

ATHLETE PROFILES

Men

ALI DAY

Age: 27

Club: Surfers Paradise

Winner of the Coolangatta Gold in 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2016. Day will be setting out to equal the record of five-time winner Caine Eckstein in this year's event. Day is the man to beat this year, with his endurance and all-round skills making him a tough competitor in any conditions.

SHANNON ECKSTEIN

Age: 34

Club: Northcliffe

Eight-time Australian Ironman champion and nine-time winner of the sport's professional series, Shannon Eckstein is back in the Coolangatta Gold for the first time in a decade. Eckstein finished third in 2005 and second behind Rhys Drury in 2007. Now, following surgery to correct a calf problem, he's back and determined to win the only major title that has eluded him in his glittering career.

HAYDEN WHITE

Age: 28

Club: Currumbin

Sixth in the 2016 Coates Hire Coolangatta Gold, White will be out to put more pressure on Day this year. A powerful ski and board paddler, expect to see him setting the pace after the opening ski leg. White placed fourth in the 2013 Gold, and won the under-19 race in 2008.

SAM FULLER

Age: 27

Club: Southport

Fuller placed 12th in 2016 and has finished in and around the top 10 over a number of years, with his best result a fourth place in 2014. The former South Australian loves racing over the longer distance of the Coates Hire Coolangatta Gold. Will this be the year that Fuller finally cracks a top-three finish?

Women

COURTNEY HANCOCK

Age: 29

Club: Northcliffe

The defending champion has proved super consistent over the Coates Hire Coolangatta Gold course and will be hard to beat at this year's event. She took the Gold title in both 2011 and 2016, and has placed in the top-three almost every year 2008 where she placed second to Hayley Bateup. In 2011 Courtney became the first competitor to win the surf sports triple crown – the Australian title, the Nutri-Grain series and the Coolangatta Gold – in the same year.

ALLIE BRITTON

Age: 25

Club: North Burleigh

In her fourth season at North Burleigh after moving from Carlton Park SLSC in Tasmania, Britton has been a constant improver during the past few seasons and could be set for her big breakthrough this year. She has two wins in the Coolangatta Gold short course race under her belt from 2014 and 2015 and placed second to Courtney Hancock in her first attempt at the Gold last year.

REBECCA CREEDY

Age: 34

Club: Kurrawa

Two-time Australian Ironwoman champion and winner of the 2016-17 Summer of Surf Sports Nutri-Grain Qualifying Series, Creedy is chasing her first victory over the Coates Hire Coolangatta Gold long course. She placed third in 2015 and 2016, and a second in 2014. After knocking on the door for so long, will this be the year opportunity finally opens for her?

NAOMI SCOTT

Age: 17

Club: Manly

Fresh from qualifying for her first Nutri-Grain Finals Series earlier this year, the talented teenager is ready to test herself over the sport's most gruelling course. A powerful swimmer, Scott's all-round skills are strong, as proven when she qualified for her first Australian Ironwoman final in 2016 at just 16 years of age. Scott is a member of Australia's 2017 Youth Life Saving squad.

MADDIE SPENCER

Age: 21

Club: Newport

A relative newcomer to the surf lifesaving ranks, Spencer won the 20-29 years category in the Coolangatta Gold short course in 2015, and is now stepping up to take on the long course challenge. A former representative water polo player, Spencer's fitness is not in doubt having recently won the Prone Stock category of the Moloka'i-2-O'ahu Paddleboard World Championships.