

Texts in English

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The texts were translated using ChatGPT and Gemini.

Foreword — World Rowing Championships 2026

Seada van den Herik, President of the Royal Dutch Rowing Federation

Rowing is more than a sport

This August, the World Rowing Championships return to the Netherlands. From 24 to 30 August, over 1,200 para and elite athletes representing more than sixty nations will race for world titles on Amsterdam's Bosbaan. For the third time—after 1977 and 2014—the Netherlands becomes the centre stage of global rowing.

This special edition of *Roel* is for everyone experiencing the event: athletes, supporters, partners, newcomers, and visitors who may be seeing a rowing course for the first time. Our aim is simple: to show what rowing truly represents. Because rowing is far more than a sport.

A Sport That Uses the Whole Body

Every stroke engages around 85 percent of the body's muscles. Legs, core, back, shoulders, arms—everything works together. Rowing blends power with endurance, explosiveness with patience. It is low-impact and accessible across a lifetime, from childhood to old age. Whether you row recreationally a few times a week or train fifteen times a week at international level, the sport adapts to your ambition.

A Fleet as Diverse as Its Athletes

Rowing begins with a boat, and the variety is vast. From stable wherries and C-boats for beginners to the razor-thin racing shells used by elite crews. You can row solo in a single scull or with eight athletes and a coxswain. You can race on flat water, rivers, or—through coastal rowing—on open sea. The fleet reflects the diversity of the rowing community.

Outdoors, Immersed in Nature

Rowing is an outdoor sport in its purest form. Athletes move across water surrounded by wind, wildlife, and changing landscapes. In the Netherlands, you can row through historic cities like Amsterdam and Utrecht or glide through quiet rural waterways lined with meadows and reeds. With 125 clubs across the country, rowing is woven into the Dutch landscape.

Rowing is also quiet. No engines, no emissions—just the click of blades and the soft hiss of the hull. And if you are early enough, when mist hangs over the water, you may hear the tiny bubbles under the boat as it lifts slightly from the surface. A sound few people ever hear. That is where rowing becomes magic.

The Power of Synchronicity

Crew rowing is never solitary. It is a collective rhythm. Research from the University of Oxford shows that rowers training in perfect sync release significantly more endorphins than when training alone—a phenomenon known as the *rowers' high*.

A boat slows when timing falters. But when eight athletes breathe, move, and apply power together, they reach a level of flow none could achieve individually. That feeling of unity cannot be explained. It must be experienced.

A Sport Rooted in History

Rowing is as old as civilization. Boats carried goods along ancient rivers, ferried people between ports, and accompanied pharaohs on their final journeys. Athenian rowers shaped the balance of power in

the ancient world. Rowing appears on Greek pottery, in naval drawings, and in romantic paintings of quiet lakes. It has always been part of human culture—practical, powerful, elegant, and athletic.

Honest, Not Elitist

Rowing is sometimes labelled an elite sport, but the reality is different. True elite status does not come from avoiding effort. Rowing demands sweat, strength, and endurance. A boat moves only when athletes make it move. That honesty is the essence of the sport.

Membership fees are modest compared to what rowers receive: access to expensive boats, coaching from dedicated volunteers, and training facilities. Three resources for the price of one.

A Community Like No Other

After training comes coffee, tea, and conversation. Rowing builds communities that last decades. Many of the 43,000 Dutch rowers volunteer at their clubs, contributing to coaching, events, and regattas. Some crews have rowed together for thirty or forty years. Friendships begin in boats and endure long after.

The First-Year Eights

Every year, around 250 men and 250 women compete in first-year eights and fours, representing their university clubs with pride. They train six times a week, sacrifice nights out, and race with ambition and determination. It is a school for life: teamwork, resilience, and performing under pressure. Traditions evolve, but the spirit remains.

Now: The World Championships

The athletes competing at the Bosbaan have invested years in their development. They train with expert staff, structured programmes, and professional support. The Netherlands has been among the world's leading rowing nations for years—an achievement built on hard work, innovation, and collective effort.

That success is never guaranteed. That is what makes it special.

I hope we witness exceptional racing, dramatic finals, and Dutch performances to be proud of. Above all, I hope everyone visiting the Bosbaan—whether for the first or the hundredth time—feels the true beauty of rowing.

Welcome to the water.

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row!course

Text Dominique Vrouwenvelder

From Straight Ditch to World Stage

The Bosbaan Through Time

Where a polder lay just over a hundred years ago, the Amsterdamse Bos (Amsterdam Forest) stands today. It features the straight stretch of water that has been attracting rowers from home and abroad for nearly ninety years: the Bosbaan. A bird's-eye view through the history of the world's oldest artificial rowing course.

The story behind that honorary title begins in 1928. An expanding Amsterdam needs more green spaces and recreational areas. The Amsterdam city council decides to build a large city park on the southwestern edge of the city—think swaying treetops, blooming flowers, and gracefully winding shorelines.

How did a perfectly straight waterway end up in the middle of that new forest? Rudolf Meurer, the first chairman of the Dutch Rowing Federation, played a major role. During the 1928 Olympic Games, rowing took place on part of the Ringvaart near Sloten. Because only two boats could start at a time there, numerous heats and repechages were required, making the races last ten days.

At that point, rowing was already a popular sport in Amsterdam. The Amstel River was becoming increasingly crowded due to rising shipping traffic, so the sport needed its own dedicated venue.

When it became clear that the Amsterdamse Bos would be realized, the rowing federation saw an opportunity. They proposed building a rowing course, and the municipality agreed.

Job Creation Project

Shortly after, the economic crisis of the 1930s broke out. The construction of the Amsterdamse Bos became a major job creation project, employing thousands of unemployed Amsterdammers with shovels, wheelbarrows, and rail carts. The Bosbaan was one of the project's largest components. Excavation work began in April 1934. Three years and 500,000 cubic meters of moved sand later, a course measuring 2.2 kilometers long, 72 meters wide, and three meters deep was completed.

