



Estonians' medal aim

ESTONIA'S rowing team is in Penrith to beat Australia. Rower Kaspar Taimsoo (above left) said they had not forgotten Australia won bronze in last year's London Olympics, pushing the Estonians into fourth place. "We definitely want to beat the Australians this time," Taimsoo said. "You could say we're going to seek revenge." Otherwise, he and fellow team members have nothing but good things to say about Australia. Fellow rower Alar Raja (above right) likes being in Australia and Penrith. "I like the people here — Australians are kind and pleasant," he said. Taimsoo said people in Estonia "seemed always to be in a rush". "People in Australia are more laidback," he said. They also said they liked Penrith and the Blue Mountains. "We rowed on the Nepean River and it was such a sight to see," Taimsoo said. Their coach, Matti Killing, has been coaching for more than 40 years. "There's always something different about the next generation of rowers; always something new we learn," Killing said. "We love the sport but we know we're also doing this for our jobs. That should motivate us as well as love for our country." Raja, 29, has been rowing since he was 13. "It's an opportunity to do something for Estonia and to see the world," he said. Taimsoo said patriotism was always a factor. "I started rowing at 7," he said. "I'm 25 now so I'm sure the best years are ahead of me. We're all looking forward to it."

Roderick Shaw

Dream fulfilled, now teenagers face the world challenge



MATTHEW MADDEN, 17

SINCE he began rowing nearly four years ago Matthew Madden, of Bladland East, has had one goal in mind — to make it to the Australian National Championships. His dream will come true next week when he competes at the national championships, which he described as his biggest rowing event so far, during the Sydney International Rowing Regatta. "This is what I've been working towards since I started rowing so it's exciting that it's finally here," he said. Matthew will race in the under-19 division in a composite team with three other boys from the Nepean Rowing Club and Leichhardt and is confident they will do well. "It'll be a really good experience rowing with the guys in my team. I think we'll perform really well together," he said. The year 12 student will also represent St Paul's Grammar School in the Schoolboys Championships single scull division.

"I'm aiming for finals in both my races. I want to do the best I can," he said. Despite juggling year 12 exams with his busy training schedule, Matthew says he is keeping up with his school work and appreciates the study breaks when he is out training on the Nepean River. "I train five days a week, up to 18 hours per week, both in the water and the gym. If anything it helps because it keeps me busy and focused and gives me a break from study." Matthew says he is motivated by the international and Olympic rowers he sees training on the river. "I was rowing beside the Estonian rowing team this morning, but not for long because they overtook me," he said. He is also looking forward to attending the first World Rowing Cup to be held in Australia. "It's really, really exciting that the World Cup is coming," he said.



CAITLIN RILEY, 17

IT MAY be her second National Rowing Championships but that doesn't mean it will be easier this time around for Caitlin Riley (below), of St Paul's Grammar School. The Hobarville teen will have three races in one day during the championships next week but isn't put off by the challenge ahead. "I have three races in one day so it's going to be exciting," said Caitlin who has been rowing for six years. She will race in the Schoolgirls Championships single scull division and the under 19s pair and under 19s four divisions in the national championships. Despite studying for year 12 exams she has put in many hours of training in the lead up to the Sydney International Rowing Regatta and says her hard work will be worth it when she gets to race and see the World Rowing Cup. "I'm really looking forward to seeing the World Cup rowers," she said.



You, too, can be a rower

There's a lot of excitement surrounding rowing, thanks to next week's Rowing World Cup being held in Penrith, and thanks also to the Australian rowing team's eight silver medals in the London Olympics. Nepean Rowing Club with help from the National Rowing Centre of Excellence, and Rowing NSW, are conducting testing sessions in Penrith to identify junior athletes with rowing potential. If you are between 13 and 17, tall, have strong arms and legs, and you are a good endurance athlete you can join a testing session to see if you have the potential to become Australia's next rowing champion. Athletes identified as highly suitable for rowing will be invited to join the next Nepean Rowing Club, Learn to Row program from Saturday, April 20. Testing will be conducted at McDonald's North Penrith, 2 Peachtree Road, Penrith (North) on April 6 to 7, 10am to 2pm. Details: Robyn Geelen, Nepean Rowing Club, rcbyngeelen@hotmail.com or 0434 877 758.

Nineteen crews in line-up

Selectors have named 19 crews to represent Australia in the 14 Olympic Boat classes at the opening round of the 2013 World Rowing Cup. It will be the first time that a World Rowing Cup has come to the southern hemisphere. Athletes have been training together on a camps-based basis before arriving in Penrith this weekend. Most crews will also race at the Australian Open Championships as well as representing their states in the King's and Queen's Cups ahead of racing for Australia.

All set, get ready, let's go!

This festival of rowing will be raced over seven days at the Regatta Centre, Monday to Sunday, March 18 to 24. There will be 2000 competitors in 800 races and the best rowing talent from all around Australia and more than 25 rowing nations from around the world, including many London 2012 Olympic medalists. Great Britain, Germany and New Zealand — whose competitors topped the medal ranks at the London 2012 Olympic Rowing Regatta — will be there with Canada, China and the United States. Details, tickets: Ticketek, 132 849.