


*Sports News*

## Aussie's Mitchell crashes party at U.S. Paddleboard qualifier

*by Kevin Cody*

Saturday's 11th Annual Hennessey's U.S. Paddleboard Championships in Redondo was meant as a qualifier for the World Paddleboard Championships next October in Australia. But Saturday's winner won't be competing for the U.S. For the fifth consecutive year the U.S. Championships was won by Australian Jamie Mitchell.

  
Over 150 paddlers competed in the Hennessey U.S. Paddleboarding Championships.  
Photo by Kevin Cody

The Burlleigh Heads lifeguard covered the 11-mile course -- from Ave. I to the R-10 buoy off of Palos Verdes, around another buoy at the Redondo Breakwater, and back to Ave. I -- in 1:38:48.

Los Angeles County Lifeguard Kyle Daniels of Redondo was second in 1:41:54 and fellow lifeguard Gary Fortune of Malibu was third in 1:43:49.

California paddlers haven't been Mitchell's only victims. He has won Hawaii's Molokai to Oahu Paddleboard Race the past four years in a row and is favored to win it a fifth time at the end of this month.

Following the Molokai race, Mitchell will have less than a month to recover before returning to the South Bay for the Catalina Classic on August 27.

"I need to be in Los Angeles that week anyway, and I know I won't be able to just watch the Classic," he said following Saturday's race. One week after the classic Mitchell plans to compete in another 32 mile race, from San Sebastian, Spain to Biarritz, France.

Mitchell's only previous appearance in the Classic was in 2002 when he passed San Diego lifeguard Brian Zeller less than a mile from the finish to win.

LA County Lifeguard Ryan Addison finished fourth in Saturday's race, followed by Sean Richardson of Palos Verdes. Rebecca Gilman of Oxnard won the women's division in 2:15:14, followed by Jane Cairns of Santa Barbara in 2:17:07 and Cori Raffaelli of Oxnard.

In a battle for bragging rights, Redondo Beach snagged the U.S. Championships from Hermosa Beach, which hosted the race for its first 10 years.

Redondo councilman Steve Aspel said he leaned on neighbor Tim Ritter, the Hennessey's series director, to move the race to his home town. Aspel described the race as more fun and less disruptive than the Tour of California, which passed through his district last February. Aspel said the bike race won't be returning next year because the city declined to foot the bill for the race, which requires much of South Redondo west of Pacific Coast Highway to be closed to automobile traffic.

An estimated 400 Los Angeles County Junior Lifeguards also competed at the U.S. Championships in a series of shorter races. The races were followed by a luau and awards ceremony in Redondo's Riviera Village.

A dinner and raffle to raise money for the U.S. paddleboard team will be held Saturday, August 12 at the H.T. Grill in Redondo Beach. For more information call 938-8413. ER