



Nick's Blog – Aussies Day 2

When you see an accident happening, it's either a blur, or it's the opposite - crystal clear, slow-motion, as unavoidable as the accident itself.

I'm seeing it now as I write. Mixed double ski qualifier, last race of the day. Wind light onshore. Sun finally out after a day of light showers. Swell fractured, dying but still strong.

Three Newport teams: Trimmy and Jemma, Jayke and Jasmine, and Luke Jones and Hannah Minogue.

The start, and Trimmy and Jemma flee straight up their alley in mid-field and are gone. The others are on the left. Jayke and Jasmine get away with it by the skin of their combined teeth.

Luke and Hannah drive out hard and a wave comes on to the sandbar, and takes the ski of a team just to their left, turns the ski, and throws it back directly at them. All seven metres and 38 kilos of it. Point blank range.

I see Luke raise his arm, and the loose ski shudder slightly with the impact, popping clear over Hannah's head. Then the whitewater envelopes everything.

I heard myself yell, "Oh, shit!"

I don't know this, but Luke's Dad Wayne is standing 50 metres away down the beach, doing exactly what I am doing - watching to see who comes up, and what state they'll be in.

Amazingly, everyone does come up.

Luke has lost half his paddle. Turns out this is what deflected the oncoming ski. He wanders in the whitewater, looking for it. "I really like that blade!" he tells people, back in the safety of the tent. "I hope it shows up."

Luke has a bandage on his left knee, and some blood from a graze below it. This is the only damage. "I heard a crack," he says, talking about the broken paddle. "I thought it might be my arm."

Why write about this moment? I guess partly because I am relieved it wasn't a lot worse. Jonesy is an epic human, but he is not superhuman, though maybe Hannah is.

But maybe also because this Aussies is rapidly being defined by dramatic moments in the surf zone. It's the most obvious thing about our sport, yet in a way, it's the least understood: the impact on racers, the way it plays out in the mind and body.

The girls had a big day today. Lizzie Welborn, the amazing Liz, lost her ski and missed the iron final for the first time in her open career. Here's how it played out: "I came back here (to the tent) and spent about 20 minutes by myself, kind of grieving it," she told me. "Then, I don't know, there was the board. Did you see the semi?"

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By this time she was laughing. For a moment we watched as Sarah Locke ran up to the finish of a surf race heat, well in front of course. Lizzie was captivated by Sarah's fantastic grace - the way she runs almost as if on air. We theorized that Sarah must have a dance background somewhere, which indeed she does. "She has full control of her movements," said Lizzie, beginning to laugh again. "Me? I don't have full control over my movements!"

I was thinking, You're out of your mind Welborn. You're in the board final with Jemma, Piper and Analise Kibble. You've definitely got a grip on something.

And speaking of Ms Kibble. Analise is not a claimer. She is cool, calm, and gives nothing away. She is now in the open final in iron, board, and ski. First open year. "You're doing well!" Jillian Jackson, Alex's Mum, told her. "Well, I'm trying," Kibble said.

I feel like Analise has things in common with some of the great surfers I've grown up with. She has an unusual feel for the ocean. Competition or not, she'd be in it, feeling it, figuring it out. It's deeply connective and satisfying for her. She is the near exact opposite of another epic star in the making at these Aussies: Kimberley Doyle. In the under 19s, Kimmy has also made all the finals, with a happy surf-skill set that's somehow evaded her for years.

Analise preserves her emotional state, while Kimberley's an open book. "I think I'm just enjoying myself!" she told her fans in the tent, and that was more than enough for us.

All this is not to take away from the bravest athletes I've seen at the Aussies so far: the under 17 girls who took on the single ski rounds this afternoon. 138 girls signed up for this race and a good chunk of them showed up for it, despite what they'd already seen and taken part in - the most difficult and complex racing zone a Maroochydore Aussies has been able to produce. It meant a lot to every one of them. Brooke Derz came second in a heat and looked like she'd won an Olympic medal.

Olivia Clues and Pipi Te Pania, powerful and fantastic, ripped through to the final, only to be put off till another day.

Jonesy swears he is OK. He better be. There's three days and a lot of medal racing ahead.

Don't forget our team dinner:

21st April 2024 @ 6.00pm

Cotton Tree Bach Bar

Shop 2

13-15 The Esplanade

Cotton Tree

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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
U19 Surf Team Luke Chaffer/Anthony Doyle/Conner Maggs/Noah Maggs

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: 48



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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

