



# surf sports

# mag



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Issue 65 | December 2023

## Coolangatta Gold

*Wrap up*

Aussie IRB  
Championships

Aussie Pool Rescue  
Championships

Kozii Iron Challenge

## Features

- 2 Coolangatta Gold
- 22 Aussie IRB Championships
- 28 Aussie Pool Rescue Championships
- 32 Nippers Kozii Iron Challenge
- 37 Health & Training with Nick Marshall



## Issue 65 | December 2023

### Publisher

Harvie Allison Photography  
PO Box 531, Mudgeeraba QLD 4213  
0417 285 133

### Editorial Office

PO Box 531, Mudgeeraba QLD 4213  
Email: harv@harvpix.com  
Ph: 0417 285 133

### Editor

Harvie Allison

### Art Director and Design

Susan Formica - Creative Flare

### Senior Photographers

Harvie Allison, John Veage, Kate Czerny

### Advertising Manager and Administration

Harvie Allison  
Ph: 0417 285 133  
Email: harv@harvpix.com

### Contributors

#### Editorial

SLSA Media – Beyond The Break Consulting,  
Nick Marshall, Harvie Allison, Sally Rowlands SLSA, Melinda Jackson

#### Photography

Harvie Allison, John Veage, Kate Czerny, Malcolm Trees,  
Therese Glowalski, Beth Smith

### Contributions to

Surf Sports Magazine  
PO Box 531, Mudgeeraba QLD 4213  
Email: harv@harvpix.com

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### Cover photo: KNG winner Ali Day

Photo: John Veage

### This page: KNG winner Lana Rogers

Photo: John Veage



At the heart of the image



N.B. All photographs which appear in this magazine are taken by Harvie Allison Photography - unless otherwise stated.

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## What a great start to the season with Shaw and Partners Coolangatta Gold having it's 39th running and the amazing Ali Day claiming his 9th title ... he sure is THE GOAT.

In this issue we bring you coverage of The Coolangatta Gold weekend of racing as well as a wrap from the Aussie IRBs at Kingscliff.

Also from another favourite venue the Aussie Pool Titles where we will host the World Lifesaving Titles in August at Southport Pool on the Gold Coast.

To round up some great Nipper action from the Kozii Iron challenge and a story from Nick Marshall about wearable devices.

Hope you all enjoy and we are certainly looking forward to a huge season with the Kellogg's Nutri-Grain irons sure to thrill as always, before a trip to the Sunshine Coast for all the Aussies action.

Again to our surf sports fans a big THANKS for your continuing support. Next mag will be the Aussie Titles Program edition and of course have a great Christmas everyone.

**Harvie Allison,**  
Editor/Publisher

*Winners are grinners.  
Ali & Lana with the hardware.*



# ssm



# COOLANGATTA GOLD 2023 *Review*

Story by SLSA Media  
Photos by Harvie Allison  
and John Veage

## LONG COURSE



## **ALI'S** *Perfect Day* as Rogers returns to top of Coolangatta Gold

Ironman legend Ali Day has extended his reign as the greatest ever athlete to compete in the Shaw and Partners Financial Services Coolangatta Gold, winning his 9th title on the Gold Coast.

Day, who has won the race every time he's started, was eager to add another Coolangatta Gold ▶



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# LONG COURSE



title to his trophy cabinet, but knew it wasn't going to be an easy feat with one of the strongest fields ever assembled.

Reigning Nutri-Grain IronMan champion Matt Bevilacqua spearheaded the chase pack that featured world Ironman champion Cory Taylor and veteran ironman Kendrick Louis.

"These Coolangatta Gold races get harder and harder every year for a lot of different reasons. Today, obviously the weather and my competitors. ▶

“ You can train for that run over and over again during preparation, but it still doesn't feel like the race. ”





**Top left:** Courtney Hancock

**Bottom:** Lana Rogers claims the win

The field was stacked with guys I've raced and trained with for a really long period of my career.

"I've got so much respect for them and when they said they were both doing it, it gives you inspiration and makes you want to do the race," he said.

The 33-year-old found himself in an unfamiliar position, trailing after the opening ski leg, but knew he could count on his strength in the swim, and was able to lead for the remainder of the gruelling 41.8km race.

"I really like the swim leg, it's my bread and butter. But you're still really worried because Bevy (Matt Bevilacqua) is one of the best ironmen ever and that's sort of where I made my move.

"I just had to chip away, and try and get a bit of a gap. My calf was actually a little bit sore when I got off the ski, and I was a bit worried in the swim and the board, but I put my shoes on and it just held up.

"You can train for that run over and over again during preparation, but it still doesn't feel like the race. It's a bloody tough race, and I'm super stoked to have another one under my belt," he said. ▶



# LONG COURSE

It was an emotional win for Day, who announced he and wife Kel are expecting another baby in 2024 earlier in the week, but also shared the victory with two and a half year old son Danny and the rest of his support crew.

