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**SARASOTA CREW ROWS VICTORIOUS AT THE “HEAD OF THE HOOCH”**

*60+ Area Students Compete in Second-Largest U.S. Regatta and Hold 24-hour Ergathon This Weekend to Benefit All Faiths Food Bank, Raise Funds & Attempt to Break Ergathon Record*

**Sarasota, Florida / November 11, 2009** – More than sixty members of Sarasota Crew, all students from 8 Sarasota area schools – competed in races last weekend down the Tennessee River vying for, and winning, top positions in the [“Head of the Hooch”](#), the second largest regatta held in the U.S. Sarasota Crew youth brought home a collective team total of 120 points, earning them sixth place overall in the regatta among 35 youth teams. The team will celebrate this coming weekend with a 24-hour “Erg-a-thon” outside Whole Foods to benefit XXX and raise funds for the program.

The Sarasota Crew had 55 entries over 16 events, medaling in four of them. They earned SILVER in the Men’s Quad, as well as, BRONZE in the Men’s double, Women’s quad and Freshman Men’s Eight.

The medalists were

Men’s Quad	Silver Medal Matt Sobotka Hunter Leeming Josh Schmidt Marcel Dupuis
Men’s Double	Bronze Medal Matt Sobotka Hunter Leeming
Women’s Quad	Bronze Medal Christina Niffenegger Carli Goldberg Mari Beiling McKayla Taaffe
Men’s Freshmen 8+	Bronze Medal Josh Simon Travis Taaffe

Jose Colon  
Ryan Hails  
Andre Dupuis  
Andrew Konecny  
Ryan Day  
Tony Rzepka  
Ian Hull

Sarasota Crew has one of the largest youth rowing programs in the southeast and getting the team, along with all of the equipment, up to Tennessee was no easy task. On Thursday night, they headed out with the trailer packed with 26 boats, oars, riggers, equipment, and two motor coaches, each loaded with 40+ student rowers and chaperones, followed by an entourage of parents and volunteers who both flew and drove.

The trip to Chattanooga took 13 hours and left no time for sleep or showers before the team needed to be at the regatta site early Friday morning. Parents and rowers immediately set up tents and began cooking lunch while other team members unloaded boats and started the critical task of rigging in preparation for the first practice heats that afternoon.

Galvanek summarized the weekend racing with the following comments: "We were very pleased with the performances of our athletes over so many different events. Our goal at the Hooch was to ensure our rowers got to experience as many rowing events as possible. I was very pleased to see our more senior rowers participate in as many as 6 events over the two day competition, rowing the equivalent of almost 40,000 meters, while our younger rowers were eager and willing to demonstrate their proficiency over multiple events as well. During the weekend the entire team demonstrated great technique and fitness that have us well positioned for the spring season.

Sarasota Crew is known for its commitment to giving all of its athletes the opportunity to develop their rowing skills to their fullest potential. "It's a core value of our program," says President John Leeming. "We don't ferret out the best rowers to assure a win; we want to give as many kids as possible the opportunity to compete" Head Coach Casey Galvanek says, "With persistence and effort even an unskilled athlete can become a good rower, and every good rower really wants a win for the team."

Sarasota Crew's Ergathon event begins Saturday, November 14 at 5 p.m., outside Whole Foods on XXX Street. "Ergs" are rowing machines used on land to help perfect rowing motion and skills. Student rowers will alternate on the machines, rowing for a total 24 hours. The event is a fundraiser with three purposes: a) to raise money for Sarasota Crew scholarships, equipment and events, including offsetting expenses for student rowers who may not otherwise

be able to participate; b) collect donations of non-perishable food items for All Faiths Food Bank; and c) attempt to break the current record for rowing in an ergathon. The event will last all night and continue the next day, ending at 5 p.m., on Sunday, November 15.

/end

#### About Sarasota Crew:

Sarasota Crew is a non-profit organization founded in 2002 by a group of visionary and dedicated parents and coaches with a mission of developing student athletes into self-respecting, quick thinking, responsible and rational young adults by promoting positive repercussive growth within the most challenging events.

#### IMAGES

##### Post Regatta Team Photo





Mens Freshmen 8+ Bronze Medal

- Travis Taaffe
- Jose Colon
- Ryan Hails
- Andre Dupuis
- Andrew Konecny
- Ryan Day
- Tony Rzepka
- Ian Hull
- Josh Simon (horizontal)



Mens Quad

Silver Medal  
Hunter Leeming  
Josh Schmidt  
Marcel Dupuis  
Matt Sobotka





Bronze

Carli Goldberg  
McKayla Taaffe  
Mari Beiling  
Christina Niffenegger (not present)