

# Brett Hanson, Doug Davis again win Around The Island Row

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NORTH WILDWOOD -- Former Ventnor Beach Patrol oarsmen Brett Hanson and Doug Davis are both in peak condition for a long rowing race, so it doesn't matter that they don't train together.

Davis is a lifeguard in Delray Beach, Florida, and Hanson lives in Philadelphia.

Davis and Hanson, both 26, won their second straight Bud Tarbotton North Wildwood Beach Patrol Around The Island Row on Tuesday at 15th Avenue beach. Their time of 2 hours, 41 minutes, 17 seconds beat last year's winning time by 1 minute, 7 seconds.

Hanson and Davis also took first in the race in 2019 and have won it in three out of four tries.

The Ventnor alumni crew was challenged most of the race by Longport's Mike McGrath and Sean Duffey, who finished second in 2:42.22. Following a gap of more than four minutes, Margate's Hayden Smallwood and Bob Bechtel were third in 2:46.47.

"It's amazing (to win again)," said Davis, the stern and a former Mainland Regional High School and Drexel University rower. "When you come in you don't expect to win ever. You want to give it your best and have a good row. A lot of things can happen. Winning is icing on the cake."

Davis works out with the lifeguards at Delray Beach.

"I row with the guys there and keep in shape," Davis said. "Coordinating my stroke with Brett is no problem because we were both taught by the same people (on the Ventnor patrol). I came in from Florida on Friday and we rowed together for 20 minutes (Monday)."

Hanson doesn't have the advantage of still being a lifeguard in his workouts, but he does ergometer training.

"We were first and second early and took the lead in the back bay," said Hanson, a former Holy Spirit High School and University of Pennsylvania rower. "We were just rowing together, and it felt good being in the lead. Longport had a good race. Anything can happen, but it went well in the ocean. Doug and I first rowed together in 2016 and we coordinated well."

McGrath and Duffey pulled about even before the final turn into the ocean, but Hanson and Davis regained control in the ocean.

"We were second most of the race and jockeying for position," said Duffey, 40, the stern. "They (Hanson and Davis) kept a really good course in the ocean and when we'd make a move they would counter it."

"It's good to see the top three being from Atlantic County. We had a good race. We train for 15-minute races (in beach patrol events), and not so much for this. So it was good to be with the top pack."

Smallwood, 21, and Bechtel, 36, were in their first race around the island.

"We were following (Wildwood Crest's) Terry McGovern (a seven-time winner of the race, who was eventually fourth with James Yarussi)," Bechtel said. "Hayden called me (recently) and asked me if I'd like to be in it. I guess I like torturing myself because I eventually said yes, and it was cool. We train for 15-minute doubles races, so the last hour of this race was really hard. I'm not sure if I'll do it next year."

Longport's B.J. Fox and daughter Madelyn Fox were 17th out of 25 crews in 3:05.10 and were the first of two mixed doubles crews. Madelyn, a 20-year-old junior rower at Temple University, was in her first island row.

"He knows the course well," said Madelyn Fox of her father. "It was a tough race. I had to get out of the boat once early in the race because we got stuck. After that it was pretty smooth sailing for me. We got into a solid pace. We wanted to save some energy for the ocean, and we did. I'll consider doing it again next year."

All 25 crews finished.

**Note:** The Around the Island Row was held in 2020 with much protocol in the year that nearly all South Jersey lifeguard events were canceled due to COVID-19. The race has been held every year starting in 1976, and it's now the oldest, continuous South Jersey lifeguard event. Its name honors the late Tarbotton, who started the race in 1976 as a member of the North Wildwood City Council.

**Results:** 1. Ventnor alumni (Brett Hanson-Doug Davis) 2:41.17; 2. Longport (Mike McGrath-Sean Duffey) 2:42.22; 3. Margate (Hayden Smallwood-Bob Bechtel) 2:46.47; 4. Wildwood Crest (Terry McGovern-James Yarussi) 2:46.58; 5. Cape May (Andrew Treffeisen-Mike Fitzpatrick) 2:47.31; 6. Wildwood (Brandon Joyce-Cainan Noon) 2:48.18; 7. Stone Harbor-Avalon (Tom

Lake-Kurt Kurcher) 2:49.49; 8. Cape May (Rob Moran-Pat Kennedy) 2:50.12; 9. Wildwood  
alumnus-Wildwood Crest alumnus (John Livingstone-Justin Cattan) 2:52.32; 10. Avalon (Gary  
Nagle-George Glomb) 2:54.31.