



University to help power rowers across the Atlantic

Two rowers from Lancashire are aiming to race across the Atlantic in a rowing boat, aided by sports scientists at the University of Central Lancashire.

Paul Nelson and Adam Murfitt will take to their specially designed craft, the “Spirit of Lancashire” in October and expect to spend up to six weeks at sea, completing the challenging race. Until then, they are working with a team of sports scientists at the University, whose knowledge and expertise is helping them prepare both body and mind for the ordeal.

Dr John Bradley, from the Department of Biological Sciences at the University, is co-ordinating the programme of support for the rowers. He says: “We’re offering a whole range of support from the physiological and biomechanical to the actual psychology of preparing for, and coping with, the race itself. We’ll be working with Paul and Adam over the coming months, running a comprehensive programme of tests to ensure that, by October, they are physically and mentally ready.”

Simulated rowing sessions will take place regularly at the University over the coming year, with the first 24 hour simulated row beginning on Saturday 18th January at midday. Physiological assessment will monitor the rowers’ fitness and help them structure a training program to achieve optimum performance. Biomechanical assessments will analyse their rowing technique so they achieve the most efficient rowing action possible, especially important when rowing such vast distances.

A nutritional strategy is being planned which will determine what the rowers can eat and when, based on their calorie expenditure and metabolisms. Even how much waste their bodies produce will have to be taken into account. Sports psychologists will help the rowers to prepare mentally for the ordeal of spending several weeks cooped up in a very small space with no home comforts and very little sleep.

Paul Nelson says: “Adam and I are aiming to complete the race in about 40 days, which would actually break the record, so we know we’re asking a lot of ourselves, and we are extremely grateful for the support we’re getting from the University.

“As well as the physical challenge, there’s the stress of living in an enclosed, arduous environment for nearly two months, something neither of us has ever experienced before.”

- page 1 of 2 -

- page 2 of 2 -

The race begins at La Gomera in the Canary Islands and finishes in Barbados. Paul and Adam will row approximately 2900 nautical miles in shifts of two hours. The average time for the crossing is 55 days with the record, held by a New Zealand crew, being 41 days. Adam and Paul aren't sure how long they will take, but they say: "We are not only training to compete, we are training to win!"

Paul and Adam are still looking for sponsors to help finance their transatlantic challenge. For further details view the website at www.spiritoflancashire.com or contact Paul on 0780 832 9274 or Adam on 0795 759 2997.

Media invitation

In a special preview event, before the first 24 hour simulated row, **Adam Murfitt and Paul Nelson will be at the University of Central Lancashire on Tuesday 14 January from 1.30pm.** Their boat, "The Spirit of Lancashire", will be available for viewing and there will be opportunity to view the rowers undertaking various assessments and physical tests in the Sports Science laboratory.

Further details from Kate Ford on 01772 894423, 07968 861580, or Pamela Culley on 01772 894425.

13th January 2003
nr001kjf