

39 CREWS TO COMPETE IN NORTH WILDWOOD'S 21-MILE ISLAND ROW

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Author: GUY GARGAN For The Press

A record 39 crews are set to go in today's North Wildwood Beach Patrol Around The Island Row, a grueling 21-mile two-man boat race around Wildwood Island.

The 17th annual event will get a floating start at 9 a.m. at 15th Street beach and head around the island in a counter-clockwise direction. The oarsmen will first advance north to the Hereford Inlet and go under the Stone Harbor and Grassy Sound Bridges.

The crews will continue south in the Wildwood back bay and row under the Rio Grande Bridge. The boats proceed to the Cape May Bridge near the bottom of Wildwood, and will round the turn at the Cold Spring Inlet. Back in the ocean, the oarsmen row up the Wildwood beachfront back to 15th Street.

The marathon again has a good mixture of youth and experience. Many past winners of the race will be on hand, and also most of the current South Jersey Lifeguard stars.

"Guys train especially for this race and come back year after year," race director Lou Cirelli said. "The oarsmen who have been in this race many times know exactly what to expect and they know what to do. A lot of the rowers specialize in longer races. There isn't as much of an age factor in this race as there would be in a sprint race."

Veteran Max Bilkins of Wildwood Crest Beach Patrol has won the race three times, with three different partners. He'll go today with longtime crewmate Bick Murphy. Don't forget Ocean City's Ron Kirk, a two-time winner of the race and former meet record holder. He teams today with Chris Oves, who was second last year with Ted Evans.

Then of course there's Dennis Funk and George Miller, the Ventnor City alumni crew that won in a record 2 hours, 56 minutes, 6 seconds in 1987. Always in the hunt are Mike McGrath and Don MacEachern of Longport. The two have finished second three times and third twice. Terry Randolph and Marty Franco of Cape May also have done well.

The youth movement will be there too. Last year's winners were Bob McGinty and Cliff Murray of Ventnor, and the two will be tough to beat today. Two-time South Jersey 1 1/2-mile doubles row champions Craig Whitehead and Mike Cras of Avalon will be there too. Evans and Chuck Dunn, 1990 Island Row winners, were second to Whitehead and Cras in Monday's South Jerseys, and they should contend. Avalon's Mark Duszak and John Glomb will be on hand too. Joe and John Swift of Margate City should be in the top 10, along with Jim Gibbons and Steve McGwinn of Wildwood.

A team that could surprise is Jim McDevitt and Sarah Baker of Ventnor. McDevitt and McGinty stormed to victory this summer in the Dutch Hoffman and Margate Memorial 1 1/2-mile doubles rows.

Lineups

Brigantine - Bill Baldwin-John Jenkins; Atlantic City - Butch Josesh-John Forkin; Ventnor City - Bob McGinty-Cliff Murray; Wilmer Abbott-Paul Murray; Scott Jones-Jim Mason; Jim McDevitt-Sarah Baker; Dennis Funk-George Miller (alumni); Margate City - Joe Swift-John Swift; Longport - Mike McGrath-Don MacEachern; Tom Grimley-Jim Grimley; Judge Casciato-Paul Kosner; Ocean City - Joe Sheffer-Scott Heery; Ted Evans-Chuck Dunn; Ron Kirk-Chris Oves; Sea Isle City - John Meissner-Fran Lake; Avalon - Craig Whitehead-Mike Cras; Mark Franzoni-Rick Frick; Mark Duszak-John Glomb; Stone Harbor - Nick Christos-Chris Naylor; John Vizzard-Fritz Lloyd; Tim Wierman-Matt Thompson; North Wildwood - Dave Cooper-Dave Lindsay; Wildwood - Jim Gibbons-Steve McGwinn; Ed Snider-James Savage; Steve Stocks-Tom Killian; Tom McCann-Chris McCann; Jim Rolfing-Jim Toolan; Wildwood Crest - Max Bilkins-Bick Murphy; Tom Frederick-Ed McClain; Glenn Donahue-Matt Donahue; Rick Greco-Linda Kelly; Cape May - Terry Randolph-Marty Franco; Steve Mogck-Geoff Rife; Rich Demers-Harry Back; Tom McLaughlin-Chuck Calvanese; Cape May Point - Bob Cwik-Keith Jackson; Mike Mader-Russell Coombs; Belmar - Mike Mitchell-Tim Harmon; Long Branch - Joe Pawlish-Matt Schaad.

