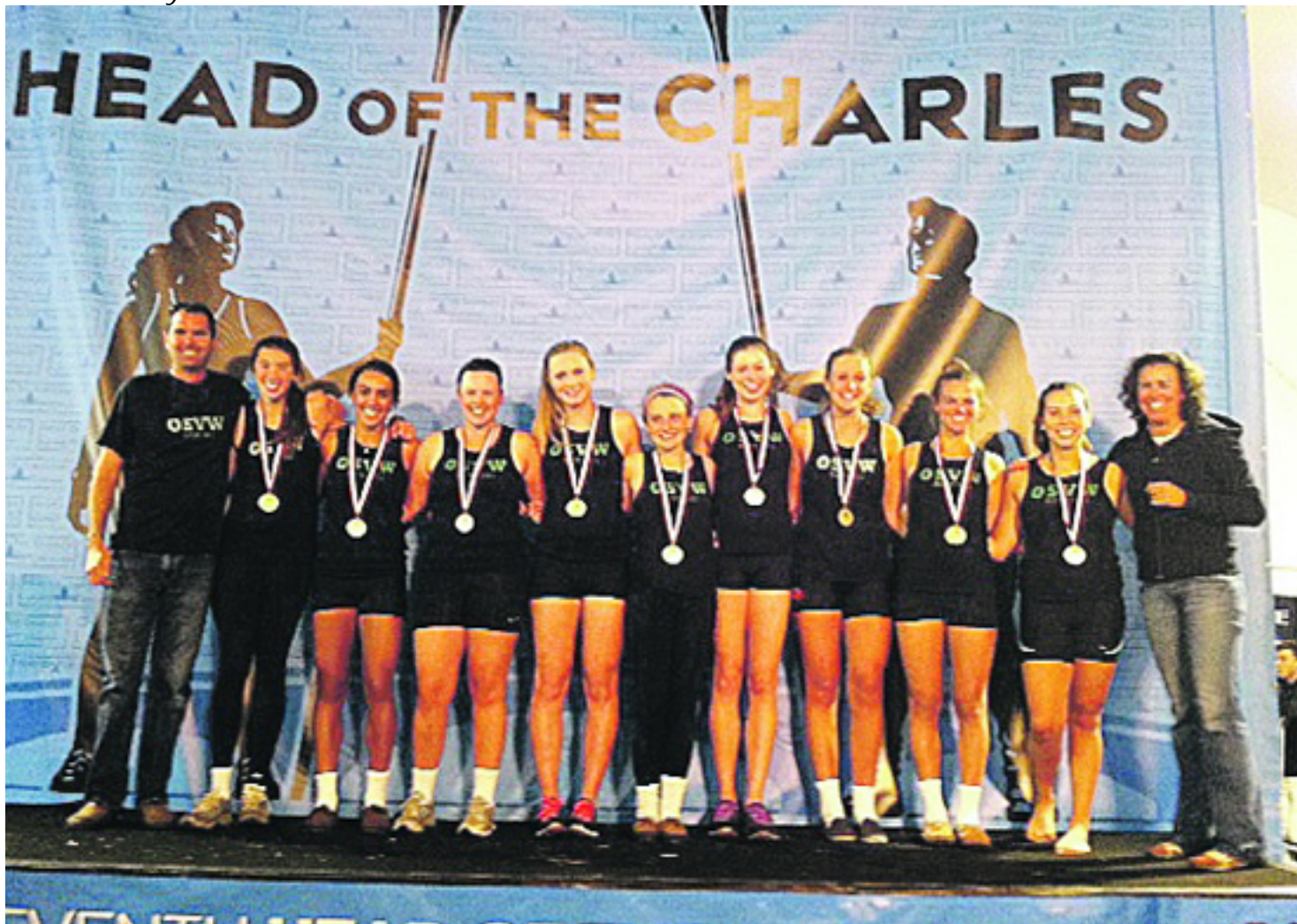


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Oakland Strokes' Women Win Major East Coast Regatta

Submitted by Diane Moe



From left: Coach Derek Byrnes, Sara Cratsenburg, Alia Shafi, Alex Ohman, Krissy Lukins, Amanda Rutherford, Corinne Bozzini, Lauren Dahlberg-Seeth, Brittany Presten, Michelle Popelka, Coach Cass Cunningham Photo provided The Oakland Strokes Rowing Club women's varsity eight took first place out of 75 boats Sunday, October 23 in the youth eights women high school category at the nation's largest rowing race, the Head of the Charles Regatta on the Charles River.

The Oakland team powered through the three-mile course in 17 minutes, 12 seconds - nine seconds ahead of its closest competitor, the Marin Rowing Club. In a sport long dominated by East Coast rowing teams, the one-two finish by Oakland and Marin was a major surprise.

In the Strokes' boat were Sara Cratsenburg (Miramonte High School); Alia Shafi, Lafayette (Acalanes); Alexandria Ohman (Bishop O'Dowd); Kristen Lukins (Campolindo); Corinne Bozzini (Campolindo); Lauren Dahlberg-Seeth (Miramonte); Brittany Presten, Orinda (College Prep); Michelle Popelka (Moreau Catholic), and coxswain Amanda Rutherford (Piedmont).

Five of the girls have committed to Division I universities: Preston (Stanford), Dahlberg-Seeth (Dartmouth), Bozzini (Harvard), Lukens (Princeton), Ohman (University of Michigan).

"We thought we were second or third," Rutherford said. "We didn't know we had won until we got back to our dock and the coach (Derek Byrnes) said, 'You guys know you won, right?' At first we didn't believe him. Then we all started screaming and crying. We got our medals around 4:30 p.m. They're really big and gold and round."

The win was the first ever in the women's portion of the regatta for a West Coast rowing team.

More recently, the women's eight team placed third at the American Regatta on Saturday on Lake Natoma.

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