

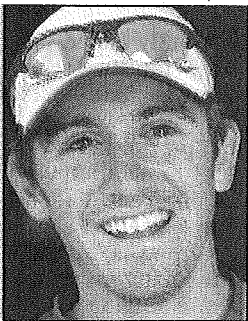
# Going for 2 in a row



APRIL SAUL / Inquirer Staff Photographer

Marcus McElhenney (left) says growing up in the area was key. "This competitive, in-your-face culture ... breeds decent coxswains."

## Another local coxswain looking for gold



Marcus McElhenney, a Delaware County native, is the coxswain for the U.S. men's eights in Beijing.

By Mike Jensen  
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

When the U.S. Olympic men's heavy-weight eight shows up for rowing's marquee event in Beijing, a man who honed his skills on the Schuylkill will be calling out directions to the crew.

Is history repeating itself? When the U.S. eight won gold in Athens in 2004, the coxswain was a local, a graduate of St. Joseph's Prep. This time, Monsignor Bonner High and Temple graduate Marcus McElhenney is the coxswain, having beaten another St. Joseph's Prep graduate for the spot.

This coxswain is Delaware County-raised, the hard-working son of a roofer and a schoolteacher, "a creature of

knowledge," and a fan of the great opera singer Maria Callas.

Above all, McElhenney says he believes he is a product of his environment, on and off the water.

"You grow up real fast if you're a coxswain in Philadelphia," said U.S. men's head coach Mike Teti, a Bonner graduate. "When you've got hundreds of boats [on the Schuylkill] at the same time, generally the [coxswains] are pretty sharp, because they just have to be. There are singles out there, blind boats, pairs. They've had to deal with a lot of stuff. It's like growing up on the autobahn in Germany. You really have to handle a vehicle."

See **OLYMPICS** on E8



### Countdown to the Olympics

- NBC's coverage of the opening ceremonies in Beijing begins Friday at 7:30 p.m.
- Day-by-day previews of every Olympic sport continue on E8.

Williams officially a 76er again.