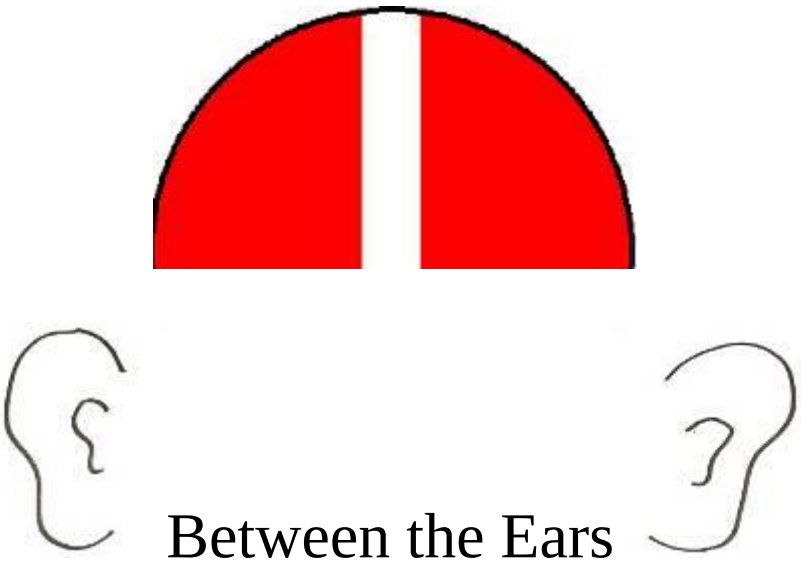


Between the Ears

Competition Newsletter of the Swanbourne Nedlands Surf Life Saving Club

(The race might finish between the flags, but between the ears is where the race is won and lost...and it's also where the famous red and white cap of Swanny sits…)

Contents

Why Compete?

Why do we compete? And why is it so important for Swanny lifesavers to train and race on the beach and in the surf?

To most people, competition is about winning; winning championships and medals and titles. But competition can be so much more than winning; it is one of the central pillars of surf lifesaving, one that literally supports the entire structure and philosophy of the movement.

Firstly, there are obvious health benefits to staying fit and active. This applies to anyone. Young or old, active or retired from lifesaving duties, you can benefit from occasional or regular training sessions. But for active lifesavers, there are a number of additional benefits. Competition conditions lifesavers to carry out rescues. It not only keeps them fit, it also provides them with the necessary skills in the surf. For this reason, most races simulate rescues of one kind or another. In a board race, for instance, the aim is to get off the beach, out past the break, turn a set of buoys and then return to shore as fast as possible. This is exactly what you'd be doing if you had to pull someone out of the water using a rescue board. Surfboat races, surf races, belt races, board races, board rescues, R & R, champion patrol and champion lifesaver events all encourage people to improve their lifesaving skills. Even events like the ski, which have few practical lifesaving applications, are still of immense value. People enjoy racing skis, so they get out on the water to train or compete, learning to read and negotiate the surf, getting to feel at home in the ocean.

Training imparts not only skills and fitness, but generates many shared experiences in a squad; large swells, spectacular wipe-outs, encounters with sea-creatures (some of these are fun - like seals, whales and dolphins - and some aren't…). This is the foundation of camaraderie, a sense of community within the Club and can even be the basis for life-long friendships.

Having regular training times and squads active on Swanny Beach throughout the summer have additional benefits. Over the years, more than half of the rescues or first aid cases attended to by Swanny lifesavers have occurred outside rostered patrol hours. Having squads of trained lifesavers present on the beach or on the water before work in the mornings, or late in the evenings, gives the Club a greater presence on the beach and better coverage to protect and treat members of the public. Our public image improves, as does our standing with the Council and other community groups. It also gives you, our lifesavers, more practice and experience in dealing with rescues and first aid cases.

For these reasons, competition should be about learning and personal development and enjoyment. It shouldn't be an end in itself, but a pathway to becoming a better lifesaver.

So to give everyone a kick in the pants, here is a simple summary:

If you are not training and racing in the surf, you are only half a lifesaver!!!

(Unless you're a lifesaver like Yan Mahoney, who is a deadset legend…)

Competition Available to Members

1. State Carnivals, State Championships and Aussie Titles

These events are open to every lifesaver who is 1) financial, 2) proficient and 3) has qualified by doing enough patrol hours. The patrol hours requirements vary depending on your membership status; 16 hours for Active Seniors, 8 hours for Active Reserve and 0 hours for Long Service and Life Members. New Bronzies who have just qualified must do a pro rata amount depending on when in the season they passed their ~~exam~~ assessment (anywhere from 16 down to 4 hours).

This means that State Championships and Aussie Titles are for active lifesavers, not just elite level athletes. Sure, there are champion athletes competing, like Olympic gold medallist Clint Robinson, but that just adds to the fun. I mean, you can stand on the line and race against the best in the world and you have every right to be there. These are **your** championships.

A lot of people feel uncomfortable about racing at this level. They feel that they are not elite athletes, that they are gumbies who shouldn't be there and are just getting in the way. But having the gumbies there is what makes an Aussie Title worth winning. For example, in the beach sprint, the top guys have to race against a huge field, maybe against every lifesaver in the country. They've got to race seven or eight times over several days, under different conditions and every time they've got to finish in the top half of the field. Those gumbies in the first round are what *make* an Aussie title hard to win and therefore worth winning. All the other finalists are in the same position and if they can't win because of the gumbies in the first round, they don't deserve to.

What this means is that if you are an active, proficient and financial surf lifesaver, you have every right to compete. In fact, you *should* compete

2. Unsanctioned Events

This is any event which is not run by or sanctioned by SLSA or SLSWA. It includes all the ocean swims and swim-thrus, the kayak events (including the Avon Descent), the fun-runs, triathlons and multi-event relays, as well as the new generation Adventure Races, like the Anaconda. Members are welcome to compete in these and are also welcome to use Club equipment if they need it (just remember to tell someone first, before you take it). While Swanny encourages its members to compete at anything and everything, we rarely make formal, club-structured arrangements to do these events. Occasionally a boat team will do the City to Surf together, or a large crew will do the Avon, but mostly it's left up to individuals.

3. Club Races

The most important competition of all is Sunday Club races. They are a time for all members, regardless of age, sex or ability, to do things together. The main focus of the morning is racing, but it's a social time, too. All the other stuff at Surf Club is good, Surf Club competition on Sunday is the quintessential lifesaving activity.

Sunday Club races are handicapped. *The slow competitors go first, the faster competitors behind them*. The theory is that anyone can win if they try hard enough. Unfortunately, it never works like that in practice and the handicap system is much abused. In fact, nothing in the Club is the cause of so much deceit, artifice, trickery, chicanery, craftiness, dissimilation, guile, low cunning, duplicity, subterfuge, complaint, accusation, resentment, criticism, indignation, grievance, hypocrisy, censure, remonstration, argument, name-calling, insult, profanity and expletive swearing as the weekly handicaps.

Of course, the system is ripe for abuse. A person's handicap is based entirely on their best performance for the season. That means if someone bludges for the first few races, they get a lower handicap than they deserve. This is fine, because if they want to keep their low handicap, they have to keep on losing. As soon as they pull out a faster time, their handicap goes up. The only problem is that there are five special handicap events during the season. These are the trophy events; the ~~President's~~ Presidents' Cup (800m swim), the Oldham Cup (1200m swim), the Ford Cup (1600m swim) the McPhail Cup (long run) and the Caris Cup (marathon). The winners get their names engraved on the perpetual trophies and so earn a kind of immortality, even if it's only as a name inscribed on a silver cup.

