



Dev Laheys 'em in the aisle

Northcliffe's Dev Lahey overcame an attack of pre-race nerves to realise his finest moment in surf sports when his long legs carried him to victory in the World open surf race final at Christies Beach yesterday afternoon.

Millpond conditions and an out-going tide ensured an 80 metre sandbank sprint greeted the 32-strong final field that lined up for the first major open final at the Rescue 2012 World Life Saving Championships – right up Lahey's alley.

The 1.96m tall Australian Open Surf belt champion sat nervously waiting for the final after cruising through his heat and semi, before giving what many keen observers agreed was one of the finest displays of wading ever seen.

Lahey put 10 metres on a field that included International Surf Race winner and Ironman great Shannon Eckstein, established Ironman Matt Poole, Italy's Alessandro Cuoghi, semi-final winner Tom O'Keefe from Elouera and South African open water Olympian Chad Ho.

Eckstein then mowed Lahey down and swam passed his Northcliffe team mate on the helter-skelter race back to the sandbank before another 40 metre run to the finish.

And it was Eckstein who stood up first and headed north to the shallower water with Lahey in hot pursuit behind him.

Lahey then made a conscious decision to change direction and ran inside Eckstein, backing himself to wade through deeper water.

The move paid off and within six strides Lahey had what was a long-awaited final sewn up, with Eckstein recovering from a stumble to finish second with Poole third.

"I don't think I've ever been that nervous before a race in my life, knowing it was my kind of conditions," said Lahey who's best result in five Australian surf race finals has been fifth.

"I knew I had to stay on my feet for as long as I could and just try and hang on and back myself coming home. There's no doubt that win is the highlight of my career."

Meanwhile the Youth title went to Bulli's Beau Wheeler, who also backed himself on the swim to shore, showing outstanding skills to beat Daniel Booth (Northcliffe, QLD) with Benjamin Zuill (West Beach, SA) third.



Beach Sprint Dead Heat P2

ON TOP OF THE WORLD: Rescue 2012 open surf race champions Dev Lahey and Kristyl Smith after impressive performances at Christies Beach.

Smiths crisp in surf race triumphs



SMILING ASSASSIN: Eliza Smith (Northcliffe) all smiles after claiming the Interclub Women's Youth Surf Race Final.

When Kristyl Smith sets her mind to something there's every chance she'll dig as deep as she needs to achieve her goal.

Yesterday was one of those days when the Australian and Northcliffe captain showed the best surf swimmers in the world that "the old girl" still has what it takes.

Not getting the chance to swim in the surf race in the National Teams Championship, Smith lined up determined to add her third World surf race championship following her victories in Lorne in 2006 and Egypt in 2010.

And she knew she had to be on her game to keep the long legs of Devon Halligan and Courtney Hancock at bay.

There was no catching Smith, who waded strongly through the knee-waist depth water to claim the title ahead of Halligan

and Hancock, followed by Harriet Brown (Northcliffe), Tara Coleman (Maroubra), Allira Richardson (Mooloolaba) and Bonnie Hancock (Northcliffe).

"I guess I have learned to switch on when it's needed; the wade suits me but I still didn't want to have a wade off with Devon and Courtney with their long legs so I needed a lead coming into the bank," said Smith.

Her namesake, Eliza surprised even herself when she added the Youth Surf Race to her Pool Rescue win earlier in the week.

It was a great comeback for the former Swansea Belmont junior, who only joined Northcliffe 12 months ago following three years away from the sport.

She sprinted to the line well clear of Wanda's Taylor Puskaric and Natalie Peat (Papamoa, NZ).



VICTORY KRISTYL CLEAR: Steely-eyed, Kristyl Smith (Northcliffe) captured her third Open Women's Surf Race World Title with a gutsy swim.



Golden swan song for Johnno and the Vets

It was fitting that Alan Johnston and the 240 years South Maroubra Vets carried their boat off the beach for one last time at Christies Beach this week with gold medals around their necks.

"Johnno" at 68 has been sweeping South Maroubra "around the cans" for as long as he can remember, an old salt who has weathered the waves of his beloved Maroubra stretch and up and down the coast line at more carnivals than he wishes to remember.

"This is it, this the swan song for the Vets - our last hurrah if you like and we'd love to go out on top." Alan Johnston

When it comes to the Australian Championships the South Maroubra sweep has seen them all, towing boats all over the country and into every State and you can now throw in three World Championships and a silver as well.

And many of those "Aussies" have been at the trickiest of all beaches, Kurrawa on the Gold Coast, and almost every year he has headed home to Sydney with his trusty crew of John Stone (bow), Mick O'Brien (second bow), Tom Cross (stroke) and Keith Disbery (stroke) with smiles on their faces and medals for their mantle pieces.