Champions

- 1976 - Jim Troy-Harry Zander, North Wildwood, 2:59.17;
- 1977 - Jim Troy-Harry Zander, North Wildwood;
- 1978 - Max Bilkins-John Greenwood, Wildwood Crest;
- 1979 - Max Bilkins-Dave Koper, Wildwood Crest;
- 1980 - Dave Kerr-Dan O'Malley, Avalon;
- 1981 - Dan O'Malley-Pete Soderman, Avalon;
- 1982 - Rick Shoyer-Tom Morrison, Ocean City;
- 1983 - Ron Kirk-John Herron, Ocean City, 2:57.05 (breaks record set in 1976);
- 1984 - Tom Morrison-John Millar, Ocean City, no time kept;
- 1985 - Max Bilkins-Bick Murphy, Wildwood Crest, 3:07.08;
- 1986 - Bill Sieck-Dan O'Malley, Avalon, race shortened due to ocean conditions;
- 1987 - Dennis Funk-George Miller, Ventnor City Alumni, 2:56.06 (meet record)
- 1988 - Ron Kirk-Chuck Dunn, Ocean City, 2:59.34;

1989 - John Kelley-Stuart Grant, Margate City, 3:00.08;

1990 - Ted Evans-Chuck Dunn, Ocean City, 3:03.50;

1991 - Bob McGinty-Cliff Murray, Ventnor City Alumni-Ventnor City, 3:03.49.

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GAZETTE LEADER

SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 1992

No kidding -- 19 miles

The Row returns

By ROB SEITZINGER
Sports Editor

While you're waking this (Wednesday) morning, don't be alarmed to see 30-some row boats circling the island; it's not an evacuation caused by seemingly endless rain-fall.

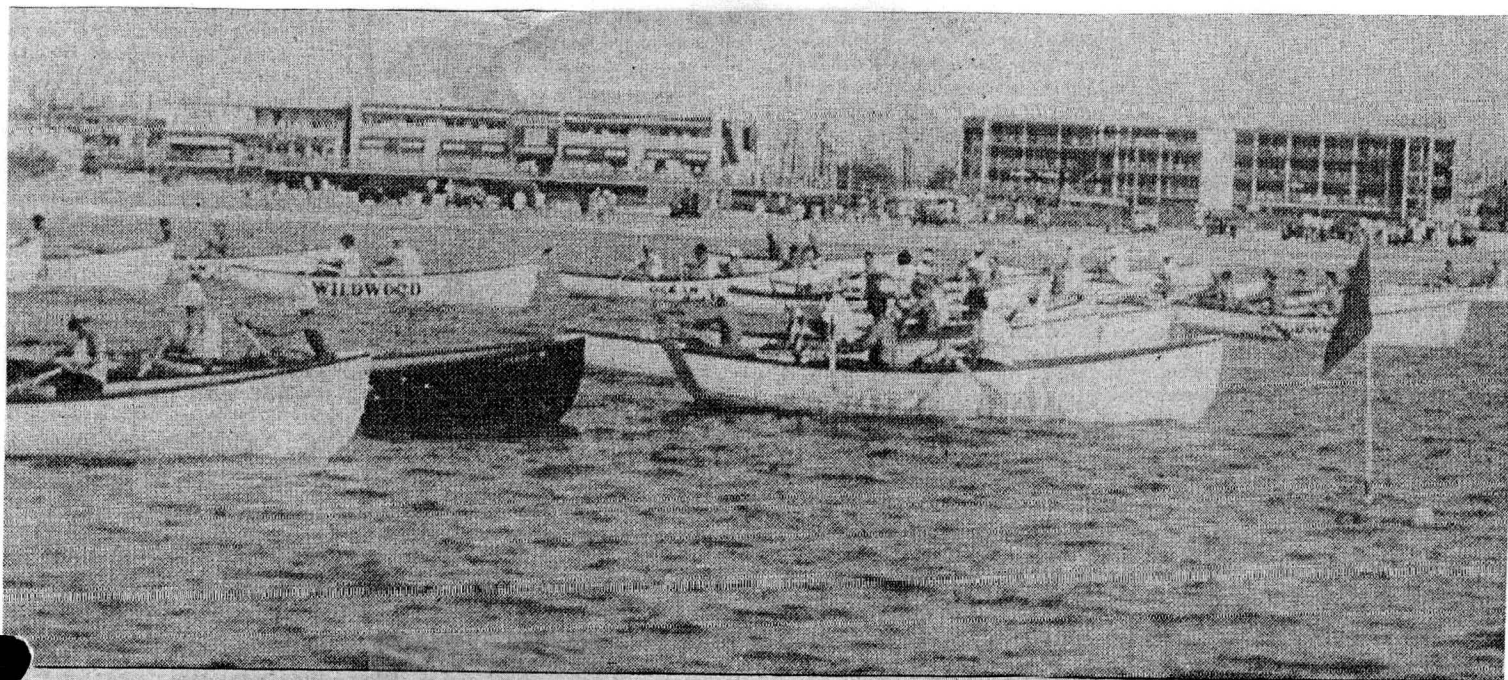
Rather, signaling the impending end of another summer of life-guard competition, the 17th Annual Around the Island Row will have returned to Five Mile Beach.

