



Rescuers... Clint Jones, Troy Jones, Geoff Case, Joe Fraser and Matt Wildman.

LIVES SAVED

Who said the days of the surf boat as a rescue craft were over? Certainly not Currumbin's Matt Wildman (sweep), Geoff Case (stroke), brothers Clint (2nd bow) and Troy Jones (bow) and Joe Fraser (2nd stroke) – not to mention the three people they saved from rough surf late Wednesday afternoon.

The pounding seas had created plenty of excitement in the competition areas but it was after the action that the real drama started.

Matt, Geoff, Clint, Troy and Joe, the Currumbin reserve grade crew, had just arrived at the beach about 5pm and were out for a warm-up row when they noticed two young swimmers in trouble just past what was a dangerous break, with a rip taking them further out to sea.

Turning back the clock to the days before IRBs and jet skis, the crew rowed towards the teenagers (English backpackers), pulled them into the boat and rowed them to the safety of the beach.

But their lifesaving work wasn't done, as they soon noticed another person in trouble, right in the middle of the bank, being smashed by the dangerous swell.

The crew headed back out to sea and realised the swimmer was too weak to get into the boat in such rough conditions.

Joe and Troy jumped into the water – Troy with a rescue tube. "It was a very hairy situation," Matt said. "Troy asked: 'Will I go?' and Joe said 'I might as well go too'."

Joe was first to reach the struggling swimmer, an Irish tourist, who was screaming: "Help, help, I'm gone, I'm going to die".

Joe turned the man on his back and held him as they were hit by several waves. Once Troy was on the scene they placed the tube around the man and swam him to the beach.

The man was seconds from being lost and once on the beach he was placed in the care of first aid crews who gave him oxygen. Even then, the first aid teams report the man was dangerously unwell and they were about to start CPR when he began to recover. He was then taken to hospital by ambulance.

Matt, Geoff and Clint managed to get the boat back to shore without incident, which under the conditions was a feat in itself.

Yesterday, life returned to something closer to normal for the crew as they easily progressed through their first round heat.

NEW MUM TAKES FIFTH STRAIGHT GOLD

City Of Perth's Alison O'Toole yesterday continued her amazing dominance in the Open Female two-kilometre beach run by taking out her fifth straight title.

But it was no ordinary victory. Just four weeks ago, O'Toole gave birth to her first child, Taighe.

So while Taighe was with his father and wondering what had happened to his 7.30am feed, Mum stood on the start line to defend the title she has held since the race was introduced in 2005.

O'Toole won the event ahead of Paige Cooper (North Burleigh, QLD) who took home the silver and Bernadette Chisolm (Clovelly, NSW) who came across the line in third.

She went into the race holding few expectations.

"I wasn't at all confident, I had no expectations coming in and I didn't know how I would go," she said.

"I was able to exercise during my pregnancy, but when the baby came there wasn't much time for training which affected my speed. I wanted to go easy and see how I went, but I found it quite easy in the end, the sand was quite hard."

And when asked how life had changed since becoming a mother, O'Toole joked: "This was my outing for the day as I've been home looking after the baby, so it was good to get out of the house."

In the open men's 2km beach run it was fourth time lucky for Portsea's David Rowell, who took the gold from Andrew Mosel (City of Perth, WA) in second, and Boyd Conrick (Redhead, NSW) who finished with the bronze. Rowell has finished seventh, third and second in his three previous starts in the event.

"It's unreal, this is my fourth crack at it and it's been my holy grail for the past four years," he said. "Over the last 200 metres I was in pain and I saw Andrew Mosel from City of Perth coming up right behind me, but I just put my head down and got there."



Mum on the run... Alison O'Toole on the way to title no.5.

"I actually nearly missed the race because I thought it was the last race so I barely had time to warm up and only just made it to the starting line in time."

The men's under-19 beach run went to Troy Ham (Swansea Belmont, NSW) from Sean Noone (Northcliffe, Qld) and Ivan De Rooster (Trigg Island) while the under-19 women's winner was Stephanie Ballantine (West Beach, SA), who beat Elouera (NSW) sisters Jenny and Kate Conder.

