

2021 JAMES BESCHEN – MICHAEL CALLAHAN MEMORIAL LIFEGUARD RACE

NORTH WILDWOOD — The Wildwood Crest Beach Patrol had just five points with two events remaining Friday.

Not a problem.

Darrick Kobierowski won the singles row and Brett Pedersen won the can run to give the Crest 10 more points and the team title at the 52nd edition of the Beschen-Callahan Memorial Lifeguard Races at the 15th Avenue beach. Seven Cape May County beach patrols competed. Crest finished with 15 points overall. Wildwood was second with 12. Avalon finished third with 11. Scoring was 5-3-2-1 for the first four places in each of the six races.

“I knew going into the can run that I had to score points,” Pedersen said.

“With everyone around me, I just wanted to go for the win.”

Wildwood Crest won five of the six races in 2019 to win the team title for the second time in a row. The races were not held last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Friday, Upper Township, Avalon, Wildwood and North Wildwood each won races. Other patrols that competed were Sea Isle City and Stone Harbor.

Crest also won the Cape May County Championships on July 9.

“It felt amazing,” Pedersen said. “Our patrol is off to a great summer. We just want to keep it rolling.”

The races honor Jim Beschen and Mike Callahan, North Wildwood lifeguards who were killed in the Vietnam War. North Wildwood Beach Patrol Chief Tony Cavalier and relatives of Beschen and Callahan gave out the awards.

The can run is a one-person surf dash in which the guards basically swim a freestyle event. It used to start with the guards jumping off a lifeguard stand, but that stopped a few years ago, Pedersen said.

“That was an extremely tough race,” Pedersen said. “I had the whole patrol behind me cheering. So, I just wanted to do it for them. Just wanted to stay ahead of them the whole time.”

Upper Township’s Ryan Fischer and Kyle Rumaker won the doubles row, the first race. The duo was neck-and-neck with Avalon’s Erich Wolf and Jack Glomb as they approached the shore, both catching the same wave at the end.

The Upper lifeguards had a rough warmup and almost broached coming in, Fischer said. But held the boat straight long enough to win.

“That’s all that matters,” Fischer said. “It was definitely a close race. It got dicey there at the end. It was a close race all the way out. The tide was just in our favor (Friday).”

“The ocean is different every race,” Rumaker said. “A lot of crews have are going to have a chance to go after it this year.”

Avalon rookie Dolan Grisbaum won the swim for the second time in his career. The recent graduate from Ocean City High School also won the event at the Cape May County Championships.

During his first race last week, the conditions were rough and he got off to a slow start. But there was a current going out Friday, and he said he was a little wide going around the second flag “But I managed,” said Grisbaum, The 2021 Press Boys Swimmer of the Year. “It feels good.”

The Boston University commit is looking ahead to the Dutch Hoffman

Memorial Lifeguard Championships on July 30, saying he wants to take on Joey Tepper, an Egg Harbor Township graduate and a rising sophomore at the University of Tennessee. Tepper, like Grisbaum, is a standout swimmer in the area.

“It’ll be tough, but I think I can do it,” Grisbaum said.

North Wildwood’s Stephan Cassel, Richie Giandrea, Travis McCray and Mark Strange won the surf dash.

Giandrea has been on the patrol for five years, but never made the team.

Until now.

“It was awesome,” said Giandrea, who thanked North Wildwood Beach Patrol chief Tony Cavalier and captain Bill Ciavarelli. “Every day we come in and work out. It feels good to be here.”

The home beach was loud when Mark Strange, who ran the final leg, crossed the finish line.

“We just have to go, and can’t stop,” Giandrea said. “It’s a far dash.”

Wildwood’s Pat Clemens won the paddleboard race. He described the conditions as “effortless,” especially compared to last week’s Cape May County Championships.

“I was able to get a lucky wave at the end there,” Clemens said. “I was able to pull ahead on my knees the whole time. I feel good.”

