



RIP TIDE

LOUIS, MILLER AND ROOKIE SCOTT ON THE PODIUM

KENDRICK WAS IN RIGHT HEAD SPACE

Manly's Kendrick Louis ... third overall, Newport's Georgia Miller won Accumulator round and Manly teenager Naomi Scott won Eliminator round. They were the major highlights of Sydney Northern Beaches athletes in the Nutri Grain series over three days at North Cronulla.

Louis started like a house on fire when he finished second to Ali Day (Surfers Paradise) in the Endurance round on the first day but then the great Shannon Eckstein made his move in the Eliminator and by the end of the second day was level on points (194) with Matt Poole.

Louis was still very much in contention and four points behind the two leaders

He breezed through the first two races of the Eliminator on Sunday before the final eight went to the line for the deciding race.

Louis struck trouble on the ski leg, leaving the door wide open for either Poole (Kurrawa) or Eckstein (Northcliffe) to be crowned king.

The finish couldn't have been better scripted. Poole had his nose in front on the board but looked over his shoulder to see Eckstein coming.

It came down to a run to the finish and Poole, who was a former Dee Why nipper, had enough energy to get across the line for his maiden Nutri Grain title.

Poole said: "It's like winning the Super Bowl, Wimbledon and the Grand Final. It means the world to me."

Manly's Louis said: "To be honest, I felt like I was in the right head space to be racing right to win the day.

"It was a bit frustrating. I had to roll on my ski in the end race at the start. I pegged my way back but it kind of wasn't enough to bridge that gap that I lost at the start.

"Matt Poole raced unbelievable all weekend and Eckstein is always up there.

"For me, I kind of got to laugh. This time last year I was nowhere near this (third on the podium).

"I finished sixth, a long way off the front. It is amazing what a change of clubs has done for me. I think it is a good stepping stone for next season."

Louis will now focus on racing for Manly at the State Open championships.

"It's about having fun, racing teams with the boys and really trying to lift that next gear.

"I am still trying to win an Australian title. I'd love to see how close I can go to that."

How the ironmen finished in series: 1 Matt Poole, 2 Shannon Eckstein, 3 Kendrick Louis, 4 Ali Day, 5 Luke Cuff, 6 Matt Bevilacqua, 7 Daniel Collins, 8 James Lacey, 9 Nathan Smith, 10 Hayden White, 11 Cory Taylor, 12 Max Brooks, 13 Ben Carberry, 14 Tanyin Lyndon, 15 Jackson Maynard, 16 Jay Furniss, 17 Wes Berg, 18 Hayden Allum, 19 Trevor Hendy, 20 Isak Costello.

Pictures: Naomi Scott winning the women's Eliminator; A nice gesture from Manly's Kendrick Louis (right). He holds series winner Matt Poole's hand high to celebrate. Runner up Shannon Eckstein is left.





HUGE FUTURE FOR TEENAGER SCOTT

Nutri Grain ironwoman series winner Harriet Brown and runner up Courtney Hancock were only too willing to offer Manly rookie Naomi Scott advice before she made her debut in the three-day event at North Cronulla.

"They told me to embrace it and just enjoy it," Naomi said.

"It has been an amazing experience. To fulfil a childhood dream at just 17 is quite unbelievable."

Naomi capped off an unforgettable final day when she won the tough Eliminator round from Northcliffe pair Danielle McKenzie and Courtney Hancock.

For Harriet Brown, finishing fourth in the Eliminator (third round) meant she clinched her maiden series win. But it was Scott who had everyone talking. She also came home first in the first race of the Eliminator. The great Trevor Hendy has watched Scott progress and thought that while her swimming was always strong, he also felt she has improved out of sight on the board and ski.

Scott was the only one of the four northern beaches athletes to make the final eight. Georgia Miller missed the cut by one, while Taylor Puskaric was also eliminated and Maddie Spencer failed to get past the first round of racing on Sunday.