On May 6, 1937, Queen Wilhelmina officially opened the five-lane-wide Bosbaan. The Varsity, an annual student rowing race, became the first major competition on the new course. Later that year, the national championships and the European Championships followed. With that, the Bosbaan immediately gained international fame.

Metamorphoses

During the Second World War, the further construction of the Amsterdamse Bos largely came to a halt. The Bosbaan remained in use, but on a limited scale. After the war, development of the area resumed, and the venue continued to grow into an international competition site. For instance, Amsterdam hosted the European Rowing Championships again in 1949 and 1954. The latter edition was special because women were allowed to compete as elite athletes for the first time, albeit in a separate event preceding the men's races.

International rowing grew rapidly, and with it, the requirements for competition courses became stricter. As a result, the Bosbaan was widened in 1963 from five to six lanes. This allowed it to host major events in the following years, including the European Championships in 1964 and 1966, and the World Junior Championships in 1968.

Another milestone followed in 1977, when the Bosbaan hosted the World Rowing Championships for the first time. The successful event confirmed the venue's international standing, but also made it

clear that further investments were necessary. Consequently, the facilities were upgraded in stages throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Improvements included a new finish tower and better amenities for athletes and spectators. The refurbished Bosbaan hosted the World Under-23 Championships in 1989.

Modern Course

The largest renovation to date took place at the turn of the century. In 2001 and 2002, the Bosbaan was widened once more—this time to 118 meters. Since then, the facility has featured eight official competition lanes alongside an additional warm-up and cool-down lane. The total length was also extended to 2,300 meters. At the same time, the boathouse was revamped. The heritage building from 1936, originally intended for changing rooms and the storage and maintenance of rowing boats, was adapted to modern standards. The wooden grandstand along the finish line also had to make way; the Olympic Training Center now stands in its place.

The renewed venue quickly attracted international events again. The World Rowing Under-23 Championships took place in 2005 and 2011, the World Junior Championships in 2006, and World Cup races in 2007 and 2013. In 2024, the international rowing circuit returned to the Bosbaan for the Senior World Rowing Championships.

World Championship-Ready Once Again

In the second half of 2025 and early 2026, the Bosbaan underwent another major renovation. Anyone visiting the venue around that time would have seen a site filled with temporary facilities, drained pontoons, and active work on the course itself. Beyond structural updates, several sports-technical systems were modernized, including timing systems, internet connection, sound equipment, and the finish camera. The start and finish towers were refurbished, and the aligner's hut—where officials align the boats at the start line—was moved to the opposite side of the course. The Bosbaan was also dredged to meet the updated international requirement of a minimum two-meter water depth across all lanes.

"Dug out in 1936, the Bosbaan is the oldest artificially constructed rowing course in the world,"

Jochem Sollard of the City of Amsterdam, one of the project leaders, told Roei! at the end of 2025.

"That is something we as Amsterdam are very proud of." With this completed renovation, the Bosbaan is prepared for the future once more. Nearly ninety years after its opening, the course still serves the very purpose it was built for: a place where rowers can train and compete at the highest level.

Tekst by Koos Termorshuizen

World Championships Director Nico Rienks

'Director? Nah, ambassador is good enough'

With Nico Rienks and Ilse Paulis, two Olympic champions are the faces of the World Rowing Championships at the Bosbaan. As 'tournament directors', Rienks and Paulis focus primarily on the athletes' perspective. We spoke to Rienks one Tuesday morning in the spring at his club, the Zwolsche Roei- en Zeilvereniging (ZRZV).

The ZRZV canteen is being prepared for a group of sixty – mainly – women who row weekly under the guidance of Dineke Bollaert. They'll be having a meal together after they return, reports Willemien Reinking from behind the bar. Also sitting at that bar is Nico Rienks (64), who has just stowed his skiff in the boathouse. We're offered a bowl of salmon soup to try. 'It's Vichyssoise,' says Reinking, who prepared it. We give the soup the thumbs up – it's perfect as it is! We then retreat to the boardroom and ask Rienks what his role as director entails, and whether it keeps him busy. "Oh, director – just call me an ambassador. That's the role I was offered, and I was happy to take it on."

Camera on a rigger

"Ilse Paulis – also a director – and I are mainly focused on initiatives from the rowers' perspective. This week we're working on the television coverage. The person responsible for broadcasting the Tour de France on TV is involved in that. We want to use the cameras and new camera angles to show more emotion. The medallists from the finals will moor at special rafts just behind the finish line. Family members are allowed to join them straight away. We want to show footage from inside the boats. We also need to think about having a camera with the coxswain. There are cameras built into glasses; that could be an option. That's the sort of thing we're working on. No team leader in a cycling peloton wants to carry a camera – it weighs 150 grams, which is extra weight after all. As a rower, you don't want to have a camera mounted on a rigger on just one side of the boat – and certainly not as a single sculler. In that case, everyone would have to carry that weight. And in small boats, a counterweight would be needed on the other side. It took some persuasion to get World Rowing to agree to let us implement our innovations."

They also consider the layout of the Bosbaan to be important. "For example, we need to take into account that, in certain weather conditions, the starting lane changes sides." But Rienks is just as concerned with the rowers and the spectators. "The athletes' village, where the rowers have lunch and where there are beds for resting during the day, will be built on the current car park. Along the railing at the head of the Bosbaan, the rowers will have their own coffee stop with a view of the Bosbaan, shielded from the outside world. That was also the case at the Seoul Games. You could see your fellow rowers crossing the finish line clearly. That's much better than a spot behind a tent with no view." In Seoul in 1988, Rienks won his first Olympic gold medal alongside Ronald Florijn in the double sculls, so he has fond memories of those Games.

The power of an eight

Not all his ideas make the cut. "I would have liked the first kilometre to be free to watch, just like at the Henley Royal Regatta, for example. Then perhaps more people who've never watched rowing before might come along." At the start, he would have liked a small grandstand with a screen. That won't be happening, but there will certainly be a coffee stall. "It's nice to walk along the Bosbaan to the start and see and hear the power of an eight setting off. Then there'll be spectators all along the Bosbaan."

