

ROCCS makes big splash at FSRA state regatta

Sunday, May 5, 2013 at 11:01 pm

James Blevins
Correspondent

The Rowing Organization of Citrus County Students (ROCCS) club has been making waves around the state of Florida for more than 10 years.



Special to the Chronicle

Ben Davison, left, and Andrew Lynch, right, pose with the Landis Cup the pair won at the Florida Scholastic Rowing Association (FSRA) State Sweep Championship at Nathan Benderson Park in Sarasota at the end of April.

On the weekend of April 27 and 28, the Inverness-based organization earned its first two state titles at the Florida Scholastic Rowing Association (FSRA) State Sweep Championship at Nathan Benderson Park in Sarasota.

The “sweep” event has each rower using a single paddle to propel the craft.

Ben Davison and Andrew Lynch won the boys pair race in a time of 5:25.40, two seconds ahead of second-place finishers Cape Coral Rowing Club.

Davison, 16, from Citrus High School and Lynch, 17, from Lecanto High School, managed to catch up to the leaders in the last 300 meters to win the race in grand fashion.

The undefeated girls group consisting of Morgan Brown, Kimberly Stafford, Emily Hall and Mikayla Dutton (along with coxswain Sierra Lemos) — all of Lecanto High — won the Junior Four title in a time of 5:54.90.

The finish saw the ROCCS group dominating second-place finisher Stanton River Bank Rowing by four seconds at the line.

Both titles are the first the club has seen since being founded by Dave Brown in 2003.

In the Boys Junior Eight race, Sanders Clardy (LHS), Christian Dossett (LHS), Colten Gardner (LHS), David Mitchell (CHS), Matt Grotjahn (LHS), Christian Javier (LHS), Billy Ball (LHS), Morgan Lyon (LHS), and coxswain Emily Hume (CHS) placed ninth after finishing third in the Petite Final.

Overall, ROCCS took six boats (three sculling, using two oars each, and three sweeps) to the state

regatta and came away with two gold medals, two silver medals — a sixth- and a ninth-place finish.

ROCCS head coach Terry Davison, also Ben Davison’s father, is extremely proud of what the club has produced at the recent FSRA regatta, but has his eyes firmly set on the future.

“We’re a club that has accomplished much in our 10-year history,” Terry Davison said. “Here at state this year has been the furthest we’ve ever been.

“Our reputation is growing amongst the other rowing clubs,” Davison added. “They all know about us now, whereas before we were a bit of a joke. We started as more of a recreational club and now we’re very competitive.”

Coach Davison still looks to get more support from the local community in Citrus County as the club, despite its success, barely scrapes by.

“We come from this wonderful place but no one knows about it,” Davison said. “So many people come up to me and say they didn’t even know we had a rowing club here (in Inverness).

“We’re getting the results, and that’s coming from all of our hard work,” Davison continued. “The kids are putting in six days a week and sometimes two times a day to get this.”

Ben Davison has been invited to try out for the 2013 Junior Worlds Sculling Selection Camp. He is one of only 18 athletes nationwide who has received this honor.

If he makes the team, Davison will be competing in Lithuania for the U.S. Junior team.

The ROCCS club next rows at the U.S. Southeast Regional Championships on May 4 and 5 in Oakridge, Tenn. in the hopes to return in June for the national championship regatta.