



LIFEGUARDS / SMALLWOOD, KUGEL TO DEFEND AROUND THE ISLAND ROW CROWN

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The 28th annual North Wildwood Beach Patrol Around The Island Row will be held at 6:45 a.m. Tuesday at 15th Avenue beach in North Wildwood.

The Around The Island Row goes counter-clockwise around Wildwood island. The doubles crews get a floating start at 15th Avenue and head north to the Hereford Inlet at the top of Wildwood. The boats go under the Stone Harbor Bridge and the Grassy Sound Bridge, and turn south into the back bay.

The race continues past the Rio Grande Bridge and the Cape May Bridge, and the crews proceed to the Cold Spring inlet at the bottom of the island. The race finishes back in the ocean as the boats head north again to the 15th Avenue start-finish line.

Carl Smallwood Jr. and chief Rich Kugel of the Margate Beach Patrol won the 21-mile race last year by a boat length in 3 hours, 8 minutes, 23 seconds. They're entered again, along with Ventnor's two-time South Jersey champions Andrew Funk and David Funk, who were second in 2002 in 3:08.25.

The Ventnor alumni crew of Dennis Funk (father of Andrew and David) and George Miller will also race Tuesday. Funk and Miller took fourth last year in 3:15.21 and won this summer's Upper Township M.S. Six-Mile Bay Row on July 28.

Craig Whitehead of Avalon will row with Margate's Greg Smallwood. Geoff Rife and Jim Wadlow of Cape May are also entered.

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LIFEGUARDS / FUNK TWINNS GRAB ROWING TITLE

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Ventnor lifeguards Andrew Funk and David Funk emphatically won the North Wildwood Beach Patrol Around The Island Row, the only prize that had eluded them, on Thursday morning. In their fourth career row around Wildwood island, the 25-year-old Funk twins left no doubt by winning by more than three minutes in 3 hours, 2 minutes, 25 seconds.

Margate's Carl Smallwood Jr. and chief Rich Kugel, who edged the Funks for first place in 2002, were second in 3:05.47. The Ventnor alumni crew of Dennis Funk, 51 and the father of Andrew and David, and longtime partner George Miller, 52, finished third in 3:07.00.

The Funk brothers won every race this summer but the first one, the Longport Memorials. They swept the "Big Three," the Dutch Hoffman Memorials, the Margate Memorials and the South Jersey Championships, for the second year in a row. Previously, they had won the Longport Memorials doubles row in 2002 and 1999.

The island race was postponed Tuesday due to thick fog, and it finally began at 8 a.m. Thursday, over an hour later than its usual starting time. The rowers at times had to fight the current and had problems with the late-morning heat.

"This was the only lifeguard race that we hadn't won," David Funk said. "Andrew knows the course pretty well; he's the bow man. It's a challenging course and there's a lot of things you have to do in the bay. Today the tide was with you half the time and against you half the time. You had to maneuver into a certain spot to not get caught (by the current).

"Our strategy obviously was to get out in front. We got into our rhythm. Last year we battled with Carl and Rich, and that took a lot out of us. This year we kept a big enough lead."

In the 28 years of the 21-mile Around The Island Row, only Avalon's Dan O'Malley and Dave Kerr (1980), Ocean City's Ron Kirk and John Herron (1983) and now the Funks have won the South Jersey Championships doubles race and the row around Wildwood in the same year.

"It feels good to win, especially after being so close last year," Andrew Funk said. "The entire race we felt really good. We were breathing well, staying relaxed and drinking lots of water. We train all year, usually for 1 1/2 -mile races which are 16 minutes long, so it's good to do well in this race."

Andrew Funk, who last Friday became the first guard ever to win the South Jersey Championship in doubles and singles rowing, is unsure if he'll return to the beach next summer. Smallwood is now a Margate alumnus.

"It was a good row, but it was hot," Smallwood said. "You had to drink a lot of fluids and I drank too much at first. Andrew and David led the whole way. They were clearly the class of the field."

Funk and Miller, who won in 1987 and set the meet record of 2:55.30 in a 1999 victory, continue to row well.

"I thought these kids had no respect for us," Miller, the stern, said with a smile. "His twins and my twins (Miller has twin daughters) used to play in our boat when they were little."

Fourth in 3:08.00 was another veteran crew, Brian O'Shea, a 46-year-old Avalon alumnus, and 54-year-old Jim Mason, a Ventnor alumnus. In only their second time in the boat together, Avalon's Craig Whitehead teamed up with Margate's Greg Smallwood to get fifth in 3:08.14.

NOTES: The only female crew, Atlantic City's Therese Hudson and Lexie Zaborowski, was 21st

in 3:54.41. ... Swimmers Mike Tripician of Ventnor and Nick Macko of North Wildwood each tried the island row for the first time. Tripician placed 15th with partner John Hazlett and Macko finished 19th with Kevin Quinn. ... Wildwood Crest's Max Bilkins and Bick Murphy, still known as the kings of the race with wins in 1985, 1992, 1993, 1995 and 1996, were 10th.

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RESULTS

1. Ventnor (Andrew Funk-David Funk) 3:02.25; 2. (Margate alumni-Margate) Carl Smallwood Jr.-Rich Kugel, 3:05.47; 3. Ventnor alumni (Dennis Funk-George Miller) 3:07.00; 4. Avalon alumni-Ventnor alumni (Brian O'Shea-Jim Mason) 3:08.00; 5. Avalon alumni-Margate alumni (Craig Whitehead-Greg Smallwood) 3:08.14; 6. Cape May (Jim Wadlow-Geoff Rife) 3:08.35; 7. Wildwood (Steve McGuinn-Mike Regan) 3:11.22; 8. Sea Isle City (Jim Savage-Dan McGuinn) 3:13.03; 9. Avalon (Dan Karabin-Evan Pierce) 3:13.40; 10. Wildwood Crest (Max Bilkins-Bick Murphy) 3:13.52; 11. Wildwood (Ed Schneider-Mike Potter) 3:14.55; 12. Margate alumni-Ventnor alumni (Jim Swift-Scott Jones) 3:15.57; 13. Wildwood (Steve Stocks-Tom Kilian) 3:17.30; 14. Wildwood Crest (Terry McGovern-John Way) 3:17.46; 15. Ventnor (John Hazlett-Mike Tripician) 3:19.30; 16. Wildwood (Mike McConnell-Ryan Myers) 3:22.51; 17. North Wildwood (Bill Kindle-Lou Dwyer) 3:25.42; 18. Wildwood Crest (Jack Moore-Tom Pietrzak) 3:30.07; 19. North Wildwood (Kevin Quinn-Nick Macko) 3:32.00; 20. Atlantic City (John Ammerman-Greg Egnor) 3:54.40; 21. Atlantic City (Therese Hudon-Lexie Zaborowski) 3:54.41.

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