



“AUSSIES” COUNTDOWN

Issue #1

Tuesday February 15, 2011

SURF BOAT GLORY UP FOR GRABS

WELCOME to the first of our **COUNTDOWN TO THE DHL AUSSIES 2011** as we preview the major events and look back on past glories. In our first edition **IAN HANSON** looks at what we can expect in the boat area which always provides plenty of thrills and spills...

The battle for surf boat supremacy at the 2011 DHL Aussies (April 2-10) has taken on a whole new meaning with the retirement of the majority of the crew that has made up the “invincibles” from North Cottesloe.

The business end of the Championship season is about to get under way with the countdown on to this year’s 2011 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships from April 2-10 at Kurrawa.

And already there have been some blistering results from the boat area. The **Jack Alliss J** crew has won gold at the last four Australian Surf Life Saving Championships between 2006 and 2009 with 2010 not held after carnival organisers cancelled major water events because of rough conditions.

The first club in the history to win four Australian open gold medals in succession disbanded at the end of the 2010 season – satisfied to have earned their little slice of surf boat history – but denied by Mother Nature for an opportunity to make it five.

Now the challengers who have tried and failed to upset the J crew are preparing to tackle the unpredictable elements that only Kurrawa can throw at them with the almost certain likelihood of a new king being crowned.

Over the next eight weeks crews from all round Australia will contest their various Branch and State Championships as well as the Battle of the Boats in NSW and the Aussie Bum Series in Queensland.

If the recent Australian Surf Rowers League championships at Wollongong is any indication then the challengers certainly mean business.

Victory in the open men’s went to Bilgola Gold, from the Sydney Northern Beaches, swept by the incomparable **Don McManus** and his crew of **Anthony O’Toole** (stroke) **Jarrad King** (second stroke), **Mitch Foran** (second bow) and **Brendan Murray** (bow).....Continued page 2.

BEST OF THE LAST TEN YEARS

SURF BOATS – OPEN MEN

2000-01: Kurrawa

(D.Griffith(s), P.Mackie, R.McPhillips, M.Richards, A.Wilson)

2001-02: Tugun

(B.Zillman(s), D.Cotterill, R.McPhillips, D.Tranter, G.Finter)

2002-03: Austinmer

(J.Patison(s), S.Drysdale, A.Prentice, A.Greenhalgh, S.James)

2003-04: Mooloolaba

(S.Davies(s), D.Dwyer, L.Smith, J.Baunach, G.Cooper)

2004-05: Avoca Beach

(R.Brierty(s), B.Meredith, B.Shine, B.Cox, G.Ruzek)

2005-06: North Cottesloe

(J.Alliss(s), J.Fievez, D.Porzig, P.Charles, K.Greville)

2006-07: North Cottesloe

(J.Alliss(s), P.Charles, K.Greville, D.Porzig, S.Coulton)

2007-08: North Cottesloe

(J.Alliss(s), P.Charles, K.Greville, D.Knox, D.Porzig)

2008-09: North Cottesloe

(J.Alliss(s), P.Charles, D.Porzig, K.Greville, D.Knox)

2009-10: Not held

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NEXT WEEK:
Beach Events
Flash back 2001

Success at the Aussies is nothing new to the Don – with open men’s and under 18 victories in 1997 and open women’s gold in 2004 and 2005.

Bilgola came over the top of the field to win from Austinmer Blue, swept by **Jack Patison** and a club that had tasted victory at the Aussies in 2003 and the Neil Innes swept crew from Bateman’s Bay, the quiet achievers of the surf boat fraternity who tasted under 18 gold under the guidance of Innes in 1998.

But it was two of the inform crews of the season so far – Australian representatives in the Trans Tasman Series in New Zealand, the Whale Beach Bigfish and Currumbin Beach Barbarians, the Queensland representatives in the Cyclones successful Inter-State Championship win at Queenscliff, who were left to lament what might have been.

Whale Beach, who protested after the first start and earned a re-call and after leading in the re-run were overtaken by the eventual placegetters.

Currumbin on the other hand – unbeaten in seven of the preliminary rounds and in most keen judge’s view, very much the crew to beat, were swamped at the second start – their title hopes shot.

Bigfish sweep **Howard Christie** has tasted Aussies gold before as a rower when he was part of the **Ross Jorgensen** Bungan Beach crews that won gold in 1985 and 1986 as has Vikings sweep **Lyle Clark**, who steered Palm Beach (NSW) to victory in 2000 and Tallebudgera Women in 2002 .

Christie’s men went close in 2008, winning bronze behind the J crew from North Cottesloe and Coogee while Currumbin have been knocking on the door for the past five years.

They finished second to the J crew in 2006 and 2007 before becoming the first crew across the line ahead of the J Crew in the 2009 final, only to have the gold taken from them when one of their rowers returned a positive drug test.