So in an effort to get the best handicap for a trophy event, people manipulate the system. They fox. They pretend they're trying when they're not. They fake injury. They feign hangovers. They lie. They cheat. They steal. They do anything and everything to get their handicap as low as possible. But there's no point in doing this if someone else is doing it better than them. So they have to make sure that the handicapper cracks down on all the other cheatin' bastards. They watch everyone closely. They scrutinize everyone else's times. They analyse everyone else's performances. And if anyone is under-performing, they make sure their complaints are loud and in the direction of the handicapper.

Your handicap's not the only thing that determines your chances of winning; the course for the race is also critical. We've only got *one permanent buoy* (only one that stays in the same place, anyway), so when we race over longer distances, new buoys have to be set on the day. If the course is set a little bit short, the front markers have more of a chance to win, because there's less time for the faster swimmers to catch them. The longer the course, the better it is for the back markers. My favourite way of improving my chances is to offer to set the buoys and then deliberately set them further offshore than they need to be. The other thing that changes is, of course, the ocean. On some days it's completely flat; on others, it'll be choppy, or blowing a gale, or breaking out near the turning buoy. Generally, the more swell there island the rougher it is, the more it favours the back markers. Poor swimmers struggle when the conditions deteriorate.

Q: What is Points Races?

A: Points Races is the ultimate intraclub competition with accumulative points throughout the season. A male and female champion will be awarded at the end of the season.

Q: When is it on?

A: Every Sunday morning at 10am!

Q: Do I have to be good at stuff?

A: Of course not! The best thing about Points Races is that it's a friendly environment where you can try every event! That means you'll know what to enter for the bigger carnivals!

Q: Sunday mornings? I'm usually tired/sick/hungover/sleeping.

A: Well that's when you need to take a big dose of TOUGHEN UP. The big blue ocean is the best way to feel better.

THE HANDICAPPER'S CRAFT

Below is an extract from a 1997 Swanny Shorebreak Newsletter, written by the then head handicapper, Wise Beyond Belief but Slightly Deranged Alfie (names have been changed to protect the guilty). Nowadays Tim does the handicaps, so they aren't worked out quite the same and the points allocation is slightly different, but the general drift is the same. So if you want to learn a bit more about handicapping and how it's done, read on…

The Handicapper's craft is a black art, a mixture of quantum physics (Mostly Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, which states you cannot measure the speed and position simultaneously with a high degree of accuracy), Chaos Theory, weird sorcery, inspired genius and raving insanity. Its origins are hidden in the mists of time and its mysteries are jealously guarded by a chosen, trusted few. The Handicapper's secrets are passed from one generation to the next by word of mouth; nothing is committed to paper. And woe betide the layperson who unlawfully learns the secrets of the Handicapper.....

But all this is about to change. In the era of open and accountable government and with the advent of the Freedom of Information Act, the techniques of the Swanbourne Nedlands SLSC Head Handicapper "Wise Beyond Belief But Slightly Deranged" Alfie are published here for the first time.

How Your Handicap Is Calculated

Beach Flags

This event is not handicapped at all. It is too hard to handicap safely. I wanted to make the winner of the previous event do 10 push ups before each round, but no one else thinks this is a good idea.

Beach Sprint

The top 2-3 place getters receive a 2 yard penalty, while the 2-3 at the back of the field get a 2 yard bonus. Those at the middle of the field stay much the same and those in between these groups get a 1 yard bonus or a 1 yard penalty, depending on whether they were to the front or back of the field.

Timed Events: Run-Swim-Run, Long Swim and the Long Run

1) Each week, the time everyone actually took to complete each event is calculated:

(Time you came in) - (Your handicap) = Elapsed time

2) A record of everyone's elapsed times for the season is kept. Your handicap is calculated from your BEST time - not your average time, or what you did last week, but what you are capable of doing at your best.

3) The slowest competitor leaves on scratch, or zero. Handicaps are calculated so that if everyone performs up to their potential, everyone will cross the line together (The Handicapper's Dream).

(Slowest person's best time) - (Your best time) = Your handicap

This means that if you try harder and go faster, you will win. If you pea out, you will lose.

4) This is where the black magic comes in. Because surf conditions and buoy placement vary from week to week, your elapsed time is adjusted or corrected to what it would have been if you raced over the correct distance in reasonable surf conditions.

For example, if you swam the long swim in 5.00 mins in a flat day when the course was 10% too far and in 5.45 mins in a nor-wester when the course was 12% to far, these times are corrected to 4.45 mins and 4.20 mins respectively (Ed: Can anyone work this out?) Thus your fasted time for the year becomes 4.20 mins, even though you have never swum it in that time.

The calculation of the length and difficulty of the course is based on the performance of 5-6 reliable competitors who perform close to their best every time they compete. If they all take 10% longer to do the course, it is assumed that the course was 10% too far (or they all went partying together the night before).

5) Every now and then a mistake is made (the timekeeper calls out the wrong time, you hear it incorrectly, the recorder writes it down wrong, or the computer makes a fundamental error in calculation - it is NEVER the Handicapper's fault).

To correct these faults, all times are eye-balled to make sure everyone's handicaps are in the right range, that people with similar abilities are leaving at about the same time and that Cameron has an extra thirty seconds more than everyone else. I can't check everyone's handicaps with everyone else's, so if I'm way out, just let me know and I'll check my calculations, the phase of the moon and the wart on my left elbow and correct your handicap retrospectively if necessary.

Debunking the Handicapper's Furphy's (or the Handicappers FAQ)

Q. How come my handicap is 3 minutes worse than last year when I haven't got any faster?

A. Your handicap is calculated from the slowest person's fastest time. If last year, the slowest person took 6 minutes to do the long run and this year the slowest person takes 9 minutes, your handicap will increase by 3 minutes even if your speed didn't change.

Q. How come Joe Bloggs and I left at the same time last week, he beat me by 30 seconds and we've both got the same handicaps this week?

A. Compared to Joe Bloggs, you weren't trying last week. You both have the same best time and should both cross the line together. I'm not going to reduce your handicap because you didn't try.

Q. How come Jane Bloggs is leaving in front of me when she's a much better swimmer than me?

A. On recorded times this year, Jane Bloggs is slower than you (ie Jane Bloggs is pea-ing it).

Q. How come all these people leave on scratch? I'm never going to catch them with the handicap I've got.

A. The first time someone does an event, they leave on scratch. This gives the handicapper a base time to work with. Don't worry; although these people receive a point for competing, they do not receive points for finishing in the top six. Only those people who have a handicap (ie have done at least one event) are eligible to win.

Q. How come my handicap bears absolutely no relation to my ability, my performances this year, or to anything in Heaven or Earth?

A. The handicapper is floundering in a morass of despair, confusion and computer illiteracy.

How the Points are Allocated

1. This is set out in the club constitution:

Winner 12 pts 2nd 9 pts 3rd 6 pts 4th 4 pts 5th 3 pts 6th 2 pts

Everyone else 1 pt

2. In the timed events, an extra two points is awarded to the person who completes the course in the fastest actual time.

3. People doing their first points race do not have a handicap. They are therefore not eligible to place above anyone who has a handicap. eg In his first swim, Murgatroyd leaves on scratch, finishes in the fastest actual time and crosses the line first. There are only 3 people in the race who have handicaps and they finish places first, second and third. Murgatroyd, being the fastest of the rest comes fourth, receiving 4 points for that position, plus the extra two for finishing in the fastest time.