The race is a grueling 19 mile venture beginning and ending in North Wildwood that has attracted a bit of a cult following. People spotted wearing an Around the Island Row T-shirt usually can expect to hear, "Were you in that race?"

Race director Lou Cirelli expects "as big a field as we have had in a while, it might be the biggest field," with 39 entries listed as of Monday and another two or three possibilities from North Jersey beaches.

Highlighting the field will be four previous winners of The Row. Last year's champs, Ventnor's Bob McGinty and Cliff Murray, return after posting a 3:03.49 last year. Ocean City's Ted Evans and Chuck Dunn, who won the 1990 race in 3:03.00, are again teamed after Dunn teamed with Cape May's Geoff Rife last year. Wildwood Crest veterans Max Bilkins and

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"The Row Returns"



AROUND THE ISLAND: Look for the floating start off the 15th Street beach Wednesday morning at 9 a.m.



Photo by Rob Seitzinger

NUMBER FOUR! Maxie Bilkins holds up four fingers to signify his his fourth Around the Island Row title, which is a race record. Bick Murphy (left) gives the thumbs up as the Crest tandem won the race for the second time.

Bilkins sets record with fourth win *Bilkins, Murphy come from behind to win The Row, again*

By ROB SEITZINGER
 Sports Editor

FIVE MILE BEACH -- Because the largest-ever field of 36 crews in Wednesday's 17th Annual Around the Island Row were forced to fight through unaccommodating currents for virtually all of the 19-mile venture, Wildwood Crest's Scott "Bick" Murphy and Max Bilkins said they were able to wear down the field and win the race in 3:10.15.

Bick and Bilk, sitting in eighth place and far off the lead boat

through Hereford Inlet, steadily picked up crew after laboring crew until they were third at the George Redding Bridge. Three previous race winners turned the rock pile in the Crest and headed for the fin-

ish line holding the top three spots. Ventnor's elder statesmen, Dennis Funk, 40, and George Miller, 41, who won the race in 1987, had led the race since the George Redding Bridge and turned for the finish

"It was basically our race to lose at that point," Bilkins said. "The only way we lose at that point is if we completely fell apart and I knew that wasn't going to happen."

line desperately trying to hold on to their diminishing lead. Ocean City's Ted Evans and Chuck Dunn, winners of the 1990 Row, had established itself as serious contenders and were steadily gaining ground on Funk and Miller. But it was Bilkins and Murphy, who haven't competed in The Row together since winning it in 1985, chasing down the two lead boats with smooth, long, powerful strokes.

