

Sarah Black – Rowing

Biographical Summary

My first exposure to rowing was through a Learn-to-Row program that was offered by my high school, Elmwood School in Ottawa, when I was in grade nine. I enjoyed the program and joined the Ottawa Rowing Club in 2005, and continued to race with that club throughout high school. In 2007, I was selected for the Canadian CanAmMex team, which was my first International racing experience. After high school, I chose to attend the University of Western Ontario, with rowing figuring prominently in my selection. Western had one of the most successful university women's rowing programs coached by Canadian National team coach Al Morrow. After two seasons on the Western Varsity rowing team, Coach Morrow began to integrate me into practices with his senior women's National Team and encouraged me to try out for the Canadian Under 23 National Team in 2009. I was selected for the team that year which was the first of three World U23 Rowing Championships that I raced in.

Goals for the Future

My ultimate goal in rowing is to medal for Canada at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. However, to arrive at that point, I have many smaller, short-term goals to accomplish first. Recognizing that there are many more experienced and accomplished senior women competing for spots on the 2012 Canadian Olympic Team, my realistic goals for next year include being selected as a spare for the 2012 Olympic Team, or competing at the non-Olympic World Rowing Championships for Canada.

Balancing School and Rowing

School and rowing have always been a close marriage in my life at Western. As I have become more involved in training at the Olympic level, I have discovered that the best way for me to do well in both arenas is to limit my commitment to only a few courses each semester and to really stay on top of my work and assignments at all times. It has also been helpful to seek out academic help immediately when it was required. I also registered for on-line courses during the summer semesters which allowed me to earn credits while ensuring my availability during the months of intensive training.

People who have influenced me

Western rowing Alumni Jane Thorton, has been a role model for me in several aspects of my life, including rowing. Her positive experiences as a rower and as a student at Western were a large factor in my decision to attend Western. Jane has had great success in both her academics and as a National Team rower and Olympian, and she continues to be a positive influence on me.