4. Anyone doing patrol or doing water safety gets one point, so make sure you tell the timekeeper.

Happy racing!

Swanny Head Handicapper

Do or do not do. There is no “try”.

Yoda
Jedi Master

The Inspiration Page

No, this is not a touchy-feely, namby-pamby, wishy-washy, introspective, get-in-touch-with-your-inner-feelings, spiritual inspiration page. This is a get off your fat arse and do some training page. You can’t get better at ANYTHING by talking about it. You can’t get better at ANYTHING with intentions. You can’t get better at ANYTHING by buying the best new gear, or by looking at training videos, or eating the right sports food, or drinking the right sports drinks. You can’t get better at ANYTHING unless you get out there five days a week, in all types of weather, whatever your mood and however you’re feeling and doing some hard work.
Is it too cold? Don’t care.
Is it too windy? Don’t care.
Is the swell too big? Don’t care.
Feeling tired? Don’t care.
Hungover? Don’t care.
Get out there, or you’ll never get any better.

> “Sometime, somewhere, someone is training when you are not. When you meet that person in competition, he will beat you.”
>
> Ron Barassi, AFL Coach

Or better yet…

> “Do or do not do. There is no try.”
>
> Yoda, Jedi Master

This is Swanny’s new mantra.

Okay, okay, okay. We know that it’s not always about winning. Here at Swanny we don’t care if you don’t win. We don’t care if you come last. We don’t care if you come last every time. We don’t care if you get lapped. But we do care if you want to race and don’t get organized to get on the line. We do care if you have some talent, but couldn’t be arsed trying. We do care if you would really like to race, but feel too shy or embarrassed to ask. If you don’t want to race, that’s fine. But there are **NO** excuses if you’d like to have a go and DO NOTHING ABOUT IT!!!

Special Feature: The Surf Swimmer

Each month we will be focusing on one competition discipline and this first edition of "Between the Ears" kicks off with a feature article on surf swimming. Swimming was selected first because

1) Swimming is the fundamental skill that all surf lifesavers MUST have. The first physical qualifying criteria for the Bronze is to do a 400m swim. The run-swim-run is THE unit of fitness for active lifesavers. I mean, even boaties have to swim.
2) If you can swim, a lot of other disciplines become easier. You need to swim to compete in the board rescue, or R&R or the Champion Lifesaver, or even Surf Board Riding (if you're a kook and lose your board)
3) Swimmers are gods and should always come first

So…

Have you ever wondered what it feels like to do a swim race in surf? Or what it feels like to do the belt swim, where you tow twice your own bodyweight in waxed cotton line? Or what it feels like to race and swim in 20 foot surf?

Or have you tried swimming, but always struggled? Do you hate the run-swim-run because you can't do the middle bit? Do you avoid the long swim in points races? Do you struggle to even finish the cup events like the 1200m Oldham Cup, or the 1600m Ford Cup?

Or are you a good pool swimmer, but struggling in the surf? Do weaker swimmers beat you time and again across the bank, or through the shorebreak, or even in the last little run up the beach?

If so, this section is for you. It contains dramatic descriptions of surf and belt races and hints and tips for racing, as well as a feature on Swanny's first ever national champion, belt swimmer Bernie Kelly.

The Belt Race

The belt race can be a tough event, especially if there's large surf or strong drift. The rope, instead of forming a straight line between the reel and the swimmer, will drift with the current and form a huge arc to one side. In a 120-metre race, you can be towing as much as three hundred metres of line. It makes it a hard event to pace. The longer you take, the more the lines bows out, the more line you have to drag. The closer you get to the buoy, the slower you swim. If there's big surf, it makes it even harder. Each wave that comes in pulls on the line, dragging it shoreward. You can spend minutes trying to gain ten metres, only to have a wave come through and drag you twenty metres back to the beach.

It can be dangerous, too. In the early days, several beltmen drowned when their lines got snagged underwater on rocks. These days, the harness is held together by a pin. If the swimmer is in difficulty, all they have to do is pull the pin and the harness comes apart. That's the theory anyway, but it doesn't always work like that. Once when Stewie Alcorn was doing a belt swim at North Cott, a yacht came too close inshore and snagged his

line on the keel. It was going fast and the harness pulled so tightly against him that he couldn't get the pin out. He was lucky he didn't drown, or get snapped in half against the yacht's hull.

Belt swimmers are the real Iron Men of surf lifesaving. They are the strongest of all the competitors, giants amongst men. They are purists, for unlike the ironmen, their dedication is often unrewarded by fame or monetary gain. Their event is a throwback to the time when the belt was used to rescue drowning swimmers and the men who swim it are reminders of the roots and traditions of surf lifesaving. Daniel McClellan. Mark Williams. Sean Davis. Adam Weir. Tanian Goode. Deane Pieters. Gods amongst men…

Fiction Section

Goin' Hard

On the line for the belt swim. I'm nervous, like I always am before a race, but for some reason it's worse than usual when I do the belt. There are a few fiddly things that have to be done; line the reel up on the peg; get the brake off; make a long loop of line, lay the belt on the sand, the canvas bit flat, the neck-strap in a clean semicircle, line it all up with the other swimmers' belts. My fingers fumble with the line and the straps and I lay the belt three or four times before I'm happy with it. The start line's a bit close to the water and every time a wave comes through, I have to pick the belt up to stop it getting washed away and then I've got to lay it all over again.

The official walks along the line of swimmers checking the pins. I pull the pin on my belt, showing him that I know how to do it and that the pin comes out easily. My fingers fumble again as I re-assemble the belt and lay it on the sand for the sixth time. The official, who has moved on to the next peg, suddenly turns around and comes stalking back.

"That's not a clove hitch," he says, pointing to where the line is tied onto the D-ring of the belt. "You'd better retie it."

I look at him and I can't work out whether he's joking or not.

"Are you serious?" I ask him.

He looks at me in surprise.

"Yes. It's supposed to be a clove hitch. Get it retied."

I fumble with the knot, which was probably tied years ago and has been pulled tighter and tighter with use. I can't get it undone and we're almost ready to go. I'm just about to give up when one of my linesmen comes over and takes the belt out of my hands.

"I'll do it," she says.

I nod thankfully and pace back to my mark, swinging my arms. The trouble with the knot has affected my pre-race routine and I'm not quite ready when the starter calls us onto the line. I try to put it out of my head; nothing I can do about it now. Just concentrate.

I face up the beach towards the reel, two linesmen on either side of me. I'm bent forward in a crouch, ready for the gun. It's up! And there it is - we're off!

I sprint up the sand to the belt, jump over the canvas strap, turning as I go and land neatly in the circle made by the belt and line. I grab the belt and pull it up to my waist. I give the canvas a quick flick so the neck strap flies over my head and lands squarely around my neck. Then I sprint back down the beach, the line drawing tight behind me, the slipknot action of the line through the D-ring pulling the belt tight against my hips. The line will be singing off the reel now, as fast as I can run. The drum will be spinning insanely. I hope I pulled the handle out so it's not going to spin with the drum and hit one of the linesmen.

But it's too late to think about it now. Here's the water's edge. I step over it, put my foot in a hole, stumble and regain my balance. I get up speed again, trying to get my knees high and wide apart as I wade through shin-deep water. I hurdle a broken wave, but it catches my ankles and I almost go down. There's a bit of tension on the line behind me now; the team's not able to give me all the line I need and it's slowing me down. I have visions of the line looped over the guard rail of the drum and caught on the spindle or around the handle. Maybe the brake's still on, or they've dropped the reel.