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 "Bilkins, Murphy"

Bilkins, Murphy notch another win

"Bilkins, Murphy"
Continued from Page 7

Funk and Miller were fading, admittedly, after the rock pile and were overtaken by Evans and Dunn and then Bilkins and Murphy. Into Wildwood, the Crest boat made its move and took the lead, holding off each of Ocean City's surges to win the race less than half a second ahead of Ocean City. After crossing the finish line, Bilkins held his hand high with four fingers outstretched, signaling his fourth Around the Island Row Championship, which is the most victories by anyone to have ever competed in The Row.

"Once we got ahead of Ocean City I let myself get in front of them so we could keep a better eye on them," Bilkins said, "but also because they couldn't see us. If they wanted to see where we were, they would have to turn all the way around and that would have messed up their timing.

"It was basically our race to lose at that point. The only way we lose at that point is if we completely fell apart and I knew that wasn't going to happen."

Evans and Dunn fared well through the race, overcoming a start in which three boats headed toward the shore despite heavy swells through Hereford Inlet while the rest of the boats, including Evans and Dunn, went wide to take the safe route, or "the long way," as Evans said.

"Three boats cut in real close to shore, we went outside.... That kind of threw us off when those three boats went inside, we didn't know they did that. We thought we were in first place at the first bridge, but then we turned around and realized we were in fourth place."

Evans and Dunn, much in the same way as Bilkins and Murphy, began picking off boats through the back bay until they were in striking distance by the toll bridge in Cape May.

"We were in a three-way tie coming out the inlet but Funk and Mil-

ler dropped back and we knew they were pretty much finished," Dunn said. "We never really slowed down, but neither did (Bilkins and Murphy)."

Evans said, "Every time we put on a surge, they put on a surge. Once you get ahead, you can control the race and that's what they did. Every time we made a move, they knew to speed up a little bit."

Funk and Miller, a perennial favorite because they are Ventnor Beach Patrol alumni, led for much of the race after passing leaders Marty Franco and Terry Randolph of Cape May at the George Redding Bridge. They led until being passed by Evans and Dunn in the ocean off Diamond Beach.

The Row's oldest team was asked at what point of the race did they realize they were 40 years old.

"We got tired around the jetty," Funk said. "We could see the field moving on us before the Cape May toll booth and we were just going to try to hold on from there. Once we turned the jetty, though, we could see the guys moving on us."

Miller said despite taking on water last year through Hereford Inlet, the tandem decided to row close to shore again despite the swells.

"Last year we took on water when we did that, but this year we got off to a great start," he said.

Many of the crews had trouble finishing the race, as some didn't cross the line until 45 minutes after Bilkins and Murphy. Most said the trouble came from fighting the tides and from the sun and humidity, which became a factor in the race's final four miles. Two-time Row champ Ron Kirk, rowing with Chris Oves, had to withdraw from the race shortly after turning the jetty because of cramps. James Savage of Wildwood, rowing with Ed Snyder, was forced to do the same thing. Sea Isle's Fran Lake finished the race against advice of race officials, but then suffered through cramps that had him screaming in pain. Lake and Kirk