They became virtually unbeatable, winning five Aussies Masters in a row as they trained like machines - becoming among the fittest Masters athletes in the country.

But the Vets came to Adelaide for the Rescue 2012 World Masters to set the record straight - one last time - after finishing with bronze at this year's Aussies, beaten by Long Reef.

But that's boat rowing, that's surfing. You can often lead most of the way, only to see a crew jag a wave and come from behind to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

"This is it, this the swan song for the Vets - our last hurrah if you like and we'd love to go out on top," said Johnno, shaking like a second hand

Holden as he braved the cold Christies breeze and eyed the 400m row to the buoys.

"One of the boys is a bit crook so we figured that Adelaide will be it for the Vets and we've got our eyes on the gold again after being a bit unlucky at the Aussies.

"We've won two World titles and finished second once so another goldie would be nice."

"Johnno" told of the dedication of his boys as they strived to maintain a reputation, second to none in a very competitive world of Masters boat rowing.

"They train as hard as any A crew, no doubt about that," said Johnno, who has been sweeping for just on 45 years.

"They do all the rowing, work out in the gym



WAVE WARRIORS: South Maroubra's Vets shows the style that has made them one of the best Masters crews in the business.

and even venture into the pool like me - but they just can't run anymore."

And when push came to shove the Vets did set the record straight, taking the gold over arch rivals Long Reef from Sydney's

Northern Beaches with South Port SA taking the bronze.

Somehow you get the feeling that the boat area just won't be the same without Johnno and the Vets.

Gil and the "Dream Team" relive '88



STILL GOING STRONG: Grange sweep Gil Barton still at the helm of the club's boat crews.

Veteran surf boat sweep Gil Barton remembers vividly the Sunday afternoon at North Cronulla in 1988 when he steered his Grange open surf boat crew to victory in the Australian Championship A surfboat final - winning Surf Life Saving's most prestigious surfboat rowing event.

To this day Grange remain the only South Australian crew to win the A boat race gold medal - in fact the only SA crew to win a boat gold in any division at "Aussies".

"We had won the Inter-State earlier in the week so the word was out that we were in good form," recalled Barton, in between races at the World Inter-Club competition at Christies Beach this week.

"We drew alley four in the final and the boys got off the beach with a great start and we settled into a good rhythm and held our lead at the turning buoys and we actually rowed away from the field on the way home and won quite comfortably in the end.

"It was a wonderful moment for the crew and for the club to win such a prestigious event. I've actually still got the video and we get it out every so often to reminisce."

It was the first and only time a South Australian surf boat crew has ever won an "Aussies" surf boat gold medal since the first National championship at Bondi in 1915 and they left Phil McGuigan's well credentialed Coogee crew and legendary sweep Ross Jorgensen and his Bungan Beach boys to fight out the minor placings.

The crew returned to defend their title the following year when the boat finals were held at

Coolangatta, making the final but the luck of the draw saw Ron Payne sweep Surfers Paradise to victory in big seas.

The crew eventually went their own ways, some staying with Grange and others moving interstate but with Adelaide hosting this year's World Championships the Grange "Dream Team" decided it was time to put the band back together.

It meant second stroke Chester McDonald flying in from Queensland to join second bowman Mike Neilsen and bowman Bill Gaynor to form the engine room in a 200 years crew under Barton's guidance and including "ring in" stroke John Bentley making up the team.

Original stroke Wayne Thompson was already established in another Grange 200 years crew, the Old Bulls, and despite the re-formation of the "Dream Team" as they've been dubbed, Thompson had no real alternative but to stay put and remain loyal to his current crew.

"It was great to have the boys back in the boat and even though they are probably carrying a few extra pounds they can all still row, no doubt about that," said Barton.

But it was Thompson and the Old Bulls who made the final won by Queenscliff, leaving the rest of the Dream Team to watch the final.

Rest assured they'll dust off that old video and have a look at that golden moment back in 1988 just one more time.

