

TO:  Parents and Athletes of the Wappingers Crew Club community
FROM: Patrick Hancock
DATE: August 25, 2020
REGARDING: Coaching transitions

When I was a young man, my Uncle (also a rower and part of many organizations) told me that how you left an organization was nearly as important as what you did with an organization.  His point, if you invest yourself in building an organization, one goal should be to enable continued success through transitions of leadership.  I have always thought that was logical, sensible advice.

With those thoughts in mind,  I have decided to stop coaching after 17 years (if you include this Spring!).  In the beginning, I was in the right place at the right time nearing the end of my second year at John Jay.  Kids from JJ and RCK initiated the effort.  Having participated in a summer program at HRRA, they wanted to row but had no coach or team until I was asked if I might be interested. I think my rowing and coaching experience was on my resume. I was thrilled! Helping to start and grow the Wappingers Crew Club has certainly been one of the most rewarding undertakings of my life.  Watching kids grow from knowing nothing about rowing and perhaps being a bit self-centered (sorry kids, it tends to be a teenage trait) to being competitive racers who care about something larger than themselves, the team, is quite a process.  Over the years more than one parent has asked, "what did you do to my kid?",  noting very positive changes. Having former rowers now return as coaches is icing on the cake. Coaching has made me a better teacher and a better person.

WCC has been a team effort all the way.  I could not be more proud of the parents and students who have made WCC "a thing".  We have always been blessed with talented and willing parental leadership without which we simply could not function.  There has always been and will continue to be a new challenge to surmount such as growing from 20+/- athletes  to 85+/-  in just five years, acquiring equipment, improving the equipment, fundraising (always!), the shell carrier, the food trailer, organizing road trips, figuring out how to recruit/train new rowers, just to name a few. The list goes on. Hats off to all of the parents who have made it happen.

I expect to be retiring from teaching in the next year or two at which time my wife and I may move, may travel a bit, may visit our six grandkids.  Who knows? In short, we expect to enjoy the increased flexibility of life. It is an appropriate time to consider transition.  I look around and see a willing and energetic corps of parents/leaders with others on deck as well as an up and coming group of coaches who are all familiar with the team as rowers and as coaches. While I will not be coaching, I expect to continue being the team advisor for at least the coming year maintaining the connection between the District and the team, filing required paperwork, and

helping out where I can.  My pickup truck, boat and engine will be available when I am. I will not be a stranger.

I have every confidence that WCC will continue to do great things.  We will have to deal with COVID, keep recruiting, help the fundraising go well. Keep working as a team, on and off the land.  Step up when a job needs to be done. Running a big crew team is hard and requires lots of people to cooperate.  Running a winning team is even more difficult.  We have done that, especially at the local level (it was not always so).  For me, our early victories and our first league championship were especially sweet.  Now, keep your sights set on the State Championship and, when possible, Nationals.  No, crew is not all about winning.  I would have loved crew even if I had not gone fast.  But winning sure makes all the effort more fun! It is also an affirmation that you are on the right track. In some ways, but not all ways, it is a measurement of your progress and success compared to others.  But, focusing solely on winning has its limits. You can be in a winning boat yet still fall short of being the best human you can be.  Focus on being your best in all ways and the winning will take care of itself.

Last, a big **THANK-YOU** to all who have made this team possible. See you at the boathouse.

All the best,

Coach Hancock