



## Sykes Racing 2008 Rowing Australia Coaches Conference



Sofitel - Gold Coast, 3 - 5 October 2008

### Conference report

The Sykes Racing 2008 Rowing Australia Coaches Conference was conducted from October 3 to 5 at the Sofitel on the Gold Coast. Nearly 250 delegates from schools, clubs and the State Institutes of Sport heard from some of Australia's and the world's most successful coaches and sports scientists.

Paul Thompson, Amateur Rowing Association's (GBR) Chief Coach for Women and Lightweights, delivered the keynote address, *Integrating Training and Technique to Maximise Performance*. Drawing on his experiences both in Great Britain and his previous experiences in Australia, Paul identified and discussed the critical components in performance, that being technical, physiological and psychological. Many of the concepts discussed can be found in Paul's book *Sculling; Training, Technique & Performance* which can be purchased from Rowing Australia.

The Technical Overviews of Australia's Olympic medal winning crews, which included the 4<sup>th</sup> place M4X, also proved to be a highlight of the conference. Broken into smaller groups, the delegates were given the opportunity to hear from Rhett Ayliffe (M2X), John Driessen (M4X), Tim Conrad (M4-) and Chris O'Brien (M2-) who discussed different elements of how they achieved their results. The smaller groups allowed delegates to ask more questions and gain greater interaction with the Olympic coaches.

The more practical sessions delivered on Sunday were very popular. Julian Jones's presentation *Rowing Australia Strength Training Model*, Ivan Hooper's presentations *The Rowing Ergometer; It's Relevance to Training and Testing* and *Stretching for Athletes*, and Tony Rice's presentation *Physiological Training Zones* provided the delegates with concise and practical information that can be directly implemented in a coaches training program. These topics proved to be stand outs in what was overall an excellent program that was enjoyed by all.

The conference would not have been possible without the support of our sponsors. Rowing Australia would like to thank Sykes Racing as the naming rights sponsors, the Queensland Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation as the major sponsor and WinTech Racing Australia and Nielsen Kellerman Australia as the associate sponsors. Their ongoing support of these important development initiatives is pivotal in the future success of our sport.

Initial planning for the 2010 coaches conference is already underway, keep an eye on the Rowing Australia website and in future newsletters for more information on the time and place of this important event.