

OARSOME CHAMP



Kirsten McCann of the University of Pretoria has become the first female rower in the country to win a world title.

McCann rows into history books

MATLHATSI DIBAKWANE

UNIVERSITY of Pretoria rower Kirsten McCann has become South Africa's first female rower to win a world title at a senior world championship.

McCann, 29, won the lightweight women's single sculls race in Florida in the US on Friday with a time of 07:38.780 at the World Rowing Championships. The Netherlands' Marieke Keijser was second and Mary Jones from the US third.

After her victorious race, she said she was glad to have not used her sprint finish this season and saved it for the world

championships.

"This season I haven't had to use my sprint finish that I have worked very hard on, and I was pretty happy to do it and for it to be effective," she said.

Growing up, she had three older brothers who rowed at school. "I used to go along to regattas to watch them. My mum used to go on their camps to help with the running of the camps and I would go with."

"I learnt to row on these camps and when I went to senior school I started rowing. From the first time I rowed, I absolutely loved being in the boat. I love water sports so row-

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Kirsten McCann

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The new world champion

stays in Edenvale and is studying Bsc, majoring in biochemistry and human physiology.

TuKSport acting director Toby Sutcliffe said McCann had an amazing year through her hard work, and congratulated her on her outstanding performance.

"There is never a substitute for hard work, dedication and total commitment, and this is evident in her resounding gold medal performance."

"All of her fellow TuKSport and High Performance Centre-sponsored athletes are exceptionally proud of her," Sutcliffe said.

National coach for the SA National Rowing Squad Andrew Grant said the team was happy for her, and proud of her for being the first women in South Africa to win a gold medal for rowing.

McCann competed at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and earlier this year won the lightweight single sculls race in Lucerne, Switzerland.

The South African rowing squad congratulated her on social media, posting: "Hearty congratulations to Kirsten McCann. She is the first female world champion in South African rowing history."