Clark says his crew, is as determined as ever to pocket the elusive little green box, that houses Aussie gold.

“We certainly had no luck in that final in Wollongong after rowing so well all weekend only to be swamped at the second start,” said Clark.

“But the boys know they are rowing faster than anyone else and we will probably rest up a little before planning our strategy in the lead up to the Aussies, where we will contest both the NSW and Queensland Championships.

“There is no doubt we are hungry for that Aussies gold.”

Throw in crews from Mooloolaba, Southport, Mona Vale, Tugun, Northcliffe and the men’s open surf boat title at Aussies 2011 is very much up for grabs.

In the open women’s it could very well be shaping up as the year of the Avoca Beach Zeniths – one of the most feared crews in the business – after their ASRL win over Mooloolaba and Fairhaven in Wollongong.

Avoca sweep **Richard Brierty**, who steered the Zeniths to Australian championship gold in 2006 and 2007 remains at the helm of a crew that could well be heading for a swansong in 2011 after long and illustrious careers.

Rowena Bull, who won gold with Bilgola in 2004 and 2005, is now firmly entrenched in the crew, as is former Ironwoman **Kate MacNamara** who joined one of women surf boat rowing’s finest in **Mel McPherson**, who has won all four National titles with Bilgola and Avoca, along with two-time golden girl Julie Mitchell.

SURF BOATS – OPEN WOMEN

2000-01: Tallebudgera

(M.Fletcher(s), K.Clarke, N.Ford, C.Burness, D.Malhstedt)

2001-02: Tallebudgera

(L.Clark(s), K.Shepard, R.Mockeridge, E.Dickson, V.Hull)

2002-03: Kurrawa

(M.Fletcher(s),Mahlstedt, N.Dickson, K.Clarke, C.Burness)

2003-04: Bilgola

(D.McManus(s),R.Bull, N.Gartner, M.Macpherson , L.Raymond)

2004-05: Bilgola

(D.McManus(s),M.MacPherson, N.Gartner, S.MacReady, R.Bull)

2005-06: Avoca Beach

(R.Brierty(s), M.Macpherson J.Mitchell J.Brierty S.Brierty)

2006-07: Avoca Beach

(R.Brierty(S), J.Brierty, S.Brierty, M.Macpherson, J.Mitchell)

2007-08: South Curl Curl

(C.Flemming(S),A.Chaffey, E.Gillis,.Mortimer, L.Raymond)

2008-09: Mooloolaba

(B.Western(s), M.Millsom, S.Campell, H.Fairfax, S.Beaumont)

2009-10: Not held

“After the Central Coast Branch Championships, it’s off to Pacific Palms for Battle of the Boats, the NSW State Titles at Kingscliff before we hit Kurrawa for the big one,” said Pearce.

One crew that knows they are capable of matching in with the Zenith’s is Chris Fleming’s South Curl Curl girls who were bundled out in a controversial semi- final series after the initial race was called back with Fleming’s crew well in front but they then missed out on the final.

KURRAWA CAINE CUTTER

Caine Eckstein will certainly bolster Kurrawa’s stocks at this year’s Aussies after starting out his career at Surfers Paradise, followed by stints at Northcliffe, Tugun and Northcliffe.



“AUSSIES” FLASH BACK FIVE YEARS AGO Kurrawa, 2006



Despite their 100 point deduction before the start of the Championships, defending club champions Northcliffe showed their surf lifesaving dominance to win the overall club pointscore at the NRMA Insurance Australian Surf Life Saving Championships at Kurrawa in 2006.

The powerhouse Gold Coast club – spearheaded by rising stars **Elizabeth Plumers** and **Pierce Leonard** – amassed 224.5 points to defeat fellow Gold Coasters North Burleigh 200 points, with Manly third (156).

Northcliffe had been penalised by the National body for indiscretions in their patrol hours but they produced a barnstorming finish with their bevy of stars.

Plumers, with six gold medals including the coveted under 19 Ironwoman title, one silver and one bronze medal and was named the Female Competitor of the carnival while Leonard, also 19, was named the Male competitor of the carnival with his collection of four gold and two silver medals – which also included his under 19 Ironman crown.

KY CROWNED KING OF KURRAWA

A third rising star, 19-year-old Tugun swimmer, **Beau Cummings** won the **Peter Lacey** Memorial Medal for his four-gold medal haul – which included the under 19 belt and surf race as well as his roles in Tugun’s fifth straight Taplin Relay victory as well as the club’s victory in Lifesaver Relay.

Cummings’s was also third to his club mate, the Kurrawa king **Ky Hurst** who won a record equalling fifth Australian open surf race championship, equalling the great **Bobby Newbiggen** – who won five titles between 1940 and 1948.