It was an experience that Puskaric and Spencer won't forget in their debuts.

Manly coach Cam Coghlan couldn't sing the praises of Scott enough.

"I am incredibly proud of the way she raced for the first time in the series," Coghlan said.

"I think she matured just over the weekend.

"She had a really tough first day and to back up with a win in the swim (individual) of the Accumulator and then to comeback and win two of the three races on Sunday showed what fighting spirit she had.

"Naomi hasn't been on a ski long but she showed she matched it with the top girls. She was not panicked on the ski and set it up with an incredible swim leg and absolute gutsy board race to finish.

"There's no doubt she can learn from this. This is a stepping stone to next year and beyond.

"It's also a really good confidence booster for Aussies. She is one of the future ironwomen stars, for sure."

Naomi finished eighth overall.



Pictures: Top: The finish of the Eliminator with Naomi Scott in the middle and flanked by Courtney Hancock (left) and Danielle McKenzie (right); Naomi (middle) on the podium after the race; and Georgia Miller with her family after winning the Accumulator round on the Saturday. Photo: Ian Hanson.



Newport's Georgia Miller came fifth in the series and the highlight for her was winning the Accumulator on the Saturday.

Considering Georgia had an appendix operation in December, it was certainly a brave performance. After the Accumulator, Georgia said: "It was six weeks before I could get back and train properly after the operation.

"I had to be so careful and getting fit was really hard so

to win this round today, I can't stop smiling, my cheeks are getting sore."

How the ironwomen finished: 1 Harriet Brown, 2 Courtney Hancock, 3 Karlee Nurthen, 4 Maddy Dunn, 5 Georgia Miller, 6 Rebecca Creedy, 7 Emma Dick, 8 Naomi Scott, 9 Danielle McKenzie, 10 Jemma Smith, 11 Amy Nurthen, 12 Lizzie Welborn, 13 Tara Coleman, 14 Kristyl Smith, 15 Kirsty Higginson, 16 Maddie Spencer, 17 Taylor Puskaric, 18 Brielle Cooper, 19 Allie Britton, 20 Ella Brown.

SMITH BIDS A FINAL FAREWELL TO NUTRI GRAIN



FOCUS NOW ON TAPLIN RELAY

The great warrior Nathan Smith has raced for the last time in the Nutri Grain ironman series.

Even before he lined up in the Eliminator at North Cronulla Beach on Sunday, it was obvious this was his swansong in the series.

When introduced to the crowd, he ran out with his three young daughters.

What a fight the 36-year-old veteran put up on the final day of the revamped event.

He led the second race after the swim and was fighting it out with Luke Cuff after the board but then trouble stuck on the ski. He failed to make the cut for the final showdown.

"In terms of the Kellogg's (Nutri Grain), I think that's it for me," said the man who has been such an outstanding ambassador for the sport.

"I think it is (over) this time. It is just too hard to devote the time and the effort required to compete at the top level with these guys.

"I have been proud of my achievements over the years. It's not the best way to leave.

"I just got clipped on the ski so that pulled me back, yet I was still in sixth going out. When it came to a sprint finish with 10 other guys, I don't really win sprint finishes. I wasn't on the best end as well.

"But I just didn't have enough gas in the arms and body towards the end. I mean I didn't feel too bad but that's life."

Smith still finished ninth overall in the series.



He will now look to the NSW Championships at Blacksmiths on March 10, 11 and 12.

He said he hadn't made up his mind whether he would do the ironman at State.

Smith has already won seven NSW open ironman titles.

"The same thing with Aussies. My main goal is the Taplin Relay," he said.

"A lot might depend on the order. My body won't handle

doing a hard ironman into a hard swim leg if I am swimming for Manly (in the Taplin) and going first. My body won't handle two races going back to back.

"I might have to sacrifice the ironman for a team event which I am willing to do."

Pictures: Smith received a rousing reception from the crowd as he entered the arena with his three young daughters; and battling it out on the board with Luke Cuff.

