

# THE BEACH REPORTER

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## **Aussie winning ways continue in paddleboard (7/22)**

*By Jim Leinonen*

Australian Jamie Mitchell won his third consecutive Hennessey's U.S. Paddleboard Championships in a new course record over countryman Jackson English last Saturday in a time of 2:04:25.

Mitchell overcame the warm weather conditions and flat water to outlast English over the last portion of the race in a record field of 132 racers at Hermosa Beach.

Including the Hennessey's/Gotcha Surfwear Junior Lifeguard Sprint Championships, more than 700 people competed, up from around 650 a year ago.

Mitchell, 27, from Burleigh Heads, Queensland, has become the poster boy for the sport as he is undefeated this year and has won every race he has entered the past three years. The last race he entered and did not win was the Catalina Classic in 1999 when he was sick during the race and finished seventh.

"It's been a good year again," Mitchell said. "We've had three races in Hawaii and this is our fourth one. We have another two when we go back. Hopefully I can continue that (streak) next week to the Hennessey's in North Shore and then the Molokai on Aug. 1."

English, who lost to Mitchell in a sprint finish last year, finished second again and gave it his best shot to beat Mitchell and his final kick over the 12.8-mile race.

"I'm always trying but Jamie's just got something, that special extra gear right at the end of the race when it gets really tough," English said. "Jamie put a little bit of gap in me on the last 20 minutes and just enough, got one or two bumps (waves) and he just put that 30 seconds in front of me. I just couldn't catch him."

On top of fighting off all the contenders, Mitchell and the others had a more difficult task this year with flat water. When that happens, a paddleboarder must paddle constantly.

"It was just glass conditions," English said. "There was a little section on the way back where the wind got up a little bit and we could catch some bumps. But apart from that, it was just pretty much paddle, paddle, paddle and no rest."

The race, like in years past, had a small group advancing toward the R-10 buoy in the first half of the race.

"On the way out to the R-10 buoy, there was a group of about five or six of us and it was

a real game of cat-and-mouse," English said. "One person would sprint out and then come back to the pack, and someone else would go. At various times there were myself and Jamie, Ryan Addison, Gary Fortune, Sean Richardson were leading and in front and just all of us trying to cover each other, kind of like a boat race. Then when we turned the R-10 buoy, it's kind of everyone for themselves."

Once past the buoy, the group thinned out on the return leg as Mitchell and English broke away into the lead. But in the end, Mitchell was too much.

"He's an amazing athlete and I've just got to give it to him," English said. "He just knows how to dig really hard when it matters and he did that again today. He's done it quite often the last few years."

Addison of Malibu was the first American finisher when he crossed the line after Mitchell and English. Kyle Daniels of Hermosa Beach finished sixth.

Tom Duryea took his second title in three years in the Stock Class (12-foot paddleboards).

"It's always a great feeling," he said of the victory.

Like Mitchell, who was in Hawaii and was used to the heat, Duryea has been training and is racing at his peak at 39. He tried to stay within distance of the top unlimited racers.

"I know I have gotten a little bit faster at least."

Shaun Jappe, 19, of Oxnard Shores took home his fourth consecutive title in the 14-foot Open class.

"The key for this race was pretty much just to pace myself," Jappe said.

Jappe wanted to come back and defend his title, and was happy for another win. "I wanted to defend my title, so it makes you push that much harder."

Jane Cairns returned to the winner's circle as she captured her sixth U.S. Paddleboard Championship in the Wahine Open class after she came up short a year ago and finished third.

She was asked if winning ever gets old.

"There's always different conditions, different people, but a great event put on by Tim (Ritter)," Cairns said. "I love it. It's worth coming down from Santa Barbara."

She had hoped to face the defending champion, Haley Bakeup of Australia, but it did not happen this year.

D.J. O'Brien of Redondo Beach took second.

"The conditions were perfect today," O'Brien said. "It was so smooth out there. It was a pretty easy fast paddle."

Paul Hennessey and Ritter started this event less than 10 years ago and it has grown into a successful venture.

"It's kind of taking on a life of its own," said sponsor Paul Hennessey. "We're going to take it where it takes us and I think the sport itself is leading us, we're not leading it."

"I like to see it grow every year. The Junior Lifeguard Class is growing so in a few more years as those kids get older our long distance numbers should start going up," Ritter said.

Mitchell hopes that the visit by the Aussies has fired up the sport and the Americans in general. This year was more competitive, he thought.

"There are more people training harder and today I saw a bunch of guys at the front that we don't usually see at the front. That's really good," Mitchell said. "The sport is picking up. It has gone to the next level."

The winners were:

#### UNLIMITED ELITE

1. Jamie Mitchell, 27, Burleigh Heads, Queensland, Australia, 2:04:25 (new course record)
2. Jackson English, 29, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
3. Ryan Addison
4. Gary Fortune
5. Sean Richardson
6. Kyle Daniels, Hermosa Beach

#### TOP ELITE STOCK

1. Tom Duryea, 39, Coronado, 2:28:25
2. Dolan Ebersol
3. Mike Murphy

#### 14 OPEN CLASS

1. Shaun Jappe, 19, Oxnard Shores, 2:21:02
2. Jay Scheckman
3. Justin Mitchell

#### WAHINE OPEN

Jane Cairns, 33, Santa Barbara, 2:40:32

UNLIMITED

17 and Younger

Jon Mangiagli, Hermosa Beach, 2:39:08

Age 18 to 29

Chris Thompson, Long Beach, 2:21:35

Age 30 to 39

George Kabris, Ventura, 2:08:39

Age 40 to 49

Mick DiBetta, Burleigh Heads, Queensland, Australia, 2:10:17

Age 50 to 59

Ron Nelsen, San Diego, 2:18:52

STOCK

Age 19 to 29

Tom Hinds, Solana Beach

Age 30 to 39

Patrick Dickey, West Los Angeles, 2:38:36

Age 40 to 49

Jeffrey Page, Imperial Beach, 2:37:02

Age 50 to 59

Mark Cappa, Encinitas, 3:00:40

LIFEGUARD SPRINTS

1. Hayden Rydberg and Mark Graham
2. Jamie Mitchell and Mick Di Betta
3. Kyle Daniels and Mike Murphy

JUNIOR LIFEGUARD SPRINTS

AA (age 16 and 17)

Boys: Tyler Stover, 8:16.11

Girls: Sara Munro-Kennedy, 9:01.40

'A' (age 14 and 15)

Boys: Malcom Reid, 7:42.80

Girls: Dana Nelson, 8:13.40

'B' (age 12 and 13)

Boys: Matt Pittlook, 6:31.84

Girls: Kevyn Murphy, 6:39.94

'C' (age 9 to 11)

Boys: Jake Miller, 4:45.21

Girls: Keeley Murphy, 5:37.61

### **Hermosa AVP prep for Athens (7/22)**

Hermosa Beach. Next stop, Athens.

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