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# ROWING / THIRTY CREWS TO TACKLE WEDNESDAY'S AROUND THE ISLAND ROW

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The 30 two-man crews in this year's North Wildwood Beach Patrol Around The Island Row will need some extra navigational skill to go with their oarsmanship, strength and endurance. There are several shallow places in the first seven miles of the 21-mile race. The 27th annual counterclockwise row around Wildwood will get a floating start at 6:45 a.m. Wednesday at 15th Avenue beach in North Wildwood.

The Around The Island Row is the summer season's most unusual and difficult lifeguard event, and it's easily the longest. The meet record of two hours, 55 minutes, 30 seconds was set in 1999 by the Ventnor Beach Patrol alumni team of Dennis Funk and George Miller.

"It's shallow water," race director Charlie Iepson said. "It should be an interesting race because if the crews aren't careful, they could get stuck. A lot of guys always come by a few days before the race and look at the water. Funk and Miller were here (Sunday) and also the Wildwood Crest guys (including Max Bilkins and Bick Murphy, five-time winners of the race)."

The crews row in the ocean from 15th Avenue north to the Hereford Inlet at the top of Wildwood.

They go under the Stone Harbor Bridge and the Grassy Sound Bridge. After making the turn, the boats continue southward in the back bay, proceeding under the Rio Grande Bridge and the Cape May Bridge.

The rowers go to the Cold Spring Inlet at the bottom of Wildwood and then make the turn into the ocean. The crews do the final miles in the ocean through Wildwood Crest and Wildwood as they head back to the 15th Avenue start/finish line.

Darrick Kobierowski of the Stone Harbor patrol won the race with Tom Lake last August. Kobierowski's partner this year is Dave Insogna. Avalon's Craig Whitehead and John Wachter won the Upper Township Six-Mile Bay Row in 2001 and 2002, and might contend. Funk and Miller were sixth last year and fourth in 2000. Wildwood's Steve Stocks and Tom Kilian tied for second place two years ago with Margate captain Carl Smallwood Jr. and chief Rich Kugel.

Ventnor brothers Andrew and David Funk swept the mile doubles row this summer in the "Big Three," the Dutch Hoffman Memorials, the Margate Memorials and the South Jersey Lifeguard Championship. But the row around Wildwood is a different kind of race, and the Funk twins, Dennis' sons, will be underdogs Wednesday.

The only crews ever to win the South Jersey Championship and the Around The Island Row in the same year were Avalon's Dan O'Malley and Dave Kerr in 1980, and Ocean City's Ron Kirk and John Herron in 1983.

#### LINEUP

ATLANTIC CITY - Pat Scherbin-Rick Plackter, Chuck Gowdy-Nick Bennett; AVALON - Craig Whitehead-John Wachter, Dan Karabin-Tim Karabin, Anselm Sauter-Ryan Broderick; CAPE MAY - Geoff Rife-Jim Wadlow; LONGPORT - Mike McGrath-B.J. Fox, Nick Grasso-Dan Garbutt (Garbutt is an Ocean City lifeguard); MARGATE - Steve Swift-Ashton Funk, Carl Smallwood Jr.-Rich Kugel, Chris Graves-Greg Smallwood, John Kelley-Brian O'Shea (alumni), Jim Swift-John Swift (alumni), John Swift-John Barallo (alumni); NORTH WILDWOOD - Tom Ogden-Romolo Forcino, Rich Bostwick-Steve Del Monte, Bill Kindle-Lou Dwyer; SEA ISLE CITY - Jim Savage-Dan McGuinn; STONE HARBOR - Darrick Kobierowski-Dave Insogna; UPPER TOWNSHIP - Greg Van Gilder-Mike Manning; VENTNOR - Andrew Funk-David Funk, Jim Mason-Mike Skey (Mason is an alumni), Dennis Funk-George Miller (alumni); WILDWOOD

- Steve Stocks-Tom Kilian, Steve McGuinn-Nate Dervin, Ed Schneider-Mike Potter, Dave Reidy-Mike Regan; WILDWOOD CREST - Max Bilkins-Bick Murphy, Tom Pietrzak-Jack Moore, Terry McGovern-Ron Ayres.

#### NORTH WILDWOOD BEACH PATROL AROUND THE ISLAND ROW CHAMPIONS

2001 - Darrick Kobierowski-Tom Lake, Stone Harbor, 3:02:45

2000 - Rob Lythgoe-Tom Lake, Stone Harbor, 2:59:58

1999 - Dennis Funk-George Miller, Ventnor alumni, 2:55:30

1998 - Ted Frankel-Mike Alton, Atlantic City, 2:59:54

1997 - Craig Whitehead-Mark Wachlin, Avalon, 3:16:07

1996 - Max Bilkins-Bick Murphy, Wildwood Crest, 3:04:28

1995 - Max Bilkins-Bick Murphy, Wildwood Crest, 2:57:48

1994 - Steve Mogck-Jim Wadlow, Cape May, 2:59:50

1993 - Max Bilkins-Bick Murphy, Wildwood Crest, 3:04:50

1992 - Max Bilkins-Bick Murphy, Wildwood Crest, 3:10:15

1991 - Bob McGinty-Cliff Murray, Ventnor alumni, 3:03:49

1990 - Ted Evans-Chuck Dunn, Ocean City, 3:03:50

THE FOLLOWING TEXT WAS NOT PUBLISHED:

1989 - John Kelley-Stuart Grant, Margate, 3:00:08

1988 - Ron Kirk-Chuck Dunn, Ocean City, 2:59:34

1987 - Dennis Funk-George Miller, Ventnor alumni, 2:56:06

1986 - Bill Sieck-Dan O'Malley, Avalon (race course shortened)

1985 - Max Bilkins-Bick Murphy, Wildwood Crest, 3:07:08

1984 - Tom Morrison-John Millar, Ocean City (no times kept)

1983 - Ron Kirk-John Herron, Ocean City, 2:57:05

1982 - Rick Shoyer-Tom Morrison, Ocean City

1981 - Dan O'Malley-Pete Soderman, Avalon

1980 - Dan O'Malley-Dave Kerr, Avalon

1979 - Max Bilkins-Dave Koper, Wildwood Crest

1978 - Max Bilkins-John Greenwood, Wildwood Crest

1977 - Jim Troy-Harry Zander, North Wildwood

1976 - Jim Troy-Harry Zander, North Wildwood, 2:59:17.

