

Chatham rises to dragonboat challenge

TWO weeks ago year 11 students at Chatham High School had no idea what a dragon boat was, let alone how to actually paddle one.

The challenge went up, a year 11 team to race a year 12 team in the annual Manning Dragon Boat Challenge to be held on Sunday March 12.

Year 12 had exams looming and study priorities took over as they declined the challenge of the dragon boats in favour of their challenging half yearly exams at the end of term. Unperturbed year 11 continued.

Eighteen students were needed, they met on the banks of the mighty Manning on the Saturday afternoon to receive an intensive half hour of training.

Initially paddling in the style of a fitting windmill they soon learned the value of team work.

Under the tutelage of a drummer and sweep provided by Dragonboats NSW, the team came together.

Sunday morning saw a well dressed team hit the river.

The team was short a year 11 paddler - no problem as a wandering year 9 student - Brodie James was quickly slotted into the ranks.

Like a well oiled machine the Chatham High School team convincingly won their first two heats

and this put them into the final against Wingham High, The All Sorts and Manoorians.

Their confidence was high and enthusiasm immense but unfortunately several members of one of the opposing teams seemed to have consumed growth enhancing supplements over the lunch hour and changed from small junior girls to larger/stronger senior boys.

A fierce race was on and the Chatham team paddled with force but unfortunately they were beaten over the line by a margin of 0.9 of a second.

The students received many compliments coming from all officials who were impressed by the maturity, manners and commitment of all the team.

A great day was had by all and the training will start again soon.



The Chatham High contingent. From left, back Thomas Wood, Tallownyn McNabb, Brodie James, Iain Wood, Kyah Shevill; Middle, Karlea McLucas, Zoe Connell, Elise Albury, Jordan Foster-Geddes, Jeremy Miller, Alex James; Front, Kim Reynolds, Toni Bush (Cpt), Grace Jennings, Alissa Paulson, Natalie Pearson, Lanise Rouland. Missing: Ben Murray, Sally Murray, Mariah Crompton.