



BRITISH ROWING

Amy McCarthy

Durham County Indoor Championships

Tyne United RC

Durham University

British Rowing SCT Scholarship Coach

TEAMWORK | OPEN TO ALL | COMMITMENT



What was your experience of indoor rowing, first at the local event hosted at your school and then the county event? How much sport were you doing before taking part in the School Games Indoor Rowing events?

At School, my PE teacher in Year 7 tested everyone on the rowing machines over two minutes, and I managed to beat the gold medal target time. I was then entered into a local competition with no expectations and qualified with first place through to the county event, and progressed on to also finish first in the regional championships. I didn't think anything of it as I had never excelled at any particular sport before. I remember the events having mass numbers of participants and spectators and still feel nervous to this day just thinking about it.

Before rowing, I had recreationally engaged in extracurricular sports, and played tennis as a junior. Local clubs were too far away by public transport and too costly to make an ongoing commitment, especially placing a lot of demand on my single mum.

What happened after the School Games event? What motivated you to want to do more of the Sport?

After winning the regionals, the North East at the time had funding to travel to Battersea and compete at the National Junior Indoor Rowing Competition (NJIRC). I came second at nationals by one meter, and was asked to come for a taster session at Tyne United Rowing Club (TURC).

From that point I was recognised as a talented athlete, and my school paid for my club fees to help me stay in the sport. Indoor rowing brought me into the world of sport that other sports did not offer me a chance with. I also gained extra support from other coaches and clubs including racing at Women's Henley with Durham School, funded positions to take part in local sculling camps, and being placed on a support programme with Durham University Boat Club. With this, I got to join the Junior High Performance Academy run by Durham.

What have been your successes in indoor rowing? How would you say the introduction to indoor rowing has shaped what you are doing now in life?

As the indoor rowing competitions were what invited me to the sport of rowing, I still say my largest successes as a rower were the three funded trips to NJIRC in my junior rowing career. I received two silver medals, both finishing second by one meter, and gold in 2013. I also got to

compete at the Junior National Championships in my single scull representing the North East, and trialled for GB juniors including taking part in their World Class Start Camp.

If it wasn't for rowing, I would never have applied to Durham University as I never thought it was within my capabilities. The sport developed my confidence and determination, resulting in graduating from Durham with a first class BA honours degree in Sport, Exercise and Physical Activity in 2018.

More recently, my successes have come from coaching. I qualified as a level 2 coach in 2016. My commitment to University Sport enabled me to be nominated for Sports Volunteer of the Year in 2017 at the Palatinate Dinner. This role has enabled me to be lead coach on the Junior High Performance Academy, lead coach on Durham University Sculling Camps and undertake the role of Assistant Manager on Team Durham's Holiday Camps.

The most rewarding role in my coaching career has been organising the Durham County and the Regional Indoors Championships. It has been the best development experience from competing in these indoors as a junior, to organising and running them at Maiden Castle.

My participation, volunteering and coaching in the sport encouraged me to apply for the position of Henley Royal Regatta Charitable Trust Coach for British Rowing. Part of this role is to encourage participation of rowing at grassroots level, assisting increasing the inclusiveness of the sport. This varies from working in schools around the region and out of City of Sunderland Rowing Club, working mainly with those from BAME groups and disadvantaged backgrounds. This has really corresponded with me on a personal level, and I have loved the opportunities my job has provided me with so far; including coaching on BUCS camps and meeting new people associated with the National Governing Body.