

Rowing gains popularity on Otsego Lake

<https://www.allotsego.com/rowing-gains-popularity-on-otsego-lake/>

By: Staff 06/24/2021 1:00 pm

by PHOEBE SMITH • Special to www.AllOTSEGO.com



Former Olympic rower Andrea Thies demonstrates proper technique during a class Friday, June 18, on Otsego Lake. (Phoebe Smith/AllOTSEGO.com)

Rowing opportunities have been expanding on Otsego Lake the past few years and a two-time Olympian has been a big part of bringing the sport to Cooperstown and Otsego County.

The Otsego Area Rowing program, under the guidance of Oneonta's two-time Olympian, Andrea Thies, has been expanding for several summers now as people take up the water sport.

A rower from her collegiate years at Cornell University, Thies aims to offer access to the sport regardless of age, ability or experience.

OAR was established in 2017, in conjunction with the Otsego Land Trust and Brookwood Point, with an emphasis on adolescent rowing opportunities.

The not-for-profit offers classes and opportunities for all ages and abilities. Although many of OAR's programs were restricted last year because of the coronavirus pandemic, this summer's rowing opportunities are in full swing with various adult and kid camps.

There is also a scholarship to help fund an adaptive rowing opportunity, via the Eric D. Dettenrieder's Memorial Fund in conjunction with Pathfinder Village. The EDD Memorial Fund strives to provide adaptive sports opportunities to individuals of all ages with physical, cognitive and developmental disabilities, similar to Pathfinder Village's endeavors towards those with Down syndrome.

Thies said making sports, especially rowing, available to those who are disabled or physically restricted remains important, as it "increases sport activity in the future."

A two-time Olympian in 1992 and 1996, and a medalist at the Pan-American Games, Thies said she did not consider herself an athlete prior to getting into college rowing.

However, her style now is of a traditional coach who talks about the values of teamwork and hard work. Her skills derived from a highly competitive level of rowing have aided her transformation to an increasingly recreational level, in which she uses the sport to "keep her going" and stay active, she said.

Thies called her involvement with Cornell's team and subsequent Olympic teams as a "chance moment."

Without the accessibility of rowing equipment and resources offered at Cornell, Thies said she believes she would not be the rower she is today, or a rower at all.

As OAR continues to gain momentum, Thies said she foresees the utmost success for the project on small and large scales, with individual participants and through expanding opportunities and accessibility within the sport of rowing in the area.

Go to www.otsegoarearowing.org for more information.

[Andrea Thies](#), [brook wood point](#), [olympic rower](#), [otsego area rowing](#), [Otsego Lake](#), [Otsego Land Trust](#), [Otsego Outdoors](#), [rowing](#), [water sports](#)