



RIP TIDE

GEDZ TIPS BIG IMPROVEMENT FROM BEACH ATHLETES



THE HEAT IS ON AT STOCKTON

Sydney Northern Beaches Branch beach coach Michael Gedz expects a vast improvement from our beach specialists at the NSW Inter Branch Championships at Stockton Beach in Newcastle this weekend.

SNB will be looking to regain Inter Branch supremacy when the eleven Branches come together for the annual event.

Sydney Branch holds the trophy and Gedz has no doubts that our biggest rivals will be strong on the beach again.

"I think our younger competitors in the under 12, 13 and 14 age groups look stronger this year and they have trained well," Gedz said.

"Artie Leiper and Nina van der Ryden are new to the team as under 12 competitors but they are State champions.

"Josh (Gedz) won last year at Inter Branch and I am sure Stefanie Fejes will have gained a lot from

the experience of representing the Branch for the first time last year.

"In the under 14s we've got Dylan Calderon making his debut and our female runner is Zoe Couzens.

"Dylan has won all his sprint and flags events at local carnivals this year. He's shot up and everyone respects him now.

"I have just told him to soak it up and enjoy himself. "Zoe is a terrific competitor.

BLAKE ON FIRE

"I think the six will be a formidable relay team."

Apart from Josh Gedz, the only other sprint winner last year at The Lakes on the Central Coast was Laura Shorter in the female open.

Her partner Blake Drysdale won the open male flags and later went onto win at Aussies.

Blake, who badly injured his wrist in the first Summer of Surf round at Queenscliff, was in grave doubt of missing representing Australia in the International Surf Rescue Challenge in New Zealand over the weekend but he got through

unscathed and won the flags in the second Test.

"It's a big relief to know that he got through. He is such a determined character but had he injured the wrist again he could have been in big trouble for the rest of the season," Gedz said.

"For him to be at Stockton is really a big plus for us."

Gedz said he has been most impressed with Maddie Wallace's performances on the track and is confident that she will do well in the under 15 age group.

"She has made a real commitment to the beach, which is so pleasing," he said.

SNB are definitely much stronger in the water this year, but coach Chris Allum says it will be a battle all the way with Sydney Branch.

"We are definitely strong in the opens this year but Sydney always come up with a strong team," Allum said.

Sydney won by 16 points last year.

Picture: Our younger beach competitors (from left): Dylan Calderon, Josh Gedz, Artie Leiper, Zoe Couzens, Stefanie Fejes and Nina van der Ryden.

LYNCH SPRINTS TO VICTORY IN AUSTRALIA SUCCESS



SCOTT, DOYLE SHINE FOR YOUTH

What better way for Athlete of the Year Jake Lynch to finish off the third and final Test at the International Surf Rescue Challenge in New Zealand by winning the beach sprint. Lynch held off South African Jonathon Rourke to help Australia clinch the three Test series at Mt Maunganui on Sunday. Lynch and his Newport clubmate Blake Drysdale shared the beach duties for Australia. Lynch won the flags and came third in the sprint in the first Test, while Drysdale, who overcame a wrist injury, took out the flags and also came third in the sprint in the second Test. Lynch was given the nod for the third Test and, apart from his sprint win, came second in the flags. One of the best performances from Manly's Kendrick Louis came in the final Test when he won the surf race. Australia finished on 445 points to win the overall point score ahead of New Zealand (412 points). Manly pair Naomi Scott and Emily Doyle were impressive for the Australian youth team. Scott won all three Oceanperson events, while Doyle won the surf race in the first two Tests. While Australia took out the first two Tests in the



opens, only two points separated them going into the third and deciding Test.

But the Australia team lifted another gear and ran out convincing winners on the last day of competition.

The Australian and New Zealand youth teams were one Test apiece going into the decider.

But like their open team, they also rose to the occasion.

Apart from Australia and New Zealand, other countries to compete were the United States, South Africa, Japan, Great Britain and Canada.

