



Nick's Blog – Aussies Day 1

So a weekend ago, I was about to cross Barrenjoey Road in Newport - down the south end of the shops, opposite Lucky's and Pep's Italian restaurant.

And suddenly this man loomed up before me.

The man was wearing a cap and a quite focused expression. I did not immediately recognize him, until good Lord! I realised! It's Sandy Beard!

Sandy, father of Jonah, original Academy member. Sandy who chaired the Academy board for seven years. The only human being I've ever seen carry two double skis, one on each shoulder, all by himself.

"Sandy!" I yelled. "What are you up to?"

He just grinned. Nothing about his expression warned me about his next words.

"I've just been dropped off at Narrabeen," he said. "So I'm walking home. Loosen up the hips, you know?"

Sandy lives at Whale Beach.

Ever thought about walking from Narrabeen to Whale Beach?

I thought about this, while I watched us all at work today in those remarkable, out-of-nowhere conditions. Several days ago a wild gale spun up around a tropical low pressure system about 1200 nautical miles ENE of New Zealand's North Island. The gale blew its heart out in the middle of the SW Pacific Ocean, then vanished. It didn't have a name. Nobody will remember that dumb gale except for us, because on day one of this Aussies, it dropped a bomb, and not all of us escaped unscathed.

There's swell, sure - bumpy lumps of half-loaded, wind driven stuff from the south and northeast, like we see at Newport most of any summer. Then there's swell like today - long lines, strong, sets and lulls, betraying its distant origins.

The sort of swell that runs races, no matter when the gun pops. How dare it stall out Jemma Smith and Piper Harrison from the single ski the way it did. How dare it hold up both our open men's double skis in the final, then almost playfully steer Trimmy and Jonesy off the line in favour of the winners. How dare it steal Ziko Vesely's paddle.

We were really good today. Not on the scoreboard so much yet, but a lot of very cool calm qualifications happened. And Bailey Clues and Maguire Reid left us with that absolutely scorching under-19 double ski win, a win so thorough and comprehensive it confused the beach commentator into thinking the people coming second were actually in the lead.

But Maroochydore just isn't like this. It's never looked like this, in any of our previous Aussies visits. It's always been the soul of decency and cleanliness.

BE THE BEST, ENJOY IT THE MOST

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Eight years ago, it hosted a day so wonderful we ended up calling it Hannah Minogue Day, because in just a few devastating hours, Hannah won three gold medals. Open ski, open double ski, open taplin.

Eight years on, it was a different kind of Hannah Minogue Day. Hannah got pumped. She was caught inside by the biggest set of the day, the worst that wild distant gale could throw at her. The Hannah Minogue ski quiver was reduced to a shadow of itself.

So guess what - her Dad is now, right this minute, driving up to Maroochydore from the Gong with extra craft. "I think I might cry," someone - I think Amy Welborn? - said.

Think about that. What does it say about what it takes to achieve great things?

Then think about Sandy's morning stroll, Narrabeen to Whale Beach. We've just started out. We're not even at Mona Vale yet. If Sandy can do it, so can we. Loosen up your hips, gang, let's go.

Don't forget our team dinner:

21st April 2024 @ 6.00pm

Cotton Tree Bach Bar

Shop 2

13-15 The Esplanade

Cotton Tree

BE THE BEST, ENJOY IT THE MOST

OPEN MEDAL WINNERS & POINT SCORERS TO DATE



Open Champion Lifesaver Jemma Smith
U17 Champion Lifesaver Harrison Woodrow (cap 106)
U17 Mixed First Sequoia Avtarovski (cap 107)/Tabitha Reeman (cap 108)
U19 Double Ski Bailey Clues/Maguire Reid



U17 2KM Ocean Swim Noah Maggs



U17 2KM Ocean Swim Pipi Te Pania
Open Double Ski Max Brooks/Jayke Rees

TOP 6 FINISHERS

4th

Open Champion Lifesaver Phoebe Savage

6th

Open Champion Lifesaver Sam Capell
Open Double Ski Mitchell Trim/Luke Jones




2024 AUSSIES

Place: -
Points: 44



BE THE BEST, ENJOY IT THE MOST

YOUTH MEDAL WINNERS & POINT SCORERS

	U14 2KM Ocean Swim U14 Surf Swim U14/15 Board Relay	Lisa Derz Lisa Derz Charli Barbour/Sadie Maggs/Alannah Paul
	U15 Ironwoman U13/14 Board Rescue U13/14 Surf Team	Charli Barbour Sophie Clues/Lisa Derz Sophie Clues/Lisa Derz/Sadie Maggs/Matilda Young
	U14 Ironman U14 Ironwoman U14/15 Surf Team U13/14 Cameron U14/15 Cameron	Tom Shrivell Sophie Clues Charli Barbour/Abi Capell/Alannah Paul/Sarah Song Sophie Clues/Lisa Derz/Sadie Maggs/Matilda Young Charli Barbour/Abi Capell/Alannah Paul/Song

TOP 6 FINISHERS

4th

U13/14 Board Relay Sophie Clues/Lisa Derz/Matilda Young

5th

U14 2KM Ocean Swim Tom Shrivell
U14 Surf Swim Tom Shrivell
U14 Surf Swim Sophie Clues
U14 Board Sadie Maggs

2024 YOUTH