NORTH CURL CURL PLAN COMES TO FRUITION



'WE PRIDE OURSELVES DEVELOPING OUR OWN'

North Curl Curl SLSC set a goal four years ago to make top three in the Sydney Northern Beaches Branch point score.

On sheer weight of numbers, North Curly knew they could never match it with Manly and Newport. But the club that finished seventh four years ago came third in the overall placing for Opens, Masters and Juniors this season.

The Juniors, in fact, finished second to Manly.

"We are very proud of what we have achieved," Glenn Slater, the Director of Surf Sports and coach at North Curl Curl, said.

"It just goes to show what a little club can do and we've proved we are a viable alternative to the bigger clubs. For us to be ahead of clubs like Freshwater and Queenscliff says a lot in what we are doing.

"On the back of surf sports, we've also increased our volunteer patrols from 12 to 16.

"And we pride ourselves in developing our own members and not relying on other members from other clubs."

Slater pays tribute to the other coaches, especially Tony Williams and Michael Clues, and also to former

Australian captain Sean Davis, who joined the coaching panel this season.

"And Renee Nero has also done a terrific job with our beach competitors," Slater said.

Slater says the club has built a very strong culture.

"At the start of the season we have a development camp at Swansea Belmont where we take about 100 athletes, ranging from under 10s to opens," he said.

"The older members train and mentor the kids and it has proved to be a really good and worthwhile exercise."

North Curly have a fantastic crop of under 10 girls coming through and they are certainly expected to be among the medals at the State Age Championships at Blacksmiths Beach this weekend.

Here are the top six in the Branch point score:

Juniors: Manly 894, North Curl Curl 454, Freshwater 273, Mona Vale 261, Newport 225, Collaroy 192.

Opens: Newport 1061, Manly 722, Freshwater 260, Collaroy 96, Palm Beach 90, North Curl Curl 81.

Masters: Queenscliff 465, Palm Beach 410, Manly 361, North Curl Curl 227, Newport 168, Freshwater 162.

Overall Placing: Manly, Newport, North Curl Curl, Freshwater, Queenscliff, Palm Beach.

Pictures: Michael Clues coaching some of his kids; and Tony Williams with guest Georgia Miller.





YOUNG NOAH LEADS CHARGE

Noah Maggs is the youngest member of Manly's All-Age Board relay team but carries a lot of weight on his small shoulders at the NSW Age Championships at Blacksmiths at the weekend.

But Manly head coach Graham Bruce is confident that Noah will deliver.

"The way the relay is structured is that the under 9 paddlers can set it (the race) up," Bruce said.

The Manly A team and North Curl Curl qualified as the two Sydney Northern Beaches representatives after the Branch Championships.

Manly were too good on the day with young Noah setting up their win at Newport Beach with a terrific paddle.

"The last thing we want to do is put any pressure on him. We've just told him to go out and do his job. That's all we can ask for," said Bruce.

Noah will have done quite a number of individual and team races before the All-Age Board Relay, which is the last event on the program on Sunday.

Manly A will field the identical team that won Branch – Noah Maggs, Finn McMurtry, Conner Maggs, Mitch Morris, Evie Coulter and Piper Harrison.

"We expect Wanda, Cooks Hill and Swansea Belmont to have strong teams in this event," Bruce said.

Manly will be attempting to win their eighth consecutive title (point score) at Blacksmiths.

"To be honest, I am more interested to see how the kids perform," he said. "But in saying that, we are very fortunate to have so many good competitors at our club."

"I have been coaching for quite some time at Manly, I think around 12 years, and I am just stoked to see how



the current under 14s have developed since they first starting competing.

"All the kids here have a very good work ethic at training and push each other.

"Piper Harrison and Tyler Krenkels are about to leave the juniors and it would be fitting for them to have a great send off in their last State (Age) Championships." Manly's big hopes in the water will be the Morris twins, Mitch and Jake, the Doyle twins Kimberley and Kate-lynn and the Maggs brothers Noah and Conner.