“I don’t remember much from when I was 2.5, but he’ll have photos and things to go off. It definitely gives you a bit of extra strength today when you are out there in the hurt locker.

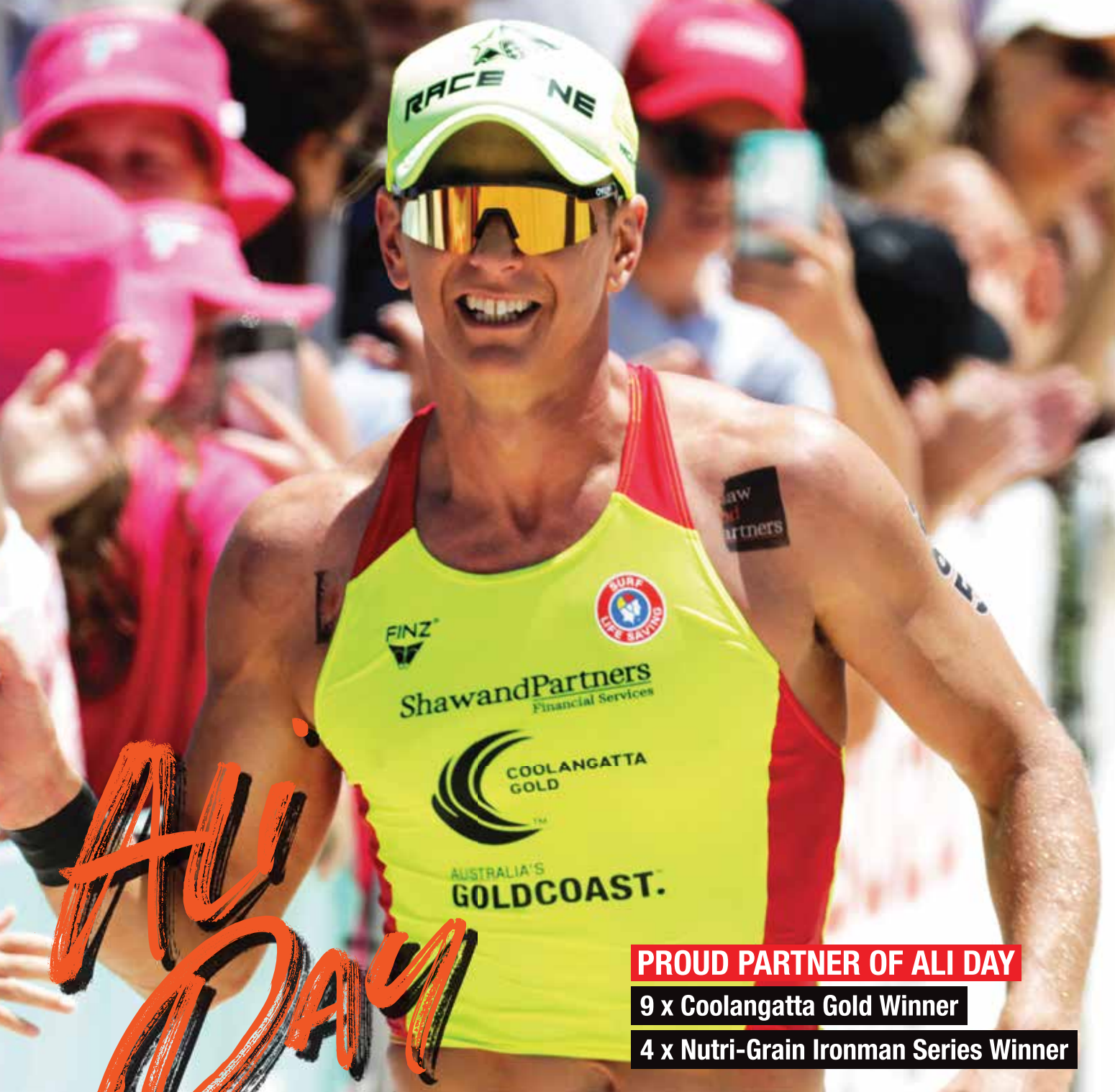
“It definitely hasn’t been an easy time in the preparation for this, but I’ve got a great support crew who have been with me through the last 20 weeks and I’m really grateful for them,” he said.

Bevilacqua finished in second place, followed by Taylor in third.

Fellow Gold Coaster Lana Rogers returned to the top of the Coolangatta Gold podium, after winning her first title in 2019. ▶







ALI DAY

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# ShawandPartners

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Having made the move south from Alexandra Headland to Northcliffe Surf Life Saving Club in the off season, Rogers said she was so proud that all of her hard work has paid off.

“It does not feel real at all. It’s been a long four months of preparation, and it’s been a big four months but I’ve just learnt to embrace the process,” Rogers said.

“To win it once is special, but to win it twice is unbelievable. I want to write myself in the history books, I’ve watched this race since I was 9 years old and I’ve watched Ali win it 9 times now.