In the under-17s Kieren Perkins (Met Caloundra, Qld) won the men's and Bree Jones (Warilla Barrack Point, NSW) the women's, while in the under-15s Mickey Mason (Port Elliott, SA) won the men's and Jordan Mercer (Mooloolaba, Qld), the daughter of former Ironman champion Darren Mercer, won the women's.

**INSIDE: RESULTS; ATHLETE PROFILES; MORE PHOTOS.
ALL CHAMPIONSHIP PHOTOS AVAILABLE ON WWW.HARVPIX.COM**



60 SECONDS WITH JORDAN MERCER

Age: 15

Club: Mooloolaba, QLD

Winning an Australian title would be... knowing all my hard training's paying off, the best feeling!

Person I would most like to meet: Jack Johnson

Favourite cartoon character and why: Spongebob, I love him!

How did you get started in surf? Runs in the family and to learn surf skills – it's a life skill.

Who is your sporting hero? My dad (Darren Mercer).

My mum is great because... She does a bit too much for me.

My mum is a dork because... Mum's pretty cool, she's not a dork!

What song do you sing when you train? War cries the club has come up with.

What's your favourite thing about Surf Life Saving? Friends and the feeling of winning.

What's the funniest thing when you've been on patrol? Watching someone run out into the water but trip in the sand before they got there!



60 SECONDS WITH SCOTT PROSSER

Age: 27

Club: Jan Juc, Victoria

Winning an Australian title would be... a dream come true.

Person I would most like to meet: Steve Waugh

Favourite cartoon character: Homer Simpson

How did you get started in surf? Through my family and mates being involved.

Who is your sporting hero? Ky Hurst.

My mum is great because... She puts up with my Dad!

My mum is a dork because... She isn't a dork.

What song do you sing when you train? Whatever is in my head at the time.

What's your favourite thing about Surf Life Saving? That everyone on the start line has a chance to win.

What's the funniest thing when you've been on patrol? A 4-wheel drive getting bogged in rising tides. It was a complete write off.

CAN ALICIA GO BACK TO BACK?



Hometown heroine... Alicia Marriott chases another title.

The heats of the Ironwoman began yesterday with defending champion Alicia Marriot knowing the chance to go “back-to-back” in front of her home crowd is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Legends Karla Gilbert and Kerri Thomas are the only athletes in history to successfully defend the title and Marriott has the added incentive to do it at home. “That would be an amazing feeling to go back-to-back with the Aussies but right now I’m just trying to take it one day at a time and get through the preliminaries,” Marriott said.

All the favourites progressed without incident yesterday, Marriott and City of Perth team-mate Candice Falzon both winning their heats. Falzon, had been ninth after the opening ski leg, second after a great swim and then hit the front and held it on the board.

Naomi Flood and Hayley Bateup didn’t need to compete having been seeded straight through to the semi-finals courtesy of their one-two finish in Wednesday’s Inter-State. As for Marriot she is trying to keep expectations in check.

“There are so many girls who could win, the list just goes on and on. Apart from Naomi who’s done a bit better, everyone else is quite level, but Naomi is definitely the one to beat.”

Nutri-Grain champion and race favourite Flood disagrees.

“It is the one that everyone wants to win, it’s bigger than the worlds, it’s bigger than the Kellog’s it’s on everyone’s agenda and it’s going to be rough and tough out here,” Flood said

“I think Alicia should actually be the favourite, you know home town, defending champion trying to prove something to herself if not everyone else, that she’s the one to beat.”

Marriott who stunned the surf life saving world with her magnificent victory in ’08 kicked off her ’09 campaign with two gold medals yesterday.

Teaming with Falzon, Melissa Benson and Michelle Graham, Marriott took gold for City of Perth in the Open Women’s Surf Teams, stopping the Northcliffe juggernaut which had dominated the event for the past five years.

Then late in the day Marriott, Falzon and Lara Taylor were left all but speechless after victory in the Open Women’s Board Relay.

“I’m stunned, I just can’t believe it...two golds in one day for Alicia and I, it’s amazing!” Falzon said.

Marriott who heads to Mooloolaba after the titles to further her career by training with Michael King’s elite squad said she has relished having the titles in her home state. “It’s been awesome for the sport in WA. Not just in numbers with more people getting involved but you can see the enthusiasm of the juniors who have seen Aussies first hand. The nippers that you talk to who want to go on to compete and maybe be a champion or compete in the Nutri-Grain,” she said.