The United States gained a podium finish behind winners Australia and the Black Fins in the opens, while South Africa were third behind Australia and New Zealand in the youth competition.

For Drysdale, Scott and Doyle, they will now turn their attentions to helping Sydney Northern Beaches Branch team win back the NSW Inter Branch trophy at the two-day carnival at Stockton this weekend.

Pictures: Top: Jake Lynch wins a close one; Below: Blake Drysdale takes out the open flags in the second Test.

LOCAL CREWS TO REPRESENT AUSTRALIA AGAINST NZ

FIRST TIME FOR SOUTH CURLY

When the South Curl Curl open men's crew went to Kurrawa over the weekend they knew they'd have to beat Bulli to win Australian selection.

Curly survived the first three heats and one more race before it came down to a four-way battle between themselves, Bulli, North Cronulla and Mermaid over three more races.

Sweep Rob Lowery said: "We came third in the first race, won the next and then it was down to the last race.

"Bulli got away but then got hit and it came down to a battle between us and North Cronulla as Mermaid couldn't win the point score.

"Then North Cronulla slewed and came across us, allowing Mermaid to come through and win the race.

"We came second which clinched us the point score."

This is how the point score finished: South Curl Curl 27, North Cronulla 26, Bulli 25 and Mermaid 24.

"This is really a great honour for our club and the first time a men's crew has represented Australia," Lowery said.

"That now means we have had both a men's and women's crew representing Australia."

South Curl Curl will take on the New Zealand champions at Elouera on February 16-18.



The South Curly crew will be in action at Dee Why on Saturday for the second round of Ocean Thunder.

Once again they'll be coming up against Bulli.

Picture: Aussie reps ... Jordan Thurlow, Trent Rogers, Chris Hughes, Mike Egan and sweep Rob Lowery.

AVOCADOS ARE FIRST CHOICE

Chloe Scott has only been rowing for the Avalon Beach Avocados for two seasons.

Last season she joined Ellie Di Biagio, Lauren Petersen, Amelia Barber and sweep Nathan Wellings and the crew won bronze at State.

Unfortunately, they didn't get a chance to test themselves at Aussies on the Gold Coast back in April as the championships were cancelled.

Still an under 23 crew, the Avocados raced at the ASRL selection trials at Kurrawa over the weekend and overcame very tough conditions to celebrate their greatest achievement to date.

The Tallebudgera crew was favourites to clinch selection for the Trans Tasman series against New Zealand.

"We had to race three heats and then another three races," Chloe said.

"We were left with four crews in the final three races and it came down to the last race.

"It was really close but the Tallebudgera crew slewed and we finished first in that race. That clinched it for us in the point score as we'd previously had a fourth and a second.

"We didn't know for some time that we'd actually won. It is very exciting."

The Avalon Beach crew will now race for Australia at the ASRL carnival at Elouera on February 16-18.



Picture: We made it ... Chloe Scott (left), Ellie Di Biagio, Nathan Wellings, Lauren Petersen and Amelia Barber.

NORTH NARRABEEN GIRLS NOW READY FOR THUNDER



Pictures: Top: The North Narrabeen girls tackle the surf at Warriewood on Saturday; Bottom: On the way to a win.

North Narrabeen rower Hayley Beckerleg feels that her North Narrabeen female crew are in much better shape to attack Ocean Thunder at Dee Why on Saturday.

The North Narrabeen girls had their final hit out at the Warriewood carnival last Saturday and were certainly presented with challenging conditions. Her crew made the final of the first round of Ocean Thunder and finished fourth behind Peter Spence's Palm Beach crew, Torquay and Currumbin.

"I don't want to undersell us but we didn't expect to go as well as we did in the first round of 'OT'. We hadn't trained much at all together leading up to our first carnival," Hayley said.

"We'd probably only been in the boat three times before. We were great at Newport and we are certainly getting it together and definitely excited to return to Dee Why."

