

The Maadi Cup is the prize for the New Zealand Secondary Schools Boys' Under 18 Rowing Eights. More colloquially, it is the name given to the New Zealand Secondary Schools Rowing Regatta, at which the Maadi Cup is raced. The regatta is the largest school sports event in the Southern Hemisphere and is held alternatively at Lake Karapiro in the Waikato region, and Lake Ruataniwha, near Twizel¹. In 2012 the regatta attracted 1600 competitors from 118 schools, which will make up the 1300 crews racing in 48 events in six days². Nearly everyone knows it as 'Maadi' and has become an iconic New Zealand sporting event. For a secondary school rower it is the event that we all strive to do well at. If you take the sport seriously and want to continue on in rowing, then this is the event that high performance squads are identified at and coaches are looking for the next top rowers. This essay will investigate the impact this event has on New Zealand society.

1

The first major impact is on the small South Island town of Twizel. With a normal population of just over 10,000 people there is a huge increase in the number of visitors to the town. The Timaru Herald reported in March this year that there is an expected additional 1600 competitors. However, this does not take in to account the parents, supporters and officials. In addition more than 8000 people are expected to converge on the town on the event's final day³. This is nearly double the normal permanent population. There will be a huge financial gain for the township. One regular supporter mentions the massive long queues that form in the local Four Square mini supermarket. With no local big chain supermarket this is the only place the fresh food can be purchased. So the Four Square mini supermarket, along with the petrol station, local bars and cafes will experience a financial windfall due to the increase in customer demand.

2

There are also positive spin offs from having over 1600 teenagers associated with a well organised event like Maadi. Firstly, all athletes would have been committed to a very comprehensive training programme that would have had them on the water training 6 days a week for 12 months leading up to the competition. Athletes will have had to give up their social life to gain the necessary aerobic fitness needed to compete. Having young people experience this will have lasting effects. They will know how to train, the importance of nutrition, what sacrifices are needed in order to reach goals and also the exhilaration of competing in a national event. Having students with this experience is important as they will be able to apply the lesson learnt to later life. This may mean they have the knowledge to undertake their own training programmes in the future and be responsible for their own health and fitness.

2

There are some groups that will not get the opportunity to experience this event. Financial cost is a major barrier to participation. Each year it costs approximately \$1500 per student to row for their school. On top of this it costs approximately \$1500 per rower for a North Island school to attend the Twizel event. There also may be some resentment of the youth in the local community of Twizel. They do not regularly compete in the regatta. In past years there have been reports of rowing crews fighting with local youths.

2

¹Wikipedia

² Timaru Herald

³ Timaru Herald

The end result of participating in the Maadi Cup is that secondary school students see involvement in sport as enjoyable and a real sense of achievement. This will lead to students wanting to become more involved in sports. This is going to have a positive effect on New Zealand society has a fitter healthy population is more productive and less drain on our health system.