

# Former Ventnor lifeguards Brett Hanson, Doug Davis win North Wildwood Around The Island Row for 2nd time

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NORTH WILDWOOD — Former Ventnor lifeguard Doug Davis, now a guard in Delray Beach, Florida, made an 18-hour visit to South Jersey on Tuesday.

In the middle of his short stay, Davis won the Bud Tarbotton North Wildwood Beach Patrol Around The Island Row with Brett Hanson.

It was quite an accomplishment but not surprising. The two rowed and trained together for years and won the 2019 edition of the race. Both were ready for Tuesday's rowing ordeal.

Hanson and Davis, both 25 and Ventnor Beach Patrol alumni, took the lead in the final third of the 18-mile, counter-clockwise row around Wildwood and won by about 200 yards in 2 hours, 42 minutes, 24 seconds.

"I haven't been in a boat since this race last year (when they were sixth)," said the 6-foot-5 Davis, a former Mainland Regional High School and Drexel University rower. "We both have a mindset for training, and we don't take time off. We've spent a lot of time in the boat together and know each other's tactics. Brett and I have three or four different strokes we use. It's a long race, but we have a lot to work with."

The 6-foot-3 Hanson, the bow, is a former Holy Spirit and University of Pennsylvania rower.

"It feels good to win," said Hanson. "We're probably both in better shape than last year. We executed our race plan. We were exactly where we wanted to be. It was the same strategy as 2019."

"We owe a lot of thanks to people like (Ventnor Beach Patrol Chief and former Penn crew coach) Stan Bergman and David Funk (one of the patrol's most accomplished rowers). We're standing on the shoulders of giants."

"I never want to miss this race," Davis said. "I was out on the West Coast in 2020 and had to miss it. I'm happy to be in it today. It's always a good time."

Fifteen doubles crews got a floating start in the Hereford Inlet at 7 a.m. McGovern and Bakey led most of the way. The Wildwood Crest crew of Ron Ayres and John Steiger, eventually fourth in 2:47.05, stayed in contention along with Ventnor, the other Crest crew and Wildwood. Wildwood

Crest's Terry McGovern, a seven-time winner of the race, finished second with Pat Bakey. Terry McGovern was trying to match 8 time winner Max Bilkins (Wildwood Crest) of this rowing race.

Many of the competitors row around the island practically every year. Jim Swift, 60, has rowed it 29 times starting in 1982. Swift was eighth Tuesday with son Jim Swift IV. Joyce, 32, a winner with Steve McGuinn in 2017, has rowed it 12 times. Wildwood's Ed Schneider, 53, was in his 30th straight row. Wayne McMurray and Jim Gibbons, sixth on Tuesday, also row it practically every year.