

# ROWING MACHINES

## BU OARSMEN LOOK TOWARD OLYMPIC SUMMER GAMES

**THEY'VE PUT** off their classes, left their Boston friendships behind. They're an ocean away, preparing for something much more grueling than finals.

Meindert Klem (CAS'10) and Jozef Klaassen (SMG'09), members of BU's crew program, have a determined eye on this summer's Olympic games in Beijing, China. Dutch citizens both, Klem and Klaassen have taken the academic year off to train with the Netherlands national rowing team there and at camps around Europe. Their days are filled with river workouts at 185 heartbeats per minute and miles of cycling and running.

And weight lifting. "It's two hours of lifting the heaviest things you can imagine," Klem says. "We usually throw up every once in a while."

Klaassen, a heavyweight sweeper (two hands on a single oar), has earned a spot on the eight-man boat, while Klem, also a heavyweight, is training with the sculling squad (an oar in each hand), aiming to race in double sculls. The Dutch hope to secure

berths for those boats at the 2008 Final Olympic Qualification Regatta in Poland in June.

"We have a very clear and well-laid-out program taking us all the way to Beijing," says Klaassen, a finance major. "Three two-week-long training camps, then several strategically planned races that will develop our racing and build us up on a continuous curve toward August. I believe our chances are strong. We have a group of guys that are gelling real well together. We're determined to prove we belong at the Olympics."

With one of the world's tallest populations — height creates a slight stroke advantage — the Netherlands has a strong rowing tradition, earning its first medal at the second modern-day Olympics, in Paris in 1900, and racking up victories ever since. In fact, Klem's father, Adrianus, rowed in the 1976 Olympics. In 1996, the Dutch men's eight boat brought home gold from Atlanta, and the same boat took silver in Athens in 2004,

losing only to the Americans.

Klem, an international relations major, has been rowing since he was fourteen. Younger brother Sjoerd (CGS'09) is following suit as a member of the BU freshman squad, suggesting that river water indeed flows through Klem family veins. Klaassen, who grew up in New Zealand, has longed for the Olympic waterways since watching Robert Waddell claim single sculls gold for New Zealand in Sydney in 2000.

If their current bids are successful, Klem and Klaassen will be the thirteenth and fourteenth BU rowers to reach Olympic heights since the Terriers began dipping their oars in the Charles River in 1937. The first appearance of a BU oarsman at the summer games was in 1956, the last in 1996. Odds are, 2008 will be a good year for BU: two recent graduates are also gunning for Olympic contention in rowing: Florian Mennigen (CAS'06) for Germany and William Daly (SMG'06) for the United States. **CALEB DANILOFF**

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—Jozef Klaassen (SMG'09)



Meindert Klem (CAS'10) (rower leaning to the left), on the Charles River with BU teammates, is training for the Summer Olympics, along with fellow Dutch citizen Jozef Klaassen (SMG'09).

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