

# Driving *success*



Pictured at SAS headquarters, from left to right: Olympic champion Heather Stanning, Mark Wilkinson, Managing Director SAS UK & Ireland, with Olympic champion Pete Reed and Sir David Tanner, Performance Director for the GB Rowing Team



Elite success is all about marginal gains and data and analytics play a crucial part in this. Working with SAS UK & Ireland, **Dr Mark Homer**, Lead Scientist with the GB Rowing Team, explains their vital contribution

**“P**erformance is absolutely key to everything we do with the GB Rowing Team because on the international stage, small improvements are the difference between winning and losing.”

Sir David Tanner, Performance Director of the GB Rowing Team, said these words when SAS UK & Ireland became the Official Analytics Partner of British Rowing last May.

Thanks to SAS, the GB Rowing Team now have the capacity for much more in-depth and speedy analysis of the rowers, allowing them to maximise every session.

To make gold medal winning decisions you need to know every relevant fact about each of your athletes, and derive insights as to what affects their performance and what affects the performance of different combinations of athletes in a crew.

So this means collecting all the relevant data on an athlete and having this immediately available for analysis to extract the key insights.

The images here show the range of factors affecting performance – but it’s just a fraction of the data needed for each individual. In addition to

## “Small improvements are the difference between winning and losing”

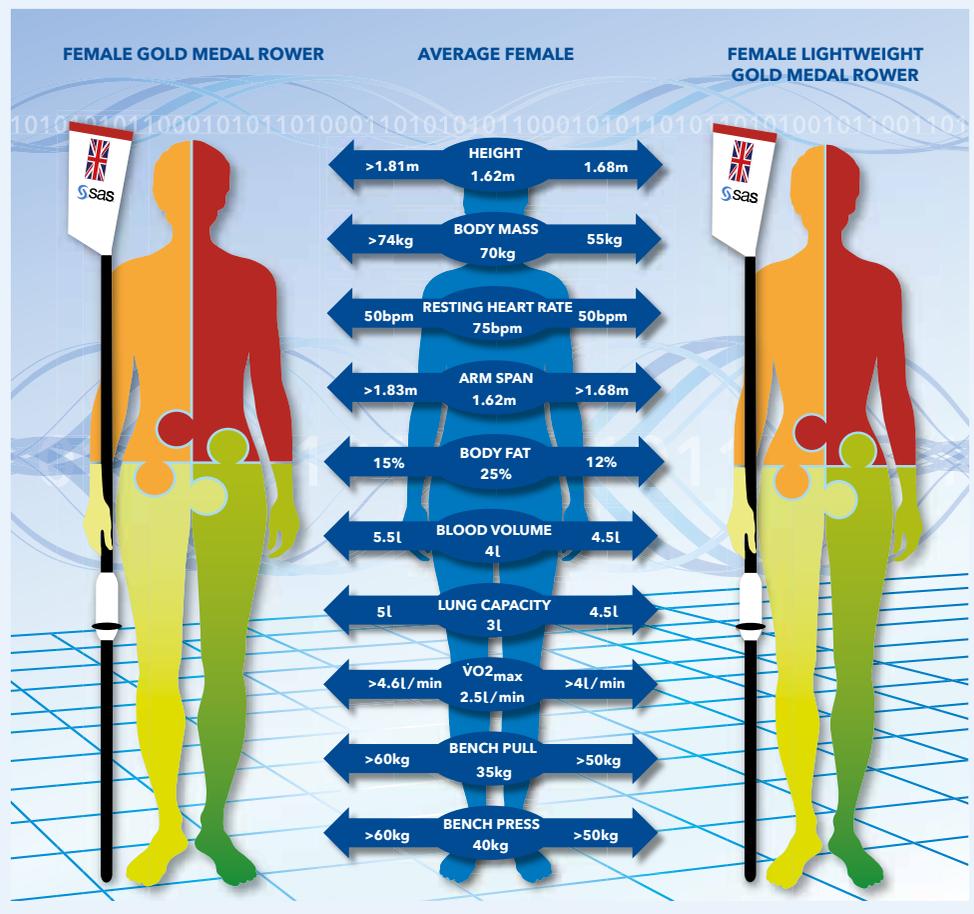
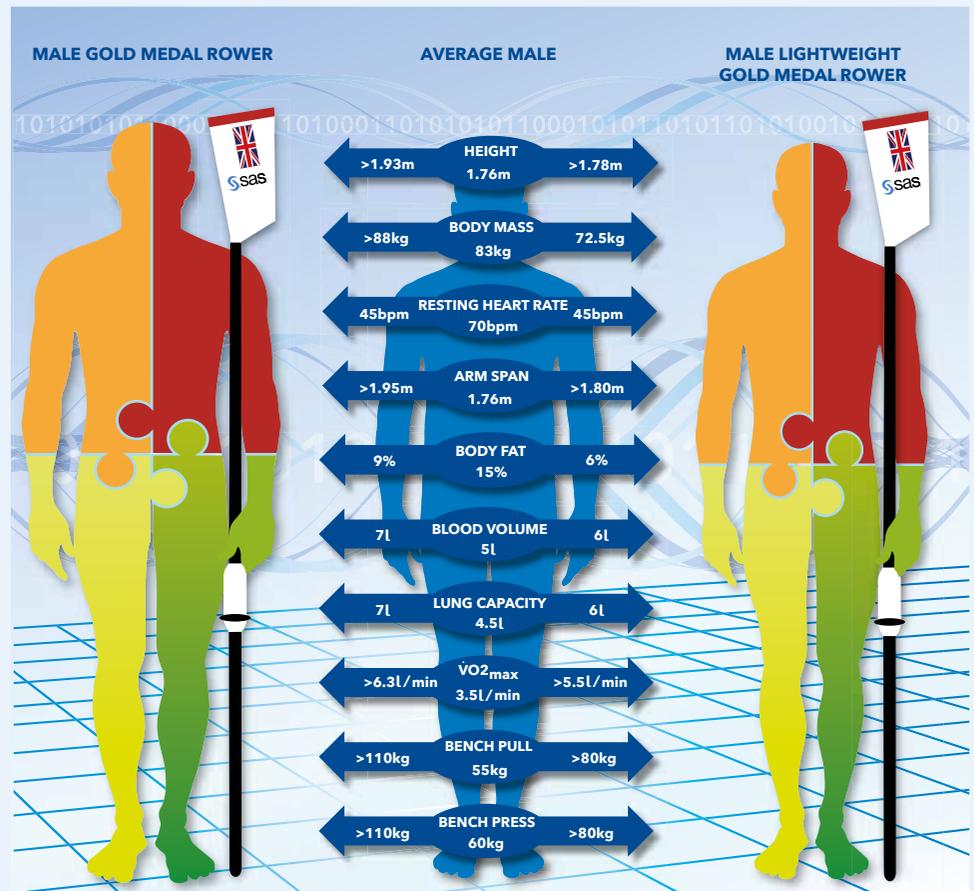
this will be performance data: on the water, strength and conditioning, the rowing stroke and biomechanical data.

Data can improve performance in lots of ways – e.g. potentially spotting initial signs of injury so training regimes can be tailored accordingly, enabling athletes to miss fewer training sessions. This way, they can be in the best possible condition for competitions.

Insights can be applied beyond the current GB Rowing Team. Using historical data on gold medal winners will inform decision-making about which young rowers might have potential to become champions and what their pathway to success should look like.

These are the decisions we know we can improve on by using data analytics – the ‘known unknowns’. There could be huge value derived from the golden nuggets, or ‘unknown unknowns’ – those things we didn’t even foresee before we started analysing the data and discovering what factors / combinations of factors affect performance. □

## Going for gold – how do you measure up?



Find out more at [www.sas.com](http://www.sas.com)

