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New Zealand Olympic Ambassador

Rebecca Scown

Olympian number:

1208

Discipline:

Rowing

Specialist event:

Coxless pair

Rebecca Scown was born in Hawera in 1983. She went to a small primary school that had only eight students – three of those were Rebecca and her siblings. She started rowing in 1998 during her senior years at Wanganui Collegiate School, following in the footsteps of her sister Hannah and brother Sam. She rowed for the school team in the Maadi Cup, the national secondary schools regatta.

At her very first national championships out of school, Rebecca came second in the under-21 pair. It was during this race that she realised that she could go far in rowing. In 2005, Rebecca debuted for New Zealand at the World Rowing Under-23 Championships in Amsterdam. She raced in the quadruple scull with crewmates Bess Halley, Darnelle Timbs and Clementine Marshall. The team won bronze and Rebecca was on her way to becoming one of New Zealand's top rowers.

In 2006, Rebecca started rowing for the Union Boat Club in Wanganui, winning several national championships over the years in various events, including quadruple

Career highlights

- 2012** London Olympic Games: Women's pair (Bronze)
- 2011** Lake Bled World Rowing Championships: Women's pair (Gold)
- 2011** Lucerne World Rowing Cup: Women's pair (Silver)
- 2010** Lake Karapiro World Rowing Championships: Women's pair (Gold)
- 2010** Lucerne World Rowing Cup: Women's pair (Gold)
- 2009** Poznań World Rowing Championships: Women's pair (Bronze)
- 2009** Munich World Rowing Cup: Women's pair (Gold)
- 2005** Amsterdam World Rowing Under-23 Championships: Quadruple scull (Bronze)



**New Zealand
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sculls, eights and double sculls. She competed as part of the New Zealand women's eight in the 2006 and 2007 World Rowing Championships. But it wasn't until she was selected for the women's coxless pair in 2009 that Rebecca experienced true international success. Rebecca and her partner Emma Feathery won two World Cup regattas and a Bronze Medal at the World Rowing Championships in Poznań, Poland.

After a year rowing with Emma, Rebecca partnered with Juliette Haigh, who was in the New Zealand women's pair from 2004 to 2008. Rebecca and Juliette were a successful match right from the start – they became double world champions, winning the coxless pairs at the 2010 and 2011 World Rowing Championships. They won the 2011 title by just eight one-hundredths of a second.

As world champions, Rebecca and Juliette were top contenders for Gold at the 2012 London Olympic Games. But they faced tough competition, especially from the Great Britain women's pair who had beaten them at the 2011 World Cup in Lucerne and come such a close second at the 2011 World Championships. In a nail-biting final, Rebecca and Juliette won the Bronze Medal, finishing behind Great Britain (Gold) and Australia (Silver).

When she was growing up, Rebecca admired Olympic athletes, but never imagined that she would get there herself. It became her biggest goal, as soon as she realised it was possible. Therefore, Rebecca was incredibly happy with the pair's medal-winning result at London. She had achieved her goal of rowing at an Olympic Games and to come away from it with a medal was a dream come true.

Rebecca has a degree in Marketing and Art History from Otago University and a postgraduate degree in Sports Management from Massey University. However, at the moment, her focus is rowing.

Quick facts

Favourite food: Roast lamb

Favourite movie: *The Lion King*

Favourite music: NZ music, hip-hop, pop... lots of different music.

Childhood heroes: My big cousins, Sonia, Hayden and Amanda, who were really good at rowing, athletics and rugby.

Current favourite athlete: Juliette Haigh

Most rewarding moment in sport: Winning the World Championships were really enjoyable and satisfying, but our Olympic Games Bronze final race would be the most rewarding.

Talents other than sport: Cooking my flatmates a Sunday roast.

Biggest injury: Tendonitis in my forearm

Biggest sacrifice: Missing out on fun occasions with family and friends.

Job outside sport: I have studied during my rowing career, but rowing is my full-time job.

Other fun facts: I spent two weeks in Kenya in 2012 volunteering at an early childhood development school, went on safari and visited the gorillas in Uganda with my rowing partner, Juliette.

Honours

2012, 2011 Wanganui Senior Sportsperson of the Year, Supreme Award



An average training day for Rebecca involves:

- waking up
- having breakfast
- cycling to rowing
- rowing
- a weights session
- cycling home for lunch
- cycling back to rowing for an afternoon session
- cycling home
- having dinner
- going to bed.

It's tough, gruelling training, but rowing in a pair keeps her motivated. She is also inspired by watching the other rowers in the squad train hard every day. Rebecca will be looking to regain national selection in March 2013. As Juliette has retired from rowing, Rebecca hopes to form a new combination to race at the World Championships in Korea in 2013, with a long-term goal of competing at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.

Rebecca was named a New Zealand Olympic Ambassador in 2012.

Links

Rebecca Scown's Olympic Museum profile:
<http://imuseum.olympic.org.nz/museum/athlete/profile/28894>

Rebecca Scown's and Juliette Haigh's website:
<http://www.sportsground.co.nz/1boat2girls/52332>

Follow the NZ Olympic Team here:



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Official Olympic Sport

Rowing

Men's rowing has been part of the Olympic Summer Games since 1900 (it was cancelled in 1896 due to bad weather). Women's events have been part of the programme since 1976.

The basics

There are two styles of rowing in Olympic competitions.

- Sweep rowers use a single oar on one side only. They compete in crews of two, four or eight people, with equal numbers of oars on each side of the boat.

Coxed or coxless crews are all sweep rowers. The coxswain is a person who steers the boat, but doesn't row. In coxless boats, the boat is steered by one of the crew, normally using their feet.

- Scullers row with two oars. They compete as singles or in crews of two people (called double scull) or four people (quad scull).

Sculls are slower than other categories of racing boat, so scullers are known as the strongest and toughest rowers. Single sculls are also often used in training for team events to improve rowers' techniques.

The course

All Olympic rowing races take place over a 2,000m course. There are six lanes in each race, and the first boat across the finish line wins.

Rowing is the only Olympic sport where competitors cross the finish line backwards.

Important points

At the Olympic Games, each country is allowed to have only one boat for each rowing event. This can mean selections are strongly contested, such as during the trial series raced between Rob Waddell and Mahe Drysdale in 2008.

There are lots of things for rowers to be aware of in their races. Some important ones are:

- getting a good start (a false start results in disqualification)
- staying in their lane (crossing into another lane results in disqualification)
- working as a team to get the most distance out of every stroke
- saving just enough energy to push to the finish.



Olympic events (at the London 2012 Olympic Games)

Men

- Men's single sculls
- Men's coxless pair
- Men's double sculls
- Men's coxless four
- Men's lightweight double sculls
- Men's lightweight coxless four
- Men's quadruple sculls
- Men's coxed eight

Women

- Women's single sculls
- Women's coxless pair
- Women's double sculls
- Women's lightweight double sculls
- Women's quadruple sculls
- Women's coxed eight