“It’s very special to me, I think it’s the toughest race to win in surf lifesaving

and only the toughest athletes race it,” she said.

It was a hot day at Coolangatta, making for tough racing conditions and pushing the ironwomen to their limits and forcing Rogers’ Northcliffe teammate Georgia Miller to withdraw on the final run leg.

“I’m sharing this one with Naomi Flood and Georgia Miller, we did this whole prep together and it’s really, really special,” she said.

“It’s been a long four months of preparation, and it’s been a big four months but I’ve just learnt to embrace the process. We’ve got a big season ahead of us, so it’s exciting times and I’m so happy that it’s starting this way,” she said.

Rounding out the Ironwoman podium was Ironwoman legend Courtney Hancock in second, and Surfers Paradise young gun Lucy Derbyshire in third. ■

“ I’m sharing this one with Naomi Flood and Georgia Miller, we did this whole prep together and it’s really, really special. ”

*Below: Team Tiarnee*





SHORT COURSE

## JASON becomes first *Paralympian* to complete Coolangatta Gold while Borg and Harris take out Short Course Titles

The opening day of the Shaw and Partners Financial Services Coolangatta Gold delivered sunshine and testing conditions as competitors took on the 21km short course race as well as teams and youth events.

Two-time Paralympic swimmer Braeden Jason has become the first Paralympian to complete the short course, crossing the line in a time of 2 hours, 50 minutes and 50 seconds.

Jason represented Australia at two Paralympic Games, announcing his retirement from the sport just three weeks ago. After competing in surf lifesaving as a nipper, Jason's attention quickly turned back to the surf to tackle a new challenge.

With only 6% vision, Jason's effort to complete

the short course required a support team from Alexandra Headland Surf Life Saving Club, that raced with him from start to finish.

"It started off pretty well, I did feel pretty good but it's a gruelling race ... it's definitely not for the faint hearted but I guess it is a race for the not full sighted as well," Jason said.

"Hopefully I can pave the wave for some more people with any disability to take part in it. I love surf lifesaving and this is the pinnacle of it I'd say. ▶



“There’s definitely no chance I could’ve done that without the support of my clubmates, I had some amazing guides around me the whole way, including my youngest brother Regan who got to finish off with me in the run.

“There’s no way I could’ve done it without them, with only 6% vision I’m only seeing about two or three metres ahead, so I can’t even see the end of my ski let alone where the buoys are,” he said.

Having now been able to tackle the short course, Jason said he’s looking forward to his next challenge and hopes to compete in the long course in future years.

“ It started off pretty well, I did feel pretty good but it’s a gruelling race ... ”

“I’d really like to do the long course, considering I only jumped on a ski for the first time in November last year, and couldn’t even stay in it,” Jason said.

Newport Ironman Jackson Borg powered home to deliver an emphatic win in the Open Male Short Course.

“That’s an awesome way to start the season, means that what I’ve been doing in the off season is working and gives me a bit of confidence,” Borg said.

“I had a lot of ups and downs last season, and so I have to trial for the Nutri-Grain IronMan Series this season. I wanted to focus on the short course this year, be a bit sharper, instead of focusing on my steady pace.

Borg led from start to finish, managing to pull away from the field in the opening ski leg and carrying his



# SHORT COURSE

momentum through for the two hour plus race.

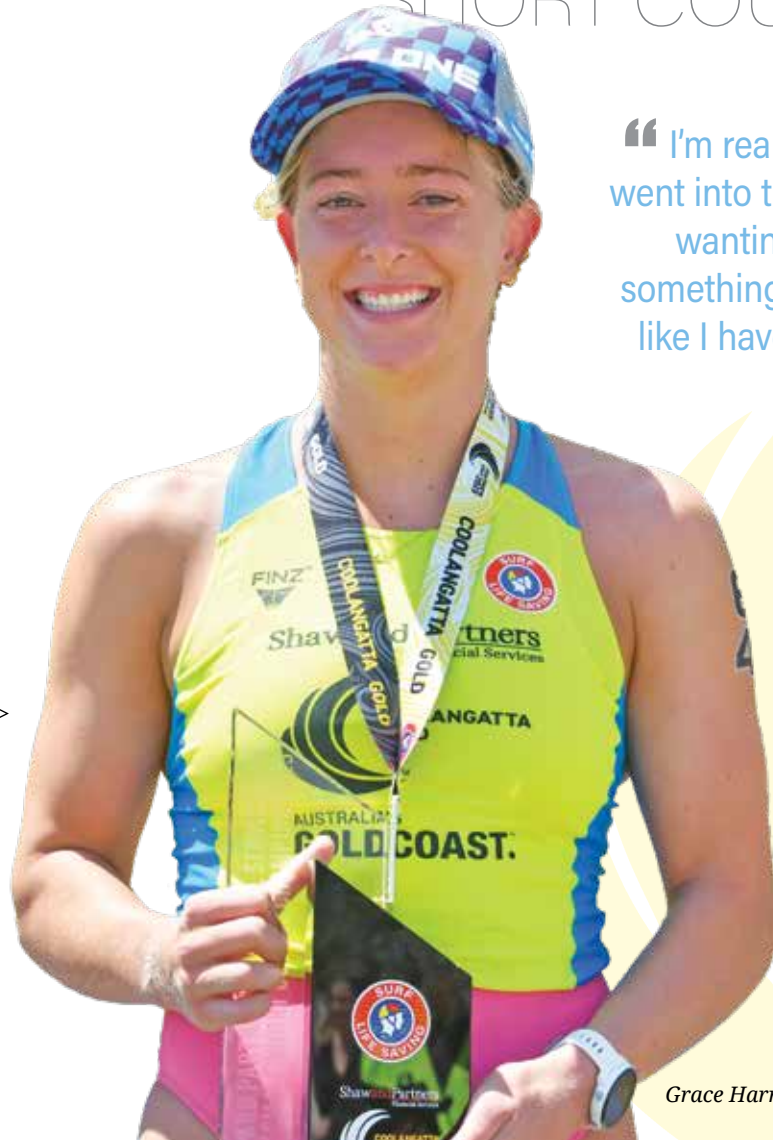
“I kept on looking back, so I was trying to keep an eye on the boys behind me. But Archie (Vernon) and Mitch (Stitt) are good athletes, they are both so young and kept me honest the whole way.