Like all of the athletes, Marriott loves the amphitheatre finish used for the blue ribbon races.

“The city of Stirling has done such a great job creating this amphitheatre, I remember running up the shute last year and I think my family and friends had all pushed their way to the front, it was just an unreal feeling to be able to run through with them cheering me on.”



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ZANE’S BELTING UP

Zane Holmes’ bid to add the Australian open belt title to his already crammed trophy cabinet got off to a flying start on a day when he also took his first gold of the Whereis® 2009 Aussies.

Alongside Nick Crilly and Tate Smith, Holmes took Northcliffe to back-to-back gold medals in the ski relay, ahead of Manly and Kurrawa.

“What a great start to the Aussies, a gold medal on the Thursday is great, I just love it like this in these conditions,” Holmes said.

That said, the five time Nutri-Grain Ironman champion got a sense of how difficult his Aussies will be as he faces 25 races during the titles.

As well as advancing in the board relay and surf teams, Holmes had two wins in the belt and two seconds in the single ski. Indeed his day had started anchoring the opening rounds of the ski and board relays, then round one of the ski followed by a sprint to the other end of the beach for the belt.

“I guess you can’t blame them for scheduling the ski and belt at the same time, it wouldn’t be too often they have a ski paddler pulling a belt,” Holmes quipped.

The former World Ironman champion is very serious about his tilt at the belt, targeting it as one of the few races he is yet to win at the Aussies.

“It’s something I haven’t won, along with the ski and double ski, I can probably paddle a ski for a bit longer but time is running out to have a crack at the belt, so I really want to see what I can do, so far it’s going ok,” he said.

With the swell predicted to grow in the coming days, old time belt champions expect Holmes may get something of a shock.

“I’ve only swum it once before (at the Queensland titles) and it was flat then, I’ve been training expecting it to be flat. Everyone tells me how much harder it’s going to be when there’s a wave, add a bit of a drag and some weed and it’ll be interesting, that’s for sure.”

That said, Holmes is excited by the prospect of a solid two metre swell for the farewell to Scarborough. “It really is a great venue with the infrastructure here, really all we needed was that one ingredient which is waves and we’ve got it so it should be a fantastic send off.”



At “Holmes” in the belt... Zane Holmes on his way to a quarter final win.

MAROOCHY STINGS



Winners... Maroochydore Under 17 surf team Martha, Miranda, Jean and Bec.

Dramatic surf may have been the topic of conversation on Wednesday but yesterday in the junior water areas it was all about the stingers.

Pushing through the ‘sting’ barrier were the girls from Maroochydore, taking out gold in the under-17 women’s surf teams. In a strong field of young lifesavers, Miranda Bell, Jean Harris, Martha Kneale and Bec Pegg battled it out to the end.

“It was a hard start, once we were all in the water everyone was bashing each other around,” Bell said.

Kneale agreed: “Yeah, it was pretty rough, especially out around the cans and the whole way we had to compete with so many stingers!”

“We had no assistance coming back in because there was a rip so that made it tough”, Pegg said.

It was a well-earned win and a great start to Championships for the junior Maroochydore team.

Rounding out the medal winners were Warilla/Barrack Point Black claiming the silver and Terrigal A the bronze.

The under-17 men’s crown went to the strong Mooloolaba A line-up of Mitchell Miller, Nicholas Anderson, Ben Sheppard and Bill Maish, who won from Northcliffe and Currumbin Beach.

In the under-15s, Redhead A (Jay Sullivan, Sam Corrigan, Issac Morgan and Mathew Fairbairn) won the boys’ from Wanda and Ocean Beach, while the girls’ went to Mooloolaba (Kareena Lee, Jordan Mercer, Teisha Jenkins and Tianni Hing) ahead of Redhead and Cronulla.

A Northcliffe A (Alex Gaudins, Dev Lahey, Sean Noone and Max Beattie) won the men’s under-19 surf teams from City of Perth and Warilla Barrack Point, and the under-19 women’s was won by Manly Blue (Flo Epper, Elly Speer, Emma Williams and Polly Williams) ahead of Northcliffe and City of Perth.

