



BARRY SLOAN/GAZETTE PHOTOGRAPHER

A competitor in the boys' 13-14 race leans back and rests after crossing the finish line during The Schuylerskiff on the Hudson River in Schuylerville Sunday.

## SCHUYLERVILLE

# Rowers pull for prize in Schuylerskiff

## Boat race draws 101 scullers to Hudson River to vie for trip to Italy

BY JUSTIN MASON  
Gazette Reporter

With a trip to Italy on the line, Sacha Castellini wasn't going to take chances. The 14-year-old sculler from Cambridge pulled far enough away from the other skiffs that he wasn't sure if he had crossed the finish line. Just to be safe, he kept on rowing down the Hudson.

"I did an extra 700 meters more than I had to because I didn't want to lose," he said after the race Sunday morning.

Going the extra distance paid off in the end. Castellini was among eight rowers who were awarded a trip to Europe as part of the first-annual Schuylerskiff.

The inaugural event at the Schuyler Yacht

Basin brought 101 rowers of all ages from around the northeast to compete for the trip and bragging rights. Event organizer Chris Chase said the race is loosely based on the Silverskiff Regatta, an internationally acclaimed race that occurs in Turin, Italy, each November.

"It's a pretty popular race in Italy," he said.

The Schuylerskiff is the first race of its kind in the Capital Region, because it features only single-seat sculling races. Sculling involves rowers who use oars on both sides of the boat, whereas rowers only use one oar in the more common sweep rowing.

Many sculling enthusiasts consider it a healthier form of rowing, especially for adolescents. Chase said the motions used in sculling help young rowers develop more evenly distributed

muscle, which in turn extends their longevity in the sport.

Chase said some countries don't allow young rowers to compete in sweeps. For instance, England doesn't allow rowers to compete in sweeps until they turn 16.

"[Sculling is] a much healthier aspect of rowing," said Chase, who is also coach of Saratoga Rowing Association, under whose auspices the event was run. "Why blow out your back when you're 19 when you can row until you're 90?"

Junior racers traveled a 4-kilometer path, or about 2½ miles, around Schuyler Island, while the other classes rowed 8 kilometers. The rowers ranged in age from 13 to 70 and even included

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several members of the national team.

Brian Tryon, a member of the national team originally from the Albany area, said he didn't have his best race on Sunday. But the 32-year-old rower from Connecti-

cut said he enjoyed the all-sculling regatta.

"People seem to relate with each other a bit more because everybody is on their own out there," he said. "It has a more welcome feel."

Castellini, who only recently picked up sculling, said his victory Sunday may convince him to dedicate more time to the sport. He was

pleased that his second race went better than his first in Canada over the summer.

"In the first heat, I hit a buoy and flipped over," he recalled.

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