At the time of the interview, it was not yet entirely clear how the medal ceremony would be organised. "It would be great if lots of people could be there to witness the winners being honoured. It probably won't take place in the usual spot, right in front of the VIP stand, but in the fan zone next to the stand. That way, it'll be easier for many more supporters to attend."

He himself is a lot more nuanced about winning gold than he used to be. "Of course, when you're right in the thick of it, a World Championship and certainly the Olympics are the most important things in life, but now I enjoy the genuine friendships I've made through rowing more than the medals lying in a cupboard somewhere. I also think it's important that, during your rowing career, you start to think a little about what you want to do for the rest of your life." Rienks easily shifts to a broader perspective. He has been working in occupational health since 1992 and says: "It's just like in the business world: the people who are really very good and stay at the top for a long time aren't overly single-minded either. They are sociable, approachable and have a great capacity for empathy."

Rienks has been a member of the ZRZV since he was fourteen. He also rowed during his studies with the Vrije Universiteit's rowing club, Okeanos, and "I even kept my skiff at Nereus for two years, because I wanted to row on the Amstel in winter." When he didn't get a place on the medicine course, he went on to study human movement sciences, with half his modules in medical subjects and half in social sciences.

After the 2000 Sydney Olympics, four years after winning gold with the Dutch Eight in Atlanta, Rienks gave up rowing. After two years of taking a break from top-level sport, he simply picked up the oars again. He still rows about four times a week, "and twice a week I run strength training sessions for the young rowers in Zwolle and join in myself as well."

Rowing under artificial light

On the Bosbaan: "It's now two metres twenty deep throughout, with new buoys and lovely changing rooms. The City of Amsterdam has ensured that the Bosbaan has been restored to its original 1937 state. It's wider than it was back then, but the buildings and the appearance are just as they were in those days. In addition, the City of Amsterdam is also a major financial sponsor of the World Championships."

All the races are now held in the middle of the day. "I'd hoped we'd be able to row in the evening. The wind usually dies down in August then. It would be quite special, rowing under floodlights – I don't think it's ever happened before. But it didn't happen. I do understand, mind you, that it's down to costs – particularly television rights – as evening slots are too expensive for rowing broadcasts. Perhaps I'm being too conservative, but I don't really see the removal of repechages as an improvement just yet. If someone's unlucky in the first heat now – if they're a bit ill or if there's a problem with the equipment – then after a failed heat you can never reach the A or B final. That's a shame if you've come from the other side of the world and no longer have a chance to make up for a mistake."

Not just a meeting-room tiger

Rienks is closely involved with TIG. "TIG organises the World Championships; it's a good, professional club." In addition, there are over five hundred volunteers and more than a thousand rowers. Among other things, TIG is responsible for arranging accommodation for the rowers and their support staff, judges – we used to call them 'camp judges' – and representatives from World Rowing. All in all, the number of non-rowers involved is perhaps twice as large as the number of rowers.

"I certainly enjoy being involved in all aspects of things. We've also been working on a sailing clog, the Cloggy, which competes in national races and is heading to Lucerne. If it brings in extra tickets, that's great. I'm not one for meetings, but I know lots of people in the organisation. That makes it even more enjoyable. I organised the Royal Holland Cup for over ten years, including a World Cup. A number of people were already involved back then. I have to go to Amsterdam once or twice a week. Every month there's a big meeting with the whole organisation."

Rienks: "If everything goes according to the plan we've drawn up, I won't have much to do during the World Championships themselves. Only if a decision really needs to be made that has immediate consequences for the rowers, if anything crazy happens or if the weather goes completely haywire, then I'm sure I'll be called in."

Text and photos by Kemal Rijken

New Memories at the Bosbaan

My own moment of glory at the Bosbaan came in 1997, when I finished third in a coxless four with macon blades — long before big blades became standard — rowing for R&ZV Jason from Arnhem at the national youth regional rowing finals.

It was a different era, with equipment, technique, and etiquette unlike today. I sometimes feel a touch of nostalgia, yet every period has its own charms. In 2026, the infrastructure looks far more modern: improved pontoons, cleaner buoy lines, and refurbished buildings.

I quit rowing at the end of 1999. I couldn't have imagined it would take 23 years before I returned to the sport. In the meantime, I often visited the Bosbaan, but never rowed there again. That changed in June. For this World Championship special of *Roei!*, I invited former Olympian Reinder Lubbers to join me in a double scull. He now rows at De Hoop and flies over the Amstel in an elite boat, but this course is familiar territory for him — far more familiar than for me.

Twin Brothers

Rowing together proved an amusing contrast: Reinder is a head and a half taller and far more athletic. A joke about *Twins* — the film in which Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito play mismatched twin brothers — was inevitable. I wondered how it would go. Would I be able to keep up? Would our heights clash?

Although De Hoop is a few kilometers away on the Amstel, the club keeps several boats at the Bosbaan. We took the *Tweevink*, a sleek double scull, and set off. From the first strokes, rowing with someone like Reinder was a joy. You learn quickly from an athlete of his level. I found I could stretch my arms further, and we ran through several technical drills.

Student Rowing

Light paddle, accelerate, ten or twenty strokes full power, then settle again. At the end of the course, just after turning, I asked Reinder about his memories. "In top sport you do a lot you don't remember, but a few things stay with you," he said. "Early on, rowing as a student at Aegir, everything was new, exciting, and fun." His best Bosbaan moments are still vivid. "With my first-year eight, we fought tough races here, especially against Nereus. It always came down to the last two hundred meters."

Gradually, rhythm developed in the *Tweevink* and we synced well. I also discovered that I still had the basics of competitive rowing. Near the pontoon, we decided to row another half course — simply because we could. Then we headed off to other commitments.

Despite the wind and occasionally choppy water, Reinder and I created new memories at the Bosbaan. We wish all World Championship spectators and participants the same joy and lasting memories on this historic course.