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# LIFEGUARD RACES / MARGATE CREW SPRINTS TO ISLAND ROW VICTORY

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A marathon became a 100-yard sprint Wednesday as three crews battled to the end in the North Wildwood Beach Patrol Around The Island Row. Carl Smallwood Jr. and Rich Kugel of Margate charged from third place with only 100 yards left in the race to win the 21-mile row in 3 hours, 8 minutes, 23 seconds.

Smallwood and Kugel finally caught leaders Andrew and David Funk of Ventnor with about 20 yards to go and won by two seconds, a boatlength in front. The crews had to fight a strong current in the ocean, and that made for relatively slow finishing times.

Before the Margate boat's final burst, the Funk twins appeared to be going head-to-head with North Wildwood's Tom Ogden and Romolo Forcino for the win. The North Wildwood team finished two boatlengths behind Ventnor in third place.

Smallwood and Kugel are more than Margate lifeguards. Kugel, 37, is the chief of the 65-person Margate patrol, while the 32-year-old Smallwood is one of two Margate captains. This was their fifth time together in the Wildwood row. They were third in 1998, fourth in 1999, tied for second in 2000 and third last year.

"After racing so close before, it feels great to win," Kugel, the stern, said. "It just seemed like the other years a dark horse would come on and win. I don't have to row it any more now, right?"

"As long as you stay top three in the ocean (the race's final seven miles) you always have a shot. I wanted to start our final sprint even sooner, but we didn't. Eventually, Carl said, 'This is it, it's now or never.' After three hours, you never think it's going to be that close."

The Around The Island Row is a race with difficult and varied conditions.

"This is the seventh time I've been in this race," Smallwood said. "1991 was the first one. You absolutely have to learn how to row this race. The first couple years I'd follow the guys who rowed it before. Now I know what points to hit and know the course.

"I knew it would be close. You always hope you have something left. I think what saved us was we stayed closer to the beach. It was definitely calmer and the ocean didn't beat us as bad."

The top three boats went all the way around the island as the leaders. Margate and Ventnor were tied at the Stone Harbor Bridge, and the Funks had a four or five-boat lead through the back bay. Forcino and Ogden moved into second place before the Cape May Bridge.

It was the third row around the island for the 24-year-old Funks and their first attempt in five years. They were 13th in 1996 and 19th in 1997.

"Our strategy was to be relaxed and wherever we were, we were," David Funk said. "We felt great and we had a sizeable lead rounding the jetty (the Cold Spring Inlet at the bottom of Wildwood).

"It was a great race. About the last mile we started to feel our lack of distance training. I'm definitely disappointed to lead the whole race and lose at the end, but that's ocean racing."

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RESULTS

1. Margate (Carl Smallwood Jr.-Rich Kugel) 3:08.23; 2. Ventnor (Andrew Funk-David Funk) 3:08.25; 3. North Wildwood (Tom Ogden-Romolo Forcino) 3:08.27; 4. Ventnor alumni (Dennis Funk-George Miller) 3:15.21; 5. Stone Harbor (Darrick Kobierowski-Dave Insogna) 3:19.45; 6. Ventnor/Ventnor alumni (Mike Skey-Jim Mason) 3:20.25; 7. Longport (Mike McGrath-B.J. Fox) 3:21.17; 8. Cape May (Geoff Rife-Jim Wadlow) 3:21.30; 9. Margate (Chris Graves-Greg Smallwood) 3:22.00; 10. Margate alumni (John Kelley-Brian O' Shea) 3:22.15; 11. Sea Isle City (Jim Savage-Dan McGuinn) 3:23.10; 12. Wildwood Crest (Max Bilkins-Bick Murphy) 3:24.09; 13. Longport/Ocean City (Nick Grasso-Dan Garbutt) 3:26.00; 14. Margate alumni/Margate (John Swift-Steve Swift) 3:28.02; 15. Wildwood Crest (Terry McGovern-Ron Ayres) 3:28.30; 16. Wildwood (Steve Stocks-Tom Kilian) 3:30.20; 17. Avalon (Dan Karabin-Tim Karabin) 3:31.29; 18. Avalon (Craig Whitehead-John Wachter) 3:33.20; 19. Margate alumni (Jim Swift-Joe Swift) 3:36.13; 20. Wildwood Crest (Tom Pietrzak-Jack Moore) 3:37.20; 21. Atlantic City (Pat Scherbin-Rick Plackter) 3:38.10; 22. North Wildwood (Bill Kindle-Lou Dwyer) 3:39.57; 23. Wildwood (Ed Schneider-Mike Potter) 3:43.26; 24. North Wildwood (Rich Bostwick-Steve Del Monte) 3:50.28; 25. Wildwood (Steve McGuinn-Nate Dervin) 3:53.26; 26. Avalon (Anselm Sauter-Ryan Broderick) 4:00.10; 27. Wildwood (Dave Reidy-Mike Regan) 4:07.45; DNF - Upper Township (Greg Van Gilder-Mike Manning), Atlantic City (Chuck Gowdy-Nick Bennett).

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