"Don't worry about what you can't control!" I think to myself. "Concentrate!"

There's a wave ahead and I'm now up my hips, where it's too deep to keep running. I start porpoising, diving under water, grabbing the sand with both hands and then surging forward, up and out to dive forward again. Deane Pieters is to my left and he's already fifteen metres ahead of me. It's not possible! No one is that fast! But he hasn't had to start porpoising yet; he's still running.

The bank is shallower here. I stand up and wade again. Deano is still running. Twenty metres ahead of me now.

"Don't think about it!" I scream silently to myself.

I try to concentrate on what I'm doing as the next wave comes through. It's big and I dive under it, grabbing the sand and pulling myself along the sea floor to avoid the mass of water moving on the surface. When I come up on the other side, it's deep, deep enough to start swimming. I try to relax into my stroke, concentrating on rhythm, breathing and timing. There's no weight on the line behind me yet, but I mustn't let that fool me. It's easy to go too hard too early and then blow up at the end when it feels like you're pulling a grand piano behind you. I put my head up and look for the green and white buoy. I can't see it because of the swell. Deano's line is right below me. Either the sweep is bad or one of us is further off course than we'd like. I look for the cans again. And again. And again. On the fourth try I see the string line. I'm off course, too far to the left, as always.

The line's getting heavy now and I'm starting to hurt. My breath's rasping in my throat. My lungs are starting to burn and it doesn't help when I try to take a breath and get a mouthful of seawater instead. Deano's already at his can, but it's going to take me almost another minute to get there.

My technique, of which I am inordinately proud, has slowly gone to pieces. I'm pulling so much weight that I can't get a decent grip on the water. My hands just slip, tearing at it rather than pulling me through it. I'm

throwing my head around and I'm kicking too hard trying to compensate. I've lost all my rhythm and I'm fighting the belt and the line. Even though I know what I'm doing wrong, it's impossible to correct it.

I'm in a world of pain now; my legs, my arms and my lungs are all on fire. It feels like I've been swimming forever. I can't remember a time when I wasn't in this tunnel of green, rushing water. It's my world, my entire universe. I have the taste of it in my mouth, the sough of it in my ears, the feel of it all around me.

"Why the hell am I doing this?" I think to myself.

But even through the pain I know why I do it. I love it. Sure I'm not going to win, but for me it's not about winning or losing. It's about standing on the line and feeling the adrenalin rush. It's about going as hard as I can and digging deep and lifting, even when I want to stop. It's about pushing myself to the edge and then seeing if I can push it further; not for glory, or a gold medal, or for any other trappings of success or fame. Just because it would be weak not to. Even though no one else would ever know I gave it less than one hundred percent, I would. Goin' hard is what it's all about.

Printed without permission from "Summer at the Rampant Swan" (unpublished).

The Surf Race – The Rules of the Race

1. Stand on the line
2. When the gun goes off, go like fuck around the course
3. Cross the finish line

(Summarised without authorization from SLSA Competition Manual, 30th Edition)

Tips for Surf Racing

1. Learn to swim
2. Learn to swim properly. Like in a pool, with a squad. Work on technique and fitness. Do thousands of laps, concentrating every second on what your hands and arms and legs and head are doing. Learn to breathe properly. Learn how to relax during the recovery stroke. Learn your body position; the angle of your head, your chest, your hips, your legs. Learn to kick. Learn where your hands sweep; how far in front, when they bend, how close to your body they come, how far back they go. Learn to turn on your side. Learn the feel of the water around you.

Now you can swim, here are some special tips for surf racing

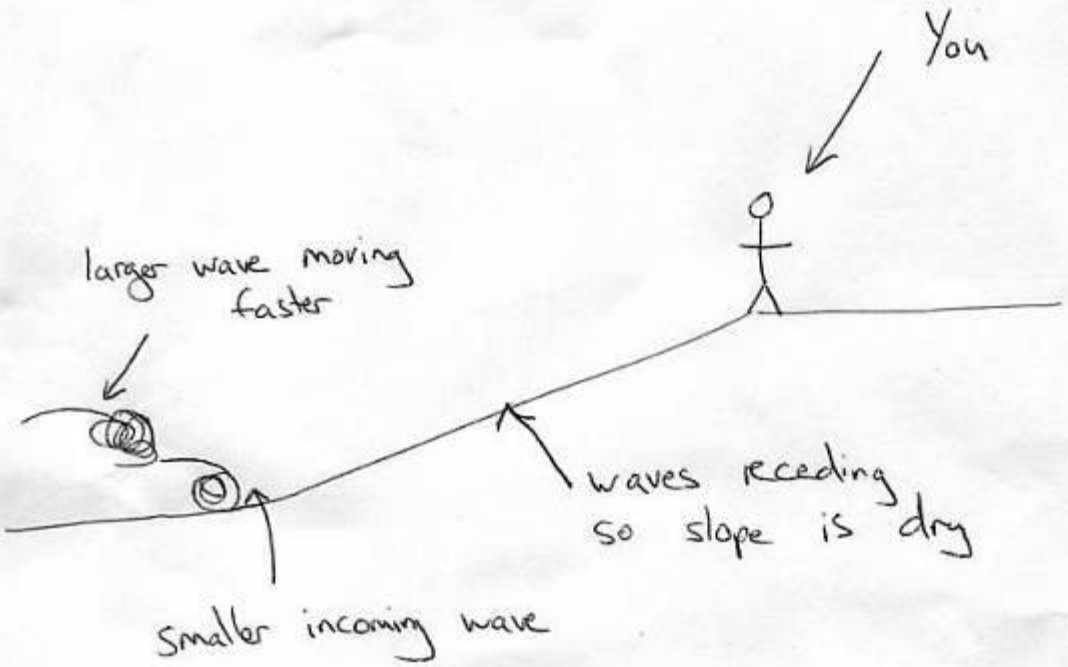
Across the Bank

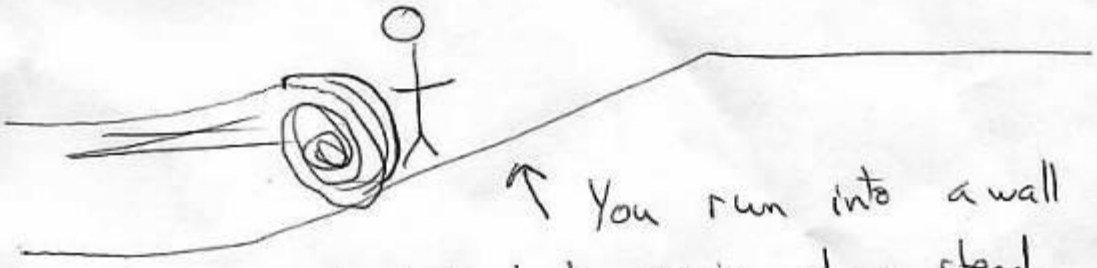
1. Try to time your run into the surf (if you can) with the waves. Aim to hit the water as the wave reaches its furthest point up the beach. That means that as you run in, the water will deepen gradually and this allows you to run further in than at any other time of the wave cycle. If you time it wrong, you could run from hard

sand into a breaking wave, which will hit you like a 5 foot high wall travelling at a steady 12 km/h. A wave like that has massive momentum and will knock you over and smash you backwards. If you get it right, the water will recede with you as you run in, giving you some backwash to ride out with. (See Figures 1 & 2 for a visual representation.) Catching the backwash is absolutely critical on craft like boards and skis and although less important when swimming, can still give you a lift. If you are doing a run-swim-run, ironman or Taplin relay event, try to time your run or time the change-over to a team-mate so that they can hit the water at the high-point. In a run-swim-run or ironman, although the swim is in the middle of the race, treat the run from the turning flag into the water as you would for the start of a swim race; go as hard and as fast as you can until you start swimming.