Four Row!ers

Tekst by Ragnar Niemeijer

Tara Rigney (Australia, single scull)

For years, Tara Rigney (27) rarely went to bed before nine in the evening. It was one of the sacrifices she made in pursuit of the Olympic Games in Paris, where Rigney was considered a serious medal contender. At the time, she already had a World Championship bronze medal from 2023 to her name, and in the Olympic season she won gold and silver at two World Cup regattas.

But at the Games, Rigney missed out on the podium by just over half a second. The disappointment was enormous. "To be honest, I had a very difficult six months after the Olympics," Rigney said in an interview earlier this year. "It took me five months before I finally unpacked my Olympic kit at home. It was so painful."

Investment bank

Shortly after the Olympics, she turned her attention to her career outside sport. Rigney took a job at the headquarters of an investment bank in Sydney. "In a way, it was good that I immediately found myself in a completely new environment. Everything there was new to me," she says.

Her mentor Scott Brennan, himself an Olympic gold medallist in 2008, helped her through the difficult period. He explained to Rigney that she had to work her way through this phase on the road to new successes. Rigney did not race in 2025, but she has made a strong return this year by winning the Australian national single-sculls title.

Cruciate ligaments

Born in London, Rigney originally played high-level netball, a sport similar to basketball. But she tore both of her cruciate ligaments twice. During her rehabilitation, she discovered rowing.

Earlier this year, Rigney was photographed smiling with a cream cake. Written on it were the words: *Hot girls close deals*. It could yet turn into a hotly contested single-sculls battle with Karolien Florijn. There is no animosity between the two, however; both women regularly like each other's posts on Instagram.

Rigney has also occasionally been pictured online with a glass of wine on the table. Perhaps, this time, a small celebratory sip will finally help Rigney make it onto the podium.

Tekst by Ragnar Niemeijer

Matt Rowe (Great Britain, M8+)

With a surname like that, surely it was inevitable that British rower Matt Rowe (27) would end up in a boat. You might think so. In reality, however, it did not happen quite that easily.

The 2012 Olympic Games in London finally ignited Rowe's passion for sport. From that moment on, the young Brit knew one thing for certain: one day, he wanted to take part in the biggest sporting event in the world himself.

He put a list of all the Olympic sports on his bedroom wall and decided to try them one by one, in order to find out where his talents lay. Eventually, at the age of fourteen, Rowe joined Kingston Rowing Club, one of the oldest rowing clubs in the world.

"The members of Kingston, my parents and Rebecca Romero are my biggest fans," he says. Rebecca Romero is a close friend of his parents. In 2008, while five-year-old Matt and his family were there, she won Olympic silver in rowing.

Bow seat to stroke

When the entire crew of the gold-medal-winning British eight from Paris 2024 subsequently retired, Rowe was one of the new rowers ready to seize his opportunity. He earned a seat in the flagship boat and, at the 2025 World Championships in Shanghai, moved all the way up to the stroke seat.

That could not prevent the Netherlands from claiming the world title, leaving the British crew with silver.

Sports-mad

Rowe did not simply emerge from nowhere: by then he already had a junior world title to his name. Like many Britons, Rowe is a genuine sports fanatic.

In recent years he has been in the stands for football matches at home, watched tennis at the US Open, and followed American baseball and American football. For fun, Rowe also enjoys kicking a football around himself and occasionally takes to the padel court.

It seems that even at 27, Rowe still has trouble choosing his favourite sport.

Tekst by Dominique Vrouwenfelder

Hannah Heideveld (Netherlands, W8+)

Half Dutch and half American, Hannah Heideveld (25) grew up in the Netherlands. Her mother's stories about American student-athletes inspired her to study on the other side of the Atlantic. Having represented the Netherlands at the U19 World Championships in 2019 and the U23 European Championships in 2020, she was offered university scholarships in the United States.

Ergometer scores

In 2021, Heideveld — by then a student in America for almost a year — tried out for the Dutch U23 national boat. That year, she was not selected.

She then produced her American passport and entered the selection process for the US rowing teams. Selection there is more heavily based on ergometer scores — and that just happened to be one of her strengths.

In the United States, she earned a place in the U23 squad and, in 2022, won gold in the women's eight at the World Championships. A year later, Heideveld and her teammates won another World Championship gold medal.

Epidemiologist

Heideveld has since graduated as an epidemiologist, swapped New Brunswick — home of Rutgers University — for Amsterdam, and shown TeamNL that they need to take her seriously.

At the most recent World Championships, the Dutch women's eight took gold, while Heideveld and her crew finished fifth.

Heideveld's decision to row for the Netherlands again does not mean she lives by the saying, *"If you can't beat them, join them."* She moved back to the Netherlands to be closer to her family. Her former American teammates may now find themselves among her opponents.

"I'd be very happy to show them around Amsterdam."

The Americans struggled to pronounce her surname. It became something like "Hiedeveld".

Eventually, her coach at Rutgers became "quite annoyed" whenever commentators got it wrong.

For her graduation ceremony, all students had to write down phonetically how their names were pronounced — and that worked. At the World Championships in Amsterdam, there is little chance that her name will be pronounced incorrectly.

Tekst by Ragnar Niemeijer

Simona Radis (Romania, W2– and W8+)

"You have to be a little crazy to train as hard as we do," Simona Radis (27) laughed not long ago at the Rotsee Regatta. "But I love it, and I also love being number one."

Radis enjoys nothing more than challenging herself and raising the bar with every training session. Until the age of thirteen, she had never even heard of rowing. Then one day a coach came to her school and asked Radis to come along for a training session.

When she went on her first training camp, she was shocked by the Spartan conditions. "I wanted to take the first train straight back home."

Long-standing partner

Radis started rowing at thirteen, and the rest is history. With two Olympic gold medals and five World Championship titles to her name, she has become one of the absolute best rowers in the world.

Radis has excelled particularly in the double sculls with her long-standing partner Nicoleta Bodnar, but she is also highly successful in the eight. Until 2024, the duo were unbeatable, but at the Paris Olympics they had to concede gold to New Zealand.

In 2025, Radis teamed up with Maria Rusu in the pair and immediately struck back with another world title. As the stroke of the new mixed eight, she added a second gold medal.

