

MIKE WIENEKE

What brought you to Greenwich Crew?

In Fall 2008, I was working full time in the golf industry, running tournaments across the region. I saw a posting for a part-time middle school coach position and thought it would be a good way to get back involved with the sport. I started working four hours a week with the middle school program as a way to give back and to still row. The staff at Greenwich Crew and the chance to be on the water pulled me in. In the Spring 2009 season, I was asked to take on more responsibilities coaching the Varsity Men. I worked full time by the end of 2009 as Program Coordinator for Junior Rowing and Head Middle School Coach. In the Fall of 2010, I stepped into the Director of Rowing position and the rest is history!

Tell us about your rowing career

I started rowing my sophomore year at St. Lawrence University. I was recruited to play football and swim. Unfortunately, a rotator cuff injury during my freshmen winter forced me to decide between the two sports. It was a very difficult decision as I had a strong connection to both. I talked to my doctor and he mentioned the possibility of rowing, if I couldn't decide between football and swimming. I had a number of friends on the rowing team at SLU and knew the Head Coach. I set-up a meeting with the coach to discuss the possibility of rowing and made the decision to switch sports for the fall season. Walking away from football and swimming was really hard, but at the end of the day it was a life changing decision, one I'm happy I made. I ended up being a Co-Captain with my great friend and former Greenwich Crew coach Jamie O'Donnell, as well as holding the 2k erg record at SLU my senior year. The whole experience taught me a lot in terms of overcoming challenges in life, if one door closes you need to continue to work hard, and other doors will open.

What do you, when you are away from Greenwich Crew?

Is there really an "away" from Greenwich Crew?!?! The club, program, teams, athletes and coaches pull you in. Seeing our athletes succeed on and off the water makes work enjoyable and drives me to always want to be better. I've been blessed with an amazing family, who understand the joy and happiness my job brings me. That being said, I love spending time with family when not working. My wife, precocious 5 year old (Mikey), parents, three sisters, in-laws and brother in-laws are all really close. Family time is very important to me! I also enjoy spending time on the water, visiting friends, golfing (when I can squeeze it in) and skiing.

Can you name one highlight over the years of working at Greenwich Crew?

It's impossible to narrow down to one highlight which stands out above others. I think overall, I am most proud of the program growth we have seen over the past 10 years. We have been able to introduce rowing to a significant number of young and experienced athletes, teaching them skills that they will have for life. Growth isn't just measured in number of athletes though, we have seen our program depth expand dramatically over the years across all sections (middle school, high school and masters). The quality of athlete we attract, I think truly speaks to the integrity of the

program. In addition to growth, the consistency in our full-time coaching staff is also something that makes me proud to be associated with Greenwich Crew.

Looking forward. Hopes and aspirations for the club?

My hope for Greenwich Crew is that we continue to be the “leading example of excellence in the sport of rowing”. Everyone associated with the program, athletes, coaches, parents and supporters, past and present have worked hard to help Greenwich Crew reach our current standing in the sport. As we settle into our role amongst the other leading clubs in the country, we need to stay focused on how we continue to better ourselves and the program. Societies need for instant gratification/information can sometimes blur the lines as to the work and constant commitment it takes to achieve excellence. Individual commitment and positive support of each other is what has and will continue to make Greenwich Crew a great place to row! GO GREENWICH!