

# OREGON STATE

everyday CHAMPIONS



COMPETITION | CLASSROOM | COMMUNITY | LIFE

## EVERYDAY CHAMPION: SPENCER ROBERTSON



While rowing wasn't necessarily on his radar when he came to Oregon State in 2009 pursuing a degree in biology, senior Spencer Robertson followed his uncle Steve George's lead after test runs in rowing Physical Activity Courses (PAC)

by joining the team.

"I've always enjoyed running, and so [rowing's] a pretty similar endurance sport," Robertson said. "And my uncle [Steve George] rowed here when he was in college and he got a lot out of it and still rows now. And so that kind of put the idea in my head, so when I got here, I took the rowing classes to get a feel for it and enjoyed it quite a bit."

Biology and rowing aren't the only tough ventures that Robertson has undertaken in just his three short years at Oregon State. Before he began his collegiate career as a Beaver, he also became a firefighter being able to relate the demands of the classroom and the water to helping put out flames.

"Firefighting and crew, you're working a lot with the same group of people so you're building a lot of companionship and you put in a lot of hard work with each other, which I like quite a bit," Robertson said.

Robertson and the rest of the Oregon State men's rowing team just finished fourth at the competitive San Diego Crew Classic and gear up for their one "home" race at Dexter Lake on Saturday against Washington.

To learn more about what the drive Robertson has, click here.

### Why did you decide to major in biology?

I think biology is a really fascinating subject, and it's a good foundation to go into health care or medical research.

### So how many years of school will you have left?

Well I have to finish up this year and graduate and another four or five years.

### What has been your most difficult class?

Biochemistry was a pretty tough class. It took a lot of time studying.

### What's the toughest part about being a rower?

The toughest part about rowing would be the

amount of time. You just have to put a continual effort over the whole year because it takes a lot of effort the whole year to build up the endurance to be fast in the spring.

### What's your position on the boat? Is there anything particular about that spot?

I row starboard and the 3-seat in the varsity boat. The middle of the boat is making sure you're pulling hard and following everyone else in front of you?

### What's it like competing for Coach Todd?

I like the head coach Steve Todd, quite a bit. He puts in a lot of time both working for the boat house project and for the team – finding new recruits and putting time in with us out on the water and helping us out.

### How exciting is it getting a new boat house?

The boat house will be a pretty big improvement from what we've had. We're using pretty old buildings right now, so a new boat house will help attract new rowers from high school and be a much nicer spot to practice.



### If you could address the people who are helping make the boat house happen, what would you say?

I'd like to say to the donors, I really appreciate the support. It's going to be a big improvement for the team and help out rowers for quite a long time.

### What's a typical race day like?

A lot of times we get up really early – a lot of races are usually in the morning. It's a pretty exciting feeling; kind of a nervous feeling. You get out on the water about 40 minutes ahead of the race to get warmed up and to practice your starting moves and get up to speed on the boat. And then it's just a quick six-minute race; it goes by pretty fast, but it's pretty intense and a lot of fun.

### How did you get involved in fire fighting?

I had a few friends that had done it when I lived in Eugene. And it sounded like a lot of fun spending a lot of time in the woods, and it was a pretty unique experience. So I got a job down in Oakridge one summer working for the forest service and enjoyed it quite a bit, so I've been doing it the past three years, and hope to continue doing it for the next couple of years.

### Are you kind of a leader of some sort?

I've gotten a bit of leadership training as a squad boss last year. And I'll probably get more leadership experience this summer. I was put in charge of three or four people at a time, but it's a lot of responsibility making decisions and making sure everyone's going to be safe.

### Did you always plan on attending Oregon State?

I started out at community college for a couple of years. I came to OSU because they have a solid science program and it was a close school to Florence, where I grew up.

### Rowing at Oregon State isn't a scholarship sport, what specifically drives you and your teammates to work as hard as you do?

I guess what attracts me and a lot of other people to rowing is that they want to push themselves and compete in a sport against some other really good, competitive schools.



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