RESULTS

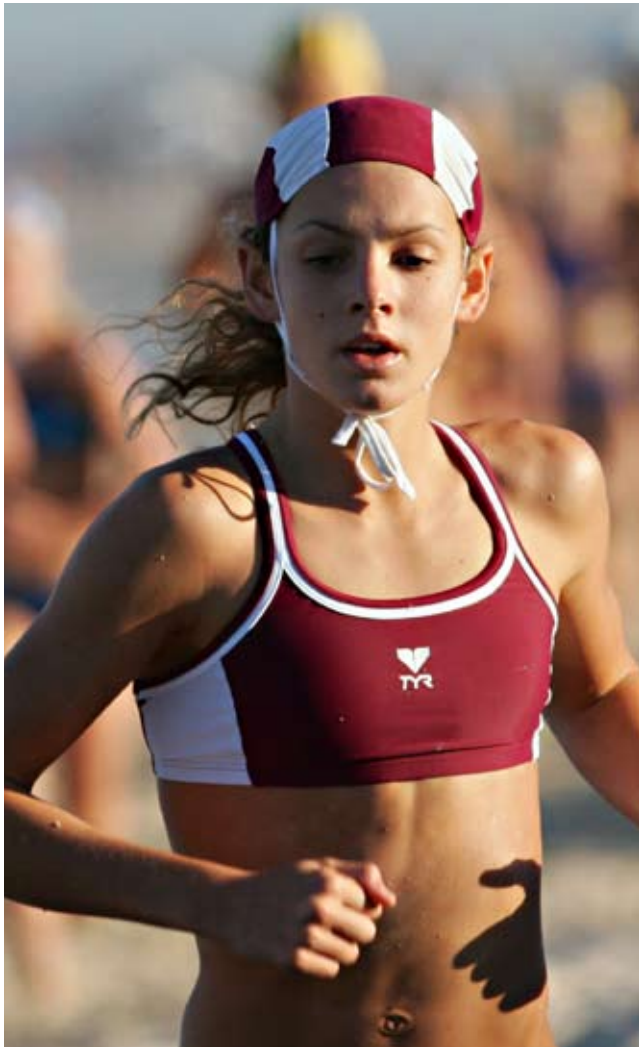
2009 Whereis® Australian Surf Life Saving Championships: Scarborough Beach, WA: Day 1

Men: Open: Rescue Tube Rescue: Cronulla A, Northcliffe B, Northcliffe A. **Ski Relay:** Northcliffe A, Manly Blue, Kurrawa Team 1. **Malibu Long Board Riding:** M Rawson (Swansea Belmont) A Carroll (Bronte) N Carlson (Cooloom Beach) **2km Beach Run:** D Rowell (Portsea) A Mosel (City Of Perth) B Conrick (Redhead) **Champion Lifesaver:** S Snell (Northcliffe) M White (Alexandra Headland) N Pluimers (Northcliffe) **U19 Yrs: Surf Teams:** Northcliffe A, City Of Perth A, Warilla / Barrack Point Black. **Rescue Tube Rescue:** Northcliffe A, Terrigal A, North Burleigh A. **2km Beach Run:** T Ham (Swansea Belmont) S Noone (Northcliffe) I De Rooster (Trigg Island) **Champion Lifesaver:** T Redwood (Sunshine Beach) E Anderson (Picnic Bay) J Walker (City Of Perth) **U17 Yrs: 2km Beach Run:** K Perkins (Met Caloundra) A Minervini (City Of Perth) B James (Warilla / Barrack Point) **Champion Lifesaver:** R McGregor (Bundaberg) S Earp (Swansea Belmont) J Little (Cronulla) **U15 Yrs: 2km Beach Run:** M Mason (Port Elliott) L Oshea (Trigg Island) M Peterie (Wanda) **Champion Lifesaver:** B Doughan (Alexandra Headland) H Pearce (Anglesea) M Sharp (West Beach)

