

GEM CITY CREW

CURRENT

Spring 2023

FROM THE ATHLETE'S PERSPECTIVE - HARD WORK PAYING OFF



Phillips practicing on the Great Miami.

It's nearly 90° outside and Jackson Phillips is in long sleeves and pants carrying his boat out to the dock to begin practice. This weather is atypical for spring in Miamisburg, Ohio, but he has his sights set on a competitive finish in Sarasota... and it will be HOT there so he wants to prepare his body for what's to come in the weeks ahead. Having completed his junior year at Beavercreek High School he has been able to solely focus his attention on the goals he's set for himself when he competes at Nationals. Phillips began rowing in middle school after a neighborhood friend invited him to try Gem City Crew's Learn to Row program. He discovered he really liked it and here he is five years later, preparing for his second trip to Nationals in his favorite event, the youth mens 1x (a race for a single athlete).

Although a quiet unassuming leader, he is intensely passionate about the sport, "Rowing is much harder than anything else I've done; more physical, more competitive,

and much more intense. I like the self improvement and the competition... the feeling of passing a competitor. I like looking at the people that are faster than me and creating goals to compete with them. At the end of the race it's no longer a competition of who's stronger, it's who can put up with the most pain and has the strongest mindset and who has the mental capacity to push through the pain and continue."

"Being in a boat feels at home."

Thinking back to when he began competing and what a race feels like for him today he said, "The first time I raced was awful... I felt like I had no idea what I was doing and it was stressful. Now, I still dread the actual race and everything leading up to it until about half-way

through my row to the starting line. That's when my mindset turns around and my race starts... then I lock in, enjoy it, and give it my all. Early on I didn't know how to pace myself and now, with experience, I know there is a strategy and a science behind my performance. People have different strengths and weaknesses, some people are better in the first kilometer of the race and go ahead early then in the second kilometer they slow down while others are the opposite, and in the second kilometer they can lock in and finish strong. Through that second kilometer is when my effort and training really matters because that's the hardest part of the race. The last 500 meters (approximately two minutes) is the most important. That's when people break. That's when others pass. And that's when it's balls to the wall."

Like many high-level athletes, Jackson has dedicated a great deal of time both on the river and through the addition of outside training, but last year when he discovered he was going to Nationals he said, "I basically tripled the amount of exercise I did. I also hate the heat so because we were headed south, I tried to train in many layers to prepare my body to compete in the Florida heat. It worked and I was able to acclimate to the heat when I competed."

"The experience of participating in Nationals was pretty overwhelming at first. There were people from everywhere. I met a rower from as far away as California. It was a much larger scale, being in Florida is much more humid and way hotter than I was used to, and it was longer, spanning four days versus most of our regattas that are two. I wasn't used to rowing three consecutive days at competition speed. You are trying to push yourself and give everything you have. It's painful and very

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Competing in the 2019 Miamisburg Regatta, Jackson's first season with the team, he (left) and teammate Tyler race in a 2x (a sculling double).

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hard to row at that level in such a short span of time. Mentally it was tough because I was the only one from my team so I was missing the support and levity of my teammates." Fortunately, this year Jackson's teammate Lili will also be competing in Sarasota so they can commiserate with each other about challenges and enjoy the camaraderie while in pursuit of their goals.

Since his 2022 trip to Nationals Jackson has been changing up a lot about how he trains and prepares for regattas. "Last year I was 40lbs heavier and I decided I wanted to lose weight and become stronger. I added more overall cardio, including running and cycling, I started lifting weights, and focused on a better diet. These healthy changes and becoming much lighter fueled a positive change to my performance on the water." Because a significant portion of his tweaked training plan took place during the fall and winter, he wasn't sure how it would affect his power. Additionally, this year he bumped up in age groups moving from U17 to U19, so he also understood that would present new challenges with more intense competition. Back in late February, he had his first test during the indoor Midwest Championship Erg Sprint. Much to his delight, his time improved and he was inspired to continue putting in the necessary work towards earning a second trip to Nationals.

After four years of experience, what would Jackson say to someone beginning their journey in rowing, "I struggle with this too, but you shouldn't compare yourself to other people within the sport. Everybody has their own ideal path and training style that helps them improve their specific strengths. Rowing is fun... my favorite activity in the world. Being in a boat feels at home. The racing can be nerve racking and it takes a lot of practice and a lot of time and is very unique. Rowing is a one-of-a-kind sport."

LEARN TO ROW CAMPS STILL AVAILABLE!

Summer is the time to sign up for one of our 3-day camps and see if rowing could be your next favorite sport! Rising 5th - 12th grade students will spend time with our team members and have the chance to try this full-body sport that's great for kids looking to find their passion AND as an off-season activity for kids looking to build their strength and endurance in other athletic endeavors!