Race results

Team scoring (top three): **1. Wildwood Crest 15**, 2. Wildwood 12, 3. Avalon 11

Doubles row: 1. Ryan Fischer-Kyle Rumaker (Upper Township), 2. Eric Wolf-Jack Glomb (Avalon), 3. Danny Rogers-Pat Scannapieco (Sea Isle)

Swim: 1. Dolan Grisbaum (Avalon), 2. Jack Levari (Stone Harbor), 3. Brett Pedersen

(Wildwood Crest)

Paddleboard: 1. Pat Clemens (Wildwood), 2. Corbin King (Sea Isle), 3. Stephan Cassel (North Wildwood)

Surf dash: 1. Cassel, Richie Giandrea, Travis McCray, Mark Strange (North Wildwood), 2. Ben Melle, Tom Sampson, Matt Comas, Brendan Lewis (Wildwood), 3. Andrew Torney, Pat O'Hanlon,

Tucker DeLuca, Jake Carpenter (Sea Isle)

Singles row: 1. Darrick Kobierowski (Wildwood Crest), 2. Wolf (Avalon), 3. Rogers (Sea Isle)

Can run: 1. Brett Pedersen (Wildwood Crest), 2. Dave DiLeoahardo (Stone Harbor), 3. Aiden Blake (Upper Township)

2023

NORTH WILDWOOD — After Danny Rogers won the singles row Friday at the 54th Beschen-Callahan Memorial Lifeguard Races at the 22nd Avenue Beach, he knew the Sea Isle City Beach Patrol could capture the team title.

Rogers was right.

Sea Isle won three of the nine events en route to the championship. The patrol finished tied with Avalon with 20 points, but Sea Isle took the title on a tiebreaker. Avalon was the defending champion. Wildwood Crest finished third with 15 points, and Wildwood was fourth with 13.

The event honors Jim Beschen and Mike Callahan, two former North Wildwood lifeguards who were killed in the Vietnam War. North Wildwood Beach Patrol Chief Bill Ciavarelli, along with relatives of Beschen and Callahan, presented post-event awards.

“It’s always good to get a team title,” said Pat Scannapieco, who placed second with Rogers in the doubles row. “I don’t remember the last one we got. It was probably a little while ago, but we got really big contributions from Mary Kate (Leonard), Jack (Christian), Dustin (Laricks Jr.) and Danny. Those were the big four for us. They have been great this season. It’s good to get a team win.”

On Monday, Avalon won its second straight Cape May County Championship title. The patrol won after winning a tiebreaker with Sea Isle. On Friday, Avalon won two races and finished second in two others. Avalon is “very good,” Scannapieco said.

“It’s competitive and fun to have them right there,” said Scannapieco, who drank out of the trophy with some of his fellow guards. “It’s really cool.”

Leonard won the women’s swim in 10 minutes, 28 seconds, which was 51 seconds faster than Avalon’s Katie Scanlon. Christian won the men's swim in 9:40. Rogers won the singles row in 4:08, which was eight seconds faster than Avalon’s Gary Nagle.

“That singles race was hectic,” Rogers said.

The tide and waves were rough Friday. Boats were hard to navigate in warmups and swimmers and paddleboarders were having some difficulty in the current, which was an issue in some of the races.

In the singles row, Nagle jumped out to a strong lead but waves were crashing into his boat and Rogers was able to get the lead. Rogers added Avalon had the best start of the day in any race.

“I got hammered at the start and just kept plugging away,” Rogers said. “Avalon just got crushed by waves out there, and there’s nothing you can do. It was tough, but that’s what makes it fun. It’s fun when it’s big.”

Avalon’s Alick Killian, Justin Rhyne, Harry Rohlfing and John McDonnell won the surf dash in 2:12. The quartet beat North Wildwood’s Chase McCray, Travis McCray, Logan Westerfer and Hunter Bostwick by just one second.

