Cuyahoga regatta with a time of 15:41, nearly two minutes ahead of the second-place finisher.

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## Close wins on crooked river

**By: George Jones**

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"Heads up!"

That was the phrase most commonly overheard along a bend in the Cuyahoga River near downtown on Saturday during the Head of the Cuyahoga regatta, as various crew teams from the area lifted their boats both toward and away from the river. Clubs at the adult, college, and high school levels all competed. The Case Western Reserve University Crew Club, comprised of alumni and current students, had a good showing at the regatta.

The club had two victories out of the six events in which they entered. The closest of those wins was in the men's eight-person race, where the CWRU team beat the team from Cleveland State by four seconds, 14:08 to 14:12.

"It was really close. We didn't really know if we were going to beat them or not," said stroke Matt Moss. "We tried catching them and it didn't seem like we were, but we caught them by four seconds, and it was in the last stretch that we did it. We just put everything into it in the last 500 meters of the race."

"It was really intense the whole way, especially when you're trying to catch another boat in front of you," said Moss. "We wanted to row as hard as we could but we also had to stay in time with each other. It's really technical. There's a lot to think about when you're in a race."

The most impressive victory was by Case graduate student and current coach on the club, Miranda Cullins. Cullins won her solo race in a time of 15:41, more than two minutes ahead of her nearest competitor.

"My strategy for this race was to keep my stroke rate at a 28 [per minute], try to finish under 16 minutes, and to hug the turns because knowing the river as well as I do is a big advantage at this race," said Cullins.

Crew is a club that definitely brings out the alumni contingent, with a team of alumni racing along with undergraduate teams.

"It's nice to come back and see that the sport is growing and the club is prospering," said Dan Bachmann, a

1997 and 2002 graduate of Case. "I'm probably the oldest alumni [sic]. When I started here, there was a wooden boat house that looked like the places they make moonshine. None of this stuff existed."

"Three or four years ago there were only six or seven teams in the regatta, and now there's thirty," added Chris Denzel, a 2009 graduate.

Rowing itself is a different experience than just sitting merrily in your boat on a lake. "Rowing is a different sport.

Everybody has to be right on together the whole time, or it sucks, it hurts even more," said Denzel. "But when it's good, it's very good. The boat just glides across the water, and everybody can feel it."

"It's hard, but it's relaxing," added Fraser Hewson, a 2002 graduate. "When it goes right, it's really relaxing even though you're working your tail off."

"As someone who doesn't actively row anymore, it's kind of like riding a bike," said Denzel, "because we were able to keep pace with teams that were practicing for weeks, and this is the first time we rode this lineup ever."

The club does a lot to prepare for races. "We have 5 a.m. practices at the boat house," said sophomore Adam Wilson. "There's a lot of time at the gym with weights and the rowing machine. The whole rowing room is surrounded by mirrors. It helps a lot."

For those unfamiliar with crew, boats generally hold two, four, or eight people, plus a coxswain, whose job is to be a coach in the boat. In boats with four or eight people, each rower holds one oar, otherwise each rower holds two oars. "The rowers are all facing backwards. The stroke is the one furthest back, towards the stern," said Denzel. "The stroke will set the pace and the technique. The coxswain constantly reminds us how to row and how not to row."

In solo races, however, there is no coxswain. "Rowing without a coxswain is challenging because you have to steer the boat while you race, and you don't have someone yelling at you to row hard so you have to be self motivated," said Cullins.

"I think the team is gearing up for a great season, ready for strong performances in Pittsburgh and Columbus next month, as well as a good showing at the Head of the Charles Regatta in Boston. We are working hard and are ready to take on the teams we will face this season such as John Carroll, Cleveland State, Carnegie Mellon, Penn State, Michigan, Indiana, and Purdue," said club president Jessica Schneider. "I am very pleased with how we raced this past weekend, with everyone on the team working to their fullest potential. If this regatta was any indication, this season is sure to be a competitive one."

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