

# A Tale of Two Coaches, A Tale of Two Captains

By Johanna Maranto



*A shared conviction that “the greatest satisfaction comes from trying your hardest, rather than settling for a half-hearted effort” propelled coaches Becky Moore and Sally Morris (back row, far left and right) and the Exeter girls crew program to the New England championship title. Co-captains Alexandra Hasbach ’06 and Aviva Lillian ’06 (front row, holding trophy) were “exceptionally strong leaders,” says Morris, “compelling everyone else to be as committed as they were.”*

*(Facing page) The girls varsity eight holds a final dawn practice before leaving for the U.S. National Youth Rowing Championships in June.*

Sally Morris and Becky Moore make a dynamic duo. Morris, who joined the classics department last September, and Moore, a member of the English department since 1994 who became department chair that same month, are coaches of the girls crew program, and together they helped guide the team to a New England championship title and the girls first boat to the U.S. National Youth Rowing Championships.

Morris and Moore go way back, both as rowers and as friends. They began their rowing careers long before they met, and each discovered crew in college by default, rather than design—Morris because a broken bone kept her off Trinity’s field hockey and basketball teams, and Moore because “as a nonathlete, I arrived at Radcliffe and joined the only sport that did not make cuts: crew.” Both fell quickly in love with the sport, rowed competitively throughout their college years and then moved into coaching and teaching. Their paths finally crossed at the Brooks School in North Andover, MA, where they forged a friendship as working mothers with young children.

Enduring friendships, says Moore, are one of the great benefits of this demanding sport. “There are athletes I know from collegiate rowing and prep school coaching whom I only see once a year, yet it is always fun to see them,” she says, “to share stories of year and to appreciate the generations of rowers competing behind and ahead of us.”

In 1992, the two women decided to train for the Charles River All-Star Has-Beens (CRASH B) Sprints World Indoor Rowing Championships, held in Boston each February. Now in its 25th year, the event was founded by a group of former U.S. Olympic and World Team rowers who, according to the CRASH B Sprints website, were looking for a way “to break up the monotony of winter training” and came up with the idea of a dry-land regatta in which rowers race

2,000 meters on ergometer machines. The CRASH B Sprints now attracts hundreds of rowers from around the world, from teenagers to octogenarians.

"Sally and I had to begin our 'mother's morning training sessions' before everyone needed to leave for school and work," recalls Moore. "On winter days, having a goal made the whole prospect of exercising in the dark more inviting, so the CRASH B's seemed a natural motivator."

"Although we sculled together on Lake Cochichewick in Massachusetts during the summers," adds Morris, "running and erging served as the most time-efficient workouts for two teaching, coaching, dorm-running mothers of three. Besides, we had fun racing together."

Then Moore moved to Exeter and Morris got even busier, following her appointment as chair of the Brooks classics department and head coach of the rowing program. They took a hiatus from the CRASH B's until this past winter, when "Becky challenged me once again," says Morris, who scored a strong sixth-place finish in the senior women's division. They are already looking ahead to 2007.

not, to try different seats in the boat; they also rotated coxswains. After practice, they sent out regular motivational group emails. During the winter, they tailored workouts for each of the girls based on programs provided by Morris. They also organized a 24-hour "ergathon" fund-raiser and a weeklong spring training trip to the OARS Boat Club in Orlando, Fla, recruiting both a nationally known coach and a sports psychologist from Australia to work with them. "They were exceptionally strong leaders," says Morris, "compelling everyone else to be as committed as they were."

When she arrived at Exeter, Morris expected 2006 to be a year of transition. Although girls crew has done well in past New England Interscholastic Regatta (NEIRA) championships, they did not medal in 2005. Due to the girls' relatively small size and light weight, Morris knew they would have to work hard to achieve the high level of technical skill necessary to compensate. She also knew that it can take a while for coach and team to get acquainted. "My style of coaching dictates that the best athlete moves to the first boat to make it the best, and on down the line," Morris says. "Nobody owns a seat in a boat. Each girl has to earn her seat every day."

But the perseverance and focused training that began in September paid off in May when the girls first boat won the NEIRA championships and an automatic invitation to the junior nationals. And thanks to strong performances by the second and third boats (who finished second and first in their divisions), the Exeter team won the E. Arthur Gilcreast Award, a points trophy for the best overall girls eights team performance. (Icing Morris' pleasure was the fact that the winning first boat was stroked by her daughter, Kate Morris '07, who had also rowed to a NEIRA win for Brooks in 2005.)

