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# Lifeguard races / First-time duo easily wins Around the Island Row

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Carl Smallwood Jr. and B.J. Fox compete in the row together for the first time and beat some more established teams.

Carl Smallwood Jr. and B.J. Fox have both been in the North Wildwood Beach Patrol Around The Island Row several times, but never as a team until Tuesday morning.

Smallwood and Fox, both former lifeguards, overpowered a field of 18 other doubles crews to win the 33rd annual row around Wildwood in 2 hours, 48 minutes, 19 seconds. Smallwood and Fox, rowing in a Margate boat, pulled away in the final ocean sprint and finished well over two minutes ahead of anyone else.

Behind them were the event's two most renowned crews. Dennis Funk and George Miller, 56 and 57 respectively, placed second in 2:50:40, and Wildwood Crest's Max Bilkins, 56, and Bick Murphy, 49, were third in 2:51:36.

Funk and Miller have won the race four times, and Bilkins and Murphy are six-time winners.

The Around The Island Row is a 20-mile race in which veteran oarsmen usually outdo younger sprint doubles crews.

Smallwood, 37, is a state trooper and former Margate Beach Patrol rower, and Fox, 35, is an

Atlantic City Fire Department captain and a former Atlantic City and Longport guard.

Fox sat at the awards ceremony with wife Kathleen and daughters Madelyn, 5, Megan, 4, and Lauren, 14 months.

"Carl and I teamed up this year, and we started rowing in May," Fox, the stern, said. "We're usually done by 7 (a.m.). We see Dennis and George out there (in the Margate-Ventnor backbay) every morning.

"I used to row this race with Mike McGrath and John Swift, and the best I got was third with John one year. It feels great to win it. It's an honor to have my name on the list with people like Bilkins and Murphy, Funk and Miller, and Murphy and Wadlow (2007 winners Kevin Murphy and Jim Wadlow)."

Smallwood also won the Around The Island Row in 2002 with Margate chief Rich Kugel.

"We felt good the whole race, and B.J. kept a good (stroke) rate," Smallwood said. "I think we benefited in the backbay against the headwind because we're a bigger crew. It feels just as good to win it again."

Smallwood and Fox got the lead at the Stone Harbor Bridge, a mile into the race, increased the lead over Funk and Miller to a minute in the bay and continued to pull away.

"The headwind made it harder, but I think they would have won in any conditions," Miller, the stern, said.

Bilkins has been in most of the 33 island row races, including the first one in 1976.

"Bick and I still like competing and keeping in shape, and hopefully we can inspire younger guys on our patrol," Bilkins said. "We had a (Wildwood Crest) rookie, Liam Leyden, who rowed really well today."

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RESULTS

1. Margate alumnus-Atlantic City/Longport alumnus (Carl Smallwood Jr.-B.J. Fox) 2:48:19; 2. Ventnor alumni (Dennis Funk-George Miller) 2:50:40; 3. Wildwood Crest (Max Bilkins-Bick Murphy) 2:51:36; 4. Margate (Chris Graves-Greg Smallwood) 2:53:07; 5. Upper Township-Wildwood alumnus (Wayne MacMurray-Bill Kindle) 2:54:44; 6. Margate alumnus-Ventnor alumnus (Jim Swift-Scott Jones) 2:54:51; 7. Wildwood Crest (Terry McGovern-Liam Leyden) 2:55:55; 8. Margate alumnus-Ventnor alumnus (John Swift-Jim McDevitt) 2:56:31; 9. Cape May (Jack Lindeman-Jim Wadlow) 2:56:50; 10. Wildwood (Ed Schneider-Ryan Meyer) 2:57:20; 11. Wildwood (Steve McGuinn-John Lose) 3:00:42; 12. Wildwood (Shane Regan-Nate Dervin) 3:01:40; 13. Wildwood Crest (John Fair-Rick Greco) 3:05:12; 14. Ventnor (John Hazlett-Mike Tripician) 3:06:32; 15. Cape May (Herb Treffeisen-Steve Kwalick) 3:07:38; 16. North Wildwood (Marty Hagan-Pat Clemens) 3:08:43; 17. Longport (Tom Sher-Jim Curran) 3:09:44; 18. Cape May (Ed Giordano-Sam Downs) 3:19:47; 19. Cape May (Erika Axelsson-Mary Grace Maggiano) 3:42:00.

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