“The current was rough, but we knew that going in there,” said Killian, a 2022 Middle Township High School graduate who ran the first leg. “We had a strategy and followed that and it worked out in our favor.”

Killian and Rhyne gave the patrol an early lead. But when Rohlfing went out, the tide pulled him sideways and he had a longer run back once he got to shore to tag McDonnell, which made the race more close. The relay team did not even place at the Cape May County races Monday.

“It got close, but I was very confident John would take it home for us,” Killian said.

Avalon’s Alyssa Sittineri won the women’s paddleboard in 7:29, and North Wildwood’s Emmy Nelson was second (7:44). Sittineri never won this event before, and has been paddling for about six years for Avalon.

“The waves are a little intimidating, but I was glad to get out there and win,” Sittineri said. “It was fun. I’m pretty excited.”

Christian was unsure how he would do in the men’s swim with the waves and currents. The male and female swims were a box swim rather than going out in the ocean and coming straight back in. Going diagonal was much easier, both Christian and Sittineri said.

“It’s anyone’s game when the surf is like this, so I’m very happy,” Christian said

Dennis Bakey and Tom Lake of Stone Harbor won the doubles row (4:11) in a very close race. Rogers and Scannapieco were second in 4:12, and Wildwood Crest’s Pat Bakey and Jake Klecko were third in 4:17.

“It feels awesome,” Bakey said. “Great competition. The waves were pretty big. It was fun.”

Added Scannapieco, “Rough water and rough surf and a little windy, but it makes it fun.”

Rogers agreed.

“It’s fun to have (Stone Harbor and Wildwood Crest) right there next to us,” he said

Wildwood's Matt Comas won the men's paddleboard in 5:59. He also competed in the surf dash, and led Wildwood to a fourth-place finish. In the paddleboard, he said it was tough to stay on the board but he caught a wave at the end.

"That's what got the job done," he said. "I was nervous in the beginning. I went out there this morning and was working on coming in and out of the waves. SoI was feeling comfortable out there. It worked out."

Wildwood Crest's Sofia Jurusz won the women's can run, and Upper Township's Ryan Manning won the men's can run. The can run is a one-person surf dash in which the guards each start by jumping off a lifeguard stand. Not many other host patrols have that event.

"It was really rough but it was good," said Jurusz, who graduated from Middle Township. "There are a lot of strong women out there, so it was an honor to compete with them. (The can run) is really fun. I'm glad they had it."

Results

Team scores: Sea Isle City 20; Avalon 20; Wildwood Crest 15; Wildwood 13; North Wildwood 13; Upper Township 10; Stone Harbor 8

Doubles row: Dennis Bakey-Tom Lake (Stone Harbor) 4:11; Danny Rogers-Pat Scannapieco (Sea Isle) 4:12; Pat Bakey-Jake Klecko (Wildwood Crest) 4:13

Men's paddleboard: Matt Comas (Wildwood) 5:59; Wyatt McDevitt (Wildwood Crest) 6:11; Hunter Bostwick (North Wildwood) 6:27

Male swim: Jack Christian (Sea Isle) 9:40; Brendan Lewis (Wildwood) 9:52; Brandon Hontz (Avalon) 10:07

Female swim: Mary Kate Leonard (Sea Isle) 10:28; Katie Scanlon (Avalon) 11:17; Callie Walker (North Wildwood) 11:53

Female paddleboard: Alyssa Sittineri (Avalon) 7:29; Emmy Nelson (North Wildwood) 7:44; Lindsay Robbins (Upper Township) 7:53

Surf dash: Alick Killian, Justin Rhyne, Harry Rohlfing and John McDonnell (Avalon) 2:12; Chase McCray, Travis McCray, Logan Westerfer and Hunter Bostwick (North Wildwood) 2:13; Pat Bakey, Brett Pederson, Jake Klecko, Roman Voinea (Wildwood Crest) 2:16

Singles row: Rogers (Sea Isle) 4:08; Gary Nagle (Avalon) 4:16; Dennis Bakey (Stone Harbor) 4:32

Female can run: Sofia Jursuz (Wildwood Crest); Grace Malcarney (Upeer Township); Dottie O'Brien (North Wildwood)

Male can run: Ryan Manning (Upper Township); Brendan Lewis (Wildwood); Brett Pederson (Wildwood Crest)

Sea Isle City repeats as Beschen-Callahan Memorial lifeguard champions in North Wildwood Jul 12, 2024

NORTH WILDWOOD — Kylie Fry never won a race prior to Friday.