“It’s always awesome to come up and do the Coolangatta Gold, it’s such an iconic event. It’s definitely on my bucket list every year, it’s one that I’ve been able to cross off a few times now,” he said.

Alexandra Headland’s Grace Harris claimed her first ever Shaw and Partners Financial Services Coolangatta Gold Short Course title, crossing the line in a time of 2:26:58.

“I’m really happy, I went into this season wanting to prove something ▶

“ I’m really happy, I went into this season wanting to prove something and I feel like I have today. ”



“ It’s always awesome to come up and do the Coolangatta Gold, it’s such an iconic event. ”

Grace Harris

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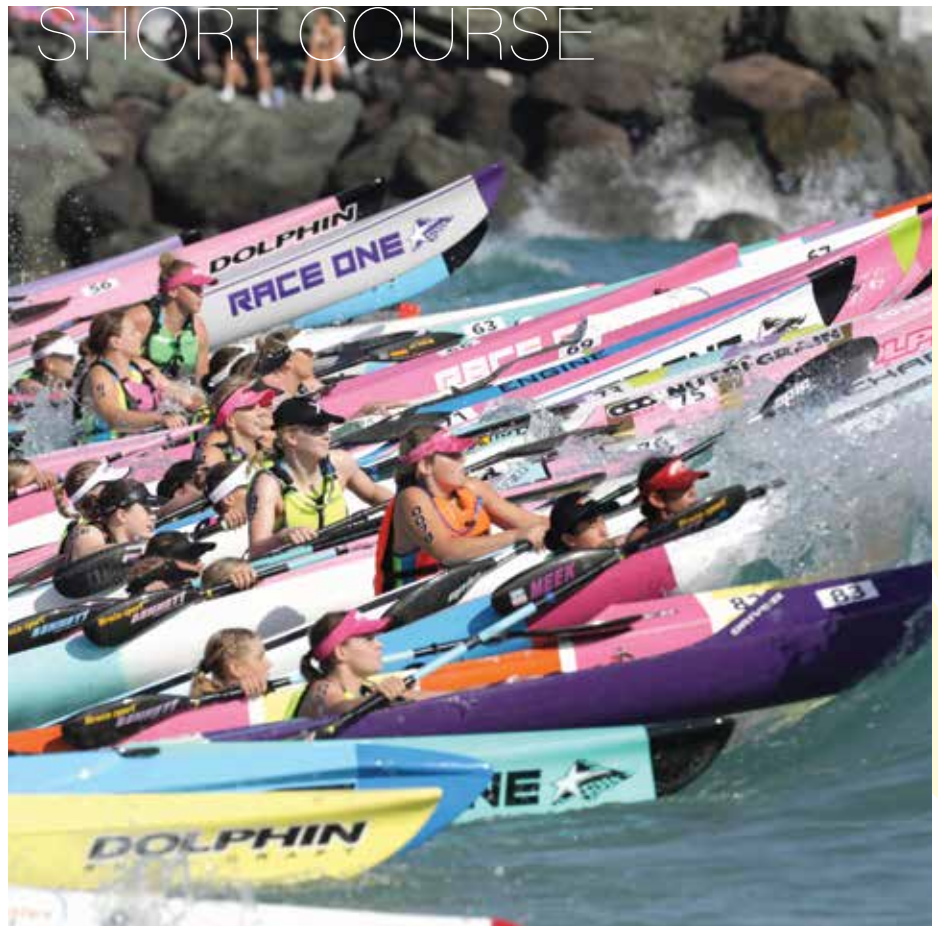
and I feel like I have today," Harris said.