Chopping wood and cooking

Radis comes from a small Romanian town near the Moldovan border, an area that has produced a remarkable number of strong rowers. A few years ago, Romanian rowing president Elisabeta Lipa offered her explanation.

According to the rowing legend, it has to do with the simple upbringing many children in the region receive: working outdoors in the fields, chopping wood and cooking.

Radis now lives in Bucharest and rows for Steaua Bucharest, a name that many people primarily associate with the football club.

"Football is also the most important sport in Romania, but I hope that one day rowing will be number one," says Radis.

On the Divan

By Jos Wassink — illustration by Bettina Weller

"I think we're going to sink"

Capsizing, collisions, damage — it's all part of rowing. But no one likes talking about it, because it's usually rather embarrassing. On the divan, brave rowers relive their most painful moments. This time: treading water in a rain suit, with cameras in hand.

Where did this happen?

"On the Bosbaan, during the Koninklijke–Holland Beker in 2012. I was more or less the house photographer at the time. It was a calm June day, cloudy with light rain. I remember wearing my rain gear."

And where exactly were you?

"I was sitting on the foredeck of a motor catamaran with a cameraman from NOS. We were going to follow the women's eights race. Before the start there's complete silence in the start area, apart from our outboard engine quietly idling. We were moored in a line of other boats along a pontoon, waiting for the start signal."

And once the race began?

"It was a women's eights race, so they shot off with considerable force. We pushed away from the pontoon, the driver accelerated, and then clipped the left rear corner of the catamaran in front of us with our right front corner. Catamarans steer terribly, of course. It didn't seem serious, so the driver opened up the throttle to follow the national women's eight."

Did that go well?

"I had a perfect view from the front of the catamaran, but we weren't really closing the gap. That was the first thing I noticed: we couldn't pick up as much speed as in earlier races. And at one point the driver said: 'I think we're going to sink.' A few seconds later: 'Yes, we're sinking.' Then the boat started to list and we slid into the water. I was wearing a rain suit, carrying a rucksack, and holding two cameras. The NOS cameraman watched his camera — tripod and all — disappear to the bottom."

What did you do?

"Treading water like mad to keep my cameras above the surface. I realised it wouldn't be long before I'd have to let go of them to save myself. But those cameras were my babies. It's honestly a miracle that one survived intact. The body of the other was lost, but the lens could be repaired."

How long were you in the water?

"In reality, probably less than half a minute, though it felt much longer. Another catamaran was nearby quite quickly, but because those things manoeuvre so badly, it still took a while before someone managed to pull me out. If I remember correctly, it was Helma Neppérus."

How could this happen?

"The left float turned out to be leaking. We'd had a collision on the right side when pulling away, and apparently the frame of the catamaran had been pushed into the left float, causing a puncture."

What lessons can be learned?

"We didn't wear life jackets on the motorboats back then. I don't think that would be allowed now. And we shouldn't have continued after the collision. We should have checked whether everything was still safe. But yes, we didn't want to miss the race."

Did you manage to take any photos?

"Yes, it's quite funny. You see the women's eight at a distance up to about 250 metres, and then it stops. We were about 150 metres down the course when the boat sank. The next morning I was back as usual. People looked at me in surprise — 'Oh, you're here again?' They clearly didn't expect that."

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Row!baan 😊

Text by Jos Wassink, animations by TIG Sports & Events

World Rowing Championships at the Bosbaan

From athlete village to fan zone

The Bosbaan will host the 2026 World Rowing Championships — a rowing festival for some six to eight hundred athletes, an equal number of staff, and up to ten thousand spectators. *Roel!* asked Willem Overdiep, managing director of TIG Sports & Events, what the event will look like.

Getting there

Anyone planning to attend the Staatsloterij World Rowing Championships (the “WRC” for short) is best off travelling by public transport. TIG Sports & Events will run additional shuttle services to the Bosbaan from Amsterdam Zuid and RAI stations. Visitors who still choose to come by car — despite closures and roadworks on the A10 — should park at RAI and use the same shuttle buses.

Athlete Village

The car park at the head of the Bosbaan will be transformed into an athlete village. The estimated six to eight hundred athletes and their support staff can rest here, receive physiotherapy, warm up, or eat a healthy meal.

“Normally an athlete travels between hotel and venue two or three times a day,” Overdiep explains. “Because of all the closures, we decided to bring the facilities to the Bosbaan instead of having athletes commute back and forth.”

Along the edge of the village, broadcast trucks will be stationed — home to the media organisations covering the event.

Winners’ Island

Walking towards the Bosbaan, you reach the terrace above the boathouses. The left bank is reserved for athletes, staff and equipment. The right bank is for spectators and media.

A unique feature this year is the **Winners’ Island**. The top three finishers of each A-final will dock there and be greeted by team staff, friends, family — and of course the media, eager for first reactions. The public will not have access to this area.

Hospitality Tent

Visitors pass through an exhibitor zone with stands from rowing brands, clothing suppliers and boat builders. The area is set up like a village square, complete with coffee carts.

The first large tent by the water is the hospitality tent, intended for guests of the national and international rowing federations, sponsors and other VIPs. The elevated terrace sits just beyond the finish line and offers a beautiful view of athletes after their race. Competitors can walk underneath the terrace to reach other facilities.

Grandstand

Permanent facilities include the finish tower and the KNRB office. The finish tower houses timekeeping, jury and commentators. During the Championships, the KNRB office becomes a kind of conference centre for team coaches, race organisers and World Rowing staff. The upper floor remains the domain of TeamNL.

Next to the KNRB office, a temporary grandstand will rise with 5,000 seats — “twenty percent more than in 2014,” says Overdiep. Access requires an additional ticket. A basic ticket grants entry to the venue but not a seat.

Fan Zone

No worries — you can simply continue to the fan zone, a tent-lined terrace stretching to the water’s edge. “This is where the rowing festival comes alive,” Overdiep says. Bars create atmosphere, and there is a continuous programme around the racing with guests, previews and reviews.