Gem City Crew provides:

- Highly qualified coaching staff
- Student-to-coach ratio of ~5:1
- Inclusive and responsible athletic development
- The symmetrical movement of sculling (each rower holds two oars)
- For more information and to sign up visit: gemcitycrew.org/learntorow

Learn to Row participants who go on to join the team can train seasonally or year-round with fall, winter, and spring competitive opportunities. Already have rowing experience and want to join our competitive sculling crew? Contact us at gemcitycrew@gmail.com and we will help get you started!



Learn to
ROW
THIS SUMMER WITH
GEM CITY CREW

- Mon, Jun 26 - Wed, Jun 28 (contingency-Thu, Jun 29)
- Mon, Jul 24 - Wed, Jul 26 (contingency-Thu, Jul 27)
- Mon, Jul 31 - Wed, Aug 02 (contingency-Thu, Aug 03)
- Mon, Aug 07 - Wed, Aug 09 (contingency-Thu, Aug 10)

Each session is \$150

Hey GCC ALUMS!

We want to hear from you! We are looking for ways to get the band back together! Watch our social media and/or your email this summer for more information.



Ben, helping to carry his double down to the river for practice, has found a love of rowing.

GETTING TO KNOW THE NOVICE: BEN

Ben participated in a few of our summer Learn to Row camps and joined the team this winter as a way to keep in shape, but enjoyed it so much he continued into spring, his first season on the water!

What got you started in rowing?

I was looking for a way to exercise and be outdoors.

What do you like about rowing?

It's fun and gets you moving and socializing.

What is your favorite thing about rowing?

The friends that I've made. My teammates have been really helpful and nice and understanding. *And funny.*

What did you think of your first regatta?

It was fun and really organized.

What is different about rowing from other sports you've participated in?

I like the consistency and that I know what to expect every time and what's expected of me. I like that I can track my improvement, which is harder to measure in other team sports.

With your experience from Learn to Row, indoor, and now training on the water, have you established any goals for yourself moving forward?

At some point, I want to try to earn a spot at nationals.

Here at GCC we love Ben's enthusiasm! He asks great questions and is a supportive teammate! We think he has a bright future and look forward to helping him turn his goals into a reality!

DOGWOOD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP



MIDWEST OFFERS CONTINUED EXPERIENCE - PHILLIPS AND RODRIGUEZ ADVANCE TO NATIONALS

The 2023 Midwest Junior Rowing Championship was held May 20 - May 21 in Bethel, OH. It began cold and wet with our rowers in the Saturday morning races dealing with heavy rain, but fortunately ended with sunshine and blue skies. We witnessed continued growth in our young group during competition in their single and double sculling events as well as an inspirational finish by one of our veterans.



The team has enjoyed a spring season surrounded with amazing teammates (and families!) that are incredibly supportive of each other - we couldn't be more proud to have them represent Gem City Crew and for who they are both on and off the water.

We're excited to see what's to come for our small but mighty team! Congratulations to Jackson and Lili for advancing to Nationals!

To watch Nationals via live stream:
Check the GCC social media sites for daily links!

To learn more about Lili's journey visit:
<https://gofund.me/59170128>

TEAM WEBPAGE



June 2023

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: TRINITY



While working hard alongside each other this group of fun-loving kids have been building lasting friendships!

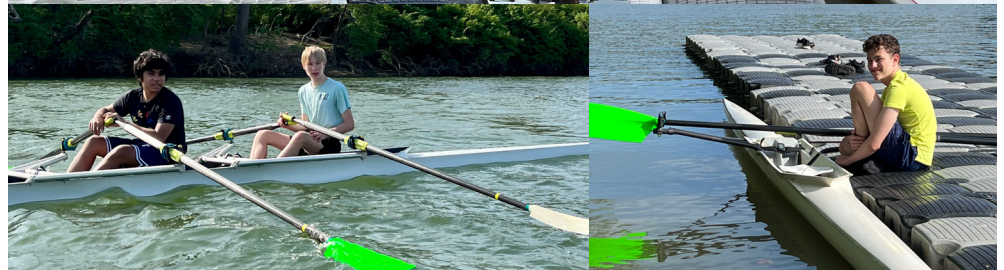
Recently some of our team members were able to gather and celebrate our lone senior and talented artist, Trinity. Through her hard work at Springboro High School, Trinity earned the Distinguished Graduate Award (top 20 out of 500 graduating seniors class of 2023).



Trinity will be attending Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) in the fall. She is on scholarship (Distinguished Scholar Award recipient) and will major in Computer Animation. We wish her all the happiness and success and know she has what it takes to make her dreams a reality!



SPRING PRACTICE



Save the
DATE

MIAMISBURG REGATTA
SATURDAY, OCT. 21, 2023