2. Run as far and as fast as you can. You can run faster than you can swim, so the farther out you run, the faster you will be. The faster you run, the higher you can lift your knees, so the deeper you can go. The deeper you can go before you swim, the further you can run and thus the faster you can go. Run flat out for as long as you can. Hold nothing back.
3. Only try to run over waves if they are very, very small. A wave moves towards the beach; you are going the other way. Once you have jumped a wave, your foot (moving forward) lands in water behind the leading edge of the wave (moving backwards relative to you). This will push your foot backwards while your upper body continues moving forwards. This will make you fall flat on your face and make you look like a twit. It is surprising how small a wave can be and still do this to you. Try it on a small wave if you don't believe me (but do it where no on can see you).
3. Dive over small waves, but just make sure you don't faceplant on the sand on the other side when it's shallow. Be prepared to stand up and start running again straight away.
4. Dive under bigger waves. ALWAYS dive to the bottom and hold onto the sand until the wave has gone. Any wave that is big enough to dive under is big enough to push you backwards if you don't hold onto the sand. You may feel like it's not pushing you backwards, but it will. The competitor next to you who holds on when you don't will ALWAYS come up in front of you.
5. Know where the bottom gets deep and exactly where you have to start porpoising or swimming.
6. Porpoise when you can no longer run.
7. Swim when you can no longer reach the bottom easily from your last porpoise. If you lose momentum and can't quite reach the bottom on your last porpoise-dive, you've left it too late.
8. At Swanny, you can often go straight from a run to a dive to swimming (also at Scarborough where the inshore hole is present). Make sure you get the timing right; if you fall over because you went too deep, you've lost all your momentum from the run.

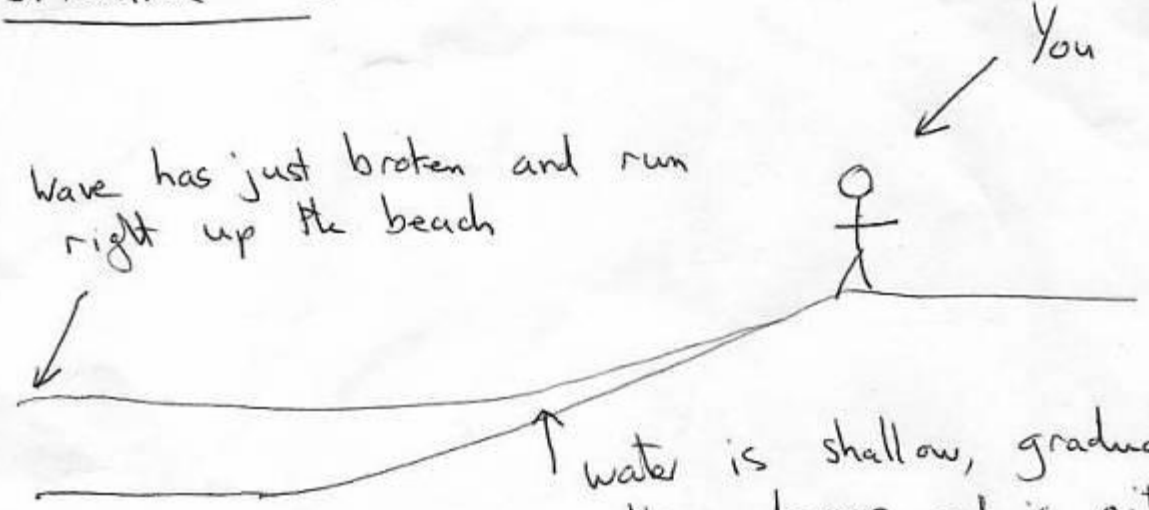
Situation 1

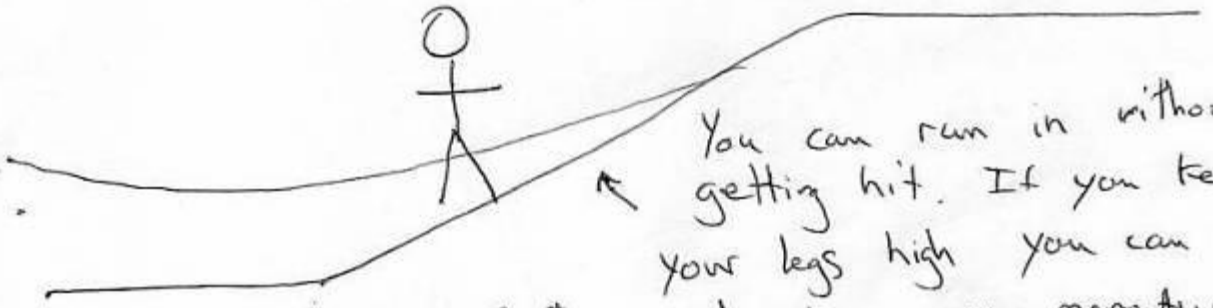




↑ You run into a wall of water 4 foot high moving at a steady 12 mph and it flattens you

Situation 2





On a board or ski you can catch the backwash out as the water recedes

On the way out

1. Going under or through waves, always dive as deep as you can. It is not possible to dive too deep or stay under too long. If the wave has broken, grab the sand and hold onto until it has gone.
2. Swim straight to the can. You can follow the feet of others, but you must still look up to check that they are going straight. Other ways to check your direction are: the angle of the sunlight in the water, the angle of the chop, the direction of sand ripples on the bottom of the ocean. None are as good as having a look every 5-10 strokes.
3. When looking for the buoy, lift your head high, but don't try to hold it up for too long. Use your height out of the water to dive back in (much like butterfly swimming). If you can't see the buoy, try again next stroke. Keep trying each stroke, preferably at the top of a wave or swell or chop. DON'T try to keep your head up all the time. If you are swimming through chop, go under the wave, but punch up through the back of it and as you come up, get high to have a look.
4. You won't see the buoys if you have long hair over your face, or your goggles have fogged up. Even short hair can be a problem; as you lift your head out, water cascades over your fringe and into your eyes. You only have a moment to see the buoy and you won't see it if you have water in your eyes. Either cut your hair very short or wear a cap. If your goggles fog up, they're useless. Either wear anti-fog goggles (expensive) or get tough and race without goggles. Sure it hurts underwater and you can't see very well, but you CAN see when you look up for the buoy.
5. When you swim through chop, don't fight it. It knocks you around and makes you feel like you're swimming badly. Don't worry; it's doing the same to everyone. Relax with it, keep low in the water. Breathe on the protected side so you don't get water in your mouth. Going into it, take shorter strokes and go under the small crests. Punch through the back of them as for 3 above. Time your stroke so you reach under the front of a crest and glide through it with one arm out in front. Running with chop, you can lengthen out and essentially ignore it.