And best of all: the medal ceremonies take place here. Not on a distant podium, but right in the middle of the crowd. “It happens with thousands of people watching. In the Netherlands, with the TeamNL spirit, that’s a guaranteed celebration.”

If you want to follow a race up close, you can buy a ticket in the fan zone for the electric train that runs along the opposite bank just before the race — followed by coaches shouting encouragement from their bikes.

Row!champions

Text by Niki van Sprang

Olli Zeidler: "I'm glad things have calmed down a bit now"

How was your first post-Olympic year as Olympic champion?

"Absolute madness. The attention after the Olympic Games is significantly greater in Germany than after the World Championships — you really notice it. I spent whole weeks travelling for events and sponsor commitments and barely knew how to fit everything in. An amazing experience, but I'm glad things have calmed down a bit now so I can focus on the essentials again."

You originally wanted to take the year off, yet you still competed at the World Championships.

"Exactly. The federation asked whether I wanted to race the single without selection trials. And the Worlds happened to fall during my 'career week' on campus, so I didn't have any classes. Perfect timing. During my studies I could only train for an hour in the morning before lectures. For the last six weeks I flew from Geneva to Munich every weekend to train properly. The fact that it was almost enough for a gold medal in the end wasn't bad at all."

And now, after finishing your MBA?

"I completed my master's in December — as one of the top students in my cohort. I now live and work in Zurich, but only at sixty per cent, so I can combine it well with training. Pretty much ideal. Winter went very well: from mid-December onwards I could build up steadily and lay a solid foundation for the season."

On paper you've achieved everything: multiple world titles, Olympic gold. What are the big goals now?

"Los Angeles, of course. Paris was what the Olympic Games should be — completely different from Tokyo during Covid — and that gave me fresh motivation. And beyond that, I simply want to find out how fast I can really make this boat go. In some races I was incredibly fast up to the thousand-metre mark, but then the wind dropped and you can't hold a 6:30 split. A world record is something I'd really like to show in the next one and a half to two years."

Have you ever rowed in Amsterdam?

"Once, during a Deloitte event on the Bosbaan. It reminded me of my home course in Munich because of the clear lane markings, so I felt quite comfortable."

Finally: bus or bike to the course during the World Championships?

"Good question. If we're staying close to the course, you can of course take the bike. Otherwise I prefer the bus — at least nothing can happen on the way."

Karolien Florijn: "There are lots of new girls who can row really fast"

How was your first post-Olympic season as Olympic champion?

"It honestly wasn't a particularly fun year for me. I focused mainly on my studies, and I'm really happy about that now. At first I wanted to push on straight away — I even went to the World Beach Sprint Championships — but as time went on I realised I needed some space after Paris. In autumn I started building up training again, and now I'm almost finished with my degree and fully back into it."

What was it like to spend a year as a training rower rather than a racing rower?

"That definitely takes some getting used to. People don't always understand what you're doing if you're not racing, and rowing is a big part of your identity. This year I kept some things at arm's length so I could focus on my courses — I'm simply doing myself a favour by getting those credits in now. And in the meantime you keep doing what you love most: training. I really do enjoy that."

What are your goals for this season?

"First, to get as fit as possible. I want to get back to at least the level I had, and preferably take another step forward. There are lots of new girls who can row really fast, so I'm curious. I'm trying to approach it openly and without expectations. It's a bit strange: everything I *really* wanted to achieve, I've actually already achieved. But I still enjoy it so much, and I want to feel that I'm giving everything in every race."

Does a World Championship at home make the season extra special?

"I take it race by race. First Sevilla. A World Championship in your own country and your own city is of course fantastic, but I really hope the Bosbaan will be fair — in 2014 that was an issue. You don't want every race to be won by ten seconds. But the location and the atmosphere for the crowd are wonderful."

And how will you get to the course during the World Championships?

"By bike, of course."

Row!city

Text by Ragnar Niemeijer

Bronze Olympian Van Dorp devoted to his World Championship city

"I love Amsterdam!"

If there is one true Amsterdammer in TeamNL Rowing, it is Simon van Dorp. The towering sculler — well over two metres tall — was born and raised in the capital and is preparing for a World Championship in his own hometown. *Roei!* meets the Gentle Giant on the terrace of Café tHuis aan de Amstel, to talk about his Amsterdam.

Why did you want to meet here?

"It's simply a beautiful spot, and it's a lovely old house. I've been here often because my girlfriend used to live just behind it. Through rowing I've always had a connection with the Amstel. My club, Willem III, is only a five-minute bike ride from here."

Where did you grow up?

"I was born in an Amsterdam hospital and lived on a houseboat in Schellingwoude until I was fourteen. After that we moved to Nieuwendam, a village that has since been swallowed up by Amsterdam. At home I have a map from the 1940s and you can still see it lying between the fields. My affinity with rowing started on that houseboat. My father used to restore old boats that were rotting away in the ditch. My brother and I would get a rowing boat or a little sailing boat. I really grew up on the water. I did judo for a while, played football and even tried breakdance — but I wasn't built for any of that."

Which neighbourhood feels most like home?

"I think Amsterdam-North suits me best. I first lived on my own in Osdorp and later in Buitenveldert, in a house rented by the rowing federation. In total I've lived in six places, but the Van der Pekbuurt in Noord is great. My mother was a GP there and back then the atmosphere was pretty rough, but now it's nicer and safer than it used to be. You can still feel the city there — the vibe of an old working-class neighbourhood. It's authentic, with lots of cultures mixed together, and it's becoming really hip."

For which other city would you leave Amsterdam?

"There are plenty of nice cities, but they don't do much for me. The only thing I sometimes miss is nature. I love it — forests, water, mountains. I think Austria is beautiful, and I'd love to see Kazakhstan one day. I don't know if I'd want to live there, but the images look amazing. When I studied in Seattle and went on road trips, I loved the ruggedness and the space. I could live in Seattle — I know lots of people there. It's a great city."

Where do you like to eat?

