



## **Annual Report**

2023

Siggiewi Rowing Club

## Introduction

This Annual Report covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

Sigġiewi Rowing Club, an all-inclusive sports club, was established in 2016 with the aim of bringing together individuals of all ages and abilities, and professionally guide them in their personal journey in the sport of rowing. The Club welcomes a mix of athletes, para-athletes, and athletes with intellectual disability, of all ages (Junior to Master), female and male who train on fixed-seat and, sliding-seat Olympic and Coastal boats, as well as indoor rowing.

The year 2023 was the first full year with Sigġiewi Rowing Club (SRC) as a “Full Member” of Malta Rowing Association (Għaqda Regatta Nazzjonali u Qdif Ieħor). It was a year of significant growth of the Club, with the challenges this brings with it for a young club of very limited resources.

Nevertheless, the Club continues laying its foundations to establish itself as Malta’s leading rowing club from a number of aspects – from inclusion to excellence in sports. This report outlines some of the challenges faced, achievements and milestones for 2023.



*Club athletes and session making waves worldwide in January 2023 when it was featured by Malta Paralympic Committee – Re-posted by Pararowing Foundation and re-posted again by Concept2 Inc.*



*Club athlete making local history for the Club winning first Palju in Traditional Regatta Races in June 2023.*

## **The Board of Administrators**

The Executive Committee of SRC, from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 was composed as followed:

President: Prof. Joseph N. Grima  
Vice-President, PR & Brand Officer: Joeaby Vassallo  
Secretary: Dr Michelle Vella Wood  
Treasurer: Matthew Delia  
Assistant Secretary, Registrar: Katya Sacco, B.Sc.(Hons.), M.Pharm., M.Sc.  
Officer in Charge of Training: Jan Tanti  
CrossFit Liaison Officer: Capt. Andre` Buhagiar  
Club Physician: Dr Danica Bonello Spiteri

At the AGM held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023, a new Committee was elected. This Committee is composed as follows:

President: Prof. Joseph N. Grima  
Vice-President, PR & Brand Officer: Joeaby Vassallo  
Secretary: Sharon Borg Schembri, B.Sc.(Hons)(Melit.), M.Incl. Ed. & Com (Melit)  
Treasurer: Mark Schembri  
Officer in Charge of Training: Jan Tanti  
Daniel Bezzina, B.Eng.(Hons)(Melit.)  
Matthew Delia  
Katya Sacco, B.Sc.(Hons.)(Melit.), M.Pharm.(Melit.), M.Sc.(Melit.)  
Carmel Schembri  
Marie Louise Spiteri Fiteni, B.Accty.(Hons)(Melit.),M.Sc.Training&HRM(Leic.)

The Board met regularly and frequently throughout the year, in person and more frequently though electronic meetings. All members contributed to the discussion and decisions were always taken by consensus.

In addition, the Club administration is assisted by various coaches included Juan Farrugia, who had been supported by the Club to obtain a formal coaching qualification from the University of Malta (MQF Level 4). Mr Juan Farrugia was paid for his services.

## Achievements and Milestones

Major achievements and milestones for SRC in 2023 include:

- (1) Enlarging the Club through enrolment of a number of rowers and ordinary members;
- (2) Start of Land Training at Dar tal-Providenza Gym in Jan 2023;
- (3) Continuation of the on-water Olympic and Paralympic rowing programmes, with SRC athletes participating in training camps and competitions in Italy;
- (4) Making important steps forward to be the leading pararowing club on the island in collaboration with the Malta Paralympic Committee (MPC); Having a para rower taking part in the March 2023 Regatta; Commencement of specialised classes for para-rowers, which are also open for, and attended by abled-bodied athletes;
- (5) Strengthening of our ISport programme which is run in collaboration with MPC and the Malta Trust Foundation chaired by H.E. M.L Coleiro-Preca. Her Excellency visited our Club, met the athletes and the Trust donated a rowing ergometer to be used by the athletes.
- (6) Commencement of Strength & Conditioning sessions and summer programmes;
- (7) Placing the order of four Olympic rowing boats, two single, two doubles, to compliment the purchase of paralympic boats being made by MPC;
- (8) Writing and winning various grants for 2024, including SIS, VOPs, Responsible Gaming Foundation and APS CRS grant as well as secure funding from Visit Malta;
- (9) Enhancing our fixed-seat traditional rowing training and participation, including winning of our first Regatta palju: 2<sup>nd</sup> Place in the Tigrija tal-Barkoli (Athlete: Mark Schembri)
- (10) Holding a full-year of coached indoor rowing training (various sessions per week) at Dar tal-Providenza Gym in a fully-inclusive setup;
- (11) Organisation of the Club Indoor Rowing Time-Trials and participation in the Malta National Indoor Rowing Championships which saw various SRC athletes being medalled;
- (12) Continuation of training in Coastal Rowing and competing overseas with SRC athletes competing in the World Beach Sprints (C1x); Mediterranean Beach Games, Trofeo Filippi, European Championships, Endurance Mille Remi Genoa