Results of the 17th Around the Island Row

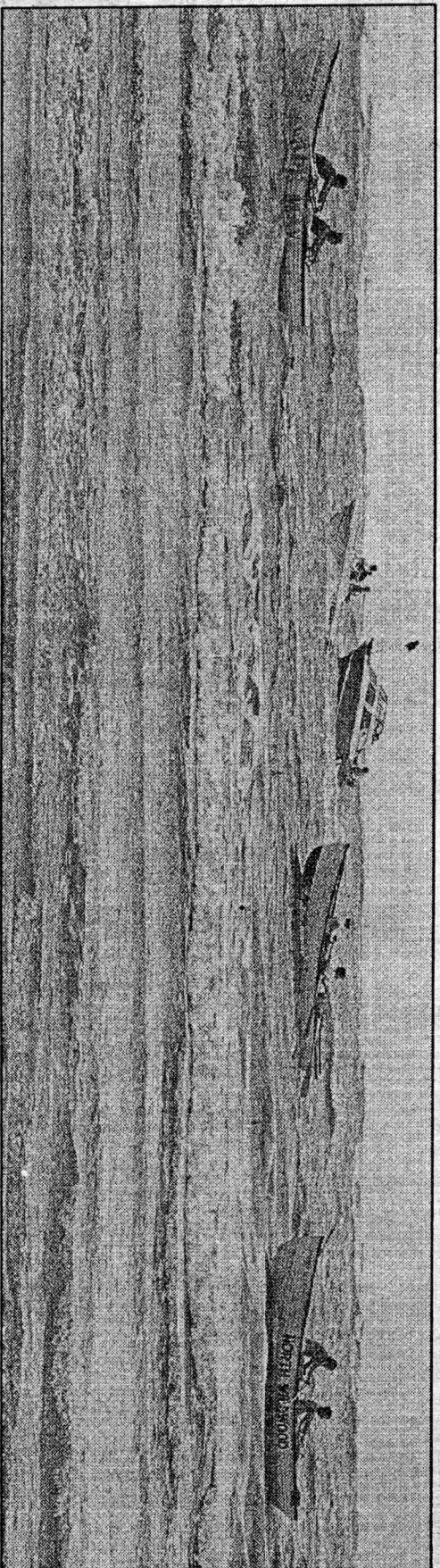
1. Max Bilkins/Scott Murphy (WCBP)	3:10.15
2. Ted Evans/Chuck Dunn (OCBP)	3:10.42
3. Dennis Funk/George Miller (VBP)	3:11.54
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13. Glenn and Matt Donahue (WCBP)	3:23.04
14. Jim Gibbons/Steve McGwinn (WBP)	3:23.36
15. Geoff Rife/Steve Moczg (CMBP)	3:24.14
16. Mark Duszak/John Glomb (ABP)	3:25.32
17. Tom Killian/Steve Stocks (WBP)	3:25.52
18. Tom and Chris McCann (WBP)	3:26.32
19. Tim Wierman/Matt Thompson (SHBP)	3:27.00
20. Jim McDevitt/Kevin Murphy (VBP)	3:28.08
21. Butch Joseph/John Forkin (ACBP)	3:29.10
22. Linda Kelly/Rick Greco (WCBP)	3:30.21
23. Dave Cooper/Dave Linsay (NWBP)	3:31.35
24. Jim Toolan/Jim Rohlfing (WBP)	3:35.35
25. Tom McGlaughlin/Chuck Calvanese (CMBP)	3:36.01
26. Keith Jackson/Bob Cwik (CMPBP)	3:36.52
27. Mike Mitchell/Tim Harmon (Belmar)	3:40.02
28. Nick Christos/Chris Naylor (SHBP)	3:40.46
29. Rich Demers/Harry Back (CMBP)	3:43.31
30. Tom and Jim Grimley (LBP)	3:44.26
31. Fritz Lloyd/John Vizzard (SHBP)	3:45.19
32. John Meissner/Fran Lake (SICBP)	3:50.07
33. Mark Franzoni/Rick Frick (ABP)	3:57.08
34. Mike Mader/Russell Coombs (CMPBP)	3:58.34
35. Ed Snyder/James Savage (WBP)	DNF
36. Chris Oves/Ron Kirk (OCBP)	DNF

were taken to Burdette Tomlin Memorial Hospital, but only Kirk was treated. Both are OK.

"Max said before the race, 'It's overcast but it looks like it's going to burn off,' and he said 'I hope the sun does come out because that will take care of the people who are truly not in shape,'" Murphy said when asked how the conditions affected the winners. "I don't mean that in a spiteful way, but we knew we were in shape and that we could handle it."

Bilkins said, "I was a little concerned we weren't going to have the tides with us the whole race.

but the more we thought about it, we said maybe it will work in our favor because we consider ourselves in pretty good shape and it would take its toll on the guys the guys who are in good shape but not real good shape. We were real patient, I credit (Bick) for setting the pace. I thought we were going slow, but the patience worked out for us. We were taking one stroke while the others were taking one and half, but we were moving better than they were, so I knew let's just stay with that because we're moving with real good efficiency and the other crews are working harder."



