

Laumann v.
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Peel Biography Book
Laumann's triumph

One of Silken Laumann's former coaches remembers phoning the media a few years ago with results of her races and being met with overwhelming apathy. No one could quite get their heads around that unusual name and rowing wasn't exactly what they classified as glamor sport.

My, how things change. Laumann's face is now one of the most recognizable in sport and those same people who didn't have time to get her name in the paper would surely die for an interview with Canada's sculling sensation.

Laumann has had a remarkable year: winning a world championship, winning the World Cup and winning the hearts of her homeland with a comeback story of Olympian proportions which would be dismissed as outlandish in a piece of fiction.

Following a devastating injury in May which tore a major muscle, requiring five operations, Laumann's astounding level of fitness and her indomitable spirit have pushed her on to her Olympic goal in Barcelona.

We at *The Mississauga News* have to confess to a conflict of interest, not because Laumann is a resident, but because Chief Photographer Fred Loek (the aforementioned coach) was one of those who carefully nurtured her development.

Early this morning, Laumann was to take to Lake Banyoles for the semi-final of the 2,000 m. single sculls.

No matter how she does, she is already a national heroine. What has been as remarkable as Laumann's physical recovery is her matter-of-fact approach to the whole process. Unwilling to allow years of training to be wasted — and alarmed at spending another four years chasing her dream through a relentless training schedule — Laumann has concentrated on her seemingly impossible dream and seemingly willed it true. And she has quite intentionally allowed the media attention to be focussed on herself at the Games to help the other crews concentrate.

As Mississauga South MPP Margaret Marland told the Ontario Legislature recently "I think all of you with constituents who face different forms of adversity from day to day, and obviously people with injuries they sustain through many different causes, are inspired by the courage of Silken Laumann and her determination to represent her country. I'm sure that whether Silken has a medal or not, she represents for all of us what our proud young people in all sports on the Olympic team are about."