Happy as they were about the junior nationals invitation, co-captains Hasbach and Lillian, both seniors, faced a difficult decision: taking part in the June 9-11 competition would mean missing Exeter's graduation, held the same weekend. Both girls chose to attend graduation and let others compete in their places; true to form, says Morris, they still attended every practice up until the team left on June 8. Exeter finished sixth out of the 18 boats invited to the regatta—a very respectable finish, Hasbach points out, since all the other qualifying teams were regional rowing clubs, and not schools. The entire first boat except for Hasbach and Lillian will be returning to row for Exeter next year, boding well for another strong season.

When they reflect on the lessons crew has taught them, the team's co-captains sound a lot like their coaches. "As a coxswain, you need to know how to steer the crew," says 5-foot-tall Lillian. Crew has taught her to always "keep the point," focusing her energies, both mental and physical, on a fixed point—a technique that works off water as well as on.

Hasbach says that thanks to crew, she is "more aware of the value of patience, perseverance and what it really means to be on a team," and that it's possible to push beyond what she thinks of as her limits. "And I will continue to do that," she vows, "because now I know I can always do better than I did the last time." ■



SALLY MORRIS

Both women are well aware of the influence a coach's example can have on athletes. "I always had female coaches as role models," says Morris, women who were "extremely passionate about their sport, but who also relished other parts of their life with the same intensity." This "passion for life" is what she hopes to pass on to her own rowers. "They know that I am as keen [as they are] on winning my own event, whether a real race or just a daily workout. I hope to show by example that the greatest satisfaction comes from trying your hardest, rather than [settling for] a half-hearted effort."

### COMMITTED TO ROWING FAST

At Exeter, Morris says she found "a group of dedicated, fit and competitive young women who are committed to rowing, and to rowing fast"—starting with Alexandra Hasbach '06 of Leaburg, OR, and Aviva Lillian '06 of Paris, France, the team's co-captains and a dynamic duo in their own right. Morris recalls being struck with the intensity of their investment in the team from their very first meeting, when "they invited me to lunch and we talked for three hours about their goals for the season."

During fall club crew, Hasbach and Lillian welcomed all comers, including novice rowers. They encouraged each girl, seasoned or

# Spring Sports



A



B



C



D



E



F



G



**H**



**I**



**J**



**K**



**L**

**(A) Baseball**

**Record: 14-1**

**New England**

**Tournament Finalist**

Coach: Bill Dennehy

Captain: Ryan Lapointe '06

**(B) Softball**

**Record: 7-7**

Coach: Bruce Pruitt

Captains: Mairead Small

Staid '06, Jessica Smith '06

**(C) Boys Lacrosse**

**Record: 12-7**

Coach: Eric Bergofsky

Captains: Samuel Duprey

'06, Brett Hughes '06,

Michael Scalise '06

**(D) Girls Lacrosse**

**Record: 8-6**

Coach: Kathy Nekton

Captains: Rebecca Austin

'06, Sarah David '06

**(E) Boys Tennis**

**Record: 2-6**

Coach: Tony Greene

Captains: David Paik '06,

Philip Song '06

**(F) Girls Tennis**

**Record: 5-0**

Coach: Jean Chase Farnum

Captains: Monica Hernandez

'06, Casey Simchik '06

**(G) Girls Water Polo**

**Record: 8-5**

**New England Tournament**

**Semifinalists**

Coach: Lundy Smith

Captains: Sarah Lee '06,

Erin Turmelle '06

**(H) Boys Track & Field**

**Record: 2-3**

Coach: Hilary Coder

Captains: Alex Godfrey '06,

Michael Hamman '06,

Colton Heward-Mills '06

**(I) Girls Track & Field**

**Record: 3-3**

Coach: Hilary Coder

Captains: Grace Cineas '06,

Laura Tabor '06, Caitlin

Wood '06

**(J) Cycling**

**Record: 7-0**

**New England Champions!**

Coach: Don Mills

Captains: Alexander

Fankuchen '06, Rebecca

Kane '06

**(K) Golf**

**Record: 3-3**

Coach: George Mangan

Captain: Nick Bawa '07

**(L) Boys Crew**

**Record: 5-5**

Charles M. Swift Coaches'

Trophy:

Coaches: Lawrence Smith,

David Swift

Captain: Solomon Kim '07

**Girls Crew (See page 40)**

**Record: 6-4**

E. Chandler Sanborn Trophy:

Coaches: Sally Morris,

Becky Moore

Captains: Alexandra Hasbach

'06, Aviva Lillian '06