Race (silver medal), Coastal endurance races in Trieste where the crews obtained a silver and bronze medal;

- (13) Participation, as a Club, in various on-water fixed-seat races overseas, with the SRC crew winning medals at the Coppa Europa regatta held in Genoa in the Yole and Voga in Piedi categories; silver at the Palio di Pallanza, various medals in the Taranto endurance races and very respectable results in the regatta in Reggio Calabria as part of the Festival del Mediterraneo as well as in Civitavecchia;
- (14) Running of various projects including its “Rowing Clinic” and ISport activities;
- (15) Started extensive refurbishment of the sea-front property which is being used as our boathouse (a 15 year lease obtained in 2022 through the kind support of the Lands Authority, the Ministry for the Economy and Industry and the Honourable Minister Silvio Schembri, our Mayor Dominic Grech and others) with installation of water and electricity services through a SIS grant and extensive renovation work in preparation for planned expansion with the arrival of the para and Olympic boats. Most of this work is being carried out by inmates of Corradino Correctional Facility and prison wardens who were instrumental in transforming the premises to its present state. Also had extensive discussions with Public Works regarding the repair of the slab in the inner room which needs to be replaced.
- (16) Signed an agreement with Enemalta for the use of their ex Sea Malta premises on a *mera tollaranza* basis to be able to launch boats;
- (17) Outreach, fundraising and team building activities, including an end of year event the direct beneficiary of which was Dar tal-Providenza.

It must be emphasised that our Club grew significantly in terms of rowers and ordinary members. Ordinary members of our Club include our Mayor, the **majority of members of the Local Councils from both sides of the political spectrum** as well as local MPs. As a result, the Club is honoured to be able to retain its full neutrality from every aspect.

In terms of rowers, the Club managed to secure the registration of more rowers, including experienced rowers, female and male, as well as a number of other abled-body and para athletes who started rowing for the first time. Here it must be emphasised that our membership base in terms of athletes is truly diverse with some members aiming to compete at very high-level in national and international events whilst others row to improve their health and wellbeing, and to be part of a vibrant rowing/sport community.

A very important sector of the SRC membership base continues to be that of “para rowers” and the Club is honoured to have actively training with it the Secretary General of Malta Paralympic Committee Julian Bajada who had started his connection with rowing whilst reading for his postgraduate degree with the University of Cambridge, UK. In 2022, Dr Bajada took it upon

himself to help to organise a fundraising event, the beneficiary of which was the Malta Paralympic Committee with the scope to helping the setting up of a pararowing on-water programme which will be hosted and administered by SRC. **In 2023, six para boats have been ordered, together with oars and ancillary equipment through this initiative.** The Club and its members thank Dr Bajada.

We also continue to focus on visually impaired (VI) athletes, a programme supported by the Club's partnership in the ISport programme and athletes with intellectual impairments. Club is honoured with the support of coaches Juan Farrugia, Jan Tanti, Mark Schembri and Leanne Xuereb Ungaro who are helping in the development of these specialised programmes.

The Club puts massive efforts to organise Club training. This year, it engaged various S&C coaches, including Coaches through the Erasmus scheme and two volunteers: Coach Victor and para athlete and BSc(Hons) sports graduate Thomas Borg. Also coaching were Jan Tanti, Mark Schembri, Juan Farrugia, Leanne Xuereb Ungaro and Dr Dario Cearsola.

These are some images:









In terms of overseas experience, the Club took part in various races as detailed above. These included the para training camp in Lake Varese by para rower Kurt Farrugia coached by Mark Schembri and Joseph Grima and Varese experts, training camps in Palermo Sicily by Max Spiteri Fiteni coached by Dr Dario Cerasola, the para regatta in Gavirate and the very prestigious Mediterranean Beach Games in Heraklion Crete, rower Mark Schembri (National athlete).

Below are some images of these experiences. Much more detailed reports of other overseas regattas/training camps are in **Annex I**.



*Max Spiteri Fiteni in one of the Palermo training camps*



*Kurt Farrugia in Varese*



*Kurt Farrugia in Gavirate*



*Mark Schembri in Med Beach Games*

In terms of traditional rowing, the Club managed to secure its First Palju, won by Mark Schembri in the Tigrija tal-Barkolori and also took part in the March and September regattas. Some images are as below:





*Presentation of the Palju on the 8<sup>th</sup> July 2023 – A historic day for Siggiewi RC*



*Presentation by Julian Borg to Mark Schembri – July 2023*



*Siggiewi Team – March 2023*



*Siggiewi Team – September 2023*



In terms of outreach, Club featured in the Bulletproof Awards as a nominee for the award of Team of the year and Club para rower Kurt Farrugia as most inspiring person

Apart from this, a most important event was the Festa Gheneb, which saw our Champion rower Nick Mercieca winning the pushups challenge. This is, to say the least, amazing, since Nick is a para rower and managed to surpass all abled-bodied members and non-members taking part in the challenge. Well done Nick Mercieca!