"It's still only the start of the season, and I don't really know where everyone else is at but I'm really happy with the progress that I've made so far and I'm really happy that I was able to grab the win today.

"Just pushing myself towards that finish line at the end. It's all worth it after those long hours in winter, and just finishing that's really the main motivating factor for me," she said.

With extra incentive added to the Teams' events this year, courtesy of an increased prize money pool from Shaw and Partners Financial Services and Race One Surfcraft, clubs from across the country assembled a red hot field.

The Northcliffe Open Men's combination of Joe Collins, Mitch Morris, Zach Morris and Cory Hill took out first place. ▷



“It was a red hot field and we knew that coming in. Everyone was in that race until the very end, and I knew I had a big weight on my shoulders going into that run,” Collins said.

“This race is so iconic in our sport, I’d love to do it across the coast again. It’s great to put your name on that trophy, I’m not there yet but I’d love to be up there with Ali (Day) one day,” he said.

Following in the footsteps of their clubmates, Hannah Sculley, Ryley Harland, Tom Norton and Harriet Brown took out the Mixed Open Teams.

“It was a red hot field, and good to take that one for the Northcliffe team. This is the first year with prize money on the Mixed Teams event, and I think it’s been a phenomenal atmosphere.

“Everyone has put in a lot of work to get this event off the ground, and you can see how much it means to everyone here today,” she said.

Jemma Smith, Lizzie Welborn, Piper Harrison and Dominique Melbourn finished first in the Open Female Teams. ■



Grace Harris

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SHORT COURSE





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# TEAMS

**Right:** Open Mens Teams winners Northcliffe

**Middle:** Open Womens Teams winners Newport

**Middle:** Open Mixed Teams winners Northcliffe





## Youth Challenge

Over 350 young athletes competed in today's Youth Challenge, with ages ranging from under 11's to under 17's.

The Youth Challenge features a 350m swim, a 250m run and a 450m board leg. >

### OVERALL POINTS TOP 6

1	North Burleigh	42
2	BHMP	29
3	Mermaid Beach	17
4	Swansea Belmont	15
5	Alexandra Headland	14
5	Newport	14
6	Cudgen Headland	13







## DOWNWIND PADDLE

# Norton and Smith take out Shaw and Partners Financial Services Coolangatta Gold Downwind Paddle

Tom Norton and Jemma Smith have been crowned Coolangatta Gold Downwind Paddle champions after an epic race on Saturday afternoon.

Tom Norton and Jemma Smith have been crowned Coolangatta Gold Downwind Paddle champions after an epic race on Saturday afternoon.

Competitors set off at Coolangatta Beach across the 15km course that took them south, before heading back up along the iconic Gold >

“ Once we turned, there was a few runs out there which was good, but then the race back to the beach was just pure toughness straight into the wind. ”

Coast coastline to finish back at Coolangatta.

In a red hot men's field that featured Australian champions, Olympians and world champions, it came down to a sprint finish between Northcliffe teammates Tom Norton and Cory Hill.

Norton managed to just pip former world champion Hill at the post, with Manly's Oscar Jones rounding out the podium in third.

Norton said it was great to race against some of the best paddlers in the world, and that makes the win extra special.

“It was very tough...the first 5km we were full of energy so it wasn't too bad. Once we turned, there was a few runs out there which was good, but then the race back to the beach was just pure toughness straight into the wind,” Norton said.

“I hit the turn first, but then Cory got away from me, he's really good at picking the runs.

“Sometimes when you're behind you get that underdog feeling and I was just slowly catching him, and then finally went past him so I was stoked,” he said.

Norton said he's got a big few months of racing coming up, culminating in the 2023 ICF Canoe >





Ocean Racing World Championships in Perth in December.

“We’ll head to Sydney in a couple of weeks for the 20 Beaches, I’ve never won that one so I’m really looking forward to it,” Norton said.

“And then we’ll head over to Perth for Race Week, followed by the World Championships which will be great. So we’ve got a lot of racing coming up and I’m really excited about it,” he said.

Smith, who won the inaugural title in 2022 and current world champion, showed why she is among the best paddlers in the world, claiming a commanding win ahead of New Zealand’s Danielle McKenzie.

Smith said she was super proud to be part of the event, and see so many paddlers joining in.

“I think the greatest thing to see was when we were lining up and just how many people were there.

“It’s unreal that everyone has really got behind this event, it’s the second year it’s been run and to see the numbers grow has just been awesome.

“I’m really stoked to be a part of it, and I hope that everyone has had a great day out here at Coolangatta. I even got to paddle alongside a whale out there, which was really cool,” she said. ■



“ I even got to paddle alongside a whale out there, which was really cool. ”

**feature**

Story by Sally Rowlands, SLSA

Photos by Harvie Allison and Beth Smith

# 2023 SHARKSKIN IRB Championships *Review*







# **KURRAWA CLAIM *back-to-back*** **SHARKSKIN Australian** **IRB Opens Championships**

The opening day of the Shaw and Partners Financial Services Coolangatta Gold delivered sunshine and testing conditions as competitors took on the 21km short course race as well as teams and youth events.

