



RIP TIDE

The Sydney Northern Beaches Branch Championships get underway on Sunday with our beach competitors invading Narrabeen Beach. It will be a first this year with the juniors, masters and opens all held on the same day. The Westfield Junior Branch Championships (beach events) start in the morning. The march past teams will then take centre stage. Then follows the Bill Buckle Subaru Branch

masters and opens beach sprints, flags and beach relays. Surf Sports Manager Marcial Nunura explained the reason for choosing Narrabeen Beach. "We looked for the best venue and there is a freeway of sand at Narrabeen Beach at the moment," he said. The First Aid competition will also be held on the same day but at Dee Why Beach.

The Branch Championships will continue the following weekend, with the R and R and open water events at Newport on Saturday, February 11. The boat championships will also be held on February 11, but at Long Reef. The Branch junior water events are at Newport on Sunday, February 12.

GET READY FOR THE BRANCH CHAMPIONSHIPS

LAURA WINDS CLOCK BACK

Laura Shorter's beach coach Michael Gedz believes the Newport sprinter is running better than ever.

"I think Laura is running as good as when she won two open sprint Aussies in a row," Gedz said. "She's strong, back in the gym and hasn't had any injuries.

"You can tell she wants success."

Shorter captained the Sydney Northern Beaches Branch team this season and won the female open sprint at Inter Branch on the Central Coast and also at the big Manly carnival. She is also leading the Summer of Surf sprint series.

"Laura will have her final run in the series at Surfers Paradise on Saturday but is flying back straight after so she can compete at our Branch Championships on Sunday," Gedz said.

"So is her partner Blake Drysdale. Blake is leading the Summer of Surf beach flags and is almost unbeatable in that event.

"He won everything last year except Aussies when he broke. His form is just as good this season."

Gedz said the open men's beach sprint at Branch should be interesting with Jake Lynch (Newport), his clubmate's Dan Grbac and Drysdale and Collaroy's Dean Scarff and Michael Kember to fight it out.

Lynch will go in as favourite after winning at the Manly carnival last Saturday. Kember took out the event at Freshwater on Sunday.

Gedz himself will have his usual sprint battle with his Queenscliff clubmate Brian Dolly in his age group in the masters.

"There was a time when I could never beat Brian," Gedz said.

"I started doing pilates for a hip problem and since then I have turned the tables on him."

Michael's son Josh, who competes for Manly, is certainly going to be hard to beat in the under 12 male sprint.

He won at Inter Branch and also at the Manly Nipper Nats last Friday.

Cousins Aiden Helu and Oskar Enasio will renew their rivalry in the under 14 male sprint, while Newport pair Macy Carrothers and Lily Marsters should feature in a thriller in the under 15 female sprint.



Pictures: Branch representatives Laura Shorter and Josh Gedz. **BELOW:** Blake Drysdale (left) and Michael Gedz.



VERITY AT SUMMIT OF MT KILIMANJARO



RAISING FUNDS FOR KENYA CHARITY

When Verity Boulton decided halfway through last year that she would climb Mt Kilimanjaro, she didn't know what she had let herself in for. Verity thought that with all her training and rowing for the Palm Beach Patriots that she would cope. Last month she conquered the highest mountain in Africa and raised money for Flying Kites, Kenya, a charity which helps students gain a competitive education.

"I always like to challenge myself," she said.

"I actually don't like walking that much so I thought I'd get outside my comfort zone and give it a go.

"My brother James was doing it and there were nine of us in the group.

"No matter how many erg sessions or boat sessions you do, nothing can prepare you for altitude."

Verity said the altitude got the better of her. "I was quite sick by the time we reached the Stellar Point (about an hour before the peak). My hands turned a light shade of blue-black and our head guide had both my hands in his mouth to prevent



frostbite. It was minus 20 degree weather. Quite the experience!

"Without a doubt it was the most physically and, even more so, mentally challenge I've ever experienced.

"I wouldn't have changed a thing but I certainly won't be returning to do the summit any time soon.

"But raising money for Flying Kites kept me focussed."

Verity has ruled out climbing Mount Everest.

"I think for my next adventure I might choose

something a little more tropical and at sea level. A half ironman is still sitting somewhere on the list," she says.

Verity was back in the boat for the Patriots crew at the Manly carnival and what a great day they had. They won all five races, including the final and also earned State selection.

"I am feeling good. It all came together. It was flat and you felt every stroke," Verity said.

Pictures: Thrill seeker Verity Boulton makes it to the top of Mt Kilimanjaro; and in the stroke seat for the Patriots, winning at the Manly carnival.

NEWPORT GIRLS DEVELOP QUICKLY AS AUSSIE REPS

NOW HEADED FOR NEW ZEALAND

When the Newport Pistol Shrimp came together as a crew back in October, sweep Michael King said it all "fell into place".