**Siggiewi Rowing Club (VO/2036) @ Festa Gheneb**  
**JOIN us, ROW & WIN with us**  
**FESTA GHENEb**  
 From 6:30pm 2023  
 F. JAZZA SAN NIKOLA  
**SIGGIEWI**  
 16.09.2023  
 17.09.2023

**Take a CHALLENGE**  
**1 minute ROWING / PUSHUPS**

**SIGGIEWI**  
 MALTA MMXXVI  
**ROWING CLUB**

**The SRC Challenge Rules:**

**Equipment:**  
 Concept2 Rower Model D with PM4

**Categories:**  
 Women / Men  
 Ages: Under 12; 12-15; 15-18; 18-40; 40+  
 Open / Para (PR1, PR2, PR3, PR3-VI, PR3-ID)

**Challenge Entry Donation:**  
 Under 18: €2 (1 attempt); €5 (3 attempts)  
 18+: €5 (1 attempt); €10 (3 attempts)  
 Para: Free

**Awards:** 1 month free membership + T-Shirt

**#BEACTIVE**  
 EUROPEAN WEEK OF SPORT  
 23 - 30 September

**DECATHLON**



**Nick Mercieca** – Winner of the pushusps challenge with an amazing 100 push-ups within a minute

Club also held an end of year event the direct beneficiary of which was Dar tal-Providenza. The fund in aid of DTP event raised around 1500EUR. The events in the Pjazza were meant to promote rowing and healthy living, and to recruit new members.



Malta Council for the  
**VOLUNTARY** SECTOR



Small Initiatives  
Support Scheme



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA  
MINISTRY FOR INCLUSION,  
VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS  
AND CONSUMER RIGHTS

*Post published on 1-Jan-2024, when donation from Challenge was formally given to DTP.*

**Club's Assets:**

- The Club's Movable Assets in ownership, at the end of the financial year, are estimated at €12,500. These are:
  1. The two boats donated by Mr Robert and Mrs Kathy Valleaum and two sets of grey/black sculling oars, Current estimated value (un repaired):  
Estimated value: €1000
  2. The Kajjik "Tias" with registration number S25283 donated to the club by Josef Dalli, Estimated value: €800
  3. Painted old wooden oars donated by Kalkara Regatta Club, Estimated value: €400
  4. The plastic training scull with stabilisers and a pair of sculling oars. This boat was purchased from Mr Alfred Fino and was totally funded by a donation made by Dr Julian Bajada, Estimated Value: €800
  5. Two Concept2 rowing ergs, a pair of slides and one ski-erg (purchased through the SIS 2022 grant), estimated value: €3000;
  6. One Concept2 rowing Erg, donated by Malta Trust Foundation in 2023, estimated value: €1000
  7. One Concept2 rowing Erg, donated by Dr Julian Bajada in January 2023, estimated value: €1000
  8. Two Concept2 rowing Erg and two pairs of sides, purchased through the SIS 2023 grant, estimated value: €3000
  9. Two grey Concept2 with PM3, purchased at a reduced price second hand in May 2023, estimated value: €1000
  10. Miscellaneous Gym Equipment and Weights, estimated value: €500

**All other boats and oars, even if used by SRC athletes, are privately owned and not property of the Club.**

## Financial Report

Despite a total expenditure of €17,371.77, Club is ending with a positive balance of €12,764.75eur in cash and bank deposits of which €3017.40eur are owed to its members and will be refunded in as soon as practically possible. This balance is kept in view of the massive projects of 2024.

Thus, recognising the Club has the aforementioned assets of €12,500, the Club's net worth as on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 stands as **€22,247.35**.

## Acknowledgements

The Club thanks all those who have supported the Club to enable the dreams of the Siggiewi affiliated rowers become a reality.

Moreover, the Club most gratefully acknowledges the support it received from **SportMalta** for the financial support with respect to the international participation, the **Malta Trust Foundation** chaired by Her Excellency M.L. Coleiro Preca for supporting the Club through the ISport programme, the **Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector** (MCVS), the **Ministry for Inclusion, Voluntary Organisations and Consumer Rights** (MIVC), various government entities, Siggiewi Local Council, the Malta Paralympic Committee and Dar tal-Providenza. The Club is also very grateful to all those who made donations or gave sponsorships (see Annex II).

**Professor Joseph N Grima**  
*President*

**Sharon Borg Schembri**  
*Secretary*

**17<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

**Siggiewi, Malta**

**List of Annexes:**

**Annex I:** Detailed reports of overseas regattas/training camps SRC participated in 2023

**Annex II:** List of Donors and Sponsors