Around the buoys

1. Take your own line. Don't go wide to avoid others, but don't deliberately cut anyone off. Keep your line.
2. Accept any contact as part of the game. Don't go looking for it, just deal with what gets handed out. In a full surf race, 48 people attempt to go around one buoy at the same time. Inevitably there is biffo, but most of it's incidental. Whacking someone will just slow you down, as well as making you a target next time.

On the way back in

1. Swim straight to where you want to finish. See 2 & 3 above.
2. Look behind you or under your shoulder for incoming waves. It does slow you down to do this, but you'll be slower if you have to swim all the way back in to the beach while everyone else catches a wave in.

3. Don’t try and stand up too quickly. It’s very hard to lift your knees on the way in – much harder than on the way out. Stay on the surface and let the waves and water movement push you shorewards. Only try to stand once your hands can touch the bottom during a normal swimming stroke.
4. Bodysurf a wave if you can. This is not easy to do during a race. The only way to get good at it is to practise, practise, practise. Try catching them way too far out, try catching them way too late, try holding them through the backwash, try picking them up broken (without pushing off the bottom) and always hold them as far up the beach as possible. In a race, take the drop even if you think it’ll hurt you. No guts, no glory…

Profile of a Swimmer

Looks: Like a Greek god
Trains: Like an animal
Smells: Like a swimming pool. “Chlorine No.5” by Coco Chanel
Intellect: Beyond the comprehension of mortal men
Favourite Movie: The Big Blue
Worst Movie: Drowning by Numbers
Favourite Superhero: Aquaman
Favourite Music: Handel’s Water Music, Night Swimming by REM, Not Drowning Waving
Favourite Book: “The Bodysurfers” by Robert Drewe
Favourite Saying: “I watch you fighting the water and I laugh” (Alex Popov)

Profile of a Swanny Legend – Bernie Kelly

Bernie Kelly was Swanny’s first ever national champion, but more than that, he was WA’s first ever national champion; the first person ever from this side of the Nullarbor to win an Aussie Title.
He won his title in the surf belt. In 1947 there was no Ironman event. The surf belt was considered the blue riband event; the very, very best competitors were belt swimmers. They were not only competitors, but true lifesavers as well, the first guys up when the alarm was called and someone had to be rescued.
Before Bernie Kelly, many Western Australian competitors had tried and failed to win an Aussie Title. In fact, there was growing frustration in WA and even a feeling that it couldn’t be done. Lack of consistent surf, lack of top-drawer competition and having to travel interstate just to compete all had a negative effect on the mentality of WA competitors. There were a few good surf swimmers in WA, but no one could crack it.
Bernie Kelly travelled to Southport, Queensland, in 1947 to have another go. He was funded by local donations from the surf club and auxiliary clubs. This put a lot of pressure on him to perform, as he was worried about having

wasted people's money if he didn't do well. Apparently, when he reached his buoy first (and won), he lay on his back in the water and cried, utterly relieved that the donated money hadn't been wasted.

Shortly after Bernie's success, Don Morrison from Cottesloe won the first of his six national surf belt titles. He went on to become one of Australia's all-time great surf swimmers. But there were many from WA who felt that he only achieved what he had because of what Bernie Kelly had achieved before him. Bernie had broken the hoodoo and shown that it was possible.

The award for the most outstanding achievement by an individual at the WA State Championships is still named after him; the Bernie Kelly Medal.

Kurrawa '96 – The Fifty Year Storm: Fiction

Ever wondered what it's like to swim and race in 20-foot surf? Well, here for the fifth time ever, a first-hand, absolutely true fictional account of the Rescue Relay at Kurruwa '96, carried out in 20 foot surf generated by tropical cyclone Beti.

On the line for the racing, the officials brief us on the course.

"You're surf lifesavers," she tells us. "You're supposed to carry out rescues in these types of conditions."

It makes me laugh, because the official looks like she's never done a run-swim-run in her life and two of the carnival IRBs have already flipped in the huge surf. We're supposed to be able to handle the conditions, but the examiners can't. One IRB has washed up a hundred metres down the beach, but the other one's tied to a buoy which is inside the break. It's been there for about half an hour, upside down and no one can get to it. It's taking an absolute pounding.

Just one race to go. Out and back and the gold medal's ours. As long as we don't let go of the board.

And that's what's worrying me as I stand on the beach and look out to sea. Forty metres away is the smallest inshore wave. It's broken and only a couple of feet high, but beyond it is another wave, twice as big. And beyond that is another wave and another and another, each bigger than the last. And as I look further out to sea, I have to raise my line of sight higher and higher, until I see the eighth or ninth wave of the set, the size of a five storey building, breaking out the back.

I've been out in the surf a couple of times now and I've got used to it, sort of. As long as I keep my eye on the waves and don't try to go too hard, the swim out the back shouldn't be a problem. The problem is going to be the trip back in.

Even the best teams would have to be worried in surf like this and even at the best of times, Leavo and I are not the best of teams. With two people on it, a board (and not a lightweight racing board, but a thick, heavy rescue board) is the slowest of all the racing surf craft. If you get caught in the zone, there's nowhere to go. You can't get under, you can't get over, you just have to sit there and take a pounding. The bigger the waves, the wider the zone. The slower the craft, the longer it takes you to get across it and the more likely you are to get creamed.

Our practice yesterday was a complete disaster and that was on the smaller inshore waves. Today, we're going to have to deal with the real biggies out the back. We could get killed, literally. And even if we don't, we could so easily lose contact with the board. That would mean instant disqualification and we can kiss any chances of a medal goodbye.

But I don't have to think about it anymore, because suddenly the gun's up. I shut my mind to everything else. I'm in a zone and the only things that exist are me, the starting gun and the surf. And then I hear the crack of the starter's pistol and I'm off.

I run down the beach, about half-pace. There's no point in sprinting, because this is going to be a marathon event. I definitely do *not* want to go into oxygen debt. I'm going to need to hold my breath long and often before I've finished.

I hit the water and immediately turn right to make the best use of the bank, the drift and what small rip there is through the inside break. The water is surprisingly warm, warmer than the air. A little wave comes through and smashes into my shins. I lift my knees, pounding through the shallow water. I hit a trough and the water's suddenly up to my waist, so I start porpoising. The bank is long and I have to porpoise twenty or thirty times before I can start swimming. Then it's just a head-down grind for the next fifteen minutes. Take five or six strokes, dive under a wave, get as deep as I can, take three or four strokes underwater, come up to the surface, suck in some precious oxygen, take another three strokes, dive under again.

It's impossible to get into a rhythm; I've got to dive every five or ten strokes to get under a wave. It's also dangerous to go too hard; I've got to be able to hold my breath for ten or twenty seconds each time I go under. I can't afford to be in oxygen debt if I've got to hold my breath for too long.

I pop up after one wave and have a quick look around. The guy from Seacliff is sitting right on my feet, but the competitor from Currumbin has vanished somewhere up ahead. The others are all well back.

The further I get off the beach, the bigger the waves get. In fact, I'm starting to get to the biggies out the back. At first, they're breaking well in front of me still, so they're just a mountain of white water by the time they get to me. But soon I'm in the impact zone, where they break. It's as frightening as hell.

It's hard to describe how big they are. Two metre seas on a four-metre swell (dive, head for the bottom, take two strokes, come up, breathe). Let's assume for a moment that's how big it is right now. Say every so often there's a summation effect (dive, head for the bottom, take two strokes, come up, breathe); that means a six-metre wave. That's (dive... breathe) over eighteen foot. It looks bigger than that. Must remember (dive... breathe) that that would be its vertical height. The actual face of the wave would be much bigger. Also, (dive... breathe) my face is at the base of the wave, looking up, which makes them look bigger than they actually are. It's a comforting thought, until I look at them again.

