



Some decisions break your heart, but they bring peace to your soul.

January 2023

## My retirement from competitive sports

**December 16th, 2022 fundamentally shook my life. Everything changed. From one second to the next my coach was gone, my confidant was no longer there, my beloved teammate was unreachable. A nightmare, that I have to learn to deal with.**

**At first it was a dull gut feeling, which then matured into a clear decision in the weeks that followed: I am ending my active career with immediate effect.**

**Some decisions break your heart, but they bring peace to your soul. The decision to end my active rowing career is one of those.**

While in the early years of my career the results were the most important thing, and my main motivation was to be at the top of the podium – no matter what the cost – the source of my motivation was increasingly no longer the purely results-based mindset. But the pure striving for excellence, for the best version of myself as

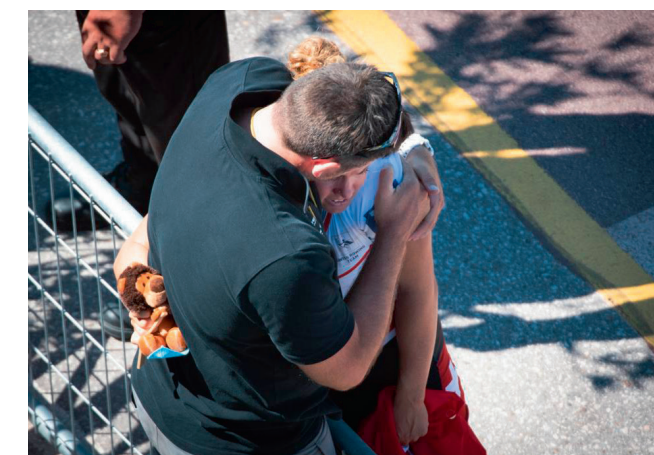
an athlete and as a person. That perspective was our core value of operating. It was our greatest common good and not only shaped me as an athlete but also as a person. And Robin too.

I've been privileged to experience more than half of my professional career alongside Robin. We never saw our assignment as a job. We were a team because we valued, trusted, motivated, and inspired each other. Because we pushed each other and were there for each other at the same time. Teamwork and the motivation to achieve and live excellence in all its facets were what drove me to tackle the campaign to Paris – my third Olympic Games – together with Robin.

**Robin's passing ruined that plan. A unique person, my coach and role model is no more. And so is our extraordinary teamwork. With that, my personal "why" broke away. Added to this is a mourning process which – as I can see – is unpredictable**



My coach, my confidant, my partner, my accomplice – Robin's passing changes everything.



**and which I therefore want to give the necessary space for. This combination finally led me to my decision with a heavy heart.**

Two-thirds of my life belonged to rowing. For 20 years rowing was the center of my life – 10 years of that it was my whole life. I was able to further develop certain of my character traits through professional sport, while learning others from scratch. The various skills that I was able to learn in the high-performance environment will shape and accompany me for the rest of my life. The lessons and experiences as well. I look back on my career with a lot of melancholy, but also with great gratitude. I will not primarily remember the medals, victories, or records, but the people who have walked this path with me, the connections and friendships that have developed. And which, I am convinced, will endure far beyond my sporting career.

Countless people have made my path possible. My deepest and warmest thanks go to you.

- To my family and friends for everything.
- Roger Achermann, who has supported me since the early years as if I were his own daughter.
- All my coaches for their words of wisdom, their tireless work on and off the water and their belief in me.

- My manager Daniela Gisler for everything – outside of training and technical inputs.
- Daniel Birrer, Samuele Fenu and Nik Jordan for their expertise and guidance.
- My training partners, especially Patricia Merz and Frédérique Rol for having fun on and off the water.
- My partners and sponsors for their trust and the great cooperation.
- To my supporters from all over the world for the many words of encouragement – in good times and in difficult times.
- My competitors for the mutual respect and the many fights.
- The rowing club Uster for my rowing home.
- Swiss Rowing, the Swiss Army and Sporthilfe for supporting my rowing career.

Today I am closing a long, sometimes difficult, but indescribable chapter. I will miss professional sport and all that it entails very much. However, my striving for excellence is not coming to an end. I'm looking forward to a new phase, which I want to approach – just like my professional career – with an open mind, an open heart, open eyes and ears and a large portion of the desire to learn.

*Jeannine Gmelin*