

Gold Coast The Bulletin *...catch up!*

Hurst wins swim then board race a day later

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FOUR-time Australian ironman champion Ky Hurst's golden run continued when he won the Hennesseys International Paddleboard Championships on the Gold Coast on Saturday.

Competing in his first paddleboard race, Hurst toppled a field of 80 world-class competitors to storm to victory in the 17-kilometre open-ocean race between Southport Spit and Burleigh Heads.

It was a feat made even more amazing given the 25-year-old was backing up from winning the Eyeline Noosa 1000 ocean swim title just a day earlier.

Hurst earned himself a special place in swimming history on Friday, breaking Olympic swimmer Kieren Perkin's record by winning the Noosa event for the sixth time.

After a wobbly start to Saturday's race, Hurst re-grouped to take the lead halfway through the course and went on to convincingly win in a time of one hour, 27 minutes and 13 seconds.

He crossed the line ahead of North Burleigh's 2001 Molokai to Oahu champion Aaron Bitmead (1:29.41) and Burleigh paddleboarding legend Mick Dibetta (1:32.46).

"I started off a bit shaky," said Hurst after the race.

"I actually rolled my board in the first five metres.

"My balance just wasn't there. By halfway I had warmed up and I just got better and better.

"I just tried to keep my line to stay up with the frontrunners. Luckily I scored a few great runners and just skipped away."

Remarkably, the experienced ironman's first attempt at riding a paddleboard was less than a week ago and coupled as his first paddle on an ocean-based surf-craft in more than two years.

"It was only my fourth time on this board," said Hurst.

"They're a whole new ball-game those 18-footers. But it's just a privilege to be a part of the race and I'm just elated to win."

Hurst's victory was another sign of his incredible versatility, something that should hold him in good stead in the future.

He said on Friday he was focusing on qualifying for the world open water swimming championships in Melbourne

next year and jumping back into ironman racing over summer.

In Saturday's women's open stock race, two-times Coolangatta Gold champion Hayley Bateup capped off a successful month when she crossed the line ahead of top Hawaiian competitor Kanesa Duncan and fellow Gold Coaster Shakira Westdorp, of Burleigh Heads.

Bateup, 26, recorded a time of 1:42.12 to finish ahead of Duncan (1:47.28) and Westdorp (1:50.00) over the 17km course.

The undisputed king of world paddleboarding, Currumbin's Jamie Mitchell, was unable to compete in the event due to sponsorship commitments.

Mitchell's unprecedented domination of the sport has seen him win all but one of the international events that he's entered during the past five years, including five consecutive Molokai to Oahu Paddleboard race wins as well as many US championships.

Fellow Gold Coast paddle-boarder Bruce Taylor, of North Burleigh, claimed the overall men's stock title with a time of 1:29.00 and overall second place.

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