Kurrawa SLSC made it back-to-back titles, claiming the 2023 SharkSkin Australian IRB Championships at Kingscliff in July, ahead of Broadbeach and Kirra. ▶

There were over 300 races held across Opens, U23's, Masters and Interstates across the four days on the north coast of New South Wales with plenty of talent and rescue skills on display.

Kirra dominated the U23 division finishing on 37 points. The fight for second was a tight contest between Caves Beach who came second on 22 points and Broadbeach on 21 points.

Kirra's coach Andrew McAuliffe says consistency was the key to their success today: ▷

“ It's pretty awesome, we set ourselves a goal, we wanted this trophy back and we've got such a good group of young kids. Everyone works for each other and we're like a big family so it's great to win. A real highlight was having our Under 23 female teams first and third up on that podium, it was pretty special for us. ”

*Below left: Winners Kurrawa*

*Below right: Brighton SA*

*Bottom: Broadbeach*





The Masters competition saw the most experienced athletes put to the test on day three with Broadbeach SLSC taking home the gold. Key in their success was athlete Chantel Fife, who took home three individual gold medals. Fife was stoked for Broadbeach to bring the trophy home for the second year in a row.

“The team has worked so hard over the year, it was an awesome effort from everyone today. Ultimately what we strive for is to get everyone confident in the IRB because one day on patrol, you ▶

**Top:** Waikanae  
**Middle:** Thirroul  
**Left:** Aldinga Bay

are going to have to use it to save lives.”

The Interstate championships were also held with teams from Australia and New Zealand battling for the gold.

Queensland continued their legacy of IRB dominance, winning all nine of the Interstate races. Coach Andrew McAuliffe says he was proud of the team for their performance and excited to retain the title for Queensland for their 13th year.

“The team has been very much the same over the years, so the mateship we have is incredible. It makes a big difference that we all love coming together and working as a team.”



*Interstate competition*





**Next year's National IRB Championships will be held at Miami Beach on the Gold Coast from 18-21 July 2024. ■**

“ The team has worked so hard over the year, it was an awesome effort from everyone today. Ultimately what we strive for is to get everyone confident in the IRB because one day on patrol, you are going to have to use it to save lives ”



*Interstate competition*

# feature

Story by **Melinda Jackson**

Photos by **Harvie Allison/Beth Smith**

## THE AUSTRALIAN **Pool Rescue** CHAMPIONSHIPS *Review*

**The Australian Pool Rescue Championships have again proven to be an outstanding success in 2023. With selection in Australian representative teams for Battle of the Tasman, New Zealand National Pool Rescue Championships and the German Cup on the line we were guaranteed to see some fast and skilful racing.**

More than 350 competitors from 42 clubs, including representatives from South African and New Zealand clubs, turned up to the super-fast Gold Coast Aquatic Centre to compete in 242 events >





across three days. It was a weekend of outstanding achievements with five World Records, forty-six individual and twelve team Australian Records being set. Shirley Kemp (TH&C) set four individual Australian Records in the 70-74 Masters age group. Bianca Rayward (BHMP, U15), Kai Gilbert (BMD Northcliffe, U15) and Peter Allison (Kurrawa, 75+) each set three individual Australian records with Bianca and Kai being rewarded for their efforts with selection in the Australian representative team to compete at the New Zealand National Pool Rescue Championships in late September. ▷





Currumbin Beach Vikings SLSC took out the Open club competition on 435 points. Chelsea Jones, Currumbin U19 team member, who broke the Australian U19 Female 50 m Carry record, said “the racing was fast and the pool deck chatter was fun. It was a privilege to be racing at the pool amongst such strong competition.” BMD Northcliffe SLSC were second on 337 and Maroochydore SLSC on 257.

The number of Masters participating in Pool Rescue continues to grow with athletes from 26 clubs across Australia competing over the weekend. ▶







*Queenslander! Victorious in the Interstate comp*

The Master's competition was won by Bondi SLSC (282) with Tweed Heads and Coolangatta (214) in second and Metropolitan Caloundra (107) in third.

As the interest in Pool Rescue events; the skills of the competitors; and the improvement in race times continues improve, Pool Rescue competition within Australia is in a great place leading into the **Life Saving World Championships, to be held on the Gold Coast in 2024.** ■



# feature

Story by **Nick Marshall**

Photos by **Therese Glowaski**



# Kozii Iron Challenge

The Kozii Iron challenge returns for season 2023-24 where the series of races spans across Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Brisbane.

With a new sponsor, Race One Surf Craft coming on board with Kozii, the event has grown from strength to strength and is an amazing opportunity for our future stars to test themselves.