The Taplin Relay – the final event of the championships – saw Tugun’s final ski paddler **Ken Wallace** come from 100m behind with “a wave from Gods” to snatch victory from Cronulla’s **Tony Schumacher** in a thrilling finale to a magical six days of competition.

The Tugun team of **Sam Hamilton**, Cummings, Wallace, **Troy Hipwood**, **Hugh Dougherty** and Hurst had been the mainstays of the team since their first victory in 2002.

Hurst collected three gold medals to confirm his status as one of Australia’s legends of the surf – taking his gold medal tally to 24 – one behind the legendary **Trevor Hendy** (25) and now 10 behind surf ski king **Clint Robinson** who took his total to 34 with his gold medal in the double ski with **Ashley Massie**.

Hurst had earlier claimed a commanding win in the over-24 surf race, winning his 22nd Australian Championships gold medal when he beat home longtime rival **Zane Holmes** in what may have been to highest quality Restricted Surf Race ever swum.

His Tugun team were edged out of gold in the surf teams final by a strong all-round performance by the Northcliffe line-up of **Jeremy Cotter**, **Shannon Eckstein**, **Caine Eckstein** and Leonard.



TUGUN’S TAPLIN KINGS: Once, twice, five times Champions

SNELL CHASING THIRD AUSSIE GOLD

Northcliffe’s **Stuart Snell** is poised to become the first person since Currumbin’s **Trent Balym** in 2002 to win three consecutive Australian Champion Lifesaver titles. Snell won the State Champion Lifesaver gold medal at the Queensland Surf Rescue Championships at Broadbeach on Sunday, while club mate **Kathryn McKenzie** took the honours in the women’s event.

DANE BACK AT MANLY

Recently married former champion Ironman **Dane Hurst**, a member of four of Tugun’s Australian championship winning Taplin Relay teams, will make a return to surf lifesaving competition with the Manly LSC this season.

SHANNON HIGH & DRY...FLOOD BREAKS DROUGHT

In the Ironman final it was Northcliffe's **Shannon Eckstein** who farewelled Kurrawa Beach in the nicest possible way with an emphatic win while Manly's **Naomi Flood** broke a Queensland stranglehold when she raced to her first national Ironwoman title.

The iconic Australian event will shift its base to Scarborough in Western Australia next year after 12 consecutive years at Kurrawa and Eckstein made sure he left with fond memories after he defeated rising star **Corey Jones** (Met Caloundra) and the seasoned **Zane Holmes** (Kawana Waters) to win the glamour event.

While Flood became the first NSW competitor to win the blue ribbon event since **Stacey Gartrell** in 1997 when she held off a determined challenge by City of Perth's **Alicia Marriott**, leaving a string of big names in their wake.

For Eckstein it was a sweet return to the winners circle after he won the coveted Ironman title in 2003 before an emergency appendectomy ruined his title defence the next season and a broken hand forced him out of competition last year.

It was a stunning return to form in the women's event for the 19-year-old Flood who had to stop training for a month earlier in the year because of illness.

Meanwhile a desperate sprint by accomplished North Burleigh craft competitor **Michael Murray** allowed him to nudge out clubmate **Jamie McGuiggan** to claim the board relay gold medal

It a replay of the 2004 board relay decider when North Burleigh also took the quinella, the Gold Coast club dominated the climax of a thrilling race with teams from Tugun and Northcliffe just behind.

SAWTELL SISTERS MAKE THEIR MARK

Sawtell sisters **Courtney** and **Bonnie Hancock** claimed the under 19 board rescue.

They led the way in a golden 30 minutes for the tiny club located just south of Coffs Harbour.

Bonnie Hancock and her elder sister Courtney showed stunning speed through the water to race away with the under-19 board rescue final.

After a cuddle in celebration Bonnie then had to immediately go the start line for the under-17 board race, where she was in contention all the way until close to the finish and eventually had to settle for second place.

Straight afterwards club mate **Kayla Russell** grabbed control of the under-15 board race from the start and was never headed as she recorded a comfortable win.

Medal machines Pluimers and Fletcher won their fourth gold of the week after helping Northcliffe to victory in the under 19 women's Taplin relay.

Pluimers had already won gold in the open and under 19 board relays and under 19 surf teams to go with a silver in the open surf teams while superfish Fletcher had already netted an unprecedented surf teams treble, taking out the under 17, under 19 and open races.

Their team mate in the Taplin relay, **Chelsea MacKenzie**, made it three wins and a second from her busy weekend.

Photographs: www.harvpix.com



FLOOD GATES OPEN: Naomi Flood left, claims her first National Ironwoman title in 2006.

SISTERS IN ARMS: Courtney and Bonnie Hancock right, take out the under 19 board rescue championship.



FLAGS HIGH FIVE FOR HARRIS

On the beach it was Northcliffe beach flags maestro **Simon Harris** who edged out training partner **Paul Cracoft-Wilson** to claim his fifth open gold medal in his specialist event.