His daughter Zoe had rowed in the bow in under 19s and sisters Piret and Celestine May had occupied the stroke and second bow seats in the previous under 23 crew at Newport. That meant they had to find a member and Katy Hulton joined from Bilgola.

"She was the perfect fit (second stroke). They selected themselves (in positions) so it fell into place," Michael said.

This weekend in New Zealand, Michael and the girls will be representing Australia as the under 23 development crew in Tests against New Zealand's Muriwai at Waihi Beach.

"It is certainly a wonderful honour and my first time representing Australia. It is even more special having my daughter there with me," Michael said.

Michael finds it hard to believe that he's now been involved in surfboats for 45 years and sweeping for 40 years and been at Newport all that time.

"I knew they would be a good crew but I have been pleasantly surprised how well they have stepped up to the mark," Michael said.

They won at Manly carnival last Saturday to clinch State selection.

Pictures: The Pistol Shrimp crew in action; Michael King, daughter Zoe, Piret May, Katy Hulton and Celestine May.



FRESHWATER RESULTS

Open Male: Coogee A, Freshwater Dukes, Palm Beach Popeyes, Dee Why MilkTrucks, Long Reef Spitting Cobras, Avalon Beach Pinkies

Open Female: Bondi1100's, Dee Why Milkmaids, Warriewood Wahines, Avalon Beach Ducks, South Narrabeen Sassatrons, Avalon Beach Avocados

Reserves Male: Whale Beach Big Fish, Newport Sea Cucumbers, Manly Boat People, Mermaid Beach Public Agents, Dicky Beach Wrecks

Reserves Women: Avalon Beach Antiques, Whale Beach Flying Fish, Newport Nibbles, Palm Beach Pineapples, Coogee Coll Runnings, North Narrabeen Black

Under 23 Male: Avalon Beach Pinkies, Mermaid Beach Weasels, Freshwater Power House Museum, Long Reef Lords

Under 23 Women: Avalon Beach Avocados, Billy Beef Cheeks, Manly Malurkadurks, Coogee The Cherubs

Under 19 Male: Maroubra Dirty Dogs, Palm Beach Pelicans, Avalon Beach Wingnuts, South Curl Curl Suckers, Freshwater Fighters, Newport Vipers
Under 19 Women: Noosa Spangled Drongo, Bilgola Burritos, Coogee L Platers.



MANLY RESULTS

Open Male: Collaroy Garricks, Bulli Gelcon, Bulli Black Sheep, Freshwater Dukes, Newport Hell Fish, Palm Beach Pigeons.

Open Women: Palm Beach Patriots, North Cronulla Blueys, Bilgola Gold, Elouera, Manly Malarki, Collaroy Gunners.

Reserves Male: Palm Beach Project, Elouera, Newport Octonaughts, Palm Beach Pork Rib, South Maroubra, North Cronulla Funky.

Reserve Women: Wollongong City, North Cronulla,

Palm Beach Pineapples, Lorne Jeray, Avalon Beach Antiques, Newport Nibbles.

Under 23 Male: North Cronulla Purds, Avoca Dirty Dogs, Bulli Basil, Caves Beach Meat Trays, Queenscliff Reality Kings, Collaroy Power Rangers.

Under 23 Female: Newport Pistol Shrimp, North Cronulla, Manly Malurkadurks, Glenelg Sirens, Avoca JOTOS, Warriewood Whips.

Under 19 Female: North Cronulla Funky, Palm Beach Paddlepops, Broulee Surfers, Noosa Spangled Drongos, Newport Sharknado, Bilgola Burritos.

MARK'S STIRRING RENDITION OF NATIONAL ANTHEM



Freshwater boat sweep Mark Rickard was asked to sing the National Anthem at the club's Australia Day boat carnival at Freshwater Beach and what a performance he gave.

Mark said he had never done it before but added: "I have been around bands all my life and I can sing."

Mark said he used to be a drummer for the 'Don't Ask Band' but there was the odd occasion when he sang.

"It was great to see everyone get involved and have pride in their country," Mark said.

UNIVERSITY MATES BACK TOGETHER

They went to Newcastle University, played rugby union for the Seahorses and even lived together. "Now we are all in Sydney carrying the Seahorse name," said Sam Walker.

"We all came to Sydney for work and it wasn't planned. Some would call it fate ... serendipity."

The boys came together when they found out that James Blanch was rowing for North Curl Curl Seahorses in the men's reserves.

"He (Blanchy) used to row with Nick (McDermott) in Newcastle at Cooks Hill. They talked us into it and away we went."

Sweep Nick Hatch said the boys are getting there. "We had four consistent rows at Manly on Sunday. We were not that far off the leaders," he said.