The Morris boys have dominated their age group since they first started out with Swansea Belmont, the host club for these championships.

They push each other to the limit and it is rare if the brothers don't finish first and second.

"Mitch is big and strong and Jake has certainly got a big heart," Bruce said.

Newport's Joel Piper should figure prominently in the under 13 iron, surf and board events.

And expect the North Curl Curl under 10 girls to be chasing gold medals in the surf and board events.

Pictures: Newport pair Brandon Bartlem (left) and Joel Piper with the Morris boys, Mitch and Jake. Below: North Curl Curl's Ruby Lovell (left), Olivia Clues and Dom Melbourn.

MANLY'S BIG HOPES AT STATE AGE CHAMPIONSHIPS



Photographer Kemble Cowan captures four of Manly's young guns in action.

Top: The Doyle twins – Katelynn (left) and Kimberley.

Below: The Maggs brothers – Noah (left) and Conner. Apart from their individual and team commitments, both boys will also represent Manly in the All-Age Board Relay.

PHOEBE ON A REAL HIGH IN CHAMPION LIFESAVER



'I WAS FEELING PRETTY NERVOUS'

Newport's Phoebe Savage has certainly taken to Champion Lifesaver like a duck to water. Phoebe only started doing the event last season and came away from Blacksmith Beach in Newcastle last weekend as the NSW Open female champion. Not only that, Phoebe recorded the highest mark on the day – 111.50 out of 120.

Phoebe said she went to Blacksmiths feeling "pretty nervous."

"I was really surprised by the result," she said.

"I felt pretty nervous because I thought Clare (Freakley) would beat me again."

Phoebe came third at the Branch Championships the week before, the event was won by Freshwater's Freakley.

Both girls will now go to Aussies.

Phoebe says she has really improved on the theory side.

"The physical part was OK. The surf was flat but tricky and there was a shore dump," she said.

Phoebe was also a member of the Newport team that finished second to Freshwater in the Open Patrol competition.

Sydney Northern Beaches clubs won a total of 19 medals in Champion Lifesaver, four gold, seven silver and eight bronze.

Apart from Phoebe, Jackson Borg (Newport), Vicki Cuthbert (Manly) and Joe Jenkins (North Steyne) were gold medallists.



Clare Freakley (Freshwater), Harry Hickey (North Steyne), Tahlia Dearden (Freshwater), Chris Curulli (Manly), Andrea Malm (Freshwater), Emily Thornton (Queenscliff) and Deb Foote (North Steyne) won silver medals.

The bronze medallists were Peter Euers (Newport), Alex Malm (Freshwater), Sophia Tonoli (Newport), Max

Moon (Manly), Jethro Mulder (South Curl Curl), Sarah Murdoch (Manly), Guyren Smith (Newport) and Jan Proudfoot (Newport).

Manly also took out the under 17 Patrol Competition. Pictures: Star in the making ... Newport's Phoebe Savage; the successful Freshwater Open Patrol team. Photos: CHRIS BORG



JACKSON WORKS ON HIS THEORY

Jackson Borg is looking forward to Champion Lifesaver at Aussies but he knows he has to improve on theory.

He won the State under 19 title at Blacksmiths last weekend from North Steyne's Harry Hickey and Freshwater's Alex Malm.

"I'll have to be ever so careful with the live patient resuscitation," Jackson said.

"I really have to get the theory part better."

Jackson came second in the event at Aussies last year but would dearly love to win it before he becomes an open competitor.

His focus now is on the NSW titles at Blacksmiths Beach in Newcastle on March 10, 11 and 12.

"I really want to give the ironman a real crack," Jackson said.

"I'll also be involved in a lot of team events."

Jackson will do the swim teams, board relay, ski relay, Taplin and double ski with Charlie Brooks.

"I am also doing the Open Taplin and maybe the iron as well. We'll just have to see," he said.