Women: Open: Surf Teams: City Of Perth A, Northcliffe A, Northcliffe B. **Malibu Long Board Riding:** T Smith (Northcliffe) L Black (Surfers Paradise) P Wilson (Mullaloo) **2km Beach Run:** A O’Toole (City Of Perth) P Cooper (North Burleigh) B Chisholm (Clovelly) **Champion Lifesaver:** K Thornton (Alexandra Headland) C Ellis (Maroochydore) M Kathryn (Northcliffe) **U19 Yrs: Surf Teams:** Northcliffe A, Manly Blue, City Of Perth A. **2km Beach Run:** S Ballantine (West Beach) J Conder (Elouera) K Conder (Elouera) **Champion Lifesaver:** E McKenzie (Alexandra Headland) S Ballantine (West Beach) A Wright (Picnic Bay) **U17 Yrs: Surf Teams:** Maroochydore 1, Warilla / Barrack Point Black, Terrigal A. **2km Beach Run:** B Jones (Warilla / Barrack Point) E Ricketts (Dickys Beach) B Barnes (Byron Bay) **Champion Lifesaver:** B Seymour (Alexandra Headland) N Dreiergs (Trigg Island) T Dunkley (Bundaberg) **U15 Yrs: 2km Beach Run:** J Mercer (Mooloolaba) C Bateman (Torquay) I Kinsey (Ocean Grove) **Champion Lifesaver:** K White (Alexandra Headland) M Redwood (Sunshine Beach) E Jeffcoat (Long Reef)

Mixed: Open: Patrol: Northcliffe, Alexandra Headland, Jan Juc. **U19 Yrs: Single Ski Relay:** Warilla / Barrack Point Black, Collaroy Red, Mooloolaba A. **U17 Yrs: First Aid:** Noosa, Dicky Beach, Coochiemudlo SLSC. **Patrol:** Dicky Beach, Northcliffe, Grange A. **U15 Yrs: First Aid:** Picnic Bay, Ocean Beach A, Manly Blue.

DAY ONE ACTION



Double ... Jordan Mercer won gold on sand and in surf.



Shining bright ... Esperance Goldfields hit the break.



Terrific trio ... Ski relay winners Holmes, Crilly and Smith.



He's back ... Ky Hurst, and not a black line in sight.

SLSA AWARDS NIGHT

The achievements of SLSA members from around Australia will be recognised in tonight's Awards of Excellence, to be held at Observation City, Scarborough.

Among the awards to be announced are Surf Lifesaver, Club and Volunteer of the Year, with lifeguards, officials, coaches and athletes also being acknowledged by their peers.

The important role of trainers and assessors in the surf lifesaving movement will be recognised for the first time.

Northcliffe legend Bruce Kolkka and the double ski team of Dennis Green and Barry Stuart will be inducted into the SLSA Hall of Fame.

Full list of winners will be in tomorrow's edition.

WHAT'S ON IN PERTH DURING THE AUSSIES

TOP BARS

Luxe Bar

Known by some as Perth's best bar, this is the place to be on Sunday nights with its stylish décor and happening atmosphere. Right in the heart of the Mt Lawley club and café strip.

446 Beaufort St, Mt Lawley T: 9228 9680

Niche

This sexy drinking den blends eclectic styles from stone walls and sculptures to vast mirrors and lighting. Hidden behind the busy streets, those in the know head here for designer cocktails.

Off Oxford St, city end, Leederville T: 9227 1007

Tiger Lils Restaurant and Bar

Pub priced drinks plus fresh, affordable Asian food equals a good night out. Offers great international beers and funky cocktails.

437 Murray St, Perth T: 9322 7377

BACK OF BEACH ENTERTAINMENT

Le Tan

Get your sample Le Tan products and stay sun smart when at the beach! See Le Tan man on the beach or visit the team at the Le Tan marquee to try the latest products. Apply Le Tan save le skin.

Sea-Doo

Check out the latest range of high performance vehicles from the Bombardier Recreational Products (BRP), including Sea-Doos, Evinrude motors and much more.

Endura

Visit the team at Endura for all your hydration needs – sample their latest products to keep hydrated throughout the Whereis® Aussies.

Jeep

Check out the latest Jeep range at the back of beach. Jeep – get out there.

PROGRESSIVE CLUB POINTSCORE

Northcliffe 88 • City of Perth 54 • Alexandra Headland 50 • Warilla Barrack Point 30 • Swansea Belmont 28
Manly 25 • Maroochydore 24 • Mooloolaba 24 • Trigg Island 23 • Ocean Beach 22