"There's a fantastic Eritrean place around the corner from us. Absolutely brilliant. They serve sourdough pancakes with stew on top, and you eat it with your hands. Really fun to try — and absolutely f***ing delicious! When my girlfriend and I are in the city centre, we always get an ice cream at Van der Linde on the Nieuwendijk. That's a must. They have whipped-cream ice cream. There's often a queue."

What's your favourite shop?

"I'm not into clothes shopping — with my XXL size it's often frustrating. I usually order clothes online. But I'm a huge fan of Amazing Oriental at Buikslotermeerplein. It's an Asian supermarket, but they also have Surinamese products. They have really good tofu."

If you were mayor of Amsterdam, what would you change?

"Overall things are going pretty well. They could keep it a bit cleaner, but I love the city. It's busy in the centre — but it's the capital! Houses are expensive, but lots are being built. I think I'd scrap the fatbike ban. I don't really see the problem. People might ride fast on them, but people ride fast on VanMoofs too.

Former mayor Eberhard van der Laan and Johan Cruyff — they both had real heart for the city. Our eight at the 1996 Olympics was even named the 'Crujff'. My late grandfather Wouter Gortzak was also a born-and-bred Amsterdammer. He did a lot for the Bijlmermeer with the Labour Party and even served in Parliament. His father Henk did too, for the Communist Party. I sometimes think about doing something for the city council myself, but I can't take that on right now. That's for later."

Any secret tips?

"There's an Italian place in the Lutmastraat that's absolutely top-notch. Not many people know it. One man does everything — cooking and serving. It's called GialloArancio. I'm guessing that's his name. I need to go back soon. I don't want too many people to go, otherwise you won't be able to get anything anymore... That man can cook!"

Row!advertiser

Text by Koos Termorshuizen

TxMiller Foundation

A foundation that deserves to be known

A new advertiser appears in this issue — a name unfamiliar to us, which immediately piqued our curiosity. We visited one of the founders, Wietse Mulder, at his office in Zeist. From the website *txmiller.org* and LinkedIn, we already understood that the TxMiller Foundation is active in recruiting donors for stem-cell transplantation.

Mulder (63), tall and lean, has just been for a run and also plays golf. He used to row at Orca. He studied molecular biology and became fascinated by DNA sequencing — determining the precise genetic code stored in DNA. That unique code, different for every individual, is crucial for the success of transplants, especially stem-cell transplants, which play a vital role in treating diseases such as cancer.

For a high chance of success, the DNA of patient and donor must match as closely as possible. The more donors there are, the greater the chance of a match. That is why a global database exists in which donor data is stored. Leiden University plays a central role in this system.

What does being a donor involve?

The term *stem-cell transplantation* may sound daunting for donors, but it is far less invasive than people think, Mulder explains. After registering, a donor's DNA sequence is added to the database. When a match is found, the donor is contacted. They first receive an injection that temporarily increases the number of stem cells circulating in the blood. Blood is then drawn and passed through a machine that collects the stem cells, after which the donor's own blood is returned through a second tube. "It takes about as long as a Netflix film," Mulder notes.

And what about TxMiller?

We suspected that *Miller* might relate to the founder's name — and indeed it does. In fact, co-founder Erik Rozemuller also carries it in his name. They wanted something that sounded Dutch, and *molenaar* (miller) fit nicely.

And the *Tx*? In the medical world, it simply stands for *transplantation*. As straightforward as that.

Why rowing?

Yes, Mulder rowed. But more importantly, rowing attracts many healthy 18- to 35-year-olds — and at general rowing clubs, many parents of people in that age group. It makes perfect sense for TxMiller to show its name in our sport and to encourage people to register as stem-cell donors. "Become a stem-cell donor!" Mulder urges.

The art of rowing

Rowing is the ultimate blend of strength, technique and timing. What looks fluid and effortless from the bank demands perfect bodily control and intense focus in the boat. In short: rowing is an art. And rowing *is* art. Kees van Bueren has an eye for that. In art, he often spots rowers. Here is a selection of his reflections.

Thomas Eakins (1844–1916)

***The Champion Single Sculls (Max Schmitt in a Single Scull)*, 1871, 90 × 118 cm, MET New York**

An icon of American painting: the depiction of a race on the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia. Crowds of tens of thousands lined the banks, betting on the outcome. Rowing was booming. With the steam train in the background and skiffs equipped with outriggers and the newly invented sliding seat, the painting also expresses faith in modern technology.

At the same time, it is a statement by Eakins. Rowers and painters must endlessly refine their technique and will never reach perfection. Rowing as a metaphor for painting. Eakins himself rows stiffly away — his name appears on the stern of his skiff. But his friend Max Schmitt, a lawyer, has just won. Relaxed, he sits in his boat and looks straight at us. He is champion and has outpaced his friend — though Eakins could paint, and how.

See the whirlpools created by Eakins' blades, and the clean lines Schmitt's oars leave on the water. A pictorial ode to the sport.

Gustave Caillebotte (1848–1894)

***Canotiers ramant sur l'Yerres* (1877), Private Collection**

You never tire of looking at this boat — precisely Caillebotte's intention. Boatbuilder, rower, sailor, gardener and painter of all his pursuits, he was not interested in the human figure but in the construction of what humans make: boulevards, railway bridges, boats.

The rowers here are merely part of their technical creation. In this coxless pair, the focus is on the boat's structure — cut into a triangular shape — and the water it glides through. Look at the oarlock, painted with meticulous precision. See how the rowers' arms form one whole with the boat and the oars, part of the mechanism that drives it forward.

Caillebotte emphasises this through colour: the hands share the same tone as the handles. The light wood contrasts with the dark water. No land, just greenery and water. The men remain anonymous beneath their hats, though intimates recognised the stroke by the faint plume rising from his pipe.

Christiane Möbus (1947)

Four eights in the Jakob Kaiser-Haus, Berlin, and an oar

Eights move horizontally across water — a truth as plain as day. But in Berlin, near the centre of democracy, in the Jakob Kaiser-Haus among the parliamentary buildings, four eights move vertically: one black, one yellow, one red, one blue.

