



Number of rowing teams visiting Clemson breaks previous record

BY GREG OLIVER
THE JOURNAL

CLEMSON — Around 1,400 rowers from 31 schools across the Northeast and Midwest are taking advantage of the relatively warm weather in the Upstate and practicing on Lake Hartwell this month.

"This breaks our previous record last year of 1,176, so we're up another 20 percent this year," said Kade Herrick, tourism director for the Clemson Area Chamber of Commerce. "We had two teams that came in two weeks ago, so things are getting started a little earlier this year."

This week, rowing teams

from Michigan State University, Boston University, Boston College and Tabor Academy, a private high school in Massachusetts, traded in the bitter-cold winter weather for temperatures in the Clemson area that will hover in the mid-to-high 50s most of this week.


Teams from other northern schools such as Syracuse University, Notre Dame and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy will show up next week, and more will arrive the following two weeks.

"We'll be covered up until the end of March," Herrick said.

Herrick said this year's 1,400 rowers nearly doubles the 730 who trained at the former Y Beach

four years ago. Since then, the facility has undergone many changes, including the addition of another dock, more launches for coaches

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Rowers from Tabor Academy in Marion, Mass., carry their shell to be stowed after docking at Lake Hartwell on Monday. Tabor's team is one of many from high schools and colleges in the Northeast and Midwest visiting Clemson this week to take advantage of better weather and lake conditions.

PHOTOS BY REX BROWN | THE JOURNAL

ROWING: 'It's a break from the cold New England weather'

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to rent and expansion of the course by Clemson University from six to eight lanes. The site is now called the Snow Family Outdoor Fitness and Wellness Center.

Last year, officials reported an economic impact to Clemson of \$2.3 million, and Herrick said this year's estimate is expected to be approximately \$2.7 million.

Michigan State Crew Club coach Bryan Pape said the university is represented by 52 rowers this year — half varsity and half novice. Pape, who said the team has visited Clemson all three of the years he has been with the program, said the trip lined up with MSU's spring break.

"Our break doesn't line up with anyone else's, so we have a nice, quiet week here with a lot of water to use," Pape said.

Pape added that the lake is broken up into so many "pieces" that

teams can row in different areas, such as the university course and the city course.

"There's always some place you can go out on your own and the team can be on their own without anyone getting in your way," he said.

Michigan State senior Ben Friman said he likes the freedom Lake Hartwell provides the rowing teams, as well as the opportunity to just be outdoors.

"I like the red soil and the green trees and green pines," Friman said.

"I'm a forestry major, so I love some good scenery. Along with spring break, it's great to get outdoors after spending the winter indoors on rowing machines."

Boston College rowing team coach Alex Dillon said this year marks his fifth visit to Clemson, including once as an undergraduate student at the school.

"We love it — you can row all day in any direc-

tion," Dillon said. "The water just makes it lovely. It's a break from the cold New England weather."

In addition to the rowing teams' annual visit, Herrick said Clemson has also reached an agreement with U.S. Rowing to host America's Youth Cup on March 31.

"They are expecting 800 rowers from the Southeast — 18 and under — from Virginia to Texas to Miami," Herrick said. "It's great for recognition to the community and the ability to bring in a U.S. Rowing event. Being able to build off it has been great for the community overall."

Herrick added that Clemson is required to host one of U.S. Rowing's smaller events before hosting a national event. He said he hopes Clemson will eventually be able to host a youth nationals or U.S. Rowing national event.

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