

I have this recurring dream. It is evening and the air is wet. Mercer lake is dead calm and I am floating around taking it all in. The silence of this surreal moment is only slightly disrupted by the coxswains call, "hands on the eight". This is where things get weird. In my dream the coxswain is Pete Cipollone and the eight is a blue Vespoli with "Polaroid" and "USA" on the side. Someone calls out, "what's the lineup?" Jim Millar responds, "let's go with Potter at stroke, Jamieson seven, Kiesling six, Baxter five, Joe at four, Eric three, I'll row two and Rick at bow.

In my dream I tell Pete what a pleasure it is to be there. He responds, "It will be even more of a pleasure tomorrow when we kick some ^%%#\$*^*# 'cause that's how we roll around here." In my dream this statement wasn't censored. You may want to refer to row2k.com's audio of Pete's '97 Head of the Charles win for ideas on how to best fill in that space. We slip away from the dock, humidity getting the better of a heavy gray USRowing t-shirt that hasn't even seen a full stroke yet. Half slide drills get everyone dialed in; some five and tens confirm that there is power in this lineup. Now I go back to the hotel to wake up so I can try to get some sleep. Dreams are illogical that way.

In my dream I only vaguely remember the start; the "beep", the red light turning off as the green light turned on. I barely remember the first 500 meters. I am looking over Steve at Brian Jamieson's left shoulder and listening to Cip call the shifts. One man's shoulder and another's voice are now my universe. At about the 800 meter mark I get the sense that I am breathing hard. By the time I confirm that we are over the line - first - world champions. Only in a dream can three minutes go by that fast. I am elated and crushed at the same time; elated because forty weeks of training in earnest for this one event has come to its' fortuitous end, and crushed for the same reason.

Later that afternoon we race a 4+ with the same glorious result - Same elation afterward but without that crushing sensation. Why? There is already talk of Lithuania in 2008. After all, this is a recurring dream...

Andy Baxter