Pictures: The North Curl crew, Sam Walker, Nick McDermott, sweep Nick Hatch, James Blanch and Max Elmes; and in action.





COLLAROY GIRLS READY FOR TITLE DEFENCE

Brooke Perry loves the tradition of the R and R. "I have been doing it since I was 10 and my sisters did it before me," she says. These days Perry (pictured in main photo second from right) swims in the belt for the Collaroy 5-Person Open women's team. "What I really like is the teamwork that is involved in the event," she said.

Brooke said the girls have just started to get serious about their training for the big carnivals coming up.

They will be defending their State title at Blacksmiths and hope to go at least one better at the Aussies.

"That's the goal. We finished third at Aussies last year," she said.

The girls were second to Bondi at the Australia Day carnival at Freshwater but bounced back to win at Manly last Saturday.

Pictures: Top right: the Collaroy team: Nicole Bridges, Amelia Suters, Annabelle Loone, Brooke Perry, Steph Doney; and the Freshwater teams competing on Australia Day.

FRESHWATER RESULTS

Open 6-Person: Coogee 2.92, Freshwater Maroon 5.92, Wanda 6.00, Seacliffe 7.96, Freshwater White 8.20.

Open Women's 5-Person: Bondi 6.76, Collaroy 7.00, Freshwater 9.86.

Open Men's 5-Person: Freshwater 3.50, Coogee 3.82, Seacliffe 10.86, Anglesea 14.56, Alexandra Headland 17.54

Open Mixed 5-Person: Freshwater 5.5, Collaroy 5.68, Anglesea Cheeky Devils 7.48, Anglesea AES 8.24, Anglesea Green 11.16, Alexandra Headland 13.5

MANLY RESULTS

Open 6-Person: Freshwater Maroon 1.24, Coogee 3.00, North Cronulla 9.34

Open Women's 5-Person: Collaroy 1.80, Freshwater 3.02, North Cronulla Gold 4.00, North Cronulla Pink 4.6, Bondi 7.34

Open Men's 5-Person: Freshwater 4.00, Coogee 4.14, Anglesea 11.80, Alexandra Headland 13.92

Open Mixed 5-Person: Freshwater 3.5, Anglesea Aces 5.14, Anglesea Cheeky Devils 6.66, Alexandra Headland 13.6, Anglesea Green 13.82





GOOD TIMES AHEAD FOR MONA VALE JUNIORS

Mona Vale may not have had any individual winners at the Nipper Nats carnival at Manly but the club is definitely on the way up. That's according to Kris Monnock. "I believe there are exciting times ahead," Kris says. "Thanks to Marty Cowper (head coach) and Bryce Munro, we are definitely on the way up." Luka Monnock had the best individual result of the Mona Vale athletes at Nipper Nats when he came second in the under 13 board final. He also made the ironman final. Also among the group at Manly were four under

13 girls – Jayme Saggars, Mia Paltridge, Kira Beuzeville and Charli Munro.

"They are a fantastic bunch of girls that have worked hard since the age of nine," Kris said. "We like to say they are a team of champions, not individual champions but together they are a really great team and bring out the best in each other."

"They work really hard and are the greatest of friends. They are disciplined and such a pleasure to have on the beach."

Kris said everyone was looking forward to the

Branch Championships. "All our athletes have improved out of sight and the rewards will come," she said.

Kris thought that Nipper Nats was a really good carnival and well run.

"It was great to see a lot of clubs outside Sydney make an effort to travel. You could say the big kids came out to play and the standard was high," she said.

Pictures: Luka Monnock (top left); Jayme Saggars, Mia Paltridge, Kris Monnock, Kira Beuzeville and Charli Munro enjoy Nipper Nats.



PIPER KNOWS THE BATTLE AHEAD

Manly's Piper Harrison faced some of her toughest opponents at the Nipper Nats carnival at Manly last Friday so she knows exactly what she's up against at the State titles next month. Piper (pictured top left) finished third in the under 14 iron woman, behind winner Eliza Johnson (Swansea Belmont) and Avoca's Piper Walker.

"Yeah, I've come across them a lot throughout the years, State, Inter Branch and other carnivals. It's good competition," Piper said.

"Eliza was up there at State last year. It was a sprint to the line in the iron final."

On the race at Manly and trying to catch Eliza after the swim leg, Piper said: "I didn't have my best run out on the board but I did my best. It was tough conditions, not many waves."

Piper also finished second in the surf race.

Isaac Crews (North Curl Curl) went mighty close to taking out the under 13 male iron but was beaten in a sprint finish by Flynn Hamilton (Cooks Hill).

Manly's Mitch Morris won the treble in the under 12 surf, iron and board with brother Jake second in those events, while Manly's Conner Maggs took out the iron and board in the under 11s. Queenscliff's Artie Leiper enjoyed the strong competition of the Nipper Nats.