Staff photo by Tom Kinnemard
Two-man teams compete Wednesday morning off the Wildwood beach in the 21-mile North Wildwood Around the Island Row.

Wildwood Crest duo wins 21-mile North Wildwood Island Row

By GUY GARGAN
For The Press

NORTH WILDWOOD—It was just like old times for Max Bilkins and Bick Murphy on Wednesday as the pair won the 21-mile North Wildwood Beach Patrol Around The Island Row.

The Wildwood Crest Beach Patrol veterans came from off the pace to pull even with two other boats with seven miles to go before rallying to win in 3 hours, 10 minutes, 15 seconds. Before this summer, Bilkins and Murphy hadn't been a rowing team since 1985, when they also won the Around The Island Row.

Lt. Bilkins, a Wildwood Crest life-guard for 21 years, is now the only four-time winner of the event. His other victories were in 1978 with John Greenwood and 1979 with Dave Koper.

"It's an advantage on my part that I've rowed this race so often," Bilkins said. "This race is kind of my favorite. I know the course and some of the other crews, knowing that, follow us. I've had a lot of partners and I want to give them all credit."

The 40-year old Bilkins, whose first name is pronounced Mox, and the 33-year old Murphy stayed in contention the first two-thirds of the race. After

the final turn past the Cold Spring inlet, the Crest duo caught Dennis Funk and George Miller, the Ventnor City Alumni crew that led in the back bay.

Ted Evans and Chuck Dunn of Ocean City were also making their bid, and the three boats were even for about three miles in the final ocean run to the finish. Bilkins and Murphy beat Evans and Dunn by five boat lengths, with the Ocean City pair finishing second in 3:10:42. After a great effort, Funk and Miller faded but held on to get third in 3:11:54.

"I told Max this is going to be our race," Murphy said. "Max is more

knowledgeable than anyone about this race. He barely even turned around to look. He knows at each part of the race if it's time for to change pace or take a water break. I was hurting when we got to the (Cold Spring) inlet but we took a drink break and once we got to Diamond Beach, I had a little air back in me. We passed Ocean City and Ventnor and they didn't come back after that."

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The powerfully built 6-foot-3 Bilkins and the slender but strong 5-10 Murphy didn't row for seven years because Murphy moved to Atlanta. The sternman returned to the Crest beach this summer, and he and Bilkins were second in the Cape May County Championships, fourth in the Dutch Hoffmans and fourth in the South Jersey Championships.

"We've been in the hunt in all the other races," Bilkins said. "In this race, you throw out a lot of variables likes waves and swells. You have to be patient and smart. Bick is a great athlete who's in great shape, and I relied on him for the pace. My original goal was to finish in the top three, but once you get up that close, you have to get a little extra drive."

Thirty-six two-man boats got a floating starting at 15th Street beach at 9:35 a.m. and headed north. In the Hereford Inlet, Terry Randolph and Marty Franco of Cape May led Ron Kirk and Chris Oves of Ocean City by 1 1/2 boat lengths, with Funk and Miller not far behind.

Randolph and Franco led Funk and Miller by six boats at the Stone Harbor Bridge (three miles into race), but at the Rio Grande Bridge in the bay (10-mile mark), the Ventnor Alumni had a slight lead. At the Cape May Bridge (14-mile mark), Funk and Miller led Evans and Dunn by four boats, with Bilkins and Murphy third.

"When you're in first place, you get to see the whole race develop behind you, so you try to get there," Funk said. "We still had the lead for about the first half-mile after the (last) turn."

Kirk and Oves were in contention back in the stretch run, but Kirk cramped by badly and had to be

taken to Burdette Tomlin Hospital. He was treated and released.

"We were in fourth place after the turn into the ocean, about 70 yards from the lead," Oves said. "We were right in it. Ron said he had a cramp in his toe and I told him to fix it (by rubbing it and drinking water). But a couple strokes later, he nearly collapsed, and I called it."

Results

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