Their upward and downward motion in the vast hall makes viewers stop in wonder. What is this? It is a work by Christiane Möbus. She lets these boats move through space — through air, an uncomfortable element for vessels. We are inclined to see them as *dislocated vessels*. Möbus has lifted them from their function and granted them a higher boatworthiness.

The same applies to one of her oars, pierced unusually through a metal disc. Chalk on the floor beneath reads: *Man kann ja nie wissen* — you never know.

Here in Berlin, the Constitution is guarded — its first article so essential that it reaches poetic height: *Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar...* That these four boats bear the colours of the German flag and the blue of Europe is something to pause over.

Winslow Homer (1836–1910)

***The Fog Warning*, 1885, oil on canvas, 77 × 123 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**

Racing rowers row as if their lives depend on it — and however hard it is, it remains a luxury. For men like this fisherman, life *does* depend on rowing. Their story must be told.

In Maine, schooners once set out with dories stacked on deck. A dory is a small, light rowing boat, pointed at bow and stern, mass-produced in New England. Fishermen were dropped overboard in these dories where fish were expected, to be picked up later. But lone dories often fell prey to storms or thick fog. Many capsized or died of hunger and thirst.

They rowed towards the coast or hoped another vessel would rescue them. In the painting, a fisherman looks back from his Banks Dory. He sees the schooner's sails on the horizon — tiny, barely reachable. He holds his oars above an oncoming wave. A fog bank rises, threatening to swallow him. In the foreground lies his catch: halibut, glowing in the last light. A cynical scene — however large the fish, will he deliver them to the mother ship? Soon he will be lost in fog. He shouts himself hoarse. Alone, he drifts. Night falls. He thinks of his wife. Hunger gnaws; thirst can no longer be quenched.

Roger-Joseph Jourdain (1845–1918)

***Chez M. Chambellan, constructeur à Bougival*, 1879**

Boat lovers rejoice at this glimpse into Chambellan's workshop, just outside Paris on the Seine.

Diagonal lines lead the eye to the elegant woman in the doorway. She stands in backlight, absorbed into a feast of sepia, orange and ochre.

With the oars on her delicate shoulder, she seems to urge her husband to come rowing. The painter himself, Jourdain, pays homage to his worldly wife — a woman who moved among the great figures of her time. With the rudder somewhat awkwardly in hand, he chats in his Sunday best with the boatbuilder and his wife, both dressed in sombre black.

"You were talking again," she will say later, as she takes the oars herself.

George Seurat (1859–1891)

***Un dimanche après-midi à l'île de la Grande Jatte* (1884–1886), 207 × 308 cm, Art Institute of Chicago**

In bright light, behind the trees on the left, a four rows past — in contrast to the bourgeois figures on land, mostly in shadow. They are "doing their mischief in the dark".

On La Grande Jatte, near Paris, prostitutes sought clients. The lady in front holds a monkey on a leash — *singesse*, *apin*, slang for prostitute. The woman fishing at the water's edge symbolises a woman of ill repute. The men remain wisely in shadow, not wishing to be recognised.

Seurat needed a ladder to paint this enormous canvas — more than two by three metres — dot by dot in 1884. Pointillism was born. And a final curiosity: in Chicago, this iconic work hangs just a few hundred feet from the start of Route 66.

Claude Monet (1840–1926)

***En canot sur l'Epte*, 133 × 145 cm (1890), Museu de Arte de São Paulo**

A moment of imbalance gives this painting its tension. One girl fumbles with the oar, pulling the boat to port; the other raises her shoulders, trying to counterbalance. The composition itself seems off-balance, with the emphasis on the pink tones of the girls and the slightly darker boat.

Boat and girls stand out beautifully against the greens of foliage and water. The oar blade in the foreground restores the balance — its green and pink harmonising sublimely. The swirling Epte gave Monet headaches; he wrote: "You go mad trying to paint it."

Text Niki van Sprang

'I know every single centimeter of that course'

Introduction

Lennart van Lierop (32) is the only TeamNL rower who was already at the starting line back during the 2014 World Championships—at that time still in the lightweight eight. After a successful transition to open weight rowing, he became Olympic champion in the quadruple sculls in 2024. At the time of writing, he is preparing for the World Championships in Amsterdam in the coxless four.

Had a good row?

"Definitely. It's our first time here in Zell am See and it's a wonderful place to be. Beautiful mountains, radiant weather, and a nice lake—just big enough for great boat training sessions. I love the mountains anyway, so I think the surroundings are stunning."

How often are you on the water?

"Up to ten times a week. A little bit more in the Netherlands, a bit less here. During this adaptation week it's twice a day, and next week back to every single day again."

How did you get started with rowing?

"Twenty years ago, through the school rowing championships in 2006. A few of us from PE class went on the ergometers. I signed up for a day of rowing at Laga, prepared for the school rowing championships at De Delftsche Sport (DDS), and never left."

What do you still want to achieve in rowing?

"To become world champion once more and to go to Los Angeles to accomplish something special there again. The World Championships in Amsterdam will be extra cool: I've been training there almost every day for over ten years and know every single centimeter of that course. Family and friends can come watch, which has a nice feel to it. Results don't always have to be gold, but it won't be B-finals either. Right now, I might actually get slightly more happiness out of a great process than a gold medal, but I am absolute still striving for gold."

What is your finest rowing memory?

"Paris. The Olympic Games and winning gold there. That's definitely the most incredible thing I've done in rowing. My happiest moment might have been the European Championships in the single sculls in Bled, though. Emotionally, winning from complete underdog status was genuinely different from going into the Olympics as the overwhelming favorite. Paris was the crowning achievement of my rowing career, and Bled was the confirmation that I really was that good on my own."

What does rowing mean to you?

"Getting better is always very central in rowing—I really like that. We also have a genuinely great group to train with and the atmosphere at the OTC (Olympic Training Center) is good. After Paris, I realized once again that simply being out in that boat is just really fun on its own. I always prefer outdoor sports over indoor ones anyway."