It was Harris's fourth win in succession in the hotly contested flags championship.

The king of the short sprint event cruised through the early part of the final before going into the last three with New Zealander Cracoft-Wilson and Japanese speedster **Tatsuya Honda**, the Tokyo Fire Department representative.

Mollymook's **Melissa Howard** won a golden double in the open and under-19 flags events and spearheaded the club to victory in the beach relay.

The lightly built speedster dominated the field in both flags events, using her agility and speed to consistently gain the best position to secure a flag.

Howard took advantage of the surprise elimination of her arch-rival Lisa Wright to take out the open final from **Abby Lewtas** of Anglesea.

Before she could celebrate her second open championship, she was called to the line to contest the under-19 final, which she won ahead of **Bhey Orwin** of Half Moon Bay.

In the boat area it was the **Jack Alliss** swept North Cottesloe J crew from Perth, who claimed the club's first gold medal in the prestigious event defeating Currumbin Beach, Barbarians and Freshwater, while **Richard Brierty** swept his Avoca Beach Zeniths to gold in the women's final ahead of South Curl Curl and Wanda.

MEAGEN FOLLOWS DAD'S FOOTSTEPS

Northcliffe's **Kristyl Smith** may have relinquished the open Ironwoman crown but earned some compensation on the final day by winning the open board race and being part of the winning taplin relay team.

It was the B team of Plumiers, Smith and **Britt Collie** that took gold ahead of the club's other combination, with Maroochydhore third.

Kurrawa's **Meagen Nay** signalled a glittering career awaits her in surf lifesaving when she won both the open and under-17 surf races.

Nay, who swam at the trials for this year's Commonwealth Games, took advantage of the flat surf to power her way to a golden double.

The daughter of Olympic and Commonwealth Games swimmer, the late **Robert Nay** couldn't believe her luck when she arrived at the beach and saw the pool-like conditions.

Two hours after wrapping up the under-17 title, she outclassed a strong open field, including placegetters **Emma Wynne** (City of Perth) and Kristyl Smith.

Mollymook's **Ashley Cheney** was to contemplate her future after winning her third consecutive open beach sprint title.

Cheney, who celebrated her 25th birthday during the titles, had intended that the race would be her last but wasn't prepared to confirm the decision straight after crossing the line three metres ahead of **Kristyl Smith** of North Cronulla and **Renee McCabe** of Scarboro in a dominant performance.

Northcliffe's Sheree Merryfull was furious after missing the Ironwoman final but was soon smiling again when she won the open ski final.

The Queensland champion powered her way back to the beach to take her first senior gold medal by a big margin and quickly praised her club and her teammates.



SANDFLIES:
Simon Harris right, makes it number five beach flag National championship.

DOUBLE TROUBLE:
Meagan Nay right, taking out both the under 17 & open surf race events.



SURF LIFE SAVING – STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS DATES MEDIA CONTACTS

QLD

Name: Crazy John's Qld Masters Championships

Date: March 25 2011

Venue: Kurrawa

Name: Crazy John's Qld Senior State Championships

Dates: March 26 & 27 2011

Venue: Kurrawa

Contact: Cameron Ward

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T: 07 3846 8044 | F: 07 3846 8099 | M: 0419 201 246

W: www.lifesaving.com.au

NSW

Name: 2011 Allphones NSW Surf Life Saving Championships

Venue: Kingscliff, Cudgen Headland NSW

Date: Masters: March 17 2011

Opens: March 18-20 2011

Contact: Donna Wishart

Media & Communications Manager | Surf Life Saving NSW

P: 02 9471 8050 | Switch 02 9471 8000 M: 0414 414 087 | F: 02 9471 8001 |

W: www.surflifesaving.com.au

VIC

Name: Victorian Lifesaving Championships

Date: 12 & 13 March 2011

Venue: Lakes Entrance Beach

Contact: Drew Urlichs

Manager – Aquatic Sports

P: 03 9676 6957 | M: 0402 404 099

W: www.lifesavingvictoria.com.au

TAS

Name: Senior State Championships

Date: March 12 & 13 2011

Venue: Clifton Beach SLSC

Contact : Mel Bush 03 6223 5555

W: www.slst.asn.au

SA

Name: Masters State Championships

Date: March 12 & 13 2011

Venue: Christies Beach

Name: Seniors State Championships (Beach)

Date: March 25 2011

Venue: Glenelg

Name: Seniors State Championships

Date: March 26 & 27 2011

Venue: Moana

Contact: 08 8354 6900

W: www.surfrescue.com.au

WA

Name: 2011 WA Senior Surf Lifesaving Championships

Date: March 12 & 13 2011

Venue: Scarborough SLSC

Contact: Maclain Bruce | Marketing Communications Executive | Surf Life Saving Western Australia

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