



UCI WIRA Re-Cap

Two weeks ago the University of California Irvine Men's Crew traveled up north to Folsom, California and raced at the Western Conference Championships on Lake Natoma. The crew is a band of misfits with backgrounds ranging from volleyball to badminton. The oarsmen are none-alike, however, the boys all bring a special quality to the table whether that is brain or brawn. They defeated many highly ranked schools with varsity status and veteran oarsman. In rowing when you win a race the opposing team hands over the shirt off of their back to the victor. The boys were able to collect a handful of shirts as they defeated 14 teams.

The crew won their third WIRA Championship in the programs 50th year in existence. Unfortunately, in 2009 the program was dropped from athletics and lost its varsity status making the crew a club sport. The soul of the program lives on, as students rush campus in the early fall looking for athletic teammates to add to their arsenal. Unlike many programs who recruit high school oarsman, Irvine is composed of athletes who have never seen or heard of rowing before stepping foot on campus. The team is led by AJ Brooks, a highly decorated oarsman from the University of Washington. AJ states on day one that "there is no experience required; all you need is the overwhelming desire to win." With every victory they look to continue with this success into the future. After the race, Head Coach Brooks tells the entirety of the crew that he wants to continue growing and encourages his oarsman to bring down more athletes. This is Brooks' first year as the head coach and he has already captured a title. Students who are interested in the opportunity are encouraged to come and check out the program.