Each time I go under, it's an unbelievable experience. The foam cuts out the light completely, so even though I'm only two metres underwater, it's pitch black. And the sound is like nothing I've ever heard. Like a train going overhead, like rolling thunder - no comparison is suitable; nothing can describe that sound. And when I come

up on the other side, I'm flotsam in the roiling foam. It beats against me, pushing me back to the beach. I fight it, but my hands tear uselessly through it. I'm unable to get a grip on the aerated water. I've never felt so completely helpless and insignificant in the surf.

And now I'm frightened. I'm right in the impact zone, where the waves gain height just before they break. Getting under a wave is no longer just a matter of avoiding the broken water. With a breaking wave, there's a huge mass of moving water; even if I'm under it, it can still grab me and suck me up the face. If that happens, I'll find myself going over the falls, backwards. Taking a fifteen-foot drop on my back and then being hit by a ton of water is not something I'm keen to try. To be honest, it shouldn't happen if I'm deep enough, but my imagination is fairly vivid. It's hard to get the fear of it out of my mind.

"A ton of water," I think to myself. "That's … that's only a cubic metre of water. More like being hit by twenty tons. For God's sake! Three days ago, the biggest wave I'd ever seen was a six-foot shorebreak at Swanny. How am I supposed to be able to deal with this?"

But although the size of the waves makes them look scary, they're quite a nice shape. If I get deep enough, there's hardly any pull at all, even on the huge, unbroken giants. Then an absolute monster of a wave picks up in front of me and I dive into it, trying to get under and through it before it breaks. When I pop out the back, I'm in clear water for the first time. It means I've made it through the break.

I put my head up and yes, there's the string line. It's only twenty metres in front of me, but about fifty metres to my right. They've set it as close as they can to the break, but it's still about four hundred metres offshore. At last I can race. I put my head down and sprint for the cans.

I make it just ahead of the guy from Seacliff and I hang over my buoy with my arm in the air. Then, holding the line in one hand so I don't drift away, I float on my back and suck in the oxygen. After a few moments I've recovered enough to sit up and take a look around. The Currumbin guy's already at his buoy and he's hardly puffing; he must have been there for a while. Out to sea, an IRB is ploughing up and down, keeping an eye on the competitors. One of the officials in the duck is standing up, waving two flags above his head. The flags are the same colour as my buoy and the Seacliff buoy. He must be signalling to the shore that we've reached the string line. Of course; there's absolutely no way anyone on the beach would be able to see us. I sit on the string line and wait for Stewie.

After about ten minutes the second Currumbin competitor pops out of the back of a wave and swims to his can. Stewie arrives five minutes later, hot on the heels of Seacliff. Stewie wraps his arm over the buoy and holds one arm up in the air. Then he moves to where I'm floating behind the cans and wraps the rescue tube around me. With Stewie there, I've got someone to talk to.

"How was it, Big Fella?" I ask him.

"Intense," he says, still puffing. "I couldn't get under properly with the tube."

Yeah, that would have been interesting. The tube is designed to support an unconscious person in the water, so it's pretty buoyant. Stewie must have been worked.

With the buoys set so close to the break, they are lifted and dragged each time a wave comes through. The pull is immense and Stewie and I have to hold on tightly to the line to stop from being swept away. I'm surprised the string line hasn't dragged its anchors.

It seems like I've been out here for ages now. I've completely recovered from my swim and I'm starting to stiffen up. Usually I can't get enough rest in this race; it's ironic that suddenly I'm getting too much. I try to imagine what poor bloody Leavo's going through and I can't. It was bad enough swimming, but at least I could get deep underneath the surface. He's on a board which is designed to float. He must be copping an absolute pasting. The worst thing is not being able to see what's going on. Our event horizon is a bare twenty metres from where we're resting on the cans.

Suddenly Leavo and a Seacliff competitor pop over a wave and race down to the buoys. Where's the Currumbin guy? He must have been axed... no time to worry about that now. Leavo swings the board around in front of me and I climb on and we head back to the beach.

I'm too far forward, so I stop paddling and readjust my position. We paddle quickly, not talking. After we've gone about thirty metres I turn around and look over my shoulder. There's a king wave coming. I yell to Leavo and we lift our rating, trying to get out in front of it. I'm trying to remember all the things that Leavo's told me about surfing this kind of wave, but my mind's a complete blank. All I can hear is his macho *Point Break* bullshit again.

"Just paddling into big surf is a total commitment, man. You can't just call time out and stroll on into the beach if you don't like it."

I look over my shoulder to see what the wave is doing. Bad move. I freeze for an instant, completely petrified.

"You see, fear causes hesitation. And hesitation causes your worst fears to be realized."

"What the fuck," I think to myself. "What's the worst that can happen? We die. I can deal with that."

So I put my head down and lift my rating, trying to stay up with Leavo's insane stroke rate.

"You got that kamikaze look about you. And Leavo can smell it from a mile away. He'll take you to the edge. And past it."

This is crazy. Are we actually going to try and take it? I'm not sure, but I feel the surge of the wave underneath us and I look down over the lip and see the drop and my heart is in my mouth...

The wave is huge. It's so big that it has a sort of a false crest just behind the actual face. It's this crest that we're on and suddenly we're ploughing into the *back* of the wave face. The board gets vertical; we can't control it anymore and over we go. I hang on like grim death and hope that Leavo has, too. He has.

"Thank Christ for that!" I think to myself. "We didn't take it and we didn't let go of the board."

But all is not well. We're off the board, which is upside down and facing the wrong way, we're right in the zone and there's another mountain of water bearing down on us.

We make a lightning decision.

"You don't have time to think up there. You just react."

"Wrong movie, you idiot," I think to myself. "That's *Top Gun,* not *Point Break*. Concentrate!"

We leave the board where it is and grab the straps. As the broken wave swamps us, we pull the nose under. We hardly move an inch. As soon as it's gone we flick the board back over, get on and start paddling for our lives. But it's too late.

I look over my shoulder and there's yet another wave looming. It's smaller than the last two, which means it will break closer to shore. Like right on top of us.

A million thoughts are going through my mind. First amongst them is "Let go of the board. Head for the bottom. Stuff the medal." I don't know why I don't do it. We're in exactly the wrong spot. We're going to get absolutely axed. It's not just a matter of getting hit by a lot of water. We're going to be on top of it when it breaks, which means we'll be taking the drop and *then* we'll get hit by a lot of water. Me and Leavo and fourteen kilograms of fibreglass (and how many tons of water?)and somehow we've all got to stay together without getting killed. I suddenly hate this board with a passion. It's behaving with pig-headed obstinacy and I'm sure it's possessed by some malignant force with a perverted sense of humour.

"Look at this pig-board piece of shit! You got no business out here whatsoever!"

"Get to the back!" Leavo is screaming at me, but for once he doesn't have to tell me what to do. I'm there before him. I slide back as far as I can and loop my hands under the straps. We're going to take the drop.

"This will sting a bit, but it's for your own growth, bro'."