Each round of the Kozii Iron Challenge consists of three Iron races. Where there is no elimination, and >

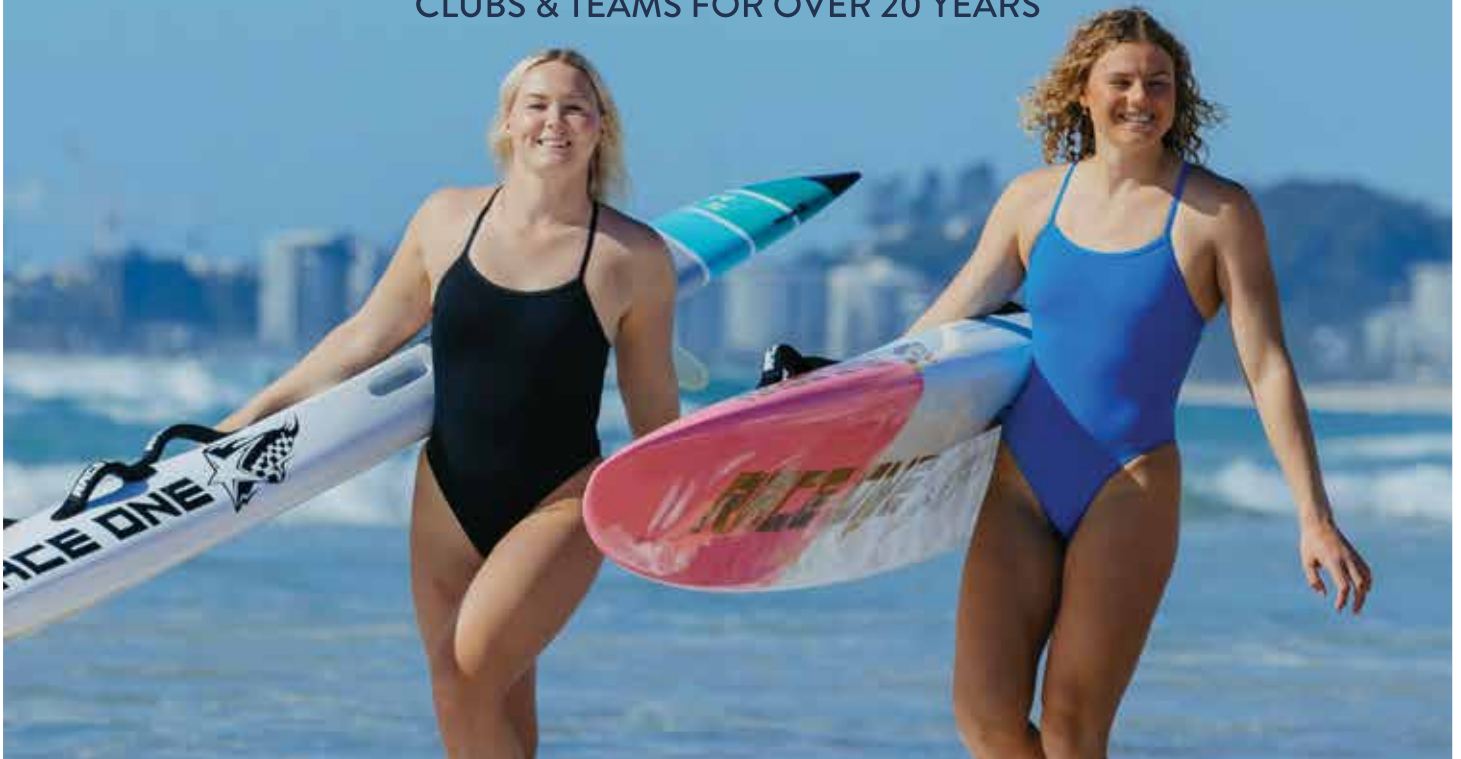
*Below: The Dance Off, always a favourite*



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*Ali Day impresses with his Coolie Gold trophy*

all competitors have a chance to race three times across the morning.

In between races there's prizes, giveaways and of course everyone's favourite, the dance off.

The event was born out of two long standing junior coaches, Nick Marshall OAM and Chris Redler. Who both for 20 years had stood beside each other on the sand coaching at training sessions and carnivals. Both

coaches who work in junior sport in areas away from surf lifesaving, Chris in education and Nick in Physiotherapy, wanted to create an event that was different to other carnivals. An event that allowed all the nippers they coached to race as Iron athletes like their heroes.

The concept was to create a carnival that maximised participation, was fun, and had people off the beach by lunch. As Nick said, "I was finding so many families just



*North Burleigh in the shorey*





“ All events cater to a safe and enjoyable environment and as Nick mentions on the microphone, no race is for ‘sheep stations’ it’s about the young nippers having fun and being able to test their skills against their peers. ”

didn’t have the time or desire to be on the beach for two full days at a traditional surf carnival like I did or like my parents did, they wanted something that allowed their kids to emulate what their heroes like Courtney Hancock and Ali Day do, but achieve that in a small pocket of time on a Saturday morning”, so with that Chris and Nick went about creating the event.

