

Imperial College

Alumni Association of Singapore

DRAGON BOAT RACE TEAM



Dear Alumnus,

Last Sunday (27 March 2005), our two ICAAS Dragon Boat Teams participated in the finals of the Oxbridge Challenge Trophy. Established last year, the challenge aims to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the rowing race between Oxford and Cambridge. It was the first time that a dragon boat race took place at the picturesque MacRitchie Reservoir. In fact, to race on fresh water was a first for most teams.



Our team's home ground during the two race days.



Prof. Wong stands next to the banner promoting the MacRitchie Regatta.

On the preceding day (Saturday), both of our teams qualified for the finals after some tremendous efforts. It turned out that the difference in timing among the Oxford, Cambridge and our two ICAAS teams was no more than 1 sec! Therefore everybody was expecting a very close finishing, even though the distance of 500 meters is relatively long for dragon boat races.



Back row: Freddy Ng, Lee Hiang Meng, Matthew Lim, Anthony Lye, Chew Chee Keong, Ong Ee Leong, Allen Chong, Ng Chia Yong, Chan Tze Hoe, Aaron Ong, Cheng Jin Tong, Malte Schuldt, Stanley Fong, Joshua Ang, Yvonne Ooi, Sia Tse Ming
Front row: Chan Yiu Kei, Benjamin Wong, Oh Lock Soon, Chew Chun Chau, Toh Poh Joo, Tham An Liang, Kenneth Loh

In essence, this is the first time that the Oxbridge Society has extended invitation to other alumni societies for the Oxbridge Challenge Trophy. As a result, most of the participating teams did not acquire much experience in dragon boat training. In contrast, the Oxbridge Society has already been rowing for more than one year while our ICAAS team has began training since mid-January this year.



ICAAS was represented by a strong 22-members team on two dragon boats, much to the surprise of many alumni associations which struggled to find enough paddlers for one boat. After some pondering and creative discussions, our team names “Imperial Dragons” (left) and “ICAAS Dragon Boat Race Team” (right) were conceived.

ATTENTION – ARE YOUR READY – GO! This string of commands initiated the start of the race as our budding rowers pushed their paddles deep in the water. Our first few “Catch and Compression” strokes were both firm and long, allowing our boats to gain speed as swiftly as possible while overcoming the sheer inertia and hydrodynamic drag.



25 meters after the start. From left to right: Oxford, Cambridge, ICAAS, ICAAS.

After the first 30 forceful strokes, our vehicles moved into the maintenance mode which proved to be the most challenging part of the race. This is followed by the energy-zapping Power 10 on the 80th stroke – a strenuous routine that gives the boat both psychological and physical boost. As our boats reached the final distance, we mobilized our last reserves, stretched our arms to the furthest and drove our paddles with every single ounce of strength we have. This phase of charging is critical to race success and requires strong coordination and synchronisation of every members' strokes.



The two ICAAS teams passing the finishing line just about one or two boat length after Oxford and Cambridge.

On completion, Oxford hit the finish line at 2' 56", Cambridge at 2' 57". Both boats finished the race with a timing more than 10 seconds faster than that achieved during the heats (3' 10" and 3' 11"). The first ICAAS boat finished 3rd at 3' 3" while ICAAS boat #2 was close behind at 3' 4". Considering the short period of training, these are great results for the ICAAS teams!

Immediately after the race, our team members found time to relax, enjoy some refreshments and socialise with the other race teams.



Hing Yan (VP, ICAAS) chatting with David Campbell (UK Deputy High Commissioner to Singapore).



Lock Soon and Chia Yong present our team shirts at a glance. The raring-to-go Imperial Dragon's logo on the t-shirt was designed by team member Aaron Ong.



We really enjoyed our participation in this event. In the evening we joined the Oxbridge Society at Clark Quay for buffet and beer.

It is only three days since the race has ended but I have already received more than 20 new email messages from team members discussing future activities. Our first race is over, but the story of the ICAAS Dragon Boat Race Team has just begun ...

On a final note, we would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to our sponsors TPA Strategic Holdings, UOB Life Assurance and Prof. Wong Limsoon. Without their support, we would not have rowed this far.

Malte Schuldt
Team Capt. & ICAAS EXCO member