



HEAD OF THE CHARLES REGATTA - OCT. 21-23, 2022

MEN'S CHAMP SINGLES

John Graves Edges Nielsen by Less Than a Second

By Katherine Isbell – Posted on October 20, 2019



(Photos by Riley Robinson)

After coming ever so close for ever so long, John Graves finally took home the gold in the men's championship singles race on Saturday, after finishing the same race either second or third in each of the past four years.

The 31-year-old sculler from Vermont's Craftsbury Sculling Center edged out world silver medalist, Sverri Nielsen, a 26-year-old from Denmark. Graves finished in 17:45, while Nielsen finished in 17:46.

"It's kind of surreal, like I crossed the line knowing I had a really good piece, but obviously you never know what the result's gonna be," he said. "Obviously I've had it go the other way a few times. I've been in second many, many times, so it's just cool. It's cool when it goes your way." Graves was third in the champ singles race a year ago, and in 2017, 2016 and 2015, he finished second.

Starting in bow position 4, Nielsen, a member of Danske Studenters Roklub, was fresh off of a huge summer. He won gold in the men's singles race at World Rowing Cup II and III and then took silver medal at the World Rowing Championships.

Up until the last stretch of the course, Nielsen was in the lead, but Graves, who was seated in bow position 2, ultimately finished about three quarters of a second faster. Nielsen lost a few seconds, and his lead, as he passed in front of Cambridge Boat Club, where he came around the turn noticeably wider than Graves did.



John Graves rowed a tight line along the Eliot turn, while Sverri Nielsen drifted wide.
(Photo by Katherine Isbell)

Rounding out the top three was Kevin Meador, who also rows for Craftsbury. Lincoln Park Boat Club's Andrew Campbell, the course record holder, who finished last year's race in second place, was a race-day scratch, sharing his withdrawal early Saturday morning on Twitter.

During the race, Graves said that he tried not to gauge how well he was doing against Nielsen, who was just a few strokes behind him throughout the course.

"It can be really tricky to try to gauge things during the race, but I knew that Sverri Nielsen from Denmark was going really fast and I was just trying to stick to my race plan and just go as fast as possible, but I could see that he was going super fast, so I was trying to hold off judgement and just have a good piece," Graves said.

Graves, who is originally from Cincinnati, Ohio and rowed while studying at Trinity College, is a member of the U.S. Rowing Senior National Team. He competed in this year's World Rowing Championships in Austria, where he was a part of the quad boat that finished in 13th place.

After the race, Graves called Saturday "a pretty special time," adding that he was planning on enjoying the rest of the weekend with his friends and family.

"I had the best race I've probably had here in Boston and it's really, really fun to be out there and race everyone," he said.



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