Results

Surf Boats

Women

Under 23s: North Cottesloe (T McFarlane J O'Mahony R Travaglione J Watts N Whiteside) Elouera (M Ireland K Marshall M McDonald A Smith V Wright) Henley (M Ciccarello D Hocking S Melios-Traver B Parker C Smallacombe)

Men

Reserves Final Piha (NZ) (R Jaka N MacKenzie Shane O'Halloran Shamus O'Halloran J Wright) Queenscliff (A Welsh L Beatty L Moore S Cornwell B Slattery) North Cottesloe (D Knox M McDermott J McLaughlin M O'Shea J Ridderhof)

Under 23s: Rosebud and McCrae LSC (M Baker T Baker P Grant S Wesley M Wylie) Piha (NZ) (C Bourneville L Bourneville B Richards O Sawbridge JP Smit) Batemans Bay (G Barton A Innes N Innes D Murphy S Wilkinson)

Surf Race

Women

Open K Smith (Northcliffe) D Halligan (Manly) C Hancock (Northcliffe)

Youth E Smith (Northcliffe) T Puskaric (Wanda) N Peat (Papamoa NZ)

Men

Open D Lahey (Northcliffe) S Eckstein (Northcliffe) M Poole (Mooloolaba)

Youth B Wheeler (Bulli) D Booth (Northcliffe) B Zuill (West Beach)

For all results visit rescue2012.com.au

Jordan and Jake in Beach Sprint Thriller

The judges couldn't split Newport's Jake Lynch and Grange's Jordan Caldwell in a thrilling finish to the world open men's beach sprint final last night in front of a good crowd that gathered at Glenelg Beach.

Home town hero Caldwell wound up and 10 metres from the finish looked to have the world title wrapped up, until the Newport flyer came with a blistering finish, with the bronze going to Collaroy's Dean Scarff.

Kurrawa's Melissa Howard broke through for her maiden World Inter-club title after last week winning the National Teams crown.

Results Men Open J Caldwell (Grange) J Lynch (Newport) D Scarff (Collaroy) **Youth** J Symonds (Sorrento) R Bedford (Portsea) B Drysdale (Helensburgh Stanwell Park) **Women Open** M Howard (Kurrawa) M Maritz (Durban RSA) L Shorter (Queenscliff). **Youth** A Wesley (Bundaberg) B Masters (Cronulla) B Brymer (City of Perth).



LOCKED TOGETHER: Beach sprinters Jake Lynch and Jordan Caldwell celebrate their dead heat at Glenelg yesterday.



BLACK FINS FANFARE: New Zealand Surf Life Saving Team celebrate winning the Rescue 2012 'Alan Whelpton Trophy' National Teams Crown for the first time since 1998.



EYES ON THE PRIZE: Mooloolaba's Cam Cole focused on a fast finish to qualify for the Open Men's Board semi-final at Christies Beach.



HUGS ALL ROUND: The Swiss team of Baden and Brugg after their victory in the Open Line Throw.



GOLDEN OLDIES: Masters Boat rowers proved this week like a fine McLaren Vale wine – they just get better with age.



SPLASH & DASH: Low tide brought some early burn to the legs of the men's youth surf race at Christies Beach.



GENERATION NEXT: The future in safe hands with Australia taking out the inaugural Rescue 2012 National Youth Teams Competition.



LAND A'HOY!: Malec Odendaal of the Suncoast Pirates (RSA) paddles his way back to shore in the Open Men's Board after borrowing the craft from the great Trevor Hendy.



SKI BIG THREE: Current two-time National Ski Champion, Lachlan Tame of Avoca Beach (centre) is flanked by Olympic gold medallists in Tugun's Ken Wallace (left) & Tate Smith of Northcliffe (right) in yesterday's heats.

What's On

What a busy couple of weeks it has been. Although we are coming to the conclusion of the Championships, there is still plenty to do and see. This weekend, the Beachside Food and Wine Festival will be running at Christies Beach in conjunction with the Surf Boat and Interclub Championships. Showcasing some of the best food and wine of the region, grab yourself a wine, a plate of food and watch the championships.

Saturday: Inter-Club Ocean (From 8am) Christies Beach; Surf Boats (from 8am) at Christies; Inter-Club Beach (from 4pm) Glenelg. Highlights – Men's and Women's single ski finals; Rescue Tube Rescue Finals; Board race Finals. Beach relay finals (Glenelg).

Sunday: Inter-Club Ocean (From 8am) Christies Beach; Surf Boats (from 8am) at Christies; Inter-Club Beach (from 4pm) Glenelg. Highlights – Oceanman and Oceanwoman Finals; Board rescue finals; Oceanman and Oceanwoman Relay finals. Beach Flags and 2K run finals (Glenelg).

Surf Boat Closing Party

The Surf Boat Closing Party will commence at 4pm at the Christies Beach Surf Club, featuring a DJ to get the party going. The party will conclude at 8pm and you are welcome to make your way back to Glenelg to join in the festivities at the Bay.

Closing Ceremony / Interclub Closing Party

The Rescue 2012 Closing Ceremony will commence from 5.30pm with some ILS formalities and presentations. Party band The Happy Leonards will then take to the stage from 7pm, so join in the party and celebrate your successes.

All championship photos available online at harvpix.com