The three-race series this season started in Mooloolaba in September coinciding with school holidays so that it can attract a large amount of Victorian surf club nippers ▶





who holiday over September on the Sunshine Coast, November saw the second round at North Burleigh and then the final race in the calm waters of Raby Bay in Brisbane.

All events cater to a safe and enjoyable environment and as Nick mentions on the microphone, no race is for 'sheep stations' it's about the young nippers having fun and being able to test their skills against their peers. ■

*Kosii*

*Talle competitor takes the plunge*



# health & training

By Nick Marshall

Surf Life Physio - [www.surflifephysio.com.au](http://www.surflifephysio.com.au)

## Technology and Sport

With the growing increase in technology, filming and advances in wearables (devices that can track and measure your personal health data while you wear the device) there is an ever increasing desire to include this in to young athletes and squads training programs. So much so that a large amount of parents now purchase pieces of equipment to film, calculate and measure training and racing performance in their junior athlete. These now affordable devices giving data that was once only available to athletes in an institute of sport.

Over the last 25 years of working as a physiotherapy in elite sport I have seen this very change happen in front of my eyes. We went from experienced coaches and therapists that had a keen eye to see difference, changes in technique, tightness, posture and strength and then relate that back to performance based on their extensive experience. To now having every parent with an iphone recording sessions and analysing what is wrong and ▶



**2024 LIFESAVING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**LIFESAVING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS**

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what needs to be improved. I have had parents film their child and use that footage almost as ammunition to go back to their child's coach and accuse them of not coaching correctly because their child's technique wasn't good enough.

It is scary but it is a product of the times and we can either fight it, and be left behind, or we can try to better understand the data and issues with this explosion of technology and its affordability.

I remember working when GPS data was first being used in professional football codes in Australia and sitting down with my Exercise Physiology peers as they waded through pages and pages of data and tried to make sense of it. I also remember when MRIs first became accessible to people and when the quality of imaging allowed us to see every minute issue and difference, but those areas

didn't necessarily marry up with the symptoms that a person was reporting and so we sent patients in pain away with not one problem to worry about, but several.

Don't get me wrong the advances in technology have made an enormous difference in sport performance and health. Some of my physiotherapy peers unlocking ground-breaking data and discoveries around injury prevention by wearing 'wearable' devices. Research in female water polo players who wore wearable wrist bands were able to accurately assess shoulder loading, and therefore reduce swimming load as well as throwing loads to prevent overloading the rotator cuff and risking shoulder injury.

The reality is we are somewhat at the same position now with junior sport, wearables and videos that can accurately collect data but not necessarily the people ▶







with the right amount of expertise and experience interpreting these findings. I have spent hours in front of ipads and TV screens on pool deck in my role as one of the Physios that works with Swimming Australia and the Queensland Academy of Sport, looking for performance edges as well as areas that can be addressed to reduce injuries. But I do this alongside two if not three swimming biomechanistic professionals. Who for the last decade have specialised in this area. Even after all that time it is difficult to say what is optimal, ideal or a winning formula. There's no doubt the fundamentals of good technique are of paramount importance, nobody has got to the level where I am looking at their video on pool deck who is not an elite swimmer and capable of fantastic technique. That said, in the group that can boast more than 20 Olympic medals, no swimmer swims the same. Their individual body types, their events, their training history, and their attitudes all create difference in their technique.

In so many instances what we strive for is a 'model' of perfect that has been described but not necessarily achievable or correct when applied to an individual. Remember prior to the 2008 Beijing Olympics the ideal height for a 100m track sprinter, based upon years of data and utilising the available science, was to be 5ft 10-11in, around 180cm in height.

In 2008 a 6ft 5in (195 cm) athlete in Usian Bolt burst on the scene and won the 100m event at the next three Olympics. Described as being too tall to be able to swing his legs at a rate that would generate enough speed, he defied what we thought we knew as to be the 'perfect' 100m track runner for the time. That said, we now describe the ideal model for success for the 100m track run as an athlete who is 195cm tall.

So what does all this mean, and what am I trying to say. Firstly, advances in technology are great and they drive innovation and improvement. If their use is to be able to monitor your daily health in heart rate, steps etc and that encourages you to increase your daily activity and allows you to be more physically active and safe while you do so, then great. My biggest concerns currently are around their use in junior sport, and when we can measure a range of data sets, but not accurately interpret this data and then make poor decisions based upon it.

I do love parents and athletes being able to bring video footage and training heart rates to physio sessions to help paint a picture, or better describe what is happening when they are in pain or when they are training. But I fear when wearables and a keen desire to 'google' gets in the way of professional advice and experience. So, think of these new devices and the now affordable and accessible technology as adjuncts to you and your coaches toolbox and not as a new coach entirely. ■



**Assistant Professor Nick Marshall**

APA Titled Sports and Musculoskeletal Physiotherapist

Owner Surf Life Physio

Creator Albatross Nippers Inc

[admin@surflifephysio.com.au](mailto:admin@surflifephysio.com.au)



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