That's not the case anymore.

Fry won the women's paddleboard race and women's can run to lead the Sea Isle City Beach Patrol to the championship of the 55th annual Beschen-Callahan Memorial Lifeguard Races at the 22nd Avenue beach.

Sea Isle, which also took the team title last summer on a tiebreaker with Avalon, won five events and finished third in three others for 30 team points. Avalon won three races and placed second overall with 24. Wildwood Crest was third with 16.

"It's incredible," said Fry, 24, of Reading, Pennsylvania. "I love seeing how happy my whole team gets. It's just amazing being a part of Sea Isle Beach Patrol."

The event honors the memory of Jim Beschen and Mike Callahan, North Wildwood lifeguards who were killed in the Vietnam War. North Wildwood Beach Patrol Chief Bill Ciavarelli, along with relatives of Beschen and Callahan, presented post-event awards.

The event started with the doubles row in the rain. Stone Harbor's Tom Lake and Kurt Kirchereon won. Wildwood Crest's Jake Klecko and James Yarussi placed second. Avalon's Gary Nagle and Dave Giulian were third. The rain lightened up afterward, but it remained cloudy and windy, not ideal conditions for most competitors.

Fry won the paddleboard race in 6 minutes, 6 seconds. Wildwood Crest's Maddie Priest placed second (6:13). North Wildwood's Brianna McFerran was third (6:16). Fry said she felt great, but it was tough going out with the conditions.

"It was awesome," Fry said. "My team has been working hard all winter and the beginning of summer. It was really cool to see. ... The second I turned that buoy, it felt really, really good. I just had to trust my paddling strengths."

Fry won the women's can run, the second-to-last event, and Stone Harbor's Keira Leisinger finished second. Wildwood's Margo Fox placed third. After winning, Fry received a lot of hugs from her patrolmates.

“To do it green (bathing suit) for Sea Isle, I am very happy,” Fry said of her two victories..

Sea Isle’s Dustin Laricks won the men’s paddleboard race in 5:10. Wildwood Crest’s Wyatt McDevitt was second (5:15). Avalon’s Brandon Hontz was third (5:20). Laricks is a recent graduate of Ocean City High School.

“It feels great,” the 18-year-old said. “(The water) was a little cold and some big surf on the way out, but the current and the wind definitely helped. It was a little choppy, but not too bad.”

Sea Isle’s Andrew Taylor won the men’s swim in 7:34. Avalon’s Alex Zoldan placed second (7:37). Wildwood’s Brendan Lewis was third (7:42). Taylor’s first race of the summer would have been the Cape May County Championships, but that event was postponed twice due to the weather and is now set for Monday.

“I am pretty excited,” the 22-year-old from Medford, Burlington County said. “It has been weird with the scheduling, but I was excited to get back in the water. Glad to start the season with a win. Good for myself. Good for our team. I am excited for where Sea Isle is going to go this year.”

Avalon’s Becca Cubbler won the women’s swim in 8:17. Sea Isle’s Mary Kate Leonard placed second (8:26). North Wildwood’s Callie Walker was third (9:19). Cubbler won the swim in 2022 but did not compete here last summer.

“I was really excited,” said Cubbler, adding “the ocean was cold and choppy. It was a really rough race, for sure. But it was good overall. I went into it hoping I could do a repeat of two years ago. I was glad I was able to pull it off.”

