Dr Lambert, coaches, parents and boys.

It takes a very special person to be a part of this shed. Not because you have to push yourself out of bed at 5am to row or to go to the gym. Rowing doesn't make you special because you constantly have to push through your pain barrier, or because you are unified in the commitment to your crew to pull harder, stronger and smarter than anybody else in an attempt to achieve excellence. Rowing doesn't make you special because you are in the first eight or the third four. Rowing makes you special because it challenges what you think you are capable of. Every session, every stroke and every leg, heart and lung breaking erg, rowing pushes what you thought you were capable of.

It is a privilege to be able to stand here in front of you on the centenary of the scots college boat club and represent these athletes. It's a privilege because when you look around at each of these rowers I can guarantee you that they have worked beyond your expectations. I can say this because they have gone beyond mine. Everyone from the fours to the eights, even down to the junior quads, has pushed their own barriers and gone beyond all expectations. To achieve the times and the results that we as the scots college boat shed have this season, is testimony to the hard work and dedication of the athletes and coaches presented today.

A lot of things have to come together at the right time for you to win the Head of the River. There are no second chances, no home and away games or second halves. Our entire season will get judged on this one race that will last just 6 minutes. But this year I can say I have never been more convinced in a group of boys. It’s a very powerful position to be in; when you feel so confident that if you do your best, there is nothing or no one that can stop you. To fully grasp the idea that few other crews in scots 100 years of rowing history has had the same potential for success as the boys standing here.

We know we've done the training, we know we’re as fit and strong as the other crews. It's not emotional, there’s no place for doubt; you only need to look at the facts.

During our 23 weeks of training we have managed
15 weeks of school training and 8 weeks of holidays training
Of the 8 weeks of holidays you had for Christmas we had about 2 weeks at home
We had 21 days of camp where we rowed the equivalent distance from Sydney to Melbourne and back - twice. We've done two gym sessions a week lifting a total weight of over 25 tonnes per person per week. We have missed a good 3 hours sleep, 3 times a week. In other words we have missed out on 8 full days of sleep this season in the hope of making that boat go faster.
When I hear these numbers I get really excited, that’s because we are more prepared than ever before. You only have to look at the boys here to see that this squad of men have trained within an inch of their lives and back again. Each boy here has committed himself and devoted themselves to this squad. When they wake up at five in the morning to go on the water, they are reminded that they are committed to this program. Every morning they are reminded that the head of the river is their goal- their target and it is their duty to do what they can to win gold.

In the past, boys have stood here before you and spoken of the sound of bubbles rolling along side the boats, the ultimate feeling of unity and power, when eight strong driven men push so cohesively together. In the past captains of boats have told you of the perfect storm created. How every training session, every race and every move has lead them to the victory they so eagerly desire. We have been told of how the sound of the bagpipes and the roar of the crowd inspire and motivate these men standing here before you.

Now it's my turn.

I can promise you that when you look down the river on Saturday and see the boats rowing towards you, that those men have done everything they can to put themselves in a winning position. As they come within 500m of the finish line, their lungs will be burning, their legs screaming and their minds will be a blur from exhaustion. They will be looking within themselves to go beyond what they thought they were capable of and they will be looking to their fellow crewmen to find that something extra that they thought wasn’t possible. It’s at this point when the boys are down to an empty tank that the sound of bagpipes and Scots war cries above the crowd can lift them. You have the ability to carry these boys the last 500m. You have the ability to help them forget the pain and find that bit extra. Our race plan relies on your cries to motivate our dying muscles and help keep our bodies going.

That's why it's during days like the head of the river that you realize the passion of your school. It’s not only a race showing efficiency, fitness, strength and technique on the water. But it’s also a battle of passion, heart and pride on the banks. It’s an opportunity not only to support your athletes but also it’s an opportunity to show the pride and support we have for our school in front of the entire G.P.S.

So, it's now on to you boys, the tennis players, the basket ballers and the cricketers, to get behind these boys, to appreciate their commitment to you and to help them as much as you can across that finish line. Every bruised, blistered and bloody hand has happened because we want to make this school proud.
Every day given up during our holidays was given up so that we can have the opportunity to make this college proud. The boys have done their bit. These boys have done all they can and I can guarantee they will do more for you on Saturday.

We are extremely proud of how far the boatshed has and especially proud of the effort over the last 23 weeks. The boatshed is excited about Saturday. We are excited about the potential for success. We know that we have done the work; we know we have the ability and we are excited to show everyone what we are really capable of.

Scots to the fore.