Stroke Aleisha Pollicina said: "I will be interested to see how we go at Ocean Thunder this time.

"Palm Beach were ahead of everyone but I thought all the other crews were similar.

"It will be interesting to see how it spreads after four weeks of training and giving it a good crack."

Hayley, Aleisha, Laini Collyer and Alice Clarke followed sweep Don McManus from Bilgola to North Narrabeen.



"They (North Narrabeen) have been really accommodating to have us," Aleisha said. "They have certainly been enthusiastic and

encouraging when we race. Yeah, they (supporters) have been shouting and clapping when we win a race. It's a nice feeling."



ALEX IS COUNTING THE DAYS WHEN SHE CAN ROW AGAIN

Alex Salier is planning a return to surfboat rowing in mid-January with her Warriewood female open crew.

Alex didn't actually injure herself in a surfboat incident but running.

"I tore my plantar fascia while doing some sprints for fitness," she said.

"Hopefully I'll be out of the boot in another two

weeks.

"I would really like to be back for the third round of Ocean Thunder (January 13) but if not for the Manly carnival (January 26)."

Alex says it's no fun watching the girls. "I'd much rather be rowing in the boat," she said.

The girls certainly found the surf at their home carnival on Saturday very challenging but it was

ideal preparation for the second round of Ocean Thunder at Dee Why this Saturday (December 9). The girls are looking to improve on their first round performance.

Picture: The Warriewood female open crew: Alex Salier (left), Lisa Schumacher, Sophie Lucas, Nicki Daley, Peta Fairlie and sweep Matt Sheridan

FAST FIVES AT DEE WHY

It will certainly be an action-packed day at Dee Why Beach on Sunday.

There's the foamie Fast Fives in the morning, catering for under 9 and 10 competitors.

Racing will start at 12pm with registrations at 11.15am.

Apart from the board races, there will also be surf swims.

The Opens and under 14 and 15 Fast Fives will also be held on the same day.

There will be board, ski and surf races and a Dash for Cash immediately after round five.

Picture: Competitors line up for a board race in the Fast Fives at Freshwater





Photographer PAUL LEMLIN catches some of the action at the Warriewood surf boat carnival last Saturday. Conditions were certainly testing for the crews and the younger boat rowers didn't race.





OCEAN SWIMMERS START AT BILGOLA

It's almost that time of the year when the ocean swimmers are out in force on the northern beaches. The Pittwater Ocean Swim Series gets underway on Sunday (December 10) with the first of five events at picturesque Bilgola.

This is the sixth year of the very popular series that also includes swims at Newport (January 7), Avalon Beach (January 14), Mona Vale (January 21) and rounding off with the 'Big Swim' from Palm Beach to Whale Beach on January 28.

Bilgola's event director Ray Trevisan is expecting a really strong turnout of swimmers.

And he'll be hoping the ocean water temperature is a lot warmer than it has been of late.

There are two courses as part of the Bilgola ocean swim, an 800m swim in the morning and the 1500m main event.

The main event follows a polygonal course, starting out from the middle of Bilgola Beach.

Once you reach past the break, you'll turn north towards the headland. When you reach the turning buoy, you'll head south and do the same. Eventually the swim brings you back to shore where you started.

Ocean swimming certainly has become very popular. When the 'Big Swim' was first held in 1974 there were only 48 starters.

Newport's Ollie Signorini won the male event over 2.5km in 2016 and his clubmate Maddie Spencer last year took out the open female category.

Swimmers who enter the final three swims and, that



figure was well over 1000 for the last series, go in for a lucky draw prize of a luxury stay at Byron Bay. **Pictures: The Bilgola ocean swim is always very popular. The swimmers will be hoping for warmer water and good conditions.**

SUMMER OF SURF

Our top athletes from Sydney Northern Beaches clubs will head to the south coast next weekend for the third round of Summer of Surf.

North Wollongong is the venue.