

An Inquirer Community Affairs Project

Family Can Enjoy Saturday At 5th Schuylkill Regatta

A record number of entries—442 competitors and 106 boats—have been signed up for the 5th annual Thomas Eakins Head of the Schuylkill Regatta to be held Saturday.

Regatta officials pointed out the record entries show a 30 percent increase over last year's competition.

In addition, officials expect a record crowd to watch the races which start at 1 p.m. on the Schuylkill in Fairmount Park.

The regatta, sponsored by the University Barge Club and The Inquirer, honors the noted Philadelphia painter and his famous series of paintings of Schuylkill oarsmen. It is being held to benefit the restoration of the Eakins House, 1729 Mt. Vernon St.

To accommodate the record entries, officials have added two events to the 15 races previously announced. The added starters are pair without coxswain and scholastic quads.

A record number of boats—14—are entered in the feature race of the day, the college/club eights.

Many families and groups plan to make a day of it by bringing along a picnic lunch.

Best place to watch the races, officials said, is the east bank of the Schuylkill—as the boats will pass close to this shore.

The races start half a mile north of the Strawberry Mansion Bridge, the normal site for starting Schuylkill crew events.

Boats will race downstream through the Strawberry Mansion Bridge, past the Canoe Club and Peters Island, under the Columbia Bridge, past Grant's Monument and under the Girard Avenue Bridge.

Then to the finish line—the Viking Statue in front of the Sedgeley Club at the up-river end of Boathouse Row.

It is important for spectators to understand that in this regatta,

crews will be racing against the clock, not against each other.

Due to the large number of boats in an event, races are staged with staggered starts—at 10 second intervals. The boat that finishes the course with the best time is the winner.

All boats are identified by a number at the bow to help spectators keep track of the event. In addition, the program identifies the competitors in each boat and gives the bow number assigned to the boat.

One of the features of this regatta is the length of the course—approximately three miles. The conventional course along the Schuylkill is approximately 1½ miles.

The Inquirer trophy will be awarded to the school, college or club which achieves the highest total of points in the regatta.

The winning boat in each event will be given a sterling silver medal designed by the world-famous sculptor Leonard Baskin. The medals, contributed by The Inquirer, originally were struck to raise money for the restoration of Eakins' home.

Eakins painted his famous series of 15 rowing scenes at his home between 1871 and 1876. Many art critics have called the sculling scenes the finest ever painted of a sporting scene.

But during Eakins' lifetime, he was able to sell only one painting for \$80. The collection, now estimated, now would bring about \$500,000 if put on the market.

Paintings in the series are now housed in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the National Gallery in Washington, the Philadelphia Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, the Cleveland Museum and the Yale University Art Gallery.

In 1967 one of the paintings, "The Biglen Brothers Racing," was reproduced on a U. S. postage stamp.