**CAN WE MAKE THE BOAT GO FASTER?** (bear with me….)

Over the last two weekends I witnessed the cricket matches that Reading Cricket Club hosted against what are, in effect, a couple of village cricket teams, with devastating results.

With RCC struggling to get into a 3 figure score in both games it was not enjoyable to watch and I’m sure not very enjoyable to play and with just short of two weeks before the start of the league season I was struggling to understand why.

After a couple of sleepless nights thinking about it, I think I know why.

A few years ago I had the pleasure of listening to Ben Hunt-Davies who talked about the proud moment when he was selected to represent Great Britain in the Men’s Eights rowing team and went on to win gold at the Sydney Olympics.

Prior to the Olympics Ben was:-

* **PROUD** to be part of the GB Team
* **DETERMINED** to work hard
* **TRAIN** to maintain his fitness
* **COMMITTED** to be the best that he can
* **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE** to be on the winning team

In 1998, consistently failing to medal or even make the final of major regattas, the GB Men’s Rowing Eight decided to fundamentally change the way they worked and how they worked with each other. Their focus became purely about performance, the results they hoped would follow.

They approached things differently, critically asking the same question with every single action they took… Will It Make The Boat Go Faster? Along their journey they learnt the sustainable, dependable techniques and behaviours that drove continuous team improvement. The outcome 18 months later, against all reasonable odds, was a stunning Olympic Gold on the waters of Sydney.

The story is one of a group of individuals forged into a winning team by following a set of Performance Principles, habitually and consistently, in everything they did. Those Performance Principles were:

1. Focus on what’s important

2. Focus on performance, in order to get results

3. Work together effectively

The Great Britain Men’s Eights’ collective focus, direction and drive to succeed was captured in the clear and direct question – “Will it make the boat go faster?” The simplicity of the question and its implied focus and action consistently resonates with teams and individuals, who are challenged to lead themselves and others to simplify process, reduce complexity, innovate and improve performance.

**INDIVIDUALLY WE NEED TO CHANGE OUR BEHAVIOURS AND MINDSET IF WE ARE TO SUCCEED AS A TEAM AND A CLUB.**

Please can I ask you all to have a really hard think about what you can change within your attitude and habits that will help Reading Cricket Club be successful once again and the “Force to be Reckoned with” it once was?

Ask yourself these questions and see if you can answer YES to them all. If not then things need to change FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR TEAM AND THE CLUB:-

1. Do I turn up at the time my Captain has requested on match days?
2. Do I make every effort to come to training (come rain or shine)?
3. Do I warm up with my team mates and discuss strategy with the captain on match days?
4. Do I consistently perform to the best of my ability?
5. Have I shown the right level of commitment to the club and the team?
6. Do I encourage my team mates throughout the game?
7. Do I join my team when asked to help where required?

**Wouldn’t it be amazing if our teams changed the way they played, made the most of their combined talents, and, systematically, day by day, learned to excel as a team?**

**Come on guys lets get some fire in our bellies, go out there this season and blow them out the water and let them know that READING CRICKET CLUB IS BACK IN THE GAME!**