Tom Digby

"I grew up near Henley, where rowing is everything. Upperclassmen in my school were famous for winning the famous Henley Regattas every year. I admired them greatly for their success, and thought I could maybe create my own athletic potential. So I started training. I had no idea what I was doing, but there was a rowing machine in the shed, and a couple of weights. One day, I broke one of our school records, which boosted my confidence. Ambition somewhat followed achievements; the school record turned into a world record, and contemplating the Olympics first came at the age of 15. I wasn't particularly athletic growing up, so I was scared of the demand the sport has at its peak, both physically and mentally. I still fear it to a small extent. I think everyone does.

At Yale, my team is the product of our individual hard work, but I truly believe you get the most out of any sport when you do it for others.The closer you are as a team, the more you admire each other, the better you race. Yale was actually the last collegiate crew to win the Olympics in 1956. We had a visiting coach visit tell us about that moment, and the bonds created between the 9 guys on the boat. Trophies can motivate you to sacrifice yourself in the pursuit of a common goal, but it's so much more enjoyable when you can accomplish that with a team.

I love what I do, but I sometimes fear missing out. When I'm not rowing, I feel irresponsible; when I'm training, I feel guilty. I make sure I fulfill every minute necessary to keep up my rowing and academics, but also try exposing myself to new things as much as I possibly can. I took tango lessons, actually–those were rewarding because they were so different. But at the end of the day, it's in my character to want to work harder and sacrifice things, it's just the way I am."

- Tom Digby '20 #HumansOfOISS

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