Avalon’s Molly McDonnell, Sarah Powell, Maddy Hippensteal and Mackenna Finnegan won the women’s surf dash. Upper Township’s Grace Steele, Grace Malcarney, Emily Culmone and Lindsay Robbins were second. North Wildwood’s Abby Melle, Dottie O’Brien, Brianna McFerran and Scarlett Henry were third.

“It was awesome,” Hippensteal said. “Honestly, we just came into this race wanting to have fun with the weather. It was a great ending to end up on top. It was long, but we like the longer runs.”

Avalon’s Ryan Finnegan won the singles row. Sea Isle’s Danny Rogers, who won the event last summer, placed second. Wildwood Crest’s Klecko was third.

“It’s always a fight with Sea Isle and some of those guys,” Finnegan said. “It felt good to win. There were a little bit of waves. A little bit of current pulling south to north, but nothing too crazy.”

One of the more thrilling races was the men's surf dash. North Wildwood's Logan Westerfer, Seamus McCain, Chase McCray and Hunter Bostwick won. McCray was the third leg and, when McCain tagged him, the patrol was in second place.

McCray just gave it his all and gave North Wildwood a big lead, and Bostwick finished it.

"I saw that we were behind and I knew I had to catch up for us to win," said McCray, who last summer was on the surf dash relay that placed second in their home race. "That's all I wanted to do — win. Just wanted to try our best."

Upper Township's Ryan Manning won the men's can run. Sea Isle's Corbin King placed second. McCray was third. Manning said he was in third or fourth place at the buoy.

"It's super exciting," he said. "I turned (at the buoy) and took a deep inhale and prayed for the best. I rode that wave all the way in. I popped up and looked around, and I was in first place."

Results

Team scores: 1. Sea Isle City 30; 2. Avalon 24; 3. Wildwood Crest 16; 4. North Wildwood 13; Upper Township 10

Doubles row: 1. Stone Harbor (Tom Lake and Kurt Kircher); 2. Wildwood Crest's (Jake Klecko and James Yarussi); 3. Avalon (Gary Nagle and Dave Giulian)

Men's paddleboard: 1. Dustin Laricks (Sea Isle) 5:10; 2. Wyatt McDevitt (Wildwood Crest) 5:15; 3. Brandon Hontz (Avalon) 5:20.

Male swim: 1. Andrew Taylor (Sea Isle) 7:34; 2. Alex Zoldan (Avalon) 7:37; 3. Brendan Lewis (Wildwood) 7:42

Women's swim: 1. Becca Cubbler (Avalon's) 8:17; 2. Mary Kate Leonard (Sea Isle) 8:26; 3. Callie Walker (North Wildwood) 9:19.

Women's paddleboard: 1. Kylie Fry (Sea Isle) 6:06; 2. Maddie Priest (Wildwood Crest) 6:13; 3. Brianna McFerran (Wildwood) 6:16

Men's surf dash: 1. North Wildwood (Logan Westerfer, Seamus McCain, Chase McCray and Hunter Bostwick); 2. Wildwood Crest (Jake Klecko, Roman Voinea, Luke Love and James Smith); 3. Sea Isle (Kevin O'Dare, Jake DiMartile, Rob Dougherty, King)

Women's surf dash: 1. Avalon (Molly McDonnell, Sarah Powell, Maddy Hippensteal and Mackenna Finnegan); 2. Upper Township (Grace Steele, Grace Malcarney, Emily Culmone and Lindsay Robbins); 3. North Wildwood (Abby Melle, Dottie O'Brien, Brianna McFerran and Scarlett Henry).

Singles row: 1. Ryan Finnegan (Avalon); 2. Danny Rogers (Sea Isle); 3. Klecko (Wildwood Crest).

Women's can run: 1. Fry (Sea Isle); 2. Keira Leisinger (Stone Harbor); 3. Margo Fox (Wildwood)

Men's can run: 1. Ryan Manning (Upper Township); 2. Corbin King (Sea Isle); 3. McCray (North Wildwood)