Pictures: Jackson Borg competing at Blacksmiths in Champion Lifesaver; Members of Manly's winning under 17 patrol team and SNB competitors at Blacksmiths for the Lifesaving events.

NEWCASTLE INVASION

Newcastle club Swansea Belmont is about to stage two massive weeks of surf sports action.

More than 2500 youngsters will invade Blacksmiths Beach this weekend for the State Age Championships. Manly LSC will be chasing their eight consecutive title. Next week will see the State Masters, followed by the State Open Championships.

It's a great hit out for all masters and open competitors before Aussies.





COLLAROY GARRICKS ON FIRE AT PACIFIC PALMS

The Collaroy Garricks won all eight races at the Battle of the Boats but sweep Phil Massingham is not getting carried away.

Apart from going through the preliminary rounds undefeated, the Garricks won an open men's final thriller from North Bondi and Avoca at Elizabeth Beach and also teamed with the women's open crew and juniors to take out the Tim Knight Memorial boat relay from Palm Beach, Mona Vale and Bilgola.

"While it is a confidence booster going into State, we certainly didn't have things entirely our own way," Massingham said.

"There was the length of a cigarette paper is some of the finishes. That's how close it was.

"Actually, I thought we came third in the final. We all hit the line together."

Massingham said the Collaroy boys were fresh for the Battle of the Boats carnival.

"We didn't go to the ASRL at Shellharbour the week before," he said.

"The boys did row well but the Australian champions

Bulli weren't there."

Massingham is hoping to organise some races against some other Sydney Northern Beaches crews before the State titles at Blacksmiths Beach.

The Palm Beach Patriots were back in winning mode in the women's open final.

They edged out the Bilgola Gold crew and Collaroy Gunners.

Mona Vale sweep Matt Collins has seen enough of the Patriots and says: "They are a gun crew. If they don't win (Aussies) there's something wrong.

"Along with Bilgola Gold they are the fastest crews and you can throw the South Curly girls in the mix."

Picture: The successful Collaroy Garricks.

BATTLE OF BOATS RESULTS

Open Men: Collaroy Garricks, North Bondi X Men, Avoca Z, Bulli Black Sheep, Mona Vale Rocks, Palm Beach Pidgeons.

Open Women: Palm Beach Patriots, Bilgola Gold, Collaroy Gunners, Queenscliff All But One, Mona Vale Mavericks, Palm Beach Pumas.

Reserves Men: Queenscliff I Liked Her First, Palm Beach Pork Ribs, Newport Octonauts, Gerringong Naps, Palm Beach Project, South Maroubra.

Reserves Women: Collaroy Liqueurs, Bondi Surf Bath-ers, Newport Nibbles, Palm Beach Pineapples, Manly Malurkadurk, Manly Maltesers.

Under 23 Men: Queenscliff Reality Kings, Avalon Beach Pinkies, Palm Beach Paperclips, Newport Bottom Feeders, Caves Meat Trays, Mona Vale Rude Dudes.

Under 23 Women: Avoca JOTOS, South Curly Girlies, Bilgola Beef Cheeks, Avalon Beach Avocados, Palm Beach Peas, Coogee Cherubs.

Under 19 Male: South Curl Curl The Lamp, South Curl Curl Sneaky Nuts, Palm Beach Pelicans, Freshwater Fighters, Mona Vale Mambas, South Curl Curl Slickers. **Under 19 Women:** Newport Sharknados, Noosa, Bilgola Burritos, North Curly Butter.

ROWERS PAY TRIBUTE TO A SURFING LEGEND



Battle of the Boats at Pacific Palms last year was the last carnival the late Midget Farrelly swept at with a Whale Beach crew.

The rowers who attended the 19th Pacific Palms event last weekend held a lovely ceremony in memory of Midget.

Picture (above): Members of the boat relay teams. Collaroy won the event by a whisker from Palm Beach. It came down to the sprint up the beach. Mona Vale were third.