

Introduction to
Invincible
By
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Invincible is a history of the Duluth Boat Club, which includes a period when the oarsmen of the Duluth Boat Club completely dominated North American Rowing. There was one group of four men who were never defeated in 22 elite races and were named the "Invincible Four". The Duluth Boat Club also included a young man who became single sculling champion of the world and an international celebrity. This all happened at a time when amateur rowing was closely followed by the general public and reported in all major newspapers. The stories of these rowing races were carried on the front pages of the *New York Times*, the *Philadelphia Enquirer*, the *Boston Globe* and the *Times of London*.

The Duluth Boat Club was much more than just a rowing organization. It was a social club providing a nearly unimaginable array of water recreation. By 1909, the Duluth Boat Club was referring to itself as the greatest water sports organization in the world, and it later grew even larger. A claim to be the greatest in the world is difficult to prove, but when one comprehends the many hundreds of members, the fabulous events, the everyday programs, vast assets and incomparable athletic record of the Duluth Boat Club, there is little reason to doubt the assertion. The glory of the Duluth Boat Club encompassed much more than athletics, and the word "Invincible" also describes a feeling that Duluthians once had about their community that they proudly proclaimed to be the "Zenith City of the Unsalted Seas".

Today, the existence of such an eminent organization in a small Midwestern city like Duluth, Minnesota seems very improbable. The historical context of Duluth around the turn of the century explains how this happened. The burgeoning economy and rapidly growing population of Duluth created the conditions for the founding of the club, while the vision, leadership and financial contributions of a dynamic and renowned individual brought the Duluth Boat Club to world prominence.

The greatness of the Duluth Boat Club only lasted for a period of a little more than two decades, before it went out of existence. Perhaps the club became too great, so it was bound to crash, like Icarus flying too close to the sun. Please read and wonder.