

# CHS grad finds niche in rowing

## Stroebel to captain at Princeton

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**Cedarburg —** Competitive rowing is certainly not one of the higher-profile sports around, but those who participate in it are passionate about it.

Maggie Stroebel, a Cedarburg High School graduate and Saukville resident, is one of those who enjoys the sport and is good at it; so good that she will serve as the captain of the women's lightweight team next fall in the prestigious program at Princeton University.

In 2012, she rowed in the varsity eight, which retained the Class of 2006 Cup over Georgetown University. In the previous year, she rowed in the varsity eight, the second varsity eight and the varsity four and earned silver at the Eastern Sprints.

She had previously joined the Milwaukee Rowing Club and was highly active at Cedarburg High School, earning letters in track, cross country and

basketball as well as becoming a member of the National Honor Society.

Stroebel spoke with the News Graphic about her rowing career at Princeton as well as her beginnings in the sport.



Stroebel

**News Graphic:** What kind of accomplishments has the Princeton team achieved while you have been there? I saw that the team placed fifth in a recent national championship; what other events might Princeton have won over the years?

**Maggie Stroebel:** My career at Princeton has been so rewarding and very successful, but the endings to each three seasons at the national championships have been disappointing and unfulfilling, not telling of our capability and achievements over the season.

My freshman year we were undefeated during the regular season but finished second at nationals.

However, because we were

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the No. 1 team all season, we were invited to compete at the Royal Henley in England, which was an amazing experience for me as one of only two underclassmen from our team to go.

My sophomore year was certainly a rebuilding year, and this year we were far stronger. We were ranked third in the country all season, finishing second at Eastern Sprints, essentially the east coast championships (from which Stanford is the only top competitor of ours we don't see there).

**NG:** What do you do to stay sharp with rowing in the winter?

**MS:** Winter training is by far the most grueling part of rowing. Rather than be out of season just because the water is frozen, we remain in season and train on the ergs, short for ergometers, which are essentially the rowing version of a treadmill.

There's no worse feeling that sitting on an erg for at least 90 minutes a day, six days a week. Nothing makes me more excited for spring than the thought of a thawed river or lake!

**NG:** How did you get your start in rowing? What

**MS:** Rowing is an incredibly unique sport in that it doesn't require the years and years of practice at refining skills that other sports such as soccer or basketball require. Many Olympians walked onto their college team.

I knew people who rowed at my club, the Milwaukee Rowing Club, and became interested in the sport. I knew that it has the potential to open a lot of doors for athletics in college, and I played sports my entire life. I figured there was no harm in trying out the sport and seeing where it could take me, so I joined MRC after my junior year of high school, and through a lot of hard work and determination, I became fast enough for the top women's programs.

**NG:** Did you always have the goal of rowing for an Ivy League school? How did you choose Princeton?

**MS:** Princeton was definitely always my ultimate goal. My older



Submitted photo

Maggie Stroebel, right, receives her second-place medal at the Eastern Sprints earlier this season.

brother, Spencer, attended Princeton, and had walked on to their men's lightweight team.

There are different kinds of rowing for both male and female: heavyweight or lightweight for men, and openweight or lightweight for women. Whether you are a heavyweight/openweight or lightweight is determined by your weight, and the two different teams are entirely distinct and independent of one another. It is not like boxing where you can go up or down a weight class, but openweight/heavyweight team.

Princeton has all four teams, and although we share the boathouse, we all have our own coaches, boats and oars. I fell in love visiting Spencer at Princeton, but knew I did not have a chance to be accepted into Princeton with my grades.

If I was fast enough on the erg, I could receive one of the three lightweight women's recruiting spots at Princeton. As I was joining the sport very late in the game to be recruited, that really fueled my fire. To keep my options open in case Princeton didn't work out, I also took official visits to the other top lightweight women's programs, which included the University of Wisconsin.

It's actually very funny that despite how little is known about the sport in Wisconsin, the Badgers are one of the top women's lightweight teams in the country. In the end I chose between Wisconsin and Princeton, knowing I would

love either school and team. I ultimately chose Princeton because it aligns better with what I want for a future career after rowing.

**NG:** What does it mean to you to be the captain of the Princeton team?

**MS:** I am so honored to be the captain of my team entering my senior year. Although we graduated a strong senior class, I think we are positioned to have another very strong and successful season. We have teammates back to the podium at nationals.

**NG:** What do you enjoy about rowing? What is its attraction for you?

**MS:** As with any sport, sometimes it can get hard to say you enjoy anything about it! Our season is incredibly long, going from the first day of classes in the fall to past the end of school in the spring. During that time we row six days a week every single week, no matter how demanding our schoolwork.

However, this is exactly what leads me to love the sport. There is nothing more rewarding than putting in so much hard work and seeing the results of it. The rewards are so beyond worth all the work we put in together as a team, and really pulls us together. Experiencing the benefits alongside your teammates, rather than for yourself, makes them that much more beneficial.

**NG:** Do you plan to someday try out to compete for a spot on the United States Olympic team?

**MS:** I would love to continue rowing competitively after graduation and it is a possibility, but really hard to predict. I am so young and there are so many years ahead of me before that decision would have to be made, so I have no idea.

Lightweight women only have one event in the Olympics, the double, so our probability of making the team is far smaller than openweight women, or lightweight and heavyweight men, all of whom have many more events to compete in. Rowers don't enter their prime until late 20s, so I have many years ahead of me. God has a plan for me, and I trust in where He leads me.