



Media Release

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Rising rowing stars at Uni Games

The battle to take home *The Ashes*—the New Zealand Universities Rowing Championship overall trophy—will take place on the Whanganui River this Saturday 15 April as part of this year's New Zealand University Games.

The regatta is set to be a close competition, with the University of Otago keen to retain the trophy, which contains the remains of their former club shed burnt to the ground in 1999.

Glen Sinclair, New Zealand Universities Rowing Council President, says the calibre of the 300 student rowers taking part in the Wanganui regatta will ensure it is an exciting event.

"There's some really talented rowers taking part, including Otago's Nathan Cohen, who has twice placed second in the World Championship junior single sculls and will be competing at the World University Rowing Champs in Lithuania in August.

"Victoria University, hosting partner of the Games this year, are a key team to watch. I know they have been travelling up to Wanganui for training camps most weekends and that could give them the edge they need."

Jim Ellis, Executive Director of University Sport New Zealand, says the annual competition plays an important role in attracting and encouraging young sportspeople to take part in rowing.

"What is unique about the rowing regatta within Uni Games sports is that it has a novice grade, for students who have only been training for around five weeks. This is a great way for students to get into the sport and get a taste of the excitement of competition.

"Universities play a key role in fostering successful rowers. World Champion single sculler Mahe Drysdale got into rowing through the Auckland University Rowing Club, as a second-year student."

The first Uni Games were held in 1902 with just three sports being contested—athletics, debating, and tennis. Now it's one of the biggest annual multi-sport events in New Zealand. More than 2,000 students from across ten New Zealand university campuses will compete in 28 different sports at the Games.

This year, apart from the rowing in Wanganui, the sports will be held at venues around the Capital from 18-21 April. The event is organised by New Zealand University Sport, in partnership with Victoria University, Victoria University Students' Association, Wellington City Council, Sport Wellington Region and the New Zealand Community Trust.

For further information contact Executive Director of USNZ, Jim Ellis, on 027 477 6786 or click on www.universitysport.org.nz. To attend the Uni Games, or to find out more about the programme, contact New Zealand University Games Media Manager, Kate Doran, on 04 463 5105 or 027 563 5105.