And then the wave's underneath us and I can feel the surge of it as we ride it to the top. Then the lip hits us and

"... Man, it jacks up and you drop down into the pit, twenty five feet straight down and your balls, man, your balls are ***THIS BIG****... "*

If the board falls on its nose, it's all over; we'll never hang on to it. But because all our weight's at the back, the board's still flat when we hit the bottom. My forehead is smashed into the fibreglass with the impact and a giant hand presses me into the board as literally tons of water fall on us. My breath is forced out of my lungs as I'm driven against the board. We've got no hope of controlling it and suddenly we're upside down again in the washing machine. I hold on, pressing my forehead as hard as I can against the board, just so I can feel it's still there. It's the only solid thing in my entire world. I've got no idea where Leavo island if he's still holding on. I don't even know which way is up. But I can still feel my hands around the straps and the board pressed against my face... and then the wave is gone. We come up to the surface and we've both still got a death-grip on the straps. One of the straps has pulled out of the board, but we didn't let go.

"Seacliff's gone," Leavo says as we climb back on. "They let go of their board."

I don't even look. I'm too busy concentrating on the board and another wave which has just broken behind us. By now, we're closer to the beach, so by the time the wave reaches us, it's just a wall of white water. We get to

the back of the board and pick it up, surfing it back to the beach. Out of the corner of my eye I can see the Seacliff guys on the same wave.

I have to move forward on the board as the wave loses power and then get back again in a hurry as it reforms on the shallower inshore bank. And then I can relax and just ride the wave all the way back to the beach. We're coming in a little to the right of the arena, but Seacliff are right on target. I start to angle across.

"Don't bother!" Leavo yells at me. "Seacliff's gone. They lost their board."

If they lost their board, they'll be disqualified. We don't have to race them. I straighten the board up and let the wave wash us onto the sand. And suddenly we're running up the beach and Leavo's punching the air in victory. We cross the line five metres behind Seacliff, but we've won it. Leavo turns to me and holds out his hand. It's streaming with blood where the straps have cut into them and his blood mingles with my own as we shake hands.

"Mate," he says, "you can do a board rescue with me anytime. You're a fuckin' Waterman."

Cam comes running over, jumping up and down with excitement.

"Stop sucking each other's dicks," he says as he slaps us on the back. "What do you think this is? Fuckin' *Top Gun* or something?"

"No," I tell him. "That's what I thought, but it isn't you know. It's *Point Break*." He just looks at me like I'm insane and I probably am. Then the rest of the Swanny guys come running up; Simone, Jane, Fiona, Kristie, Tim, Sconno, Walshy, Big Wave, all slapping us on the back, pummelling us in jubilation.

Competition Timetable, Training Times and Other Stuff

All of this information is on the website. If you subscribe to the e-newsletter, the Swanny Shorebreak, you'll get it there as well. But below is a quick summary…

~~Running Training at Swanny~~

~~Running training~~ ~~will be **every Thursday afternoon** from **6:15pm** 7:00pm at Swanny Beach. All fitness levels welcome!! Training caters for all fitness levels and includes drills, long runs, sprints and a cheap dinner at the OBH afterwards! Free to all club members and $5 for non-club members.~~
~~More information on coaches etc. to come.~~

Swimming Training at Swanny

Monday evenings swimming: Every Monday night at Claremont Pool. Coached by ~~**James Anderson**~~ Dan. Free to club members (other than pool entry which equates to a few dollars). The sessions suit a mix of levels and run for an hour. During summer time sessions run ~~6.45pm-8.00pm~~ 6.30pm-7.30pm sharp, from May until around October sessions run ~~6.30pm-7.30pm~~ 6.15pm-7.15pm.
~~**Wednesday mornings ocean swimming:** Every Wednesday morning at Swanny Beach. Arrive at 6:00am for a 6:15am start. Training caters for all fitness levels and is a great way to start training for the Rotto Swim!!~~

Ski Training

When: Tuesday and Thursday mornings 6.00 am (on the water).
Where: At Swanny Beach directly in front of the Club
Coach: ~~Tony Leaversuch~~

If you get there early, great, open the boatshed, get skis on the beach. If you get there after 6am, the guys will stay around Swanny Beach, so you'll be able to catch up.

If you don't have your own craft, ~~Leavo~~ will allocate a ski for you. If you attend consistently and show commitment, we will allocate you a good Club ski for the duration of the season. ~~You may also be eligible to apply for a $ for $ craft (the Club will pay half the cost of the new craft).~~

~~Board Training Session 1~~

~~When: Wednesday afternoons at 5:30 pm starting~~
~~Where: Freshwater Bay, Dalkeith. Meet at Swanny at 5 pm to help load the board trailer, or if you finish work late, meet at Freshwater bay just south of the Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club.~~
~~Coach: Peter Brigg~~

Board Training Session 2

When: Friday mornings at 6.00 am
Where: At Swanny Beach directly in front of the club
Coach: ~~Christo Rowley~~ Various

Training Timetable

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
AM		Ski Training 6:00am Swanny Beach	~~Ocean Swimming 6:00am Swanny Beach~~	Ski Training 6:00am Swanny Beach	Board Session 6:00am Swanny Beach		Points Races ~~9:30am~~ 10.00am Swanny Beach
PM	Swimming ~~6:45pm~~ 6.30pm Claremont Pool		~~Board Session 5:30pm Freshwater Bay~~	~~Running Training 6:15pm Swanny Beach~~			

Upcoming Surf Carnivals and Events

Country Carnival Bus Trips and Aussie Title Trips are legendary. Everyone who has ever gone on one will tell you… probably again and again and again. Beg, borrow or steal a ride to ~~Bunno '10~~ Smiths' 20 or the Aussie Titles. It's something you'll never regret and a trip you'll never forget…(more of that in the next newsletter).

Country Carnival - ~~Bunbury 23 January 2010~~ Smiths Beach 25 and 26 January

~~Still working on a theme, but only suggestion so far is is Bunno **BROWN!!!**~~
~~Very Rough Itinerary~~
~~Friday 22nd - Depart in evening - around 1800. Arrive 2100hrs, pitch tents~~
~~Saturday 23rd - Carnival starts 1100hrs @ Bunbury. Party afterwards~~
~~Sunday 24th - Go surfing somewhere in morning, then return Sunday night.~~

Swanny Swim Thru Saturday ~~6th February 2010~~ 1st February 2020

Senior State Championships ~~27th-28th February~~ 28th-29th March 2020

Masters State Championships ~~Sunday 14th February~~ Saturday 29th February 2020
R&R State Championships ~~Sunday 14th February~~ Saturday 15th February 2020
Lifesaving State Championships ~~Sunday 21st February~~ Saturday 21st-Sunday 22nd March 2020

Aussies ~~16th to 21st March~~ 18th to 26th April @ Gold Coast

Masters Australian Championships ~~Tuesday 16th to Wednesday 17th March~~ Mon 20th-Tue 21st April
SLSA Australian Championships ~~Thursday 19th March to Sunday 21st March~~ Wed 23rd-Sun 27th April

More information on the events, accommodation and timetables coming soon!

The Swanny Shore Break (the wave, not the newsletter)

Just a quick note on our beach. It has a ferocious shorebreak. If you want to compete, even at Club races, you need to learn how to manage it. Here is what happens if you

a) Don't know how to read the shorebreak
b) Underestimate it's awesome power
c) Show the shorebreak no respect

It's your shorebreak. Learn to read it; learn to surf it; learn to respect it. Otherwise you'll end up like the guys in these pictures.

Stay tuned for the next edition… the Boaties Edition. And no, it won't be empty, just because the space between a boatie's ears is. It will be chock full of information, tips for rowers, stories of big surf and epic races, puzzles, competitions and more…