Artie (pictured right holding flag) won the under 11 beach flags. "It attracted a lot of competition and it was good to be competing against boys that I haven't competed against before," Artie said.

Artie came fourth in the sprint final.



SMITH GETS CLOSER TO FULL FITNESS

While Kendrick Louis powered to successive iron man victories at the Manly and Freshwater carnivals last weekend, all eyes were on his Manly clubmate Nathan Smith.

Smith finished runner up to Louis at the Manly carnival and third on Sunday.

Speaking after the race at Manly, Smith said: "I did the ironman at North Wollongong (SIQS) but I felt today was a better performance.

"I probably felt a bit stronger. It was a good hit out and I paddled the board well. I am feeling better and that is the main thing. I should be a lot better come the series (Nutri Grain) in just over three weeks."

Smith was out of action for more than three months when he chipped a bone at the bottom of his fibula just days before he was due to race in Coolangatta Gold.

"I don't think Kendrick was going too hard to be serious but he is strong in all three disciplines," Smith said.

"It's great to see him enjoying himself this year. I was just trying to be strong all the way through and not be fatigued in that third leg which I normally get with my age," Smith said.

Manly certainly cleaned up at their local carnival. Taylar Puskaric won the open ironwoman and Manly won the open men's Taplin Relay. Louis was a member of that team and also won the surf race.

Puskaric came home strongly in the final board leg to overhaul Newport's Georgia Miller, who led the swim and ski legs.

"I won the Wanda carnival last week and it is so good to win here," Puskaric said.

Taylor didn't compete at Freshwater, instead saving herself for the last round of the Summer of Surf at Surfers Paradise this weekend.

"I am in a qualifying position and my focus is on that," she said.

Dual Olympic kayaker Murray Stewart made his first appearance of the season on the ski but in a Newport cap.

He paddled for Newport's B team in the ski relay and helped them win at both carnivals, finishing ahead of Manly and Newport's A team.



Pictures: Top: Manly's Jay Furniss, Taylar Puskaric, Kendrick Louis and Nathan Smith; Jake Lynch after winning the sprint final; Taylar Puskaric about to win open ironwoman final; Newport's Yvette Avery (left) is runner up in the open flags; Maddie Spencer, Taylar Puskaric and Georgia Miller after the ironwoman final.



The Collaroy Garricks were in great form at the Manly carnival and what better way to finish the day than with a win over Aussie champs Bulli in the final.

It will give the Collaroy boys plenty of confidence going into the last round of Ocean Thunder at Dee Why on Saturday.

Look who turned up to the Manly carnival. Murray Stewart and he's now competing for Newport.

Murray (middle) teamed up with Chad Alston (left) and Max Brooks (right) to win the ski relay. They also won at Freshwater.

The Newport relay girls Bethany Pate, Katie Mott, Yvette Avery and Laura Shorter were too strong at Manly.

Freshwater's promising under 19 flags specialist Max Le Gall and Manly open ski paddler Rachael Dodwell.





FAREWELL NUGGET ... GOLD, GOLD FOR AUSTRALIA, GOLD

That famous Norman May call from the 1980 Moscow Olympics – Gold, Gold for Australia, Gold – echoed around Freshwater Beach last Sunday as the legendary broadcaster's ashes were scattered at sea.

The Freshwater Dukes surfboat crew had the honour of rowing out to sea and performing what sweep Scott Morrison described as a great honour.

Morrison was just a young boy when Nugget called the famous men's medley relay win by Australia's four of Mark Kerry, Peter Evans, Neil Brooks and Mark Tonelli.

Tonelli was at Freshwater Beach for Freshie's Australia Day carnival.

He remained a great mate of Norman May and was at his home on September 11 last year when the broadcaster died, aged 88.

"Norman was just a very special man and what a broadcaster" Tonelli said.

Millions of Australians knew May because of his golden voice on the ABC.

But he was also a great lifesaver with the Freshwater Surf Life Saving Club.

Nugget was part of Freshwater's golden era in Rescue and Resuscitation (R and R) in the 1950s when they won two Australian titles and two second places, three NSW titles and three Metropolitan titles.

He was also a member of the first Freshwater team to take the coveted Australian open surf teams title in the 1955-56 season.

May got his big break in commentating when he was asked to call the first televised surf carnival by the ABC at Dee Why in 1957. The rest is history.

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North Curl Curl SLSC are hosting the inaugural Global Swim Series Pacific Championships on Saturday, February 25 at North Curl Curl Beach. The event will be held over two distances – 1.5km and 3.8km.

All placegetters will receive medals as well as prizes in the various race categories.

The event is open to all comers.

Event details at